

Director's Report

Winter Meeting

February 17, 2024

Hello Lions,

With 2024 already two months old there are some happenings that I would like to bring you up to date with.

Camp Usage:

In January the camp hosted the annual Lions Leadership Training Session. Also Known as the Grace Clower Leadership Training. If you as a Lion want to learn how to lead and grow. Or you have someone in your club that shows growing interest on becoming a better Lion. This is a great training session to put you in the right direction.

It was a great day to introduce over 20 Lions about the Lions Camp. They had never been here before. I was given the opportunity to express what this camp means to so many people. Young campers and our seasoned campers.

How they, the campers are given a chance to reach and try new goals. Step outside their comfort zones. Build up some self-confidence. Participate with others who come here to have a week of fun and recreation. No expectations, no requirements. Best of all, no classroom activities. Be a kid. No matter your age.

I did express how the camp is in need of all your help. Again, we need to reach out all over Georgia and surrounding states and spread the word about the Lions Camp. There are youth, 6-17 years old that have never been to camp. Let's tell them about ours.

How do we do this? It will take a team effort. One voice at a time. But, not just a one-person voice. Wear your Lions Vest proudly at your local fund-raising events and supply some Lions Camp information with the community. We have plenty of brochures to share just give us a call and we will mail some to you.

Do you need a Lions Camp shirt, sweatshirt, or hat to wear. People will ask, what is Georgia Lions Camp, Inc? We can order you one that will help you start that conversation.

One little funny thing that happened that day was, I always gladly take Lions around and discuss the Lions Camp, its buildings, and the grounds. I try to give a brief explanation of what activities we do in each location. If you've been on one of those tours you have experienced my love to tell everyone about the camp. It gives me a chance to explain what the camp means to so many campers who have come here over the years. Many, who still come in their adult years.

Well, you know we have what is called the limousine cart. Not always dependable. I warned all the riders that we may not make it back. But we would give it a go. Rule is if it breaks down, we (they) may have to either push the cart or walk back. You know it. When I stopped to discuss the Arts and Crafts Building. It refused to move any farther. All riders choose not to push. A short walk back was simpler. - 😊 I can't blame them; I didn't push it either!! At least the tour had almost made full circle around the camp. (By the way, I would not really have asked them to push)!

Moving on to the next event here at the camp. The strategic planning committee met over the weekend of January 21. Committee chair, Larry Griggers once again put together some interesting topics on how can we as a group of Lions work together for one common goal. Make this the best Lions Camp for the Visually Impaired. Promote what we do recreationally for those who want to come to camp.

Challenges were made again about camper attendance. Starting with the youth. Speaking to other civic groups and leaders of your local towns. Marketing on social media. How can we do a better job. What we do is okay. But it definitely needs bringing to today social media opportunities.

Challenges on how to improve the camp's amenities to bring in other organizations that are looking for a place to present their programs. How do we improve what we have? Do we tweak a few things? And the big question. How do we fund these improvements?

Prioritizing all improvements by discussing first off. How will these improvements help our campers?

If you offer Eye screening, does that help someone? Yes. If you offer help with vision in anyway. Does that help someone? Yes.

If you offer a parent a place their child can be themselves. No limitations, no boundaries, learning to make decisions on their own, or just simply overcome some fear. Why wouldn't you want to offer such a place?

Georgia Lions Camp, Inc. Is where it all begins. And it begins with us!!

Camp Usage: cont. Rentals

Rentals are a big part of how we operate here at the camp. When not being used by Lions or Lions affiliated groups. We open the doors to others.

Several Churches have their annual youth retreats here each year. Some have out grown us. We can no longer accommodate their sleeping needs. Space isn't the problem. Not enough beds are where the camp will need some long-term thoughts on how do we fix the issue.

Social media and word of mouth help promote the camp. By promoting the Lions Camp, we can tell everyone we talk to that we have the best facilities around. Clean, Safe, Private, and yes, we have AC and Heat. I have had those questions!

To date we have two new one day events here at the camp. Both are birthday party events. One adult party and one child party. Both say they will be back again and some of their attendees ask about the camp.

