

Camp WENDAKE

A Place Set Apart
 Www.campwendake.org
 director@campwendake.org

Winter Edition

November 2006



Another Great Year!!!

Director's Message

Thank you for your presence at Camp in August and your unique contribution to making this another wonderful experience for everyone.

Your voices, shared experiences, hopes and desires are in our hearts and minds as we continue the exciting work of building for the future.

We are sustained in this behind the scenes work by everything you share with us in that remarkable week. Although our beloved Campsite will soon be blanketed by snow and settled into a muffled winter silence we feel the warmth of sun, sand, laughter and genuine tears as an ongoing close embrace.

We wish you a very peaceful and blessed Christmas season and a bountiful and joy filled New Year.

Kate.

Greeting from Staff Director.

It is hard to believe that 2 months have passed since camp. So much preparation and work and the week just flies by.

The staff was amazing, again, as always, generous, helping, genuine, kind and loving. We bonded early and worked as a team. Again we made it happen.

As I look back on the week I smile to myself remembering these highlights:

Lise in her country straw hat
 Campfire entertainment by Greg and Pam

Spinners on Sylvia

Prizes given out by Pink Lady

Vincent dancing

Nellie Sinatra

Guitar players: Lindsay, Elise, Pam Mike, Johan

Brother Mark's laugh

Wayne's juggling act

Mistress of Ceremonies Mike

Shelley's limited wardrobe

Kitchen Queens dancing while they worked

Hot wholesome food

Ray and Joanne

Karen speaking Canadian – eh?

Merle's rock

Laughs, tears and precious moments

We will hold our memories close till next summer.

Many thanks to all staff who so graciously contributed their time and talent to make this camp work. Wendake happens because of you. Heartfelt gratitude

Blessings

Lynne

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Testimonials (Cont.)</i> | 2 |
| <i>From the Nurses</i> | 3 |
| <i>Confidentiality</i> | 3 |
| <i>Reunion Notice</i> | 3 |
| <i>Nellie's Message</i> | 4 |
| <i>Walk For Life</i> | 4 |
| <i>World Connections</i> | 4 |

Testimonials

I was crying; I was dying; I thought I will die alone; now I know that there is somebody who will hold my hand when God takes away my last breath.

Christine

Camp Wendake was a great experience.

Francisco

I met new friends at Camp Wendake

Time went so fast-we wanted to stay.

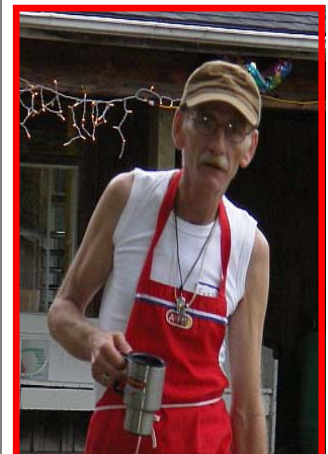
We had to go home

But know we'll now never be alone

As we remember our time at Camp Wendake.

Debe

Cabin Leader.





“My life has been enriched and changed in so many ways because of my experience at Camp; I suspect even in ways I am yet to discover.”



Testimonials (Continued)

When I arrived at Camp I had brought along everything on the checklist; sleeping bag, sun block, a variety of clothes, and of course my meds. And while all of these things obviously made my stay at Camp more comfortable, no list, no set of instructions, in short nothing could have prepared me for my experience at Camp Wendake. I say this because even now, having had months to reflect, I'm still a little hard pressed to fully express what really happened to me while I was there. It's so unusual for me--some might say unprecedented even--to be at such a loss of words. But let me try to give you a glimpse into one man's experience at somewhere that is truly "a place set apart."

