



Camp Knutson

# ANNUAL

*Report*  
2020

# CAMP MISSION

Camp Knutson is dedicated to nurturing the well-being of persons with identified needs in a setting which celebrates God's love for community and creation.



Camp Knutson provides camping services for individuals with disabilities and medical needs. Camp is open year-round, also hosting retreats, conferences, meetings and trainings September through May.

# ROOTED TOGETHER WITH LOVE



**Jared Griffin**  
Jared.Griffin@lssmn.org

2020 will go down in history in many ways. Here at Camp Knutson we will remember it as a time when we were reminded on a profound level what it means to be human. The pandemic reminded us of our fragility and our resilience. This moment beautifully illustrated how we are all connected and how that connectedness is instrumental in thriving through challenging circumstances.

On the surface, we had a summer without campers on grounds. We also grieved that chance to welcome campers, families, friends and volunteers to this incredible place.

But what truly stands out about 2020, is how – despite a global pandemic and social distancing protocols – this community came together, yet again, to restore hope and ensure Camp Knutson remains strong in the years ahead. We came together to support neighbors in need, and neighbors and friends showed their love for Camp K through generous gifts of time, talent and treasure.

With the support of LSS and Camp Knutson staff and volunteers, we held two highly successful online fundraising events. With support from volunteers, alumni summer staff and Camp K staff, we produced, packaged and shipped more than 22,000 frozen meals to support Minnesota communities experiencing food insecurity. With summer staff, we held two weeks of virtual Camp for one of our camp partners, Camp Discovery. With support from volunteers, Camp staff and alumni summer staff, we began a new fully accessible nature trail, rebuilt the dining hall deck, upgraded the archery range, did shoreline restoration work, kept the gardens and grounds beautiful, and so much more.

We are excited and hopeful about the future. You, our community, helped give us that hope in the outpouring of care you showered on us this summer. Our theme this year was Rooted Together with Love, and all of us at Camp K certainly experienced that firsthand. We look forward to 2021 and are hard at work planning for the summer, knowing we will need to continue to be flexible and resilient even as the pandemic lingers on.

We are most grateful for you. From our hearts to yours – thank you.



**Caitlin Malin**  
Caitlin.Malin@lssmn.org

*Jared Griffin*  
**Jared Griffin**  
Camp Director

*Caitlin Malin*  
**Caitlin Malin**  
Program Director

**"All of us at Camp Knutson feel so loved. We are grateful to have so many friends and neighbors that we can count on. Thank you for being here for us."  
~Jared**



**55**  
Campers participated in virtual camp

**705**  
Hours of time spent building the nature trail

**174**



Items in the Quilt Auction

**2** Families of foxes made camp their home this summer

**2** Semis delivered lumber for the nature trail & dining hall deck

**11** Summer staff helped with virtual camp: 6 onsite, 5 virtually

**50**  
New trees planted



**254**  
Night Under the Stars online bidders



**14**  
Wednesdays volunteers kept our gardens beautiful

**6**  
New neighborhood dogs that Cooper met this summer





## CAMP STAFF RESPONDS TO URGENT COMMUNITY NEED

In May 2020 Camp Knutson staff were facing the reality of a summer without camp when they received an urgent call. Since the start of the pandemic, the LSS Meals team received many requests to increase the number of meals to meet increased need from families affected by the coronavirus. They amped up their production kitchens but couldn't do the work alone. They asked Camp Knutson for help.

"LSS Meals received a specific request from the community that they needed about 160,000 meals in 30 days," said Caitlin Malin, Camp Knutson program director. "We received the call on a Wednesday and were in full production the following Monday."

Camp Knutson leadership team called on the Camp kitchen and housekeeping staff plus alumni summer program staff. Each meal needed to be prepared, individually packaged and frozen. At one point they were making more than 2,000 meals a day.

"Our staff really stepped up to make a difference," said Caitlin. "It is something Camp K team members are good at – coming together for a shared common goal of helping others. We were pleased to be given the opportunity."

