

Northern Frontier Update

July, 18, 2010

It was a great second camper week. Below are updates of current information and then a couple “word pictures” of camp.

On Monday night, Floyd Green, one of our adult volunteer counselors spoke at Battalion campfire. He challenged the guys to live for Christ. Chris Studley, our Battalion Program Director, reported that about twenty campers stayed after to be counseled about pursuing a deeper life in Christ.

Tuesday night, the Core Training campers put on the whole campfire except for speaking. These guys got the Battalion campers singing so well that one would have thought it could be heard in Indian Lake! It was terrific! The energy of the Core guys was fantastic -- future staff members for sure. After campfire I watched three counselors immediately move to sit with each of the three campers who stayed after to talk. Northern Frontier is a place where young men meet Christ – and campfire is often the time when it happens.

On Friday night at Stockade campfire, Charlie Baker told the story “The Richest Man In The Valley.” Should you not know it, this story focuses on the difference between what things man considers to be “riches” and what things God considers to be “riches.” It makes its point well. I like to imagine what the cabin devotions were like that evening.

On Tuesday, we had our tri-annual reaccreditation visit from the American Camp Association (ACA). We are not permitted to publish our score, and this e-mail now goes out to several hundred people – so let me phrase it this way: Northern Frontier was scored on 240 separate items, and “we could not have done better.” So ... according to ACA, the recognized, regulatory agency for camping in the USA, you have associated yourself with an excellent camp! We’re happy about that and continually work hard to keep Northern Frontier’s ministry and operation at top level.

The Explorer Trip had a wonderful time hiking, rock climbing and kayaking. They returned on Friday to tell of their adventures.

The first session of Core Training ended on Saturday with the whole group gathering on the hearth in the Dining Hall after breakfast as their leaders explained some of the testing and growth those guys went through the past two weeks. (Great program!) They also challenged the Battalion campers to be part of a future Core Training program to develop their walk with Christ and their character and skills as a man.

The 46ers left today for their “two-week-long conquest” of 23 high peaks. They are all “lovin’ this trip” even before it starts.

The first Father/Son Canoe Trip left yesterday for ‘the Saranacs’ for their three days of God, each other, and the woods and waters of these beautiful Adirondack Mountains. Having been on hiking and water trips from Northern Frontier, and experiencing the

beauty, the peace and the adventure that's "out there," I sometimes feel like I'm writing a travel brochure when I report on these trips. There's nothing like wilderness trips for getting away and for building relationships. Just ask me about my Northern Frontier canoe trip with Tom Commerford and Frank MacArthur many (many!) years ago!

Numbers of registrations have increased a bit, but, as of the latest registration report (last Wednesday) we are still behind last year's numbers by over 30 at the corresponding time. Registrations continue to come in – as do scholarship requests. If Northern Frontier had input to the polls that determine whether the current recession is better or worse, we would say worse. Families are not taking advantage of Northern Frontier's Father/Son programs in the same numbers that they did even last year. Whether the reason is a lost job, fear of losing a job, or simply financial frugality in a time of recession, the result is the same – Northern Frontier's Father/Son program numbers are down from last year. So – unlike most years, we still have room in all Father/Son Camp sessions and would love to have you and/or anyone you know sign up for them. Please pass the word.

Concerning scholarships: three inner city groups that will require scholarship help (over 15 boys total) are yet to come to camp this summer. Folks have responded generously to the scholarship fund this year, but, because of increased scholarship requests, we are down to \$0.00 in Northern Frontier's scholarship fund - and we have requests pending. If you or someone you know can help with a gift for scholarships, it will mean a boy will be at camp who otherwise would not be. We're asking God to provide the means to allow these boys to come.

A couple word pictures from last week:

It rained for a few hours on Friday, so the Stockade played "sock hockey" in the Dining Hall. Picture the face of a boy, nine or ten years old, immediately after scoring a goal as his teammates and the Stockade counselors cheered loudly for him. His smile covered his whole face, and his eyes were filled with delight at his success. Every boy (every child) should experience that – and when I see it, it makes me smile. Northern Frontier provides such a supportive atmosphere that this experience is not a rare event.

Some of you know I like Norman Rockwell paintings. Many of the pictures I take at camp remind me of his work - the expressions on the faces - the postures of the people - the situations that boys find themselves in (and relish) at camp. For example: Sneakered feet in a puddle, crouched to spring, eyes fixed on his target as he and his cabin mates catch a frog. The expression on his face as his body is in free-fall off the thirteen-foot diving platform. Jumping with his dad on the water trampoline. Laughing at his dad when dad falls off the aqua log. The look of terrified pleasure when dad "launches him from the blob." The boy who has hooked a fish. Three boys in a rowboat. A camper and counselor leaning off the side of a sailboat in a stiff wind. A smiling boy admiring his target as he walks from riflery. The upturned faces, hands on brows shielding their eyes from the sun as they look skyward at their just-launched model rockets. The gleeful faces of Stockaders singing fun songs. The boy carrying his craft shop project to the bus for the trip home. All of these happened here last week. They happen here every week. And

guess what ... Christ is in the center of every bit of it. “Wholesome” fun, relationships built, Christ preached (through lives and in words), the Holy Spirit working, lives changed. Thank you for being a part of Northern Frontier. I hope you recognize the power God grants this ministry – and I wish you could be here to see these “living pictures” with me. Norman Rockwell could have had a whole career here! But the original pictures are painted by God ... on the canvas of boys’ lives.

In Christ,

Ralph