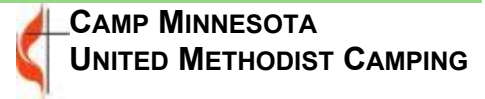




# DECISION HILLS CAMP NEWSLETTER

From the Directors Sarah & Terry Lockwood  
Decision Hills Faces Its Biggest Challenge Ever



## THE "YEAH GOD"

Well, we've made it through another great summer season of camping and hosting ministry. Nearly 2,000 people experienced the peace of Decision Hills this year with the hopes of even more next year. One camper summed up what they learned about God at camp this



summer by sharing, *"that he loves me no matter what, which really changed how I saw him."*

The Conference's Retreats & Camping Ministry Team (RCMT) has made the commitment for us to be open at least through the coming summer of 2011. The tricky part is for our struggling camp to survive until next summer. We will be working hard to make cost reductions, donations and loans from the Conference.

## THE TOUGH NEWS

Decision Hills has been in tough times before, but never to the point of possible closing. This is a very real possibility for the

camp after the summer of 2011. Factors of the struggling economy, aging and limited facilities, crushing debt and another UMC camp just 20 miles away, all contribute to the camp's struggle for survival.

The DHC Site Team (formerly the Board of Directors) has worked hard at raising funds with pancake breakfasts, a spring & fall rummage sale, the 2009 phoneathon and through direct contacts. The Lockwoods have also worked hard to reduce costs to run the camp by way of taking on even more tasks themselves when faced with making summer staffing cuts and even voluntarily reducing their own time and pay throughout the year. Ultimately, it is only through the many DHC individuals and the many local churches that support the camp that we have made it this far.

## THE GOOD NEWS

We know that there are many people that love Decision Hills, not just because of a specific "Yeah God" experience, but because of the easy going, cozy, comfortable environment here. DHC has a strong base of supporters for its size, and we thank

God for each and every one of you. Your support inspires all of us to work hard at making this an open, welcoming place of ministry, of fellowship, of fun, and of praise. It's obvious the impact that DHC has had, when you see the WOW light up in the eyes of youth and adults who have come for the first time. The Site Team, the Lockwoods, and others that have been active in the camp events are determined to see Decision Hills continue in its ministry, but it will take the entire DHC community to make it happen.

## THE CATCH 22

Our DHC Site Team has been faced with the task of coming up with a survival plan, but must go through Conference channels to put it into play. After many long discussions and debates, it has been deemed best to pay off our debt



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Check us out on the web at: [www.decisionhills.org](http://www.decisionhills.org)  
[www.facebook.com/DecisionHillsCamp](http://www.facebook.com/DecisionHillsCamp) ~ [www.campminnesota.org](http://www.campminnesota.org)



From the Directors continued from previous page

and generate enough funds to get our facilities into great working order by selling some parcels of DHC lakeshore that the camp does not use. Time is of the essence and each day's delay is critical to our daily finances.

However, in trying to work through the various Conference groups since this past July (RCMT and Board of Trustees), DHC has yet to gain permission to pursue this possibility. Presently it rests with the Conference Board of Trustees. The Conference RCMT has not been able to come to any other resolution or viable plan to guarantee DHC's survival past next summer (See Rocky Wilson's article elsewhere in this newsletter). It really comes down to increasing the number of campers who come to DHC and to relying on committed supporters.

## HOW PEOPLE CAN HELP

Given the uncertainty of what the Conference will decide about the fate of DHC, it has been decided to not pursue this year's phoneathon. We hope that once a decision is made at the Conference level as to its plans for DHC, we can then pursue a fundraising campaign with a more clear vision this coming spring to launch us into our summer season.

The bottom line, though, is that the camp is still in desperate need of donations just to make it to next summer. We would greatly appreciate friends of DHC to consider the camp when making their end-of-year tax donations. **We've also added a couple of incentive ideas to help encourage people to donate. See next article about GoodSearch.com and getting a DHC polar fleece full zip jacket.**

## WE PLEDGE

We make the promise to do the best we can to enable the ministry of DHC in our Conference and beyond. Your prayers will be greatly appreciated! **See page with Rocky's article for a diagram of the DHC lakeshore section being proposed for sale.**

## Creative Donating to DHC

What if Decision Hills Camp and Retreat Center earned a donation every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!



