



CAMP MASON Message

YMCA Camp Ralph S. Mason

Fall 2011

2011: The Best Summer Ever!

'Best Summer Ever' was our motto for the summer of 2011, and the season lived up to the hype in every way! To start with, the staff was an amazing group of talented, enthusiastic young people from all over the world. Almost 50% of them were returning, the highest number in years! We hit the ground running during staff training, and it all grew from there! From cabin activities to the theme weekends and everything in between, the 2011 Camp Mason staff delivered a safe, fun, and friendship-filled summer to our campers.

New activities included comic book creation, brain games and video-making, Campers flocked to these choices and created some amazing things along the way! Old favorites continued to be popular as well - the pool was busy throughout a number of very hot days, boating and fishing and nature were filled with enthusiastic campers, riflery and archery continued as popular choices, and the courts and athletic field echoed with the sounds of cheerful competition. Camp is an incredibly lively, special place when it's filled with kids and counselors - 2011 was a summer to remember, for sure!

It's been gratifying to see our summer program continue to develop over the last several years. Both staff and camper families are responding to our efforts to provide creative, thoughtful, engaging programs in our beautiful setting in the Water Gap. Additionally, watching campers and staff members make new friends and memories reminds us all that the work we do here changes lives. More and more families are bringing siblings, friends, and neighbors to Camp Mason - we hope to see you here in 2012. Which will be, by the way, **the best summer ever!**



YMCA Camp Ralph S. Mason - The Mason Message

The **Mason Message** is published twice a year by YMCA Camp Ralph S. Mason to share news and events with our camp families, alumni, staff, volunteers, neighbors, supporters and all who believe in and share our YMCA youth development mission!



Women's Wellness Weekend

A small but enthusiastic group of participants took part in our very first Women's Wellness Weekend at camp. Over the October 14-16 weekend, they hiked, climbed, painted, enjoyed tasty, nutritious meals and, in general, had a wonderful weekend at Camp Mason.

Some of their evaluations:

I loved that the program was small and intimate!

Amazing, kind, informative staff

All programs were wonderful – they all worked well and were well-paced and fun.

Food service: Wow!

We had a great time. There were enough activities to stay busy and enough opportunities to relax and do "nothing."

We'll be back next year!

Not only do we plan to offer this program again next fall, but we're considering a spring weekend too. Watch our website for program announcements.



MISSION

Through the transforming experience of outdoor camping – rich in bonding friendships, physical activity and fun – YMCA Camp Mason will lead youth, families and community to an awareness of our core traditions: environmental stewardship, spirituality and respect for our fellow man.

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Camp Mason is a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation. All contributions are fully tax deductible and go to program, facilities and scholarships that benefit the children directly.

Camp Mason through all and any of its programs serves all children and families on a first-come, first-serve basis, without regard to race, religion, sex, national origin, economic situation or physical challenge. Families in need of financial assistance should contact the camp office for help and information.

New and Improved Zipline!

In early October a routine inspection of our high ropes course resulted in the determination that the tree at the top end (the launching tree) of the element was deteriorating and no longer safe. Given the popularity of our zipline, we knew that quick action was needed to ensure that there would be a replacement for the majority of our fall schools and groups.

We called upon Adventure Network of Chalfont, PA (our ropes course builder and inspection service) to put in the new zipline.

In less than one day they completed the project and gave us a zipline that's 50 feet longer (and perhaps 15 feet higher at the top end) than the old one. It all adds up to more than 400 feet of flying through mid-air!

When will **you** give our new zipline a go?



Camp Mason Board & Staff Support the Annual Fund

The Camp Mason Annual Fund provides support for the camp in two primary ways. Most importantly, it provides camperships (financial assistance) to families that could not otherwise afford to send their children to camp. During the 2011 summer, more than **80 kids** enjoyed a Camp Mason experience with some degree of campership assistance. Additionally, the annual fund supports general camp operations and allows us to acquire new equipment for all our programs.

We're pleased to announce that the eleven-member Camp Mason Board of Trustees has pledged more than **\$34,000** to the 2011 Annual Fund. This represents more than 28% of our goal of \$120,000. The board – many of whom are past campers and staff members themselves – knows just how important a camp experience can be for a child. We're grateful for their generous support as well as for their many other gifts of time and talent.

We're equally pleased to share that the Camp Mason summer staff has also supported our annual fund. During the 2011 camp season our staff was invited to give to the annual fund and they responded to the tune of more than \$1,200! Fifty-eight individuals – many of whom are college or high school students – made a gift. Their generosity and thoughtfulness is appreciated. But, of course, who better knows the value of a Camp Mason experience than the hard-working young people who make it possible!