I can tell you that I discovered almost immediately upon arriving at Camp that a new friend was only ever as far away as the nearest stranger. Imagine that--a place so full of love and support and joy and hope and shared fears and dreams that people are able to come to-

gether so easily and so effortlessly--I'd like to think so *naturally*. I can tell you how wonderful the meals were, but I'm not sure, even now, that I can tell you how grateful--no, how *loved* I felt whenever I glanced towards the volunteers laughing and singing (and sweating!) in the kitchen. I can describe the sound of my paddle dipping in a lake as I pushed a canoe through the water, but again, it's hard for me to convey the joy I felt as I shared the experience with two new friends, two kindred spirits that were along with me for the ride. I can't describe the sunsets; I'll defer to the poets at Camp for that, but I can guarantee that you haven't enjoyed the sight of the sun as it falls below the water until you have done so with new friends, as I have. I can tell you that I had never meditated before arriving at Camp, and not because I had never tried. What I can say is that meditation is now an important, healing and wonderful part of my life every day. This alone is extraordinary. My life is has been enriched and changed in

so many ways because of my experience at Camp; I suspect even in ways I am yet to discover.

I can tell you that I tried to thank anybody that would listen to me. I know I missed people, maybe I missed you. You may have been missed but please know that you were not forgotten. What happened to me--the remarkable experience that I had and shared--was the result of the love, dedication, time, and trust of all of you. Together we created an extraordinary community, and I hope that like me, you were able to bring a piece of it home with you. So thank you. Those two words feel so insufficient, but you should know that I can't remember meaning them more. Ever.

I can tell you that I'm listening to *O Siem* as I write this, and that I'm smiling; I'll be singing even louder next year.

Peter

Hello Camp Wendake;

From the short meetings and chats in 1996 to the first Camp Wendake in 2007. From the first Camp Wendake in 1997 to the tenth Camp Wendake in 2006. What an amazing journey. It doesn't matter whether or not you were a first year camper, a fourth year camper or an oldie (as some of us lucky persons are - and you know who you are), being a group of individuals living with HIV or AIDS at Camp Wendake makes every day at that special place set apart a truly beautiful experience. Forgotten are the media's exposure of HIV-AIDS, seeing people we once thought were friends no longer wanting to be our friend, people on the mean streets in our cities giving 'that' look as we pass each other, family members shunning our existence, professionals only thinking of us as numbers - not people. We are people. Camp Wendake - a place set apart.

I hope everyone who reads this letter will at some point in the next twelve months take a few minutes out of your busy schedule and reflect on those six wonderful days, afternoons, evenings, sunrises and sunsets. Escapism at its best. Lets escape next year. Camp Wendake 2007. Year 11. Who would have thought.

As good as it gets at Camp Wendake all good things must come to an end. At this time, I regret to inform you that I may not be returning next year to Camp Wendake as a camper. I have informed a few staff members that I am interested in being a staff / volunteer member in the kitchen. Yes, it's true. A possible moveup to a position as one of those kitchen queens.

Keep Camp Wendake close to your heart everyday.

Keep well

Peace

Namaste



From The Nurses

Greetings everyone from Club Meds and the nursing staff-Jill, Norm, Andre, and Pam. We had a magical tenth year. It is hard to put into words the dedication that each and every staff member brings with them. Two special situations stand out for me. I feel so blessed to be part of an organization that could reach out and encourage a camper to stay, in spite of the fact that he so desperately

wanted to leave. This same camper was reluctant to leave after camp was over and came out to encourage the walkers during the AIDS Walk. The other situation that strongly affected me was when another camper found a rock with a natural design that resembled the AIDS Ribbon. He found it one evening while strolling on the beach. He was so proud to show everyone and indeed it

represented a 'miracle' in most people's eyes. These special occasions occur every day routinely and we are drawn into a sacred relationship that exists between campers and staff. Trust everyone has adjusted after camp and is treasuring memories from the summer and making plans to return for our 11th year.



Confidentiality

Camp Wendake would like to remind everyone of the "Respecting the safety and rights of fellow participants and the larger camp community" clause enshrined in our staff and camper community contract and expectations. We all sign this as a condition of acceptance to camp.