**GoodSearch.com** is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up!



**GoodShop.com** is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 30 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, eBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

And if you download the GoodSearch – Decision Hills Camp and Retreat Center toolbar, our cause will earn money every time you shop and search online - even if you forget to go to GoodShop or GoodSearch first! Add the Decision Hills Camp and Retreat Center toolbar at <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/decision-hills-camp-and-retreat-center>

**Get a DHC full zip fleece jacket** embroidered with a DHC logo by making a cumulative donation of **\$200 or more between Thanksgiving, 2010 and April 1, 2011.** See the DHC website for details on everything in this article.

## Spring Into Summer and Harvest Happening Were Great Fun!

This past May, we had over 200 people come out to the camp to enjoy our Spring Into Summer recreational gear sale. Lots and lots of friends donated used exercise equipment, patio sets, camping supplies, boats, golf clubs, bicycles and more to give us the ability to offer a wonderful variety of goods for shoppers. Over \$6,300 was raised through that



event. The coolest thing the entire day, though, was for the many DHC neighbors who came to see the camp. One gentleman who lives across the lake commented how much he enjoys listening from his side of the lake to hear the summer campers singing during their campfires each evening.

Then again, in September, we held our next sale and raised over \$4,600. Dubbed Harvest Happening, we put even more creativity into the day. Items donated by so many included a wide variety of rummage from clothing, holiday decorations, and knickknacks to bedding, furniture, farmer's market items and craft supplies. As with the May Spring Into Summer event, the concession booth was also a big hit. There were even hayrides and a children's carnival!

Thanks to LuMae Erickson for spearheading both of these awesome events and to the many who helped prepare, work the day and clean up afterward! These events couldn't have happened without you!





**Special points of interest:**

Decision Hills Camp is now accessible to view on Facebook, even for those without a Facebook account. You can view the camp Facebook page, look through pictures, videos, etc. The link is - <http://www.facebook.com/Decision-HillsCamp>

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The DHC gymnasium is the proud winter home of the Spicer-New London High School Gymnastics Team.

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The staff and Site Team of DHC are proud to announce the successful completion of their rigorous ACA accreditation process once again!



**Did You Know...**

Decision Hills Camp has some wonderful walking trails open the year 'round to the public. The trails are kept relatively groomed throughout the winter to accommodate the people who use the trails to snowshoe and cross country ski throughout the winter months.

If you want to see one of the most beautiful



sunsets anywhere, take a walk up past the dining hall on the Prairie Schooner trail and watch the sun go down

from "meditation hill" or from "the perfect view" station along the top of the trail overlooking George Lake. During the day, the four different meditation stations along this trail offer peaceful stops that have inspirational scriptures and quotations erected.

Three other trails, along with the gravel roadway throughout the camp, offer many different paths for walkers to enjoy. The trail that heads north into the woods off of our main driveway heads almost straight uphill for a challenging exploration of our beautiful cedar forest and exits in the midst of our trailer campgrounds. Another trail heads north along the lakefront and follows above the lake-shore to lead the walker to the trailer campgrounds from another direction.



Bundle up, take a drive on out to the camp and discover the quiet beauty of Decision Hills Camp this fall and winter. Plan an outing with your family for a winter campfire, some ice fishing on George Lake or enjoy the area by snowmobile. Most of all, though, stop in and say hi to the Lockwoods.



**Volunteers are a God-Send to Decision Hills!**



Once again, well over 1,000 volunteer work hours are to be celebrated as people help with the critical background chores around the

camp. This list is in no way all encompassing, but should give the reader a glance into the many hands that make Decision Hills Camp a place set apart.

