



PASSING IT ON



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PILGRIM LODGE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

THE SUMMER ISSUE

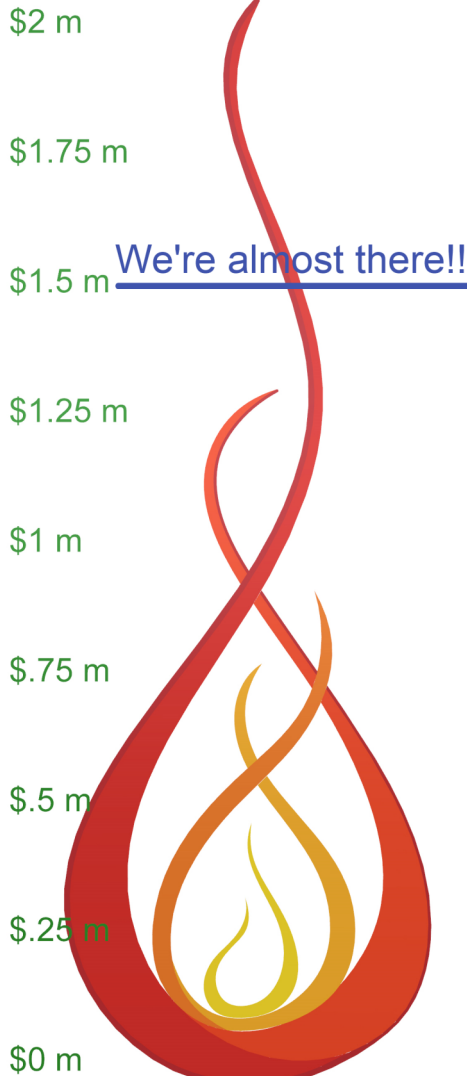
CAMPAIGN REACHES \$1.5 MILLION!!

Campaign Co-chairs Pam Gormley and Herb Oliver announced on June 3 that the Capital Campaign for Pilgrim Lodge has reached \$1,500,000. "We are pleased that the campaign has topped this benchmark on the way to our goal of \$2,000,000 by October, 2014," Pam Gormley commented. She joined with Co-Chair Herb Oliver in celebrating the nearly 200 pledges from churches, foundations and individuals that have been recorded since the beginning of the campaign.

"We still have significant work to do," noted Herb Oliver. "We are hoping for a pledge from every one of the churches in the Maine Conference. It doesn't have to be a big pledge. Every pledge is important! And we are also looking for 250 more individuals to pledge to the campaign. Every pledge counts!!"

The "We Want to Pass It On" Campaign aims to restore and rehabilitate many of the buildings and infrastructure of Pilgrim Lodge while adding a new dining hall and amphitheater. A copy of the plan for the project ("A Plan To Sustain Pilgrim Lodge") is available for anyone wishes to know more detail. Please let Campaign Consultant Peter Heinrichs know of your interest (peheinrichs@gmail.com) and he will send you a copy.

PILGRIM LODGE



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN 2013-14

Grab a glass of iced tea and sit on your back porch or by the lake and read about some of some of the Campaign's donors and a few of PL campers we're doing this for...

Darren Morgan

First Parish Saco UCC

Abbylynn Haskell &

Ben Campbell

Karen Choate

Tom & Holly Hancock

Jena Burnham

Josiah Henderson

Chuck & Rebecca Erb

Quinn Gormley

Dotty-Kay & David Stillman

Eli & Ben DiSalvatore

Laura Barrantes

And how the new PL t-shirts could get us to the campaign goal...read more about Bryan Breault's brilliant idea

DARREN MORGAN

Growing up in York Beach where summers equal a tourist invasion, it's not too hard to believe that Darren Morgan never went to Pilgrim Lodge as a kid. Summer camp wasn't even on his radar, because summers meant work, work, work. It wasn't until Darren entered seminary that he heard about PL and attended a few of the off season camps and opportunities. During seminary, Darren and Mark (then his partner and now his husband) attended Gay Men Together which took place at PL in the spring and in the fall. Darren remembers, "those shoulder seasons were awfully cold, but I was still able to see what a special place it really is. You really do commune with God there. It is phenomenal."



