



2015

CAMP NOAH



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## 2015 in Review

Camp Noah provides a safe, caring and fun environment where children build resiliency skills within the familiarity of their own communities, using a proven curriculum designed to help children process their disaster and/or trauma experience through creative activities and play.

Camp Noah celebrates every child as special. In this safe and supportive setting, children are encouraged to face their fears, grieve their losses, identify and share their unique gifts and talents, and plan for an amazing future.

### **Mission**

Camp Noah brings hope and healing to communities that have been impacted by disaster.

### **Vision**

Camp Noah will serve disaster-impacted children and families by building resiliency, restoring hope and changing lives.

 Lutheran Social Service  
of Minnesota  
*for changing lives*

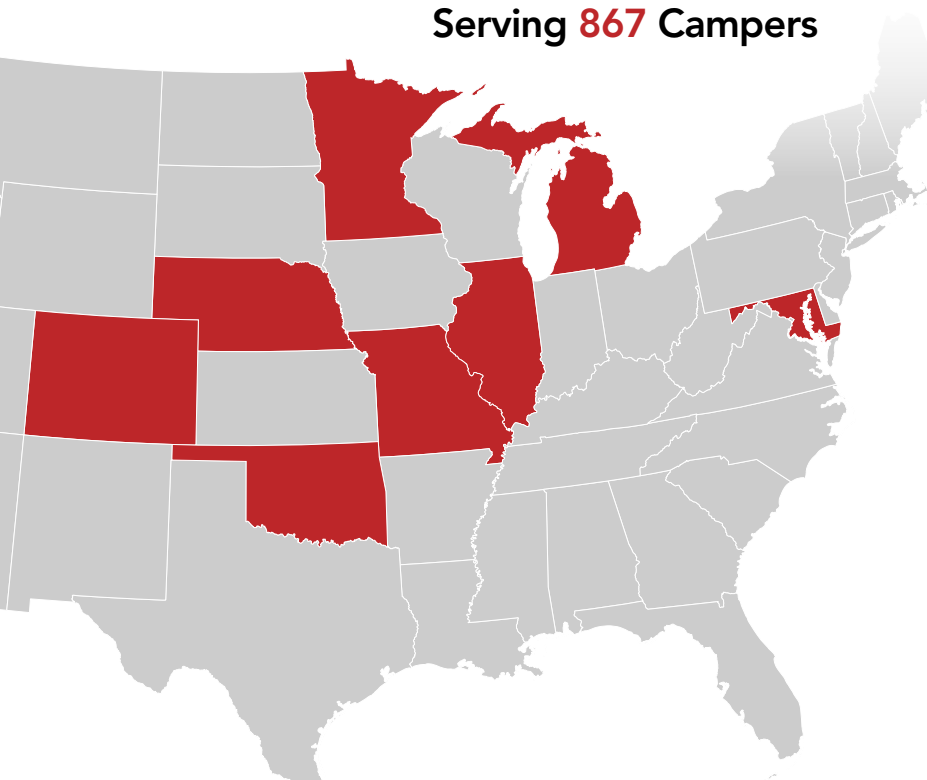
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota serves all people regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability or age.

**“Camp Noah provides a safe place for campers to learn how to face fears and build resiliency all while having fun! The campers leave this camp filled with amazing memories and they come out stronger than when they came in.”**

— Community Member, Duluth, MN

## The Impact

Serving **867** Campers



- 23** Camps
- 8** States
- 23** Teams
- 167** Certified Camp Staff
- 900+** Blankets Donated
- 21** Site Coordinators
- 25** Mental Health Professionals
- 20** Team Leaders
- 13,739** Hours Served
- 162** Local Volunteers
- MANY** Partners
- Hundreds** of Families

## Prepared Children Improve Family Preparedness

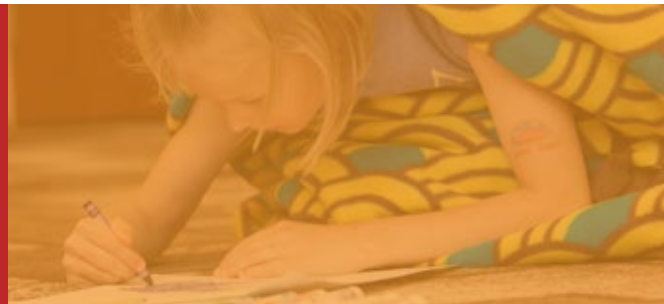
In late 2014, nine-year-old Pa Ka Baw Moo moved from a Karen refugee camp in Thailand to St. Paul, Minnesota, with her family. She joined us at Camp Noah in August. At camp, Pa Ka Baw Moo drew a picture of Thailand and talked about how much she missed home. The other children in the group, some who had been in the U.S. much longer, responded with, "Sometimes we miss it too!" and "So cool that you had a pig!"

Later that day, we talked about tornados, floods, and fires and how to stay safe, and then handed out Preparedness Backpacks for each camper. Pa Ka Baw Moo exclaimed, "We don't have tornados in Minnesota!" Another student agreed, "I'm sure there are no tornados here. That doesn't happen in America!" The biggest surprise for them was that tornados and floods do happen here — and the biggest surprise for us was that the preparedness portion of our curriculum was perhaps the most important topic of the week for these refugee children.