During the spring work days volunteers came out of the woodwork to cut & stack firewood, organized the new storage loft, raked up &



trailed leaves onto the walking trails as compost, gave the yurts a thorough scrubbing, painted docks, painted the gym hallway & lobby, trimmed trees, and helped with basic repairs. People came from the Cambridge UMC, Spicer Cross Roads UMC, LYFE Camp leadership, the DHC neighborhood, and even



some of our camp-ground friends!

The Spring into Summer & Harvest Happening sales had friends help out

from the Renville, Olivia, Bloomington Normandale Hylands, Willmar, Spicer Cross Roads, Crystal Brunswick, Hawick, and several other UMCs around our state. That's not even counting the many neighbors, Site Team members, family and friends who came to help.

We held two pancake breakfasts this late summer, raising over \$1,000. The food was wonderful and the company was even better! Volunteers from Litchfield UMC and the L.O.C.A.L. Camp built us some new picnic tables for the campgrounds. Others have come out to the camp to lend a hand with bookkeeping, cleaning, organizing, gardening, painting, constructing, sewing and more. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

## What Do Summer Staff Experience?



- My spiritual high for the summer was seeing kids respond to Christ at Xtreme Adventure Camp.



- It challenged me to be like Jesus even when it's hard.

- My summer high was having the ACA visitors tell me I had the cleanest kitchen!



- My spiritual high was watching the kids connect with God

and being able to grow with God myself.



- I loved serving!
- The best thing about the

summer was seeing the joy on the camper's faces.



- Kitchen staff music!



- It sure makes you appreciate everything more.

- This summer helped me open up more to others and not trying to figure things out on my own. Also I was reminded several times of how I should be trusting in God more and when I do things will work out.

**See back page if interested in becoming staff.**

## What Parents Have to Say About Their Kid's Experiences at DHC This Summer

- The staff is what he talked about a lot. They are all friendly. Great job in picking them!

- They can't wait for it every year! They like it as much as Christmas! They wanted it to go for another week!



- I was really happy with his experience, I think he is closer

to the people from our church he camped with and the fact he enjoyed Bible study is fantastic. They loved making their video and I am not aware of any real down sides to his experience.

- I really liked how excited he was and how well it went for his 1st time.



- I had a great time with my Grandchild.

- Allowed him to gain friendships that are lasting outside of camp. He also felt closer in his relationship to God when he got home.

- It has a positive impact with the opportunity to experience God in a whole new way away from home and our regular church experiences.

- I know for a fact that it's changed my daughter's life!



- I think it helped strengthen his feelings about his church, youth group and how he wants to interact with his peers.

## Straight From the Campers' Mouths

- Amazing and super fun!

- My best experience was the canoe overnight on the island.



- The best camp I've ever gone to would definitely go again next year.

- AMAZING!!! I LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT God and it really changed my life!



- Fun, exciting, awesome.

- The Best

- It was a fantastic way to connect with people and with God.

- My three favorite things about camp were the site, the little traditions and Quest.

- 1. worship & music 2. getting to be with my friends for a week 3. and just having a blast



- I learned a ton about working together, we are all equal under God's eye...make new friends.



- I learned how to accept people for who they are.

- I learned how to love like Jesus has loved

me, to be respectful, fun, kind, nice and everything in between!

- I learned how to recognize God in my life and how to make true friends.





## “What’s Happening With Our Ministry?”

By Conference Retreat & Camping Ministry Director, Rocky Wilson



When Sarah asked, I welcomed the opportunity to share with you a little of “what’s happening in retreats & camping”! In case you haven’t realized yet, we are in a time of transition. It is not the kind of transition that most folks would notice, at least initially. But the Conference and Site leadership who care for this ministry and our sites, are working hard to make our future better.

Part of what is changing is how we function as a structure or system. I was hired (actually re-hired) in September of 2009 to be the Conference Director of Retreats & Camping. This is a different job than the one I held for the previous 18 years. This first year has been one of transition and change. A second major part is that while we work to make changes for this year and next; we are also working to develop a long-range plan we like to call a Ministry Plan. This Ministry Plan would set a future direction that would move us into and through the next 5-10 years as an overall ministry called “Camp Minnesota”.

