

Tall Oaks Commission
September 26, 2018

Present: Kristin Dow, Jeff Hon, Suzi Goldt, Kassie Smith McKee, Martha Pierce and Bill Rose-Heim.

Kristin explained that Kassie was here to represent Camp and Conference. She or Lara Blackwood Pickrel will be attending for the next few months.

Financial Reports:

We examined August financial reports. Martha explained that the last Grandparents Camp has not been transferred from the Region to Tall Oaks, nor have the scholarship funds. We have problems with receiving notification that transfers have been made. There is approximately \$8,000 that has been identified as unpaid from DoC campers. In total we have identified \$23-\$25,000 in camp fees not transferred/not collected. Further, we discussed what camps cost versus what we have been collecting and the deficit that exists between them. We determined that we need to attend a Financial Committee meeting to help them understand the costs vs. revenue for DoC camps. We also need to inform the new Board that camp fees are subsidized, and we MUST find other revenue to cover the costs of DoC camps. The next Finance Committee meeting is October 17. Martha, Kristin and Jeff will request to attend the meeting to help explain the costs. Martha will provide 3 figures: Camp fees charged, Total Camp Cost and Camp Fees billed to Region for 2018.

Examining expenses: Utility rates went up more than was expected. Overtime was incurred in kitchen staff during the transition of kitchen directors. Bill suggested that carbon credits might be explored to offset utility costs.

Trying to analyze the ac issues in the LLC has been a problem. 2 different companies have been out to investigate, and multiple problems exist. We need to make a list of capital needs for a capital campaign. Jeff will, in conjunction with Steve, start compiling this list. Bill said that if he had the list he would share it with churches in his travels. We talked about sponsoring a building, a horse, a camper. In the short term, we will have a booth at the Gala to ask people to give on a monthly basis.

Restructure:

New Board

Invitations have been submitted to:

Still pending:

Annetta Vertreese (Bill)

Louanne Shrout - (Kirby)

Bill and Rachel Drake -- (Kristen)

Allen Watts -- pending (Suzi)

No:

Kelly Lee -- conflict of interest but will serve as liaison between specialty camps

Jim Yonts -- no (Kirby) might be on a committee

Kyle Smith -- no -- would like to be considered in the future

Yes:

Donna Rose-Hem -- yes for one year

Sandy Allen -- yes

Dan Merrick -- yes

New Invitations:

Stacey Kearney -- (Kristin)

All who have agreed to serve will be recognized at the Gala. Next month we need to plan for the first meeting for the new Board.

Camp and Conference Transition:

We discussed how the new camp and conference coordinator position will be written and hiring implemented. We suggested Kassie e-mail Erin Wathen, Region Moderator, Bill Rose-Heim (who had left the meeting) and Dave Arnold (Region Personnel Chair) about the formulation of the position description and the search for a person to fill it. Suzi suggested that it might be combined with a communications position.

Director's Report

The Last Swim event, September 3, was enjoyed by 6 DOC churches (35 – 40 people). We plan to make it an annual event – earlier in August and with plenty of publicity.

Sept 5, I did an introductory class on Project Learning Tree, Wet and Wild with Hannah, Karri, Hallie, Jan and Barb. All are interested in working with the curriculum and expanding our outreach to schools through nature based educational activities. I am working with the state organization to host a full certification course at Tall Oaks for our staff and any others who may be interested.

Sept 12, Barb met with JR and Deb Davis to begin an Equine Committee. Beth Brock visited with Barb on Sept 14. She gave a great overview of the Equine program at Tall Oaks. They looked at a job description for Equine Assistant and discussed possible future plans. There are plans to get together again in November and discuss finances and broader views of the program. Barb and I will be spending time together evaluating all finances involving the horses in preparation for the next meeting.

Sept. 17, Eyyup Essen with the Dialogue Institute came out. We visited about ways we might help one another. I gave him a tour of the facility. I believe with nurturing, we can have a good connection.

Sept 18, Tall Oaks hosted the wrap up meeting/meal with DOC camp leaders.

Sept 20, Tall Oaks hosted the wrap up meeting/meal with our large summer group leaders.

At each meeting, I asked for feedback on what Tall Oaks does well, what are areas for growth and dreams and visions for the future. There was quite a bit of similarity between the two meetings. All staff were present (except for Steve Root, on vacation). I think having them there was a great experience, as they got to hear/see a bigger picture of Tall Oaks and received the accolades first hand. Here is a summary of what was said:

The Good:

Dietary needs are met. Flexibility with food. (There was acknowledgement of the challenges during the 2 weeks of kitchen transition – however mostly all positive in this area)

Responsiveness of all staff – response to needs, requests, etc.

Kids encouraging one another. Seeing growth in the kids year to year.

Cleanliness of facilities.

Respect of confidentiality.

Customer service.

Recycling.

Getting 2019 dates so quickly.

Use of space fit Fine Art Camp well.

Enhancement of Pavilion by fire pit.

Areas of Growth: These covered both Tall Oaks Staff and the staff of our groups.

Clear instruction for the AV equipment at LLC. Ensure all parts and pieces are there and ready.

Small PA system in dining hall.

Try to keep dates in place for the future, not moving camps around.

Make sure all cottages/LLC AV equipment is current.

Put recycling containers throughout camp.

