



Our mission is to empower children by providing a safe place for growth and enrichment in the great outdoors and a respect for the environment.

Camp Alexander Impacts Even More Children and Families

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As summer winds down, Camp Alexander is celebrating another summer with increased enrollment and looking ahead to continued improvements with some new people in key positions.

During the 10 weeks the camp was open 833 campers were able to enjoy the natural setting east of Emporia. The camp averaged 83 campers per week with 218 individual campers served. Many campers enrolled for multiple sessions.

Campers this past summer were exposed to the great outdoors, teamwork opportunities, fun games and adventures. From flag raising with the pledge of allegiance, to a morning hike, various team games, swimming, canoeing, tree forts and gaga, the children remained active all day long. All four water and sports themed weeks along with the final week were full to capacity.

“We were able to continue our enrollment climb thanks to generous donors who helped us provide scholarships to continue to serve all the children of Lyon County,” said Carmen Leeds, Camp Alexander board president.

A total of \$11,570 was awarded to families who might not be able to afford camp. A corporate program partnering with Valu-Net and BLI provided \$3,490.00 in scholarship money to children of those companies’ employees.

“We hope to increase our partnerships with local businesses to broaden our reach to new potential campers,” Leeds said.

Other community support came from donations of watermelons, ice cream, root beer and freezer pops. Volunteers helped make the inaugural Fish Fry Friday a success by cleaning and cooking the fish caught by campers. The camp now has 65 fishing poles, thanks to donations from our local community, with half of those brand new and one former camper who now lives across the country made an online donation specifically to purchase fishing supplies.

Changes are ahead for the camp in the off season.

Corey Bacon, program director left at mid-summer for a new position at Frontier Farm Credit.

“I made a tough decision to make a career change, in hopes to best meet the needs of my family,” Bacon said. “The last two years at Camp Alexander have been a truly humbling experience. The work put in by the community members and the ongoing support from the board and staff, have enabled hundreds of kids to experience the great outdoors. Our community is extremely lucky to have people who are so passionate for the development of our youth.”

Juan Ramirez stepped in as interim program director for the final three weeks of camp and will be program director for the 2017 summer.

Said Ramirez: “I have been a part of Camp Alexander the last two years as counselor and assistant program director. The counselors and the rest of the staff are incredible, and we are all committed to providing a safe and enjoyable experience for all our campers.”

Meanwhile, Carla Fessler, a school counselor for Emporia Public Schools who served as camp director for two years, has decided to keep her summer free for time with her family.

“I have truly enjoyed being a part of watching Camp Alexander grow and flourish over the past two years. I have decided to step down and spend some more time with family and relaxing during the summer months. Leaving the kids and families I have met through camp is very difficult but I hope to spend some time out there next summer with some volunteer projects. I have been completely overwhelmed by the support Camp Alexander has received from our wonderful community.

“During Carla’s tenure, she guided the camp to a thriving outdoor adventure for the children of Lyon County,” said Leeds. “Her connections in town gave birth to the corporate scholarship program and many new initiatives to help fund camp and bring new experiences to the campers. We are so appreciative of all her hard work and wish her the very best with her family in the future.”

The Camp Alexander board already has hired Jen McKay as the new camp director beginning Oct. 1. McKay is a teacher at Village Elementary School in Emporia.

“I had an amazing experience as a camp counselor at Camp Alexander this past summer, and was excited to learn that the Camp Director position opened up,” McKay explained. “I am excited to establish even more positive relationships with businesses in our community who help support Camp Alexander. I also am looking forward to building positive relationships with families, campers, and community members for years to come.”

Next up is work in the off season to plan, raise funds and continue improvements at the camp. A workday is planned for Saturday, Oct. 8.

“We are in need of chainsaws and operators as well as weed eaters and operators to help clear small trees in our lower field and swimming pond area as we make some changes for next summer,” Leeds said.

Anyone interested in helping at the work day can email campalexander66801@yahoo.com.

And watch for more details for the annual Haunted Trail planned for Oct. 21-22 and 28-29.

