



ALLEGANY BOYS CAMP

inspiring change through relationship

May, 2018



COOKTENT

Sweet, spicy wood smoke teases the nostrils. The banging of pots and the rhythmic chop of knife on cutting board joins with the murmur of the breeze through the white pines to create a grand symphony. Bright orange fire licks around the edges of a shiny black cast-iron skillet. Muted voices from a lively conversation in the nearby chuck tent remind the cooks to work quickly. It's a cook-out day at Allegany Boys Camp, and we are learning and changing.

Cooking over a fire is one of the most basic of survival skills. Native Americans used fires and carefully crafted pottery to cook and roast the game they bagged and the plants they harvested. European settlers brought their cast-iron cookware and continued the tradition. America's exploration and settlement was fueled by skilled men and women bending over hot coals and using smoke crusted skillets and Dutch ovens to fry their fish and bake their bread. Even today, cooking over a fire brings a sense of wonder and excitement. Business executives take the evening off to grill a succulent steak and tourists travel from all over the world to taste Texas barbequed brisket or Carolina pulled pork, all smoked by a fire.

The fire-chef is alive and well in Allegany County, thanks to each campsite's cook tent and the fun that happens there. The therapy and education at camp centers around the group camp-

site, and cook tent could be considered the epicenter. Just consider what must happen before a camper can light a fire to cook his meal: With help from his group, he had to write a nutritious menu that is within budget. He consulted the food catalog and possibly a recipe book to plan the meal. The boy and group needed to find a solid hardwood tree and haul it back to campsite, cut it up with a bucksaw, split it with an axe, and stow the wood in cook tent to season. He carefully split pine kindling and shave long curly shavings to start the fire. Only now is he ready to carefully lay a fire and strike a match. With this level of ownership, the meals coming out of cook tent are far more than doggie roasts. Pizza, breads, casseroles, cakes, soups, stews, and grilled meats are carefully prepared.

To a boy caught in a cycle of failure at home and school, cook tent is often where they taste their first success. Imagine the pride and accomplishment of cooking a praise-worthy meal for a hungry group of ten teenagers over an open fire! This would make even a successful grown man feel accomplished. Consider all the skills that are involved: planning, mathematics, writing, buck sawing, wood chopping, fire building, cooking, mixing and measuring, table-setting, clean-up, and presentation. All these combine to make cook tent the center of education at camp and an incredible tool for therapy.

Chad Martin
Education Supervisor



A TIME TO PLANT

Part of the fun of springtime at Allegany Boys Camp is the joy of planting trees on our property. Each spring we plant thousands of seedlings. This year we planted approximately 11,000 new trees. Four different youth groups helped us with the tree planting project and each of our camp groups and staff also pitched in.

The Grace Haven youth group from McConnellsburg, PA, a group of youth from the Weaverland Conference in Manheim, PA, a youth group from Smithson Mennonite Chapel in Preston, MD, and the youth from Followers of Christ Assembly in Salem, OH all helped us with the planting.

An important part of camp is building tents and cutting firewood to facilitate living in campsites. Tent building in four campsites requires harvesting hundreds of pine trees in a given year. Firewood needs also require harvesting hardwoods and other trees for heat and cooking in campsites.

New growths and young trees improve the aesthetics of our 350-acre property. Also, animals, birds, and people's habitats are taken into consideration when planting trees at camp.

And so, with the above purposes in mind, this year we planted some 4,000 loblolly pines, 6,000 white pine, 100 eastern cedar, dozens of fruit trees (apple, pear, and mulberry), and even some buttonbushes which we planted near the pond.

Most of the tree seedlings planted were the diameter of a pencil - very small. So it takes faith and foresight to believe that our tiny seedlings will one day be harvested to assist camp's program. But by God's grace it will happen! A wise man once said that, "The best time to plant trees is 20 years ago!" The second-best time is today.

We sure had a great time planting trees this year and now we get to observe the miracle of growth.



Camping with Jesus... in the woods,
Brian Martin
Director

Camp Kindling ... *small pieces of camp news and needs*

- 🏠 Welcome back to Chief Ben Zimmerman from Goshen, IN! Ben came back to camp to help start and be a chief in the Navigator group.
- 🏠 Chief Douglas Miller transitioned from our maintenance department to being a chief in the Navigator group.
- 🏠 We are excited to announce that we just started our fourth group, the Navigators. Pray for the group and chiefs that they could have a good first few weeks and make progress as a group.
- 🏠 Welcome to Eric Myers from Keedysville, MD! He will be working in our maintenance department.
- 🏠 Hayloft Ice Cream and Soft Pretzels is planning to open on Monday, May 14. We are excited about this new venture! The profits from Hayloft will benefit camp. If you are interested in volunteering at Hayloft, please contact the managers, Merv & Carol Lapp. (610) 441-2717

