News from The Mountain Top

Dear Camp Supporters and Valentines,

As I think of Camp de Benneville Pines and all it has been through in 2020 – pandemic and forest fire – my heart is full thinking of all of you who have stepped up to help in so many ways.

Over 80 people showed up to help fill sandbags and get them placed over six different weekends. And 45 people showed up over four weekends to rake pine needles and trim limbs away from structures, making our Camp more fire safe. Staff and volunteers worked to stain decks and cabins prior to the fire, and 1,180 of you responded to our various fundraising campaigns over the year. Donations came in from all over the country as folks reached deep to support their home on the mountain top.

Others contributed to the fundraising efforts in creative ways by sending us hand-made face masks to sell and glass hearts to give to donors. Still others gave concerts, sold cookbooks, sponsored movie nights and talent shows. One volunteer paid for and installed security cameras and made sure Camp's fire alarm system was fully operational. Another paid for and installed a weather station on top of Homet Lodge. Board members took on grant writing projects, multiple fundraising campaigns, and initiated fire recovery plans. Several UU Churches held special collections, and a core group of former LRY campers set up a matching fund and went to work to raise over $30,000.

So much love flowing to the mountain top! How can I not reach out today with a special Valentine love letter to you? Some people just go the extra mile, and de Benneville would not be here if it were not for the efforts of the self-appointed caretakers of this sacred space.

Please know that your caring has meant so much during this extended period of closure. You show others by your example what being a loving steward of Camp truly means. You uphold the values of Camp and the principles of your faith.

*You are the Camp's heart and soul, its visionaries, working to preserve Camp for everyone yet to come.*

To me, a camp without the campers is but a lonely place resting in the woods, waiting to come to life. Through your efforts, you nourish the hopes and dreams of the next generation of UU campers. Your actions help to ensure that Camp will be here for them. I hold a special place in my heart this Valentine's Day for what de Benneville Pines has been to so many over the last 60 years and for what we dream it will be once again.

Thank you for being a Camp Valentine.

Be safe and stay healthy. I cherish you all.

With love,

Janet James

Executive Director,

Your Beloved Camp