You too can support the Camp Mason 2011 Annual Fund. Visit our website and click on the "Donate Now" button to make a tax-deductible gift.

Of Power Outages and Lost Revenue

We've experienced more than our share of challenges this fall – challenges that have had a significant impact on our operations and bottom line.

In late August Hurricane Irene brought torrential rains and widespread power outages to the northeast. Our location in sparsely-populated Warren County resulted in our being at the end of the line for restoration of service. We experienced **eight days** without electricity, which caused us to cancel Labor Day Family Camp and the visits of seven school groups.

On October 29th an early snowstorm dropped almost a foot of wet, heavy snow on Camp Mason. Once again, large areas of the northeast were affected and – just as in the earlier outage – we were among the last communities to have electric service restored. This black-out period of **seven days** caused the cancellation of three more school groups as well as our Alumni Reunion & Work Weekend.

All told, Camp Mason has lost more than \$85,000 in revenue from the groups that we could not serve, as well as incurring another \$8,000 in property damage. We're currently working with our insurance company on a number of claims and it is hoped that we will recoup at least 50% of our losses. Regardless of the final amount of insurance proceeds, our 2011 operations and finances have been drastically affected by these two events.

We'll survive – we always do. But now – more than ever – we need the generous support of the entire Camp Mason community. We ask that our camp families, alumni, vendors, outdoor center guests and other friends consider a gift to the Camp Mason Annual Fund. For more information about ways that you can help, please contact CEO Dave DeLuca at the camp office or by email at dave@campmason.org.

From the President of the Board...

Is there a best season to be at Camp Mason?

Come to Camp Mason in the **FALL** and you'll see the color and beauty of changing autumn leaves. The weather is cooler, making it a great time to hike around the camp or climb up to the fire tower. You can launch a canoe into the lake, and then enjoy a hearty evening meal in the dining hall in front of the roaring fire.

WINTER brings snow for sledding. The frozen lake is perfect for skating. You can cruise through the fields on cross-country skis. Winter hiking may be more challenging, but your vista into the woods is even more dramatic through the leafless trees.

In **SPRING**, new life returns to the forest and fields. Bright red buds on the trees evolve into graceful and green stems and leaves. Fields change from the dormant dusty browns to verdant emeralds and jades. As ice melts and days grow longer, the air warms and the nights still cool. The forest comes to life with sights, sounds, and movements of animals and birds.

Ah, but **SUMMER**... Summer has to be the best. Camp friends, who may not have seen each other since the summer before, are reunited for the ultimate Camp Mason experience: Summer sleepover camp. Fantastic!

And it's not too soon to start planning for the Summer of 2012, Camp Mason's 113th summer season. Don't risk being left out of the best of the best of Camp Mason... Here are a few thoughts to start you being MINDFUL of MASON!

Who would have imagined Camp being temporarily closed due to snow in October??... We survived that once-in-a-hundred year storm and were up and running as soon as JCP&L got the power restored. So put these activities on your calendar!

- Plan a Family Camp weekend this **WINTER**. What a great way to spend quality time together!
- Join alumni, family, and friends for the **SPRING** Work Weekend.
- This **SUMMER**, join all the other lucky campers as they run through the gates for OPENING DAY June 24. Don't be left out! Register now to reserve your bunk at Camp Mason!

Think about what you can do to be part of this great and historical camp. Please give a TAX DEDUCTIBLE donation to our Annual Fund. We're trying to reach a lofty goal to provide Camperships and overall improvement to camp program and facilities. We need your help! Can't make a cash donation this year...here's an idea... Can you give valuable support by lending your expertise to a committee or task force? Or make some THANK YOU calls to other supporters and donors. There are many ways to show how your appreciation and patronage to camp.

On a personal note, I look forward to seeing many, many of you this summer at camp. As Captain of the Racin' for Mason team, I will once again be cycling up to Camp Mason with many other riders in late June. Come join the team...as a rider, supporter, observer, or simply another lover of Camp Mason when we can rally round the flagpole with pride after the ride.



President Tom Mason (right) with siblings Karen and Rip

Why? The Camp Mason Annual Fund

Because at Camp Mason...

you enjoyed your very first s'more around an evening campfire...

your fear of deep water magically turned into a love of swimming...

Grubby the Nature Guy taught you that everything outdoors is beautiful...

you cooked a delicious dinner over a fire after a day of hiking with your friends...

living with people from all over the world taught you that we're not so different, after all...

reveille and taps were the perfect musical bookends to a warm summer day...

looking back, the very best friends you had were summer camp friends...

Because even a small gift can make a big difference!

www.campmason.org/donate-now



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