Post-seminary, as the minister for the Brownville Community Church, Darren rallied the kids at church to attend PL. Knowing that church can, at times, feel formal and stuffy, he hoped that kids could come to experience God in a different way, an informal way. "It would be amazing to see them come back from PL and be so exciting and have loved it."

When he became an associate conference minister six years ago was when he actually started spending time on the boardwalk in the summer as a dean of Rainbow Camp, an adult camp for LGBT folks. One of his favorite parts of Rainbow Camp has been walking the labyrinth in the dark. "It's an incredibly moving experience. With the canopy of trees and the moonlight filtering through and the sounds you hear, it is a very spiritually moving experience."

When asked how one goes from having barely any exposure to PL to deaning, Darren connects it to his call to minister. Prior to becoming an associate conference minister, Darren was a bi-vocational minister (i.e. a minister who worked full time at another job) who had no time for anything extra like being a part of PL. After becoming a full time minister for the conference, there was time to be a part of PL and be involved in its ministry, because it was another way to live out his call.

Even though Darren's involvement in PL is shorter than some of the other folks we've profiled, his support is just as strong. Darren's pledge of \$25,000 to the Pilgrim Lodge Capital Campaign demonstrates his belief in PL's ministry and how strongly he supports this ministry within the Maine Conference. "This is just a small way of showing that I believe in this ministry, and I want others to believe in it too. I hope my gift encourages others to dig deep and give as they are able."

FIRST PARISH UCC SACO

"First Parish UCC loves PL" is how Kris Galasyn, the Director of Christian Education at this Saco church described her church's relationship with Pilgrim Lodge. When asked to describe what loving PL (as a church) looked like, Kris said, "When I first got to First Parish in 2004, the camping season had already started. But when the kids came back in September they were all talking about how wonderful PL was. When we got closer to camp time the following year, I noticed that 30-40 people were going - kids, parents, grandparents! You know that recommendation that churches try to send 1 counselor for every 5 campers? We actually do that!" Wow!

Lots of goodwill and good feelings about PL run through the church. "As soon as registration for Senior High opens up, everyone is clicking to go." With \$1,000 support per year from both the Women's Fellowship and Christian Education, every camper - youth or adult - who submits an application gets campership support. Unlike most churches, First Parish has their PL Sunday in September, at the end of the summer, instead of at the beginning since they already have so many people who attend. The fall service is a time of celebration which often includes church members - young campers, teens, grandparents - reflecting on what they got out of their PL experience that summer. When asked why she thinks there is such a well of support for PL, Kris says she's never heard any negative feedback. Everyone has a great time and makes new friends, and the older kids get involved in the State Youth Council so they can see their PL friends a few more times a year.

First Parish encourages young families to take their kids to a Day at Camp where both parents and kids can get the feel of it and have fun besides. From there, they are encouraged to go to Faith Foundations which is only a half week. After having experienced ice cream daily, the chapel, the lake, ice cream, cabin time, and ice cream (did we mention ice cream?), who wouldn't want to go back? "It's a really positive experience for everyone."

Kris believes churches should donate to the PL Capital Campaign because "a pledge to PL is not just a pledge for now, it's a pledge for future generations." She loves the pictures of what PL will look like with the expanded facilities and the ability to extend the camping season into cooler months. "There will be so much more we can do with it when we have more than a couple of months of the year. So many more opportunities. It's a real investment in our future."



ABBYLYNN HASKELL & BEN CAMPBELL

Reverend AbbyLynn Haskell, pastor of the Acton Congregational Church UCC, comes from a long line of PL devotees. Her grandfather, Stan Haskell, was the camp manager, and her grandmother, Ethel, was a dean. Her parents, Ben and Betty Ann Haskell, met at a youth group retreat in Forrester, both served on the permanent staff, and got married at PL and then have continued their service as counselors and deans. Having gone to PL from third grade through high school and then served on staff, as a counselor, and a dean (as has her sister), it comes as no surprise that AbbyLynn decided to support the Pilgrim Lodge Capital Campaign with a three year pledge of \$3,000.

This single mom of two PL campers decided to pledge, because “Pilgrim Lodge is an important part of being together with our family, but you also care about the people you meet there, and even though they are all over the state, they become our family as well. A pledge means we are taking care of the place we love and make special memories.”