They worked while socially distant and wore appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Throughout the process the team stayed healthy and worked efficiently.

**When all was said and done, the Camp Knutson team produced 22,600 meals to feed our Minnesota neighbors in need.**





## QUILT AUCTION

Volunteers hang quilts in preparation for the Quilt Auction Preview. The Camp Knutson Volunteers hosted the 2020 Quilt Auction Live Auction via livestream on August 8.



## ICE TEE OPEN

The February Fundraising golf event is held on the frozen lake and is organized and facilitated by Moonlite Bay Family Restaurant.



## ALUMNI

A couple of alumni summer staff volunteered for grounds work.



## GARDENERS

The gardeners were hard at work every Wednesday morning keeping our flower beds and gardens looking beautiful.

## MOWERS

Our weekly mowers gave us a hand every Friday morning keeping our grass cut.





## BILSKI'S BURGERS

The Bilski family makes a \$1 donation to Camp Knutson for every "Bilski Burger" that sells at Moonlite Bay Restaurant for the year. If last year's number is beat, the donation goes to \$2 for every additional burger.

## DINING HALL DECK

Dennie, Josh and a few alumni summer staff put down new decking, updated the railings and steps.



## NIGHT UNDER THE STARS

Our virtual fundraiser boasted more than 100 donated items, 131 devices tuned in to watch the livestream and 254 bidders.

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*Dan Thorson, far right, as camp staff in the 1970s.*

## HALF CENTURY OF FAITHFUL SERVICE: DAN THORSON

As a college student in the '70s, the three summers Dan Thorson spent at Camp Knutson as a lifeguard and waterfront staff dramatically changed his life. What he experienced at Camp led him to changing his major to deaf education – and to teaching deaf students and youth with emotional challenges for several years. It was also at Camp that he met his beloved wife, Sandi.

Since those early days Dan has financially supported Camp K. After retiring, he and Sandi became active volunteers and recruited others to join them. The Thorsons consistently support Night Under the Stars and also introduce others to Camp through this event.

Each summer after Labor Day, four couples come with the Thorsons to serve as camp counselors for adults with mental health needs – going boating with them, hosting camp fires and just listening to them.

Dan invited members from his church to be actively involved. "We go in early May and help get Camp ready for summer – raking, cleaning up and working on construction projects."

Getting others involved with Camp is Dan's most satisfying contribution. "Seeing people get passionate about Camp is a wonderful blessing," he said.

Celebrating half a century involvement with this extraordinary place, Dan has seen Camp's impact on many individuals. He knows campers experience camp as a place where they are accepted and can just be themselves. He's seen how important it is to volunteers and staff. "People who work there fall in love with it. I've met wonderful people and developed wonderful friendships that I've maintained all these years."

After 50 years, Dan says this of Camp K: "It's in my blood."

*Dan and Sandi Thorson*



## THANK YOU TO OUR ASTOUNDING COMMUNITY!

This year you have all demonstrated your faithfulness to Camp K.

We were delighted and full of deep gratitude for the overwhelming support we experienced with our virtual fundraising events this summer. We had people new to Camp K join us online as well as many returning friends. The financial gifts we've received will help keep us strong through these challenging times and position us well to come back strong when campers can safely return.

Remember the old adage "It takes a village to raise a child?" Our adaptation to that is "It takes a community to support our campers."

That community has included volunteers, donors and friends this year, just as it has in every other year. For you, your gifts of time, talent and treasure – we thank you!







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## CONNECTING CAMPERS THROUGH A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

When Annette picked up her son, Silas, from his second year at Camp Knutson, she said she noticed a "total 180" in his confidence.

Silas started coming to Camp at age 7 with our partner Camp Discovery, a camp for children with chronic skin conditions, shortly after he was diagnosed with a condition that causes loss of skin pigmentation.

The following year, Silas began losing his eyelashes and was diagnosed with a condition that causes hair loss. At camp, he met other children who had also lost their hair, including a girl who decorated her head with a new marker drawing every day.

