

Fall 2011 Newsletter



Sky Ranch's Mission is to Facilitate an Encounter with Christ on the Mountaintops

- To unfold the gifts of all participants
- To challenge beyond the comfortable
- To gift our community with diversity
- To be fertile soil for the seeds of faith
- To embrace changing needs
- To preserve our environments
- To build up positive leadership
- To celebrate with inspiration and joy

Board of Directors

- Pastor Meghan Aelabouni - Trinity Lutheran Church, Fort Collins
- Rob Behrens - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Fort Collins
- Pastor Dan Bollman - Rocky Mountain Synod Representative, Denver
- Kevin Dragseth - Bethany Lutheran Church, Cherry Hills Village
- Gene Elder - Zion Lutheran Church, Loveland
- Pastor Ken Gibson - Grace Lutheran Church, Woodstock, IL
- Kim Haguestuen - Spirit of Joy, Fort Collins
- Jeff Kelty - Glory of God Lutheran Church, Wheat Ridge
- Angie McDonald - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Fort Collins
- Pastor Mark Peterson - Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Longmont
- RC Reiman - Ascension Lutheran Church, Cheyenne
- Scott Singdahlsen - Joy Lutheran Church, Parker
- Roberta Wentworth - Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Lakewood
- Mike Williams - Christ Lutheran Church, Highlands Ranch

SKY RANCH LUTHERAN CAMP

FENCE POST

A SUMMER TO CELEBRATE

"It was a summer to celebrate!" nicely summarizes the great summer of ministry that took place at Sky Ranch. Indeed, it was a summer to celebrate—with a fantastic summer staff, a large increase in camper participation, and numerous faith forming moments as we explored our Bible Study: Journey. Everyone who came to Sky Ranch experienced a vibrant community engaged in living out the Gospel and left with a greater sense of and excitement for God's calling in their lives.

Sky Ranch had a 58% increase (from 2010) in camper participation in onsite programs. This included increases at every age level, with the Round Up! (1 - 3 grade) program having 119% more campers and Rendezvous (9 - 12 grades) having an overwhelming 164% more campers. In the end, over 200 more participants came to camp in 2011 than 2010!



Thank you to everyone who came to camp this summer, for helping to share the Gospel and for helping to make the summer such a success. And thank you to the 2011 Summer Staff for giving so much of themselves to make this summer such a great celebration!

THE "LEAVE A TRACE" IMPACT

Anyone who has been to Sky Ranch in the last several years has been able to see many of the noticeable property improvements being made all around camp. Most of these projects would not be possible without the generous support of volunteers participating in Sky Ranch's Leave a Trace program.

The impact made by the Leave a Trace program this summer was tremendous. The Backpack Center, the Nature Center, Schramm Cabin, and the Nurse's Cabin all received major renovations. For more information on each of these projects, turn to pages 5 - 6 of this

newsletter.

A big thanks to everyone who participated in a Leave a Trace project this year, for giving of your time and energy to make such a big difference at Sky Ranch. The impact that you have made will last for years to come.



BRAD ABBOTT - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am so thankful to be part of the vibrant ministry that is Sky Ranch. God has entrusted a vibrant Gospel centered program and 117 acres of mountaintop creation to our care. There is so much to give thanks for. Going into this year, the board and staff identified three goals:

1. Increase camper participation in summer programming
2. Re-establish partnership / ownership with congregations
3. Develop a sustainable comprehensive financial development plan for Sky Ranch

As you read through this newsletter, you can rejoice with us in what we have accomplished this past year:

1. Summer Programming – **Camper participation is up 58% and Day Camp participation is up 188%.**
2. Congregational Partnership – Andy and I have visited 34 congregations this year and I have logged over 24,000 miles on my car visiting pastors, congregations and donors. We have also seen a 40% increase in the number of volunteers investing themselves in Sky Ranch through programs like Leave A Trace (see pgs 4 & 5).
3. Financial Development Plan – With the help of GSB

(Gronlund, Sayther, Brunkow) we have developed and adopted a financial development plan for Sky Ranch.

Yes, we have lots to be thankful for, but we still have a lot of work to do. The staff of Sky Ranch will continue to seek increased participation and expand relationships with current and new congregations. As we move forward toward our 50th anniversary in 2013, our focus is to implement our financial development plan that will sustain this ministry for the next 50 years. The focus of this plan is to

1. Strengthen the “Friends of the Mountain” giving club (see below),
2. Lay the groundwork for a 50th anniversary capital campaign and
3. Establish a planned giving program for Sky Ranch.