Menu of available options for all programming with costs

Some way to distinguish camp leaders from volunteers, campers, etc. (This was so T. O. staff could find them)

Ensure snacks are ready and available (some confusion occurred during the transition)

Creative back up plan for extreme heat/rain, etc.

CYF service project planned.

Ensure enough nurses are on hand for each check in – for large groups or simultaneous registrations, 2 nurses.

Make sure that any schedule changes are arranged in advance between camp leaders and T. O. staff.

Ideas to brighten the dining hall (murals?)

Dreams and Visions:

Lake/waterfront

Enhanced high course/new high course

"Tree house" – elevated meeting space

More lodging, meeting spaces.

Better acoustics in LLC.

Finish dream for Pavilion – bathrooms and kitchen spaces.

NOTE: An interesting thing happened when we brought our summer groups together (Diabetes, Sickle Cell, Foster Children, Autism). All groups were represented except for NAI (new MD group). They had not met before. They now plan to get together quarterly (if Kelly Lee and I can find times they can all do that!). They were excited about sharing resources and plans. An idea to develop program "totes" for specific areas – binoculars, garmins, telescopes, etc – that would be available to check out by any group using Tall Oaks. This would really enhance the camp experience for all and expand the program offerings by Tall Oaks. Storage was discussed. Each of these groups has to invest a lot of money to transport supplies and equipment to and from our facility. The possibility of them going together to purchase a shipping container (or similar), build interior sections and then have that space for each of them would be a great benefit. I don't see a problem, with finding a space behind maintenance or elsewhere to do that. It is an ongoing discussion, not set in stone.

How I wish the Commission could come to Tall Oaks during high times like we are experiencing right now. Briarwood Elementary was on site the 21st from 8am – 8pm. It took every staff member plus some outside help to cover lows and zip, archery, wagon rides, outdoor games – quite a full day for us all. Barb was even back out on the high course! This week, Pembroke School is here all day the 26th, Raintree is here the 27th & 28th, a Presbyterian group is here 26th – 28. Saturday and Sunday, 4 groups are utilizing all our spaces and many activities. How I dream of the day we are this busy year round!

Due to a last minute surprise by my Utah family, I am going to be away the weekend of October 5 – 7. They are flying me out to celebrate my great nephew's last football game of high school.

Hannah is currently taking a grant writing course through Johnson County Junior College. She will be flying out to California November 3 to attend her Level 2 certification course on the ropes course. This means she will be able to certify staff. Hannah will be taking 4 months off to travel, returning to Tall Oaks March 3, 2019.

I attended a Sustainable Pathways course September 9 – 13. The first half focused on sustainability and how camp & retreat centers can be better stewards of Earth and finances. By conserving electric, water and all resources, we can save money, which benefits all areas of the ministry. The last half of the course was led by Niambi Jaha-Echols and was on inclusiveness/diversity. There was a lot of discussion and ideas about how we might move forward in these areas. I plan to begin sharing what I learned in both areas with staff during staff meetings.

KITCHEN – Johnny Alexander is popular with guests. The food service has been good. He is learning to be more organized and focused in the behind the scenes areas. We have interviewed 3 new staff who will be working for awhile to see how they fit. One new cook and 2 new assistants – all adults – will really make things easier!!

As we move into the quiet times, I am being very clear with all staff that it will be an "as needed" time. When we don't have groups in to feed, kitchen staff will have to take down time. Lanette and I will cover the office. Heather will work 3 days to cover HR and finance. All other areas will adjust to provide needed services.

I am working with staff to show them how to track their own area expenses. In January, each leader – Barb, Steve, Joey, Rose and Sharon, were given their budget pages and a complete budget for Tall Oaks. They were told that they would be partially responsible for tracking their expenses by signing off on the forms each week. Hannah and Johnny have been given that documentation. Heather and I reminded them of the reason they sign those forms each week.

Question for the Commission:

Tall Oaks currently has 1 electric organ, 1 grand piano, 1 upright piano and 2 antique organs. I can't find any documentation that says these are any type of special situation. Would it be possible to sell our existing equipment and purchase a really nice electric keyboard for LLC and an additional portable keyboard for use in other locations? Our equipment gets pretty beat up by campers on a regular basis. Pianos require yearly tuning to be kept in condition. I

know neither have been tuned since I have been here. While I haven't done the research, I feel confident that we would make enough off the sale of everything to cover the cost of new equipment and possibly money left over.

Verbal additions to the written report:

Girls Scouts built a garbage container and a rain water catcher.

Two options for replacing Barb: someone from Tall Oaks who is not certified but pay for their certification. Or find someone who has certification but does not know Tall Oaks. Preference was expressed for someone who is familiar with Tall Oaks but who needs certification. There is someone on staff currently who could possibly fill the position.

We suggested that all musical instruments be sold/given away. The grand piano in LLC MIGHT have some monetary value. Martha will check with Karen Yount (the piano came from Budd Park CC) to see if there are issues.

Video Project

Kristin said we still need some youth to go to Tall Oaks to simulate summer camp for the video. Date needs to be determined, but when it is Suzi will ask for youth cabinet help.

Gala

Meeting again next Monday.

Refund Policy

We discussed the incident from this summer. The policy will have to be written by Camp and Conference for the coming year.

Our next meeting will be October 31 at 10 am at Merriam Christian Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzi Goldt