"He saw another child's self-confidence, embracing herself exactly as she was, and that gave him so much self-confidence," Annette said. "Getting to bond with other kids like him really gave him a new perspective on how to feel about himself."

Silas, now 12 years old, was disappointed to learn that Camp could not take place in Summer 2020 due to COVID-19. Camp leadership and staff shared campers' grief over this loss.

Recognizing how much this experience means to campers, Camp K worked quickly with the American Academy of Dermatology, our Camp Discovery partner, to host a virtual camp.

We hosted 55 campers via Zoom for two hours in the afternoons for two weeks. The Academy provided campers with supplies they would need for activities.

"I heard Silas doing a lot of joking and laughing with his friends during the virtual campfire," Annette said. "There were the familiar songs and some of the same traditions they'd always had. Even if he couldn't be there in person, it really gave him some closeness to camp itself."



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66 Marine North  
Akkerman, Inc.  
Anderson Brothers Construction  
Anytime Fitness, Brainerd/Baxter  
Barstock Liquors  
Bjorn Timeless Portraits  
Border View Lodge  
Brainerd Glass Company  
Bridge of Harmony  
C&C Boatworks  
Cashwise Liquor, Baxter  
Carlson Capital Management Group, Inc  
C'est La Vie Beauty Lounge  
C-n-L Distributing  
Country Works  
Cotton + Birch  
Cragun's Golf Club  
Crosslake ACE Hardware  
Crosslake Community Center  
Crosslake Sheetmetal

D & D Beverage  
Dan Miller Construction  
Deacon's Lodge Golf Club  
Diagio  
Dr. Linda Lewis  
Eide Fox + Fur  
Emily Greens Golf Course  
Emily Meats  
Encompassing Beauty  
Expressions Shoe Center  
Fladeboe Advancement  
Golden Eagle Golf Club  
Glory Hill Studios  
Grand Champion Meats  
Great Furniture Gallery  
Herregan Distributors, Inc.  
JAMF Nation Global Foundation  
Judy's House of Gifts  
Lake Country Crafts and Cones  
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Moonlite Square  
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North Country Plumbing and Heating  
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Northland Drilling, Inc.  
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Riverwood Bank, Crosslake

Rose's Beads  
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Salon Couture  
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Sysco Food Service  
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Wannebo Excavating  
Waste Partners  
Waterfront Services  
Wes Hanson Builders  
Whitefish Area Property Owners Association  
Whitefish Golf Club  
Whitefish Properties  
The Woods Landscaping

## CHURCHES

Aastad Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls  
Bear Creek Lutheran Church  
Women, Grand Meadow  
Bethel Lutheran Church  
Women, Battle Lake  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church,  
Brainerd  
Community of Grace Lutheran  
Church, White Bear Lake  
Crosslake Lutheran Church  
Crosslake Presbyterian Church  
Eidsvold Lutheran Church, Bay City  
First Lutheran Church Women,  
Fergus Falls  
First Lutheran Church, Hector  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church,  
Saint Paul  
Marshall Lutheran Church Women,  
Adams  
Our Savior's - Ten Mile Lake  
Women, Dalton  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
Women, Outing  
Swanburg Church Women, Crosslake  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Brainerd





# DONORS continued

Zion Lutheran Church Women of Amor,  
Battle Lake  
Zion Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids  
Zion Lutheran Church Women,  
Grand Rapids

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Edward R. Bazinet Foundation  
Bergquist Sunshine Fund  
Margaret A. Cargill Foundation  
Children's Minnesota  
Conway Charitable Lead Annuity Trust  
Crosslake Quilters

Crow Wing Soil and Water  
Conservation District  
Down Syndrome Foundation Camp  
Firefighters for Healing  
Friday Morning Coffee Group  
Goodin Company Foundation  
Hardenbergh Foundation  
KJ Living Trust  
LASAC Inc Senior Morning Club  
Carl and Aune Lind Family Foundation  
Margaret Rivers Fund  
MDRT Foundation  
Minnesota Community Foundation