For 48 years, Sky Ranch has been instrumental in the faith-formation for thousands of young people, giving them the moral and spiritual compass they need to develop into effective leaders in our world. **Your support is vital in establishing these firm foundations of faith. Please consider becoming a “Friend of the Mountain” today!**

DONORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp exists because of the generous gifts of time, talents and treasures of five decades of camp friends. From all of us, Thank You! Did you know...

- We served 657 campers and staff in summer programs, another 425 youth in summer Day Camp programs in communities around the region, 160 teens in our fall confirmation retreats, 950 participants in other retreats and over 150 volunteers. That’s over 2,350 lives impacted!
- Sky Ranch manages over 117 acres of land including maintaining and caring for 25 buildings and retreat facilities.
- Camper fees cover only 62% of what it really cost to go to camp. Each year campers receive more than \$120,000 in financial assistance to come to camp!

How can we do this? Two words: **We Can’t.** Not without your help! Your gifts toward the “Friends of the Mountain” giving club truly bless the lives of thousands of campers each year. If you haven’t made your gift to Sky Ranch yet this year, consider doing it now. **Thanks for giving the gift of Camp!**



2012 Summer Camp

Registration is open for 2012 summer camp at Sky Ranch. A calendar of programs and pricing can be found on our website, along with links for online registration. Special programs for 2012 include an international service trip to Belize and the Ride With The Ranch Bus Trip to the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering. See the website for more info.



ANDY SPRAIN - ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

After such a great summer—where each and every day the joy of vibrant outdoor ministry was lived out by the campers, guests, and staff—it is hard to know which stories to tell to express how fulfilling it was to be at camp this summer. Whether it is the first-time traveling day camp in Grandby where each youth prayed outloud for the group, or a staff that energetically and creatively explored new ways to share faith with their campers, or the wonderful exuberance with which the celebration of Thursday night's Songfest finished off the week . . . there were so many great moments.

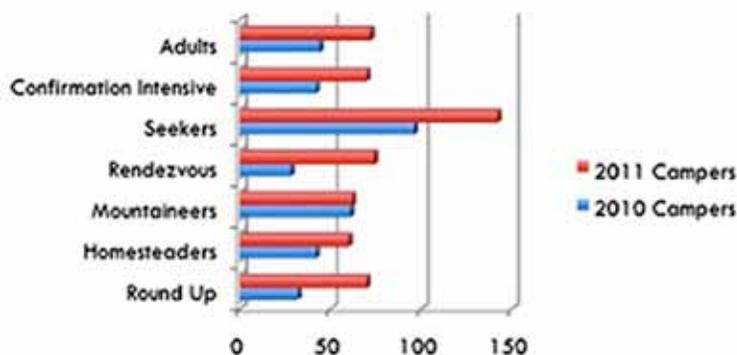
Here are just a few of the highlights from the summer:

- The summer's theme was Journey of Faith. As part of the Bible study, each staff member was encouraged to choose a single faith item that related to part of their faith story. Every time they told their story, they gave out their faith item to the campers. Each camper left with a "faith sack" full of faith items to remind them of the staff's stories.
- The Confirmation Intensive program focused on the Passion Narrative. Our week together included John the Baptist crying out from Beaver Creek, Jesus riding

into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday in a wheelbarrow, and a jubilant resurrection service.

- The leadership staff did a great job of providing regular updates to the Sky Ranch blog, so that even more people were able to be a part of summer camp.
- More people came to camp. A lot more people! we had an increase in campers by an overwhelming 58%. That is 200 more campers of all ages joining together in community, worship, and faith forming fun. It is definitely something worth celebrating!

2010 vs 2011 Camper Comparison



2011 SUMMER STAFF

Every year, one of the most powerful aspects of the Sky Ranch program is the young adults that we hire to be our summer staff. This summer's staff was especially gifted, as experienced by anyone who had the chance to interact with a staff member.

Several factors contributed to the summer staff's success. It was a more experienced staff than recent years, with 14 returning staff and 12 staff having graduated from college. Additionally, it was a very musical staff, with well over half playing a musical instrument and many more talented vocalists. But in general, the most important factor was that this staff loved being with kids and were passionate about sharing their faith with campers and adult guests alike.

Summer Staff, including salaries, training, room and board, represents 25% of the Sky Ranch budget (with individual salaries starting at \$180 per week). Consider supporting the Sky Ranch ministry by sponsoring a member of the staff for a day, a week, or for the entire summer. And keep the summer staff in your prayers, throughout the year.



Summer Quotables

"Seeing God through the eyes of a child is one of those things that you can only experience at camp."

-Kaitlyn Lundeby, Staff Member

ELCA CONGREGATIONS LEA

ZION ADOPTS THE NURSE'S CABIN

Early this spring, several volunteers from Zion Lutheran Church in Loveland, CO came to camp to finish some final touches of a bathroom remodel in the Nurse's Cabin. However, a few final touches turned into a much bigger project. While evaluating the condition of the electrical and heating systems, it was quickly realized that the cabin was in need of much more than just a bathroom re-do.