We would like to remind you that maintaining our community members safety is a year

round commitment. It includes issues around confidentiality re: participation. Everyone needs to be aware of how personal actions may be compromising that.

Camp Wendake has as its official policy re: communications a strict condition of only using images or statements with a written consent attached. We are careful to limit internal communication on a

"need to know" basis. We are establishing guidelines with regard to authorization to represent Camp Wendake in the Public domain.

We would like to point out that we do not carry responsibility for images and statements relating to Camp Wendake posted on personal sites or in personal correspondence.

Check the website for coming events. Please send questions or concerns regarding the website to webmaster@campwendake.org.

Reunion Notice

Please be aware that Camp Wendake has discontinued its official Annual Reunion.

Our energy will now be focused on creating a vehicle for an alternative way of communi-

cation for campers and staff. This will be a Web based Message Board.

If you have any suggestions/comments re the Message Board please contact our

Webmaster John Jones and Registrar Paul McCarty Johnston. They are coordinating this effort.





Winter Edition

And you thought Janet Jackson had a wardrobe malfunction. HA! They don't make wigs and t*** like they use to. Yes , it's Nellie Sinatra here. Either I'll have to add some more MICHELIN around the waistline or buy stock in REITMANS petites to keep me in place on stage entertaining the troops at Camp Wendakes talent night. Another successful year for one of the highlights of that week. I have to applaud all those who went on stage and gave a great show. Thank you for your time and assistance. Hope to see you back next year. I hope to be back myself , flying wigs and all. Well , not ' all ' ! lol

Keep walking in your boots until next year and hold your head up high. Be proud to say I was a part of Camp Wendake Year 10!!!!

x's and ohhhh's <g>

Nellie



Camp Wendake Benefits from 2006 Walk for Life!!

The 2006 Walk for Life held in London on September 24th, brought together for the first time, the three service organizations in our community that serve individuals affected by HIV/AIDS! Camp Wendake, the John Gordon Home, and the AIDS Committee of London joined forces in this year's annual AIDS Walk, breaking record numbers with over \$40,000 in donations which will be split between the three organizations. The "Wendake Waddlers" had an amazing debut showing this year, bringing in over \$6000 in pledges ourselves. We were outmatched only by the "Memory Walkers" who surpassed everyone with an impressive amount of over \$12,000. A big thank you to everyone who came out and participated, as well as to those who sponsored our walkers!

Wendake Connected to the World's HIV/AIDS Community

Those of us who are part of the Wendake community often are not aware that some of our members are also working to support others throughout the world --

One of our staff has a major involvement with a project in Africa, another with an orphanage in Africa, and a large number of organizing staff are involved with the global AIDS initiative through the Primates World Development and Relief. The larger community is often not aware that we are thinking, feeling and acting, both locally and globally. This was more than evident by the attendance of Wendake people at the AIDS conference this summer.

For the rest of us, we have an opportunity

to show our support beyond our local efforts and to participate in the global conversation about HIV/AIDS, stimulated by Stephen Lewis' book, Race Against Time. On February 7, 2007, London Reads will be hosting a discussion of the book, led by a former Wendake Staff Paris Meilleur and another speaker Bill Bryce of the Thames Valley District School Board. It will be at UCC Centre Spot Lounge, at the University of Western Ontario, by William's Coffee Pub at 12:00 Noon. I would like to invite other Wendake folks, either wearing your Wendake shirts or in your work clothes. This is a small moment when we can show our commitment to the HIV/AIDS issues beyond our "place set apart", as well as to make our presence known

locally. If you are interested in attending, please R.S.V.P to programs@uwo.ca To find out more about this reading series, go to www.londonreads.com.

Please send information about any projects, locally or globally, in which you are involved. You may find others interested in supporting your efforts and you will certainly raise our awareness.

Betsy Reilly, Childrens' Programme.

**And to All,
A very peaceful Christmas,
And a Joyous 2007!!!**