What does this mean for you, the loyal supporters and “customers” of this ministry? What does this mean for Decision Hills? The answers are coming, slower than many of us would like, but they will come. And I am hoping that each of you would be a part of helping to discover some of these answers. I will tell you how in a minute.

We are working in all aspects of this ministry, looking for ways to improve our facilities, to maintain and improve our programs, to more effectively operate our sites, to provide more professional staff, to market more effectively, and to provide what both

our leaders and retreaters/campers are looking for. As a tool of the church we want to grow! As a ministry, we now have the opportunity to come together and work to provide the kind of facilities, programs, and services that would be well-known around this region. In some areas we are very close and in other areas there is work to do.

### In Program

We are looking to offer more opportunities for adults as the “Boomers” find more time and interest, for families as they seek opportunities for vacation-like times “together”, and to develop a youth program that will draw them into the church rather than into other areas.

### In Marketing

We want to strengthen our connection within the UMC, seeking to “share with” Pastors & group leaders the opportunities available. We want to build ministry relationships where together we can impact lives. We want to reach out beyond the church into the general public to invite folks to experience our facilities, our programs, our people, and hopefully at some point - our church!

### In Fund-Development

We are working to maintain the positive relationships we now have with our stakeholders while looking at ways we can provide better services and more clarity around the impact we are making and how people can make a difference in this world.

### In Facilities

We are seeking ways to offer what you want to make you think of us first when looking for that place to go. We are looking for facilities that will

support a truly dynamic youth program. More private rooms, more and improved meeting space, more program opportunities for your group, and..... (Here’s a place where you can add your thoughts)

### In Finance

We are looking at more effective accounting practices to allow our staff time elsewhere in their work and ministry. We are seeking to be financially sustainable and better able to utilize the support of our donors for future development.

In closing, I would like to hear from you. Share some of your dreams for our retreats and camping ministry, for the ministry at Decision Hills, or what you would like to see within the new Camp Minnesota system. You can email to this address: [Camps@campminnesota.org](mailto:Camps@campminnesota.org) . But most importantly please keep both Decision Hills Camp and our overall Camp Minnesota ministry in your prayers!

Thank you for your support in making this all take place,

Rocky Wilson  
Conference Director of Retreats & Camping



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## Looking for a Summer Job?

Positions at each of our six United Methodist summer camps will be opening in the coming months. Program counseling positions at DHC, Star Lake, Ko-Wa-Kan, Northern Pines, Koronis and Kingswood will be all be available. Watch for postings at [www.campminnesota.com](http://www.campminnesota.com) and the DHC website front page.



In addition to seeking counselors, DHC will be looking for part-time support positions of housekeepers, kitchen help, lifeguards and groundskeepers. Applications for support positions and counselors may be found on the homepage of Decision Hills Camp at

[www.decisionhills.org](http://www.decisionhills.org)



## United Methodist Camp Sites

E-mail: [camps@campminnesota.org](mailto:camps@campminnesota.org)

### Decision Hills

12720 51st Street NE  
Spicer, MN 56288  
(320) 796-5510  
[terry@decisionhills.org](mailto:terry@decisionhills.org)  
[sarah@decisionhills.org](mailto:sarah@decisionhills.org)

### Kingswood

7301 Kingswood Road  
Mound, MN 55364  
(952) 472-3586  
[kingswood@campminnesota.org](mailto:kingswood@campminnesota.org)

### Ko-Wa-Kan

122 W. Franklin, Ste. 400  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
Location: Ely, MN  
(212) 230-2267 year round  
[kowakan@campminnesota.org](mailto:kowakan@campminnesota.org)

### Koronis Ministries

15752 County Road 181  
Paynesville, MN 56362  
(320) 243-4544  
[lkag@campminnesota.org](mailto:lkag@campminnesota.org)

### Northern Pines

20033 County Road 1  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
(218) 732-4713

### Star Lake

122 W. Franklin, Ste. 400  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
Location: Ely, MN  
(212) 230-2267 year round  
[starlake@campminnesota.org](mailto:starlake@campminnesota.org)