After several minutes of conversation, the group quickly decided to adopt the Nurse's cabin and to complete the work that needed to be done: renovate the entire cabin!

In the end, the renovation of the Nurse's Cabin was extensive, including the complete demolition of the interior, redesign of layout (creating a larger camper check-in area and three isolation spaces), insulation and drywalling, new electrical and electrical heaters, new windows and interior doors, and installation of new laminant flooring. Additionally, the renovation of the bathroom that began last summer was completed, including new walls, flooring, vanity, toilet, and ceiling ventilation.

Thanks to the hard work of volunteers and the financial support of Zion and St. John Lutheran Church in Bird City, KS, Sky Ranch finally has a proper care facility for our campers and guests.



CLC HIGHLANDS RANCH TACKLES THE NATURE CENTER

Volunteers from Christ Lutheran Church from Highlands Ranches, CO just cannot get enough. Last fall, Christ adopted the Stringfellow cabin, transforming it with a new deck, renovated rooms, and outside drainage. When they arrived at camp this year to continue work on Stringfellow, they decided there wasn't enough work remaining to fully utilize their time and skills. Instead, they decided to adopt an entire new building: the Nature Center.

Currently the Nature Center is being used as a staff meeting area and staff housing. The first step for this project is to renovate the meeting area. Already, volunteers from Christ have installed all new windows and doors, completely replaced all existing electrical, completely replaced the ceiling cross beams, insulated all the walls, and began work on drywalling. Already the transformation is dramatic.

LEAVE A TRACE AT SKY RANCH



OUR SAVIOUR'S REMODELS SCHRAMM

Schramm cabin, which sits on top of the hill above SonDance, has one of the best views at Sky Ranch. As one of the original cabins on the property, it also had some of the most work to be done. Luckily, the men's group from Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, CO was up to the challenge.

This spring, when the men came to camp to scout potential projects, they tramped through the snow to look at Sorrow and Hope, Staff Housing, and Schramm . . . and by far Schramm needed the most attention. Yet the group saw the potential in Schramm and knew they had their work cut out for them.

Over the course of several months and many visits, Schramm

cabin was slowly transformed. Included in their work was installation of new electrical wiring and a new electrical heater, insulation of walls and ceiling, dry walling, installation of wainscoting, new door and windows, new light fixtures and window treatments, painted floor, and a wonderful, 12' x 16' deck out over the hill. And to cap it all off, the cabin is now fully accessible.

The work the men's group did was terrific. They turned a cabin that was bare bones and only used for staff housing during the summer into one of the nicest sleeping facilities on camp. Schramm will now be available for families in the off season and for visiting pastors and other adult sponsors in the summer.



THERE'S STILL WORK TO BE DONE

As you can see, volunteers working with the Leave a Trace program have made a huge difference at Sky Ranch. And that's not all. In addition to these three groups, we have also had volunteers complete work this fall from **Lord of the Valley, Granby, CO; Glory of God, Wheat Ridge, CO; Lutheran Campus Ministry at Colorado State University and Thrivent Front Range Community**—to learn more about these projects, visit the Sky Ranch blog.

There is more work waiting for volunteer hands! We still

have several cabins that are available for adoption, as well as many more camp projects, big or small.

If you are interested in learning more about the Leave a Trace program or available projects, please visit our website, www.SkyRanchColorado.org/LeaveATrace. There you will find a summary of the program and a gallery of projects. A Leave a Trace project is a great fit for a congregation, a youth group, a men's or women's group, or even a family or group of friends. Come, leave your trace!

\$29,138 GIVEN SO FAR IN THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS IN 2011!

That's right an incredible \$29,138 has been directed to Sky Ranch by Thrivent members so far this year. Thank you to all those that have participated!

Are you a Thrivent Financial member? You may be able to designate up to \$2,500 each year to Sky Ranch through the Thrivent Choice program. How do you direct your Choice Dollars to Sky Ranch? It's easy... Call 1-800-thrivent (1-800-847-4836) and state "Thrivent Choice," or visit www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice click, "get started" then choose to give your "Choice Dollars" to "Lutheran Ranches of the Rockies". If you have any questions about the process call our office at 970-493-5258. **Be sure to thank a Thrivent rep!**

ALLISUN PALMA-RUWE SERVES IN MALAYASIA

Anyone who has worked at Sky Ranch before knows that a summer at camp helps prepare you to serve wherever God calls. Allisun Palma-Ruwe is experiencing this first hand as she works with the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission in Malaysia.