A desire to take care of PL runs deep in this family, as you can see, and it isn't lost on the fourth generation of the Haskell family, AbbyLynn's kids Ben and Keenan Campbell. After receiving a letter asking him to pledge, Ben, age 13, thought about it and worked with AbbyLynn to see what he could contribute. Ben started attending PL at age 4 when his grandparents were deans of Grandparents Camp, but his first trip to PL was when he was six days old! While he wanted to give more, they figured out that \$300 over three years was what he could handle between his allowance and money he earns at small jobs. AbbyLynn credits Pilgrim Lodge with being the whole reason she entered the ministry. “People are loved for who they are, and you can see the world for how it is possible to be. PL reaffirms God's love that Jesus came to show us and this strengthens me.” In her role as a pastor, she sees the importance of Pilgrim Lodge among her congregation. “I give because PL is also a huge help in nurturing the children and youth of our congregation. Acton is very proud in having substantially (financially) helped 9 kids from our congregation get to camp this summer.”

For AbbyLynn, Pilgrim Lodge is an “up close and personal way to experience the love of God in ways that are so deep and challenging and intimate that they impact your life and how you are in the rest of the world.” Truer words may have never been said.



SALLY COLEGROVE



Rev. Sally Colegrove, minister of Windham Hill United Church of Christ and Moderator of the Maine Conference, began deaning at Pilgrim Lodge in the summer of 1999 as the dean of the drama camp. Since then, she has been and continues to be the dean of Arts Alive, PL's “Spirit-filled creative community” as described in the PL brochure. A transplant from Connecticut, she deaned an arts week at Silver Lake, Connecticut's summer camp, for 20 years before bringing this art-inspired week to Pilgrim Lodge. She describes Pilgrim Lodge as “a unique gift which goes way beyond what I've seen in several other settings.”

Sally has made a \$5,000 pledge to the PL Capital Campaign and hopes to make a second pledge in the future. When asked why she pledged, she didn't hesitate to give a very thoughtful and thorough response. “I feel very strongly that PL is the future of the UCC in action. Our young people are the most important part of the church, because they represent the church continuing on and continuing to represent what the UCC has been historically - a mainline denomination that includes everyone.” She went on to describe how in a world where churches are competing against sports teams, travel teams, academics, performing arts, and more for time on kids' schedules, a week at PL is “a dedicated period of time and there is a possibility for real in-depth engagement with them.” PL gives us an opportunity to “provide young people with Christian education but also with a feeling of identity and a feeling of ownership of their faith.”

Sally captured the PL worship experience and the positive impact it has in both campers and the local church worship experience. PL “provides us with an opportunity to teach them to lead worship, to help them to enjoy worship, to provide them with several different settings for worship, and to help worship become something they enjoy and that they seek as part of their everyday...not just as something you go to when you have time on a Sunday.”

In case you've never been to PL, over the course of a week, every camper will be part of leading a worship service as part of a group of campers. Campers and counselors lead morning chapel or evening vespers services. Sally has seen that young people in her congregation who have been to Pilgrim Lodge are very comfortable leading Sunday services at Windham Hill and are confident reading scripture, singing, and speaking in front of the congregation. She has no doubt that local churches reap huge benefits from the worship experience, and from the Arts Alive perspective, arts experience that kids get at PL and bring home to their local church. “We're teaching them faith disciplines and the building blocks of theology as well as guiding them towards growth as kind and respectful people.” Truly, can we ask for anything more from a week at summer camp? I think not.

KAREN CHOATE



If you've been to PL anytime since the 1970s, there's a high probability you've run into a Choate. This long line of PL started when Karen attended PL as a 3rd grade camper in 1970 and continues to this day with Karen and her kids. After spending six years as a camper, Karen went on to work on the permanent staff from 1981-1983 doing a mishmash of tasks - running the store, sending and delivering mail, and working in the kitchen. The permanent staff of these days was full of names we still see involved in PL to this day. Besides Karen, Allie Rimkunas, Rocky Ackroyd, and Leslie Swanson were a part of the team.

