



YOU OTTER KNOW

October 2011



NOTES from the CAMP DIRECTOR...I write this from Camp Otter. It is eerily quiet and almost completely shut down for the winter months. **Ryan Middlemiss**, **Jim Holmes**, and I have spent some time up here packing up all of the supplies and closing down all of the buildings. We had a couple of rental groups come here this fall, but now that they are done we can winterize the rest of camp. Sitting here I am able to reflect upon the summer, and I hope that I can recap some of it to you.

This summer we were full seven out of the eleven weeks at Camp Otter and Road Rangers was full seven out of the eight weeks. We were able to serve over 700 campers in both programs. I am extremely thankful to the wonderful staff team and the amazing camper group we had this summer. That, great programming, and nice weather made for a successful summer. It is hard to believe at the beginning of the summer we did not have a

Gaga pit, a Triple Spiders Web, and a Multi Vine. All three midsummer additions changed the culture of camp overnight.

Aside from the Gaga pit, there were many other programmatic highlights. **Kuchar** brought back the ever popular Gold Rush all camp and the Everything Floats contest. We introduced new games, such as O-Ball and Stooftle Pump, which if you remember is the game played with life jackets, noodles, and plastic eggs. On the last week of camp we had our first color war battle. The Dutch Auction came down to the last round, where the green team took it home. Next year we will have a Color War themed week, so if you liked the Dutch Auction, make sure you sign up for that week. We also had a Charlie and the Chocolate Factory themed all camp and an Otter's Got Talent Show. The staff's rendition of Otter's Best Dance Crew featured the Senior Staff team doing a dance to "Summer Nights," the Cabin Staff showing off their dance moves to a medley of songs, and the Waterfront Staff had a stellar dance, too. The annual Otterlympics was won by team Slovenia led by **Brandon Hannon** and **Sarah Mosby**. Two new staff members taking home Otterlympics – what a feat!

Our special guests this year included the Frisbee Guy, a Hypnotist, and a Mad Science Rocket Show. **Davey Alaimo** dazzled us with music and the Granite State Zoo Wildlife Encounters' animal show seemed to be a favorite among the campers and staff. Campers and staff showed a ton of camp spirit by dressing up on Funday Fridays. Some of the most memorable days were "Pirate" day, "Movie Star" day, and "Super Hero" day. Lastly, we had four great overnights throughout the summer and two fabulous Family Nights, one where we inducted **Becky George** into the Camp Otter Hall of Fame.

Road Rangers, too, had an exciting summer. Surf Camp with Cinnamon Rainbows Surf Shop was even better than last year, as was Saddle Up at Ironstone Farms, which featured a horse show at the end of the week for the camper parents. Other trips included Water Country, Liquid Planet, the Aquarium, Coco Key, Sky Zone, the Patriots Place Sports Museum, Fenway Park, and a Fishers Cat game. One of the most popular weeks was Cooking Camp at the Lawrence Technical School. During that week, campers made cookies, pancakes, homemade bread, and much, much more. Lastly, Adventure Camp featured a two night stay at Camp Lawrence, white water rafting in New Hampshire, biking at Waterville Valley, and canoeing and kayaking on the Charles River. Clearly Road Rangers definitely kept busy.

At the end of the summer we gave out some memorable awards. **Kevin Matos** was our Camper of the Year. He was selected by the staff team for his ability to make Camp Otter a better place for all. We held him up to the camp as a great role model, who exemplifies the four core values of the YMCA – caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Every year the staff has an end of the season banquet, and we also give out staff awards. This year your Staff of the Year was **Matt Restivo**, Tuscarora's cabin counselor. He embraced camp life from the second he got to camp. I was honored to present the award to him. Other staff awards included: Rookie of the Year – **Danielle Quinlan**; Unsung Hero – **Andrew Kelleher**; Waterfront Staff of the Year – **Daniel Laverty**; Program Staff of the Year – **Meaghan "Spony" O'Donnell**, and Cabin Staff of the Year – **Ryan Burke**. Your Junior Counselor of the Year was **Ryan Kotowski** and your Counselor in Training of the Year was **Caitlin Durkin**. On top of all of these awards, throughout the summer everyone earned Cabin Awards, Free Choice Awards, and our Progressive Program and Swim Level Awards.

I don't have a whole lot of camper and staff news to report on this newsletter. If you have any updates throughout the year, please email them to me at cs00hoo@mvyymca.org, and I will highlight them in the newsletter. I can, however, report on some of the news. **Aaron Kenneally**, **Alex Becotte**, **Berk Uluoglu**, **Christian Serrano**, **Jack Breen**, **Jason Kenneally**, **Trev Herenda**, and **Tyler Middlemiss** are playing flag football at Merrimack College. Christian, Berk, and also **Rachel Becotte**, **Drew Finimore**, and **Zachariah Richardson** are participating in a Basketball Skills Clinic at the Lawrence YMCA. **Alec Eisenhood** is going to play YBL at the Lawrence YMCA. **Brandon** and **Jared Hannon** are both running Cross Country for their high school team. **Bryan Golden** is working at the Lawrence YMCA. **Danielle Quinlan** is amidst her senior year at Southern New Hampshire University and is continuing to play women's soccer. She recently played at Merrimack College. **Felipe Hernandez** is going to play YBL at the Andover/North Andover YMCA. I ran into him and his family at registration night. **Gabrielle Moreski** is playing Youth Soccer. **Jeff Cardoso** and his wife and daughter welcomed a baby boy into this world! **Jim Quinlan** started his freshman year at Fitchburg State University running Cross Country. **Kuchar** started her first year of grad school at Springfield College. She is busy studying and working, but finds time to visit all of her camp friends. **Matt Restivo** got married after the end of the camp season. **Rachael Utegg** started her freshman year at Austin Prep. **Shannon Delany** is playing soccer at her college and finishing up her last semester. That is all of the news I have for now; again, please send me your news to share. Also if you have pictures from the summer, please share them with me. Maybe your picture will make the 2012 Camp Otter calendar! (Continued on the back...)

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(...Continued from the front) Please remind your parents that Camp Otter and Road Ranger registration starts on January 2, 2012. For the last two year there have been waiting lists upwards of 40 campers for some weeks. Be on the lookout for the registration materials in December. Don't let it get lost in the holiday mail! In addition to Camp Otter, our overnight island camps are registering now. If you are interested in attending overnight camp, please contact our registration office for more information.

As you are diving into your school years, starting new activities and sports, and taking on new challenges, I will leave you with this quote from Joe Paterno, Penn State (my alma mater) Head Football Coach. "Believe deep down in your heart that you're destined to do great things." Have a great fall, Camp Otter.

With Otter Cheer, *Claudia Jim Sobko*

SAVE THE DATES:

Camp Registration Begins:
Monday, January 2, 2012

Camp Otter Opens:
Monday, June 18, 2012

Road Rangers Opens:
Monday, June 25, 2012

