

## **Board of Camping and Retreat Ministries**

Christian Camping has historically played a pivotal role in the development of Christian leadership within our United Methodist tradition. Every year at the retirement session for our clergy leaders we hear from people who came to Christ through the ministry of Christian Camping. Even now, the leaders of these camps have the high privilege and the awesome responsibility of walking our young people into new and deeper relationships with Christ as they gather in the beauty of God's Creation.

While all this is true, it cannot be denied that Camping within our annual conference, like other areas of our shared ministry, has been in decline. But we who serve in this ministry have made the commitment to reverse this trend. This past year more than 250 campers and 50 volunteers passed through our Camping Ministry! There's no question about it. The turnaround has begun. Now is the time for change and forward movement. Now is the time, not only to revive traditional Christian camping, but to step up to the creation of camping experiences that speak to a generation that is formed in a different reality.

New camps imagined by the Board of Retreat and Camping Ministries include an Urban Camp in San Francisco, coordinated with the San Francisco Circuits and their churches. Ground work is being laid for a "camp" which will travel to New York City to participate in our denomination's United Nations Seminar Program. There are also plans for performing arts camps and sports camps located at college campuses and other locations.

In order to step into this new time, the BRCM has spent much of 2009 restructuring and reorganizing in order to move with clarity and nimbleness as it creates new ministries and builds new partnerships across the annual conference and the denomination.

We applaud the hard work of Kelly Newell and appreciate the support and leadership of our Bishop as we move into a new day.

In closing, the BRCM is inviting input, participation and energy from across our Annual Conference. Clergy and Lay, young and old, and across the beautiful span of our diversity we invite and seek spirited and Christ centered leadership.

Come, be among us as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world through Camping and Retreat Ministries.

Schuyler Rhodes, Chair