In the summer of 1984, in addition to counseling for two weeks, she was tapped to dean Senior High camp with fellow staffer Julia Peterson (more commonly known to campers of the day as *Squid*). Karen and Squid's Senior High camp was the first camp to have a slideshow at the end of the week, and it was an actual **slide** show. (Ask your parents about slides if this all sounds prehistoric to you.) Squid spent hours and hours working on it and played music to accompany the carousel of slides, and a new PL tradition was born. During Labor Day Weekend 1985, Karen got engaged to Andy at Pilgrim Lodge! Karen continued to counsel or dean every summer until her first daughter Beka was born in 1989, and just a few short years later, she was back at PL bringing Beka to camp for her first year in 1998. The addition of Ruth and Tom to the Choate family didn't stop Karen from counseling and then deaning, because Karen hasn't missed a summer since 1999. After her first year at PL, Beka continued to return as a camper on both the land and the island and as a staff member from 2008 through 2011. Both Ruth and Tom were campers from the minute they could be, and Ruth started on staff in 2011 and plans on being back this summer -- "God willing and the creek don't rise!" Karen is glad that her kids have found PL to be a place they enjoy going. "I think I would have been very sad if they had said they weren't happy going to PL."

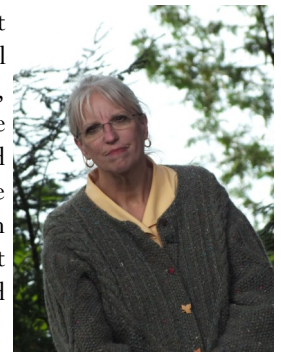
Karen has made a one-time gift of \$1,500 to the PL Capital Campaign and expects to add to it in fits and starts. As she says, "The family bank account is paying for college, so I'm giving from my bank account where birthday money and money from odd jobs accumulates." More often than not, Karen also donates her time. "It is such a fabric of my life that it would seem odd not to be involved." As a teacher, she has the flexibility in the summer to drop what she's doing to head to PL to help cover a gap or fill a space. When asked why she decided to give, Karen replied that PL is "a little spot of magic" and that her gift was to help keep the magic going. "You never know what little kid is going to get that extra spark that turns a bad beginning into a great ending...that takes them from point A to point Z because they were present in this place. You never know where you're going to find those heaven lines and where they'll take you."

TOM & HOLLY HANCOCK



There's a good chance Tom and Holly Hancock may have made the first gift to the PL Capital Campaign...without even realizing it. Several years ago, Tom and Holly made a gift to PL for the boardwalk, specifically to make the chapel handicapped accessible. Since the boardwalk project was not a simple one, it took awhile to get up and running, and Tom and Holly's gift waited in the care of the Conference for that time. Once the Capital Campaign was off and running, Tom and Holly decided to make a substantial pledge, using their original gift

as their first year donation and matching it for four more years. "The plan for the new buildings and structures is so cool," says Holly. "We're building on a success story, like rewarding good behavior."



Why did they decide to make a pledge? "It was and continues to be important...it's pilgrimological," Tom says. (FYI: Tom came up with the word *pilgrimological*.) "I think that for most kids that go to PL, if you ask them 20 years from now to tell you the 5 most important things they did as a kid, PL would be one of them. To have church camp be one of them is pretty good." Tom and Holly's personal PL experiences are radically different. Tom started counseling in the 1990s, and for 20 years or more, he was a dean or a counselor and 1-2 weeks per summer. Although his very first counseling experience was an accident as he got called in at the last minute, "it hit the right chord with the way I see how it should all work." Holly, on the other hand, was a dean twice for the White Mountain Trip Camp, helped build the labyrinth, and participated in a few Jump Start Weekends. She's a ninja with a chainsaw and can make an impressive amount of firewood. Tom echoes what we've heard from many donors. "I love being in the cabins with junior high and high school boys and creating a safe environment for them to talk about God and what God might mean to them. I don't think there's a place anywhere else in the world where they can do that. If they can talk about that out loud and in front of other guys, that is a magical moment to me."