As of August, Allisun works and lives at Sekolah Seri Mengasih in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. Seri Mengasih is a school for young people living with disabilities, a whole range of disabilities. She is teaching English to a small class of students. She is spending her days helping the teachers and supervising the students.



In her words, "Throughout the interview process for this program, everything came back to camp; the skills I acquired there, the job description, God's presence in everything. My final email informing me about where I would work even said that my 'experience working at camp is beneficial for this job.' I have been placed here and called by God to be here, like camp. Also like camp, my most important duty is to love every single kid I see, receiving each one as Christ and practicing that grace."

Please keep Allisun in your prayers, as she serves God around the world with the gifts and talents that working at Sky Ranch helped to foster.

ALUMNI CORNER

Article By: Leta Arndt Behrens and Carrie Dirks Amodeo

Sky Ranch staff alumni are among the best connections we have to camp! Just bringing up camp for many former and current staffers can evoke feelings, smells, sights, that take us back to our time in the mountains and our time together. Getting together with one another can happen at camp but around the country as well!

We want to hear from you! Where do you bump into each other or gather? How has camp formed you and influenced you today? And what is going on in your life now?!?!?



Here is one story from this year! A Rocky Mountain High in NYC! A group of former Sky Ranch staff members met up in Manhattan this June for a mini-SRLC reunion. The group, including Dawn Trautman, Mark Frickey, Julyne Derrick, and Carrie Dirks Amodeo, caught up over lunch, discussed current news from camp, and made plans for the upcoming Jubilee All Staff Reunion, scheduled for July 4th weekend, 2013.

We hope you will mark your calendar for the all staff reunion in 2013! And we hope you will get out there and host a mini-SRLC reunion in your area! If you would like to host one in your area contact us at info@skyranchcolorado.org or give us a call at 970-493-5258. We are getting our database up and running and can help you get connected with those in your area!

If you have not updated your contact info OR if you know someone who would like to receive the updates go to our website and update your contact info! www.skyranchcolorado.org/alumni.



SKY RANCH HELPS FULFILL A WISH

Sky Ranch was privileged this summer to take part in granting a wish through the Make A Wish Foundation. Jill Baker (Alumni '02 & '03), her husband Mike, and their son Mason were a part of this summer's week long July family camp. Mason was born with respiratory and sensory complications. It was Jill's hope that Mason would get experience being a kid at camp, enjoying one of the places that meant so much to her growing up.

The week was great. Mason loved getting to run around and play with all the Sky Ranch staff and other kids and families. The staff loved getting Eskimo kisses from Mason. Jill and Mike got a chance to relax (knowing the Mason was in good hands), even getting to spend a night down in Fort Collins. Mason's Make a Wish experience was just another moment from the summer to pause and realize, "This is what Sky Ranch is all about!"

SKY RANCH WISH LIST

Vehicle with reasonable gas usage for staff travel

Mini Van for Traveling Day Camp

Upright freezer for pack out room

4 – 12" Cast Iron Dutch Ovens

Digital SLR Camera for Program Promotion

Heavy Duty Kitchen Hand Mixer

2 - Commercial Grade Vacuums

15 Wood Picnic Tables

20 Twin Mattresses for Christ Lodge

4 Queen Mattresses for Christ Lodge

2 – 16' x 16' Canvas Tents (\$2,000)

Supplies for a New Sauna by river

Wood Chipper (\$420 per day rental fee)

Disc/Frisbee golf "holes"

40' x 80' Maintenance building

BEAVER FLATS TRANSFORMATION

Beaver Flats is the platform tenting area for Sky Ranch. It's location between SonDance and the Outdoor Chapel, right next to the river, has always made it a nice place to spend the night. After a full summer of work, it is now one of the best areas at camp.

The work began with a high school group from Trinity Lutheran Church in Fort Worth, TX. In just one week, the group from Trinity was able to install new entrance steps and trail, remove beetle kill trees and slash, and install benches and an altar for a new worship area. At the end of the week, the group held the first worship campfire at the Trinity Circle worship area.

Throughout the rest of the summer, participants in the Rendezvous program continued the work, including woodchipping the worship area, trimming trees and bushes, creating several new paths to the river where benches will be installed, and the creation of a new cooking and eating

area with seating for 40 and a permanent buffet table to serve meals.

Thanks to everyone who had a hand in the Beaver Flats project. We are excited to explore how we can more fully utilize this space, now that it is looking so great!



GODS BEAUTIFUL CREATION AT SKY RANCH

Enjoy some of the photographs
taken at this year's Digital
Photography Weekend.



Stay up to date with what's going on at camp by reading the Ranch Blog.
Go to our website, the News menu, and Sky Ranch Blog.



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