

May 2010

Gary's Camping Newsletter

Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders

"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows." – Sydney J. Harris

"Children grow up by 'mimicking' others. What matters most is WHOM they mimic!" - Walt Lofstrom, director of www.song-camp.org/

The Very Best Teachers (according to ABC News):

- Make sure every student is keeping up.
 - Aren't afraid to change their lesson plan if it isn't working.
 - Set high goals for their students, and themselves.
- (Maybe share this during staff training?)

YouTube Staff Welcome – "Connecticut Camp Guy" Patrick Connelly writes, "Hello Gary! Remember that classic 70's show S.W.A.T? Check out our Day Camp Ingersoll senior staff intro movie they put together: <http://www.facebook.com/1/dc096;www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIRAmhO6pjU>. A fun, campy way to make some memorable introductions. We hope you have as much fun watching as we did making it!" – contact Patrick at pconnelly@midymca.org

"Word of Mouth Marketing Cannot Be Faked – Artificial word of mouth marketing is dishonest and ineffective." Words of wisdom from the Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA). If anyone on your staff says "we need to create buzz," be sure they read "WOM 101" first. Lots of free resources here from their past conferences: <http://womma.org/wom101/> There's more "upside" here than in anything camps spend their marketing money on. And there's *still* time.

Movie Themes for This Summer? – Here's an easy place to download the poster art for upcoming movies so you can, for instance, Photoshop the heads of your own staff people into them? <http://teaser-trailer.com/>

Send In the Clones – Jeff Merhige writes, "The Clone Wars Camp big game resource, in collaboration with Lucasfilm, has been re-launched for 2010! Five great games, five fun craft projects, and lots of support stuff like video, posters, etc. Make room in your summer schedule!" http://clonewarscamp.com/login_form?came_from=http://clonewarscamp.com/&retry=&disable_cookie_login_=1 – reach Jeff at jMerhige@daytonymca.org

THE Carpetball Plans -- <http://www.stanford.edu/~cammat/carpetball/index.html> This is the ONLY place to get the original plans. BUT, I suggest two changes to these plans (you'll understand when you look at the diagrams): instead of making the side rails out of two 2x8's spliced together to create 204" long rails, I suggest just using full-length 2x8x16's. The finished table is 12" shorter, but much stronger, and easier to build. The second change: if you're planning to have kids under age 12 use the carpetball table, I suggest you make them 6" shorter than the drawings show. That keeps their smiling faces at a safer height above the "action"!

Wake Up Your Challenge Course – from its long winter's nap! That's adventure guru Chris Ortiz's recent blog post. A few expensive repairs might be waiting to surprise you. New wood chips on your low elements MUST be in place before you let any school or weekend groups use them. Chris has compiled a great list, worth printing out and delegating to all the right people with a note attached, "Let me know as

soon as these are done.” <http://high5adventure.org/community-blog/2010/03/wake-up.html> Reach Chris at: cortiz@high5adventure.org

Free Pre-Camp Staff Training – Chris Thurber writes: “Here are two fun camp prep videos that I’ve posted for free on YouTube. Hope you enjoy!”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOzfQ886xzw&feature=related> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0K4zRVXB4fs&feature=related>.” – see more about Chris at www.campspirit.com (before he heads back to YMCA Camp Belknap for his 30th summer!)

Bully Proofing Your Camp – Dan Weir, camp director at Frost Valley sends us this: “A great place to start is reading the book “Bullyproof your Child for Life” by Joel Haber. I wrote a review of it for CampNation at <http://www.camps.ca/campnation/index.php/bullyproof-your-child/>. I know the New York Y Camp used Joel Haber’s “bully-free-zone” program last summer. I interviewed exec Wheaton Griffin about this here - <http://danweir.squarespace.com/blog/2010/3/9/interview-with-wheaton-griffin.html> -- contact Dan at dweir@frostvalley.org

“ALF” Ferreira shares, “Another good source on bullyproofing is the Frank Peretti book ‘The Wounded Spirit’ that has a leaders guide as well. It is teen focused and meant to do over several meetings. Also has a scriptural component that you may or may not decide to use based on the size of the “C” in your program. – reach ALF at alferreira@yahoo.com

Portable Sound – A battery-powered PA amp to use with your i-Pod or computer that will fill a council ring or dining hall with music for 10 hours on one charge! http://www.amazon.com/Crate-TX15-Battery-Powered-Guitar/dp/B0002E3EFM/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=musical-instruments&qid=1272419248&sr=8-1 – thanks to Lee Carpenter of Camp Aldersgate, RI lee@campaldersgate.com

A See-through Clog-proof Sink Trap! – You may not have known you needed one, but once you see it you’ll HAVE to have them for all your sinks! <http://www.pfwaterworks.net/> Only \$20 at HomeDepot, etc.

Climbing Instructor Certification – Jeff Mabry of Indiana’s Flat Rock River Camp suggests American Mountain Guide Association as a reasonably priced certification training that can give your staff a “foothold” in a real professional network. Classes are offered nation-wide on topics like “Climbing Walls” and “Single Pitch Climbs” to start. <http://schedule.amga.com/spi> -- contact Jeff at <http://amga.com/index.php/jmabry@indymca.org>

Where Have You Been All My Life? – I’ve found a guy who’s even more a summer camp geek than I am; Curtis “Moose” Jackson. The quality of his web presence is a thing of beauty! Here’s the index to his site: <http://recreationguy.com/category/summer-camp/> and here’s one he does specifically for summer camp themes! <http://summercampprogramdirector.com/>

“But Nobody Told Me to Do That” – The best camps I visit *don’t always* have the best camp executives. But they do have *someone* that’s out in front, making things happen. Not crazy about your boss? S/he may be waiting for *you* to form your tribe. Here’s some inspiration if you’re in this situation (and there are a LOT of you...) http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2010/01/without-them.html Just Get Going.

Camp Horsetheif Reservoir -- Now THAT's a cool name! Here's a nice story and three photos on the Boise Idaho YMCA's brand new resident camp:

<http://www.idahostatesman.com/2010/04/05/1141506/coming-soon-a-spectacularymca.html>

Solar Hot Water In a Box – A do-it-yourself kit for solar hot water: <http://www.hot2o.com/>. You could have campers and staff work on it together.

Teach a New Skill this Summer? – Yodeling! (What a hoot! A whole bunch of hoots, actually...)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6s6NM5sYQs&feature=player_embedded

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” -- *James 3:17*

“We are very near greatness: one step and we are safe; can we not take the leap?” — *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“How beautiful a day can be when kindness touches it.” — *George Elliston*

Summer is the best time to have a clear set of eyes document what's really going on at your camp. It's an economical way to focus your efforts, and get some great web photos, too. I'm already booked for 6 camps this summer, but I still have a few dates left if you'd like to see what it might cost, and how much you could get out of a single visit.

Warm regards,

Gary

Gary Forster, LLC

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