Minnesota Department of  
Natural Resources  
MN Adult and Teen Challenge  
Patch Foundation  
Pepsi Co.  
Prairie Point Quilters  
River Valley Quilters  
Louis and Mary Kay Smith  
Family Foundation  
U.S. Bank Foundation  
\* deceased

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
EXTRAORDINARY SUPPORT  
IN FISCAL YEAR 2020!**

If we have forgotten a name or made  
an incorrect listing, we apologize.  
Please let us know. 651.529.8899

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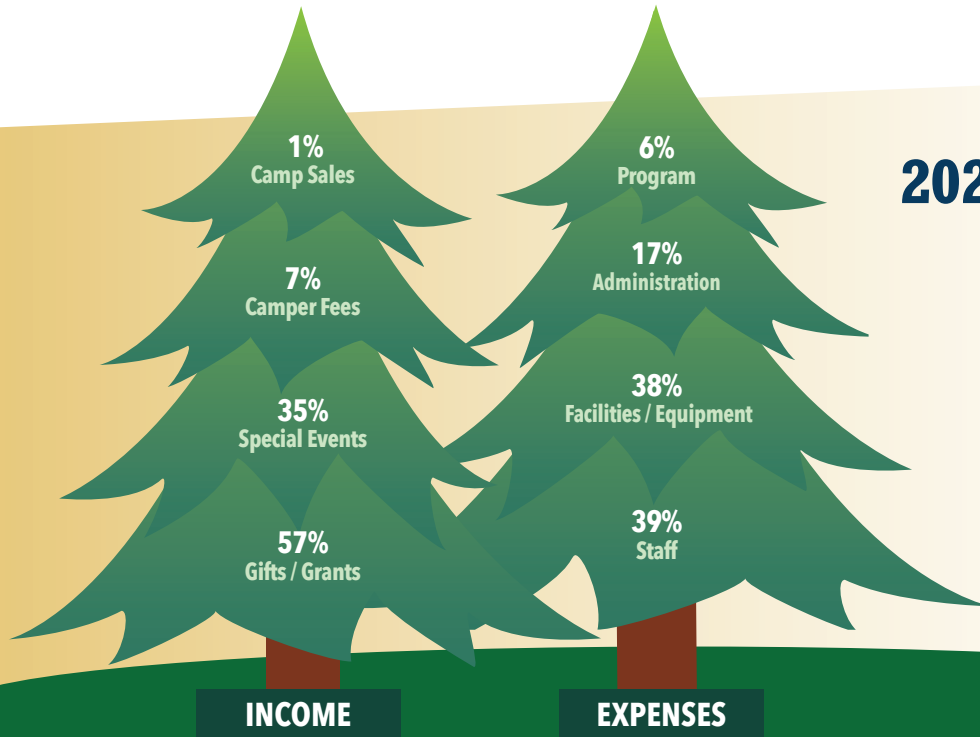
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## 2020 FINANCIALS\*

**\$735,066**  
other gifts and grants

**\$300,372**  
total amount raised by  
community fundraisers

**730**  
number of donors

\*unaudited numbers

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11148 Manhattan Pt. Blvd.  
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P: 218.543.4232

email: [camp.knutson@lssmn.org](mailto:camp.knutson@lssmn.org)



[www.campknutson.org](http://www.campknutson.org)



## CAMP PARTNERS

### Ampersand Families

servicing youth who have recently been adopted and their families

### Camp Benedict

servicing families impacted by HIV/AIDS

### Down Syndrome Camp

servicing youth with Down syndrome

### Camp Odayin

servicing youth with heart disease

### American Academy of Dermatology / Camp Discovery

servicing youth with skin conditions

### Autism Society of Minnesota / Camp Hand in Hand

servicing youth and adults with autism

### Firefighters for Healing / Camp RED

servicing youth who are burn survivors and their families

### Children's Cancer Research Fund / Camp Norden

servicing youth with cancer and their families

### LSS Youth Services

servicing youth experiencing homelessness

### TheShop, Brainerd

servicing youth experiencing homelessness

### Minneapolis Community Group

servicing adults with mental health needs