This year's rentals should be back on track and hopefully no cancellations this year. Some asks are we busy all year here at the camp? YES! I would say 39 out of 52 weeks something is going on here.

Camp Usage: cont. Fund Raising events

On February 24, 2024 the camp will host its 7th annual Cars and Crafts show. For the past seven years, The Woodbine Lions Club has organized and put on this Car

Show here at the camp. Each year it gets a little larger. Each year it gets a little better. Each year we have increase in public attendance. Last year we had the largest number of children to come. Was it the Blue Train? I don't know, But the train only stopped to unload and reload for four solid hours. Thank goodness Mark Anners was here so I could get a bathroom break!

Each year I invite you to come out and support the camp. Many are beginning to come. Maybe this year you can come. Come and see what we were able to purchase for our Tandem and Recumbent Bike program. Come see where we will be storing these new bikes.

There is a lot going on around here. You need to come visit. Who knows, you may want to help next year.

Summer Camp will be here soon. Why go on vacation to the beach? We have a pool. Why go to the mountains for vacation? We have ant hills- 😊 Our land is flat. You want get tired climbing any hills. Have you ever witnessed the smile on someone's face that reaches way down inside of you and makes you smile yourself? Well, we have that here. Young or old, a smile is a smile. Rewarding and doesn't cost a thing.

Come spend a week here and be part of what this camp is all about. Come to work not just sit around and watch. There is a need for both.

You probably get more than one week a year for vacation. You can go to the mountains in the fall.

Memories:

Over the past 13-1/2 years Gail and I have been honored to serve the Lions Camp and its campers. We began growing on the first day we arrived. Not knowing what was in store for us. Trusting this was where God had led us. Understanding now why he did not give me what I thought I wanted. We learn to trust more each day. If we let him lead!

My family has grown since coming here. Literally Grown. - 😊 Several of our Grandchildren only know about the Georgia Lions Camp as the place where Granna and Papa work. Christmas time with our family here at the camp has created some of our best memories over the past fourteen Christmas'.

Speaking of our family growing. We have grown to have family that are not maybe blood kin but a special kind of family relationship. The campers we have met over the years are part of a family that will always hold a special place in our hearts. We will definitely miss all who have crossed our paths. But rest assured, we will cross paths again someday.

From that first Christmas Camp in 2010 until this last one in 2023. Campers have spoken to our hearts. It's really hard to express how our lives have grown from these relationships.

Summers have been hot and at full speed ahead. Never a dull moment. There are, and always will be challenges. That's what makes Lions Camp special. I just hope that we were able to make a few people smile. I know they have made me smile.

Another kind of family is our family of friends called Lions. You all have made our time here at the Lions Camp a memorable one. Each of you have shown us leadership, friendship and counseling in different ways. I have learned so much over these past years. I will take all the advice you have offered and hope to use it to become a better person. I hope I am a better person today than when we first met.

We may not always take the same road. But we all have to understand, there is only one destination we have set before us. The mission to provide the best camp we can for the campers that love coming here every year. Reaching out to increase attendance. Keeping up as Lions with financial support. You know, money will keep us going. But the best way to support the camp is to stay involved physically. The camp needs to see you here, on site.

As for Gail and I we feel that we have reached the end of this journey and are headed for a new journey that we feel God is leading us to. In this, I guess what our kids say, the last quarter of our lives. (I'm hoping for 35 cents)- 😊

We will be available to reach out and help others where ever help is needed. To minister to and be ministered to. Spend quality time with the kids, grandkids, and now great-grandkids. Spend more time supporting and loving one another. Sitting on the front porch and enjoying what has been created before us.

Yes, we will miss everyone. We will never forget!

Thank you all for allowing us to serve you, the campers, and the Georgia Lions Camp.

This is not the final chapter. Just one of many.

Mike Williams

Camp Director

Of the Best Camp

Georgia Lions Camp, Inc.

Where Vision of any kind is the Brightness of all Tomorrows

KEEP THE CAMP FIRES



BURNING

Do Not let the Flame go out!