

REPORT OF THE CANTERBURY HILLS SUMMER CAMP

When I reflect on the summer of 2010 I think of campfires, hikes to waterfalls, time traveling to distant lands, and fridge magnet crafts. However, most importantly I think of all of the campers, staff, partner agencies, and supporting groups that made this all possible. This summer we were able to see 644 campers walk down the path at Canterbury Hills full of excitement! There is nothing that makes me happier than to see a unit group of campers full of imagination as they work, play, and live together. When I see this, I know that they feel the magic that Canterbury Hills has to offer.

When celebrating at the 50th anniversary party on May 15th, I had the pleasure of meeting many camper and staff alumni who inspired me throughout the summer. At this event and throughout the summer I heard stories of parents excited to share that their kids had the same fun, special camping experience as they did as children. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that I am very pleased to say that the 50th year of the Canterbury Hills camping program was a great success. This summer we saw more children than ever before! After many years of planning and wishing, two new cabin groups – Hickory and Pine – were added to the Canterbury Hills family. This allowed for an additional 128 spaces to be filled by smiling, eager, young faces! Despite this challenge of having more spaces than previous summers, we are pleased that we ran this summer with registration at 92%!

Many children would not be able to have this experience if it were not for the support of the partner agencies. It has been a pleasure working with Reach for the Rainbow where together, we were able to send 24 campers who have cognitive and/or physical disabilities to camp. Each of these campers was fully integrated into their unit so that they too can experience a week at camp. Personally, my cousin Dawson, who is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, went on his first campout this summer! With the continuing support of Angel Tree, Canterbury Hills was also able to provide a positive environment under God to many children of inmates. Also, with the support of St. Matthew's House, many families from under privileged families were also able to join us in song, dance, and play.

The impact our supporters have on the lives of campers is priceless. I would also like to send my deepest appreciation to the groups who supported us both financially and with their time. These include: The Company of Camp Artaban in Hamilton, St. Simon's Outreach Committee in Oakville, St. Andrew's Church in Grimsby, St. Michael's Church in Hamilton, and St. James Church in Dundas, and many individuals. The need for support so that the camping program can continue in the future is needed now more than ever. To our supporters, I thank you on behalf of the campers and staff of today, and in the coming years. Let's continue to make memories together!

This summer I was very fortunate as the Camp Coordinator to see how all of this translated into the magic of Canterbury Hills. It is hard to describe the reward that I feel when a leader grows the confidence to be all that they can be, when a child experiences the beauty of nature or the grace of God for the first time, or when somebody leaves Canterbury Hills and says 'I want to be here next year.' When this occurs, I know that the memories created and shared here will last a lifetime. I am blessed to have this experience and I thank all of those who helped to make this happen.

Respectfully submitted,
Nate Seroski
Canterbury Hills Camp Coordinator