The preparedness conversation continued for the campers. One of the girls decided this information was so important it should be translated, so she made sure the other campers heard the message in Karen and understood. Questions were asked and answers given and all were grateful for the information.

As the week continued to progress, Pa Ka Baw Moo made new friends and had more conversation about missing home and yet enjoying this new adventure. She sang, danced, laughed, and taught us a new game with a really large rubber band chain called "rope."

On Friday, she was sad to see the week end, but she put her "rope" in her Preparedness Backpack (you should have something to play with if you have to go to a shelter!) and left with a smile on her face, new resiliency skills, preparedness tools, and hope.





“When a storm comes, I am  
not scared! Want to know why?  
**Because I am prepared!**”

— Noah’s Wise Words, Day 2



**“When things get tough, I learn a lot  
about who I am and what I’ve got!”**

— Noah’s Wise Words, Day 4



## Resilient Communities Nurture Resilient Children

In 2015, we encountered a church and community whose resilience and strength brilliantly embodied Noah's Wise Words. On November 17, 2013, a deadly tornado swept through Brookport, Illinois. Afterward, many stepped in to serve and rebuild.

Disaster, by definition, overwhelms the resources of a community. Disaster changes the lives of those directly impacted and can change the fabric of a community as well. However, in many places, disaster also brings stronger relationships, new resources and networks, and increased resiliency.

More than a year after the tornado, we met Ms. Tiffany Benberry. Ms. Tiffany and her husband, Pastor Joseph Benberry, serve Metropolis and nearby Brookport at Mt. Horeb Church. Before the disaster, they dreamed of serving children and providing opportunities for all to live in economic stability.

Since the tornado, they have worked tirelessly alongside other local churches and organizations to help all people in the community recover. The Benberrys and Mt. Horeb Church continue to serve children and provide resources and economic opportunities for area families.

When we approached the church about hosting a Camp Noah event, they immediately said, "Yes!" Over the next few months, they jumped into preparing for camp and bringing many people together to make it happen.

Thanks to the efforts of Ms. Tiffany and everyone involved, the children who attended Camp Noah in Metropolis had the opportunity to learn that a disaster — or other challenging experiences in life — gives us a chance to learn about our own strength and the strength of our community.



## Children learned.

- ◆ **99%** of campers surveyed learned two or more resiliency skills during Camp Noah.
- ◆ **97%** of campers said, "I learned that I am somebody special."
- ◆ **90%** of campers said they learned how to stay safe during stormy weather.
- ◆ **92%** of campers said they learned what their gifts and talents are.
- ◆ **96%** of campers said, "I have hopes and dreams for the future."
- ◆ **And—98%** of campers said they had fun at Camp Noah!

In 2015, **100% of parents** reported they would recommend **Camp Noah** to other parents.



## Volunteers grew.

"I wish I had known how much of an impact the kids would make on my life. I think about them often and hope all is well...Not only did I grow close to the children but the team of helpers also became great friends. This entire experience greatly shaped my future and solidified the fact that I want to work with children in my future career."

— **Team member, Detroit, MI**

"I believe I learned from the children as well. It was worth the investment of my time. Very blessed to have been a part of such an important program."

— **Team Member, Norman, OK**

## Communities changed.

"Camp Noah brought members of the community together for a common goal. We made new contacts and friends as a result. In addition, these campers will one day run the community. They will be more resilient and prepared adults because of Camp Noah. They will be ready to handle the 'storms' of life, both literally and figuratively."

— **Site Coordinator, Moore, OK**

"I think this brought a fresh hope to people and it really helped solidify the foundation for the rebuilding of their lives. The emotional parts can take a lot longer than the physical parts."

— **Community stakeholder, Washington, IL**





# CAMP NOAH

## Highlights & Looking Ahead



### 2015 Highlights

- ◆ New populations: children of veterans, refugees
- ◆ Daily Take Homes for families & Noah's Wise Words bracelet sets for campers
- ◆ Online Refresher Course for returning Certified Camp Staff
- ◆ Affirmer of the National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Education
- ◆ COA Accreditation
- ◆ Amazing partners!



**Thank You**  
to everyone who was  
a part of Camp Noah  
in 2015!

## Looking ahead to 2016

- ◆ More new populations
- ◆ New processes for developing Team Leaders & Certified Camp Staff
- ◆ Regional dialogue about children and disasters
- ◆ Supplemental materials for special populations
- ◆ Expanded fundraising strategies

*"It brings tears to my eyes when I think of what Camp Noah did for my daughter. She absolutely loved the camp experience.*

*She was surrounded by such positive influences, in an environment of such tremendous care and support. Plus she gained a great deal of knowledge and comfort with storm preparedness and had fun and made friends along the way. It was a win all the way around!*

*I think it was just what she needed on her journey, where she had experienced so much tragedy in her short life."*

**– Parent, Wayne, NE**

“It was the best camp ever  
in the USA!”

— Alex, Detroit, MI, age 8



Find out more about Camp Noah:

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

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