MY STORY: JENA BURNHAM

Six years ago, Pam Burnham asked me if I wanted to be a Pilgrim Lodge camp counselor. I laughed. Intensely introverted, the idea of being "on" 24 hours a day for a week was, well, laughable. A few days later, I said, in passing, to my then boyfriend Ross, "I wonder if I could do it." He told his mother we would both do it. Now she was counting on me, and as my future mother-in-law, I didn't think it wise to back out on her. "You know I don't do the God thing, right?"

"Don't call it 'the God thing' and you'll be fine."

It was terrifying. It was physically and emotionally exhausting. And before the end of Senior High week, I had a list of items I planned to bring the next year. This year will be my sixth as a Senior High counselor. I look forward the entire year to my week at PL. It's a safe and soothing place. People let their guards down, are more fully themselves, and thus create deep and true connections. These bonds are vital for the campers. They are similarly vital for the lucky adults who are let in. My Senior High week restores my faith in humanity. The teenagers I see at PL are the future, and they make it brighter.

I started off at PL not 'doing the God thing.' Each year opened my heart more. My third summer, Dean AbbyLynn Haskell told a story about a wooden people called the Wemmicks (*You Are Special* by Max Lucado). The story changed my life. It broke through a barricade built of hurts and fears, and for the first time in my life, I **heard** God. More than just a brush of the Spirit, it felt like a direct message to me, telling me it's okay to flounder in faith; it's okay to make mistakes, and to have questions. And I had so many questions. Dean AbbyLynn was both patient and enthusiastic in answering. My fourth summer, I shared my wish with my Family Faith Group, and during our group's vespers service, I was baptized. The Blue FFG lined up the steps, and through them, more than a hundred campers, counselors, deans, and staff prayerfully supported me by the laying on of hands during my baptism. I cry tears of joy every time I think back on it.

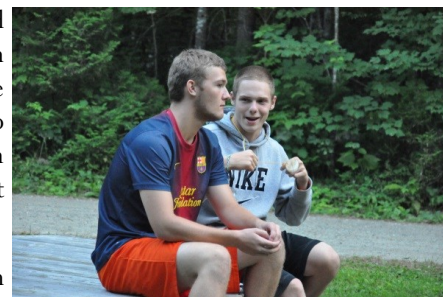
I found God and faith at Pilgrim Lodge. I was married there. I was baptized there. Sacred work is done within us while there. PL has been an absolute blessing in our lives, and my husband and I are so pleased to be able to participate and pass it on. *Jena and Ross Burnham have made a \$1,000 pledge to the PL Capital Campaign.*



JOSIAH HENDERSON

When Josiah Henderson first went to Pilgrim Lodge, he didn't like it. Yet four Island camps, two Senior High camps, and one week as a CIT for a Middler camp later, Josiah confidently explains that PL changes lives. "I was a shy kid in high school. PL helped me come out of my shell, because I knew I wouldn't be judged. I could be me. It was okay to be me." Josiah is just one of the thousands of campers who have passed through Pilgrim Lodge in the past 50 years, and while his experience is special, we are happy to say it's not unique.

Josiah first came to Pilgrim Lodge with his family for Family Camp, and he wasn't to keen on it. He remembers his mom convincing him to try out the island camp the following summer, and he took a chance. "I ended up completely loving it. I loved the whole aspect of tying religion to camping." He remembers having deep conversations with other campers while hanging out and creating bonds with those campers, so that years later, he's still best friends with them. Josiah describes Senior High camp, a boardwalk camp - not one on the island, as totally different from the island camp. But with a friend from the island camp and another from home there as well, he found another PL place that was just as welcoming as the island had been. "It still had that PL feel - growing together with friends and making lifelong friends."



Josiah was the CIT for Best of Both Worlds, the first camp to be split between the New Hampshire and Maine Conferences. It started in the White Mountains at Horton Center and ended on the shores of Lake Cobbosseecontee at Pilgrim Lodge. "I loved getting to know the kids and seeing them grow together and make friends. They had awesome conversations around the themes." The deans of Best of Both Worlds felt they had something special in their CIT. According to Dean Laura Barrantes, "he was great with the campers and a wonderfully calming presence with our rowdy boys in particular. We would often, by sheer chance, observe Josiah making a genius move which redirected some campers away from getting out of control. It was also a pleasure to hear him reading to the campers at night and hearing his counselor come up to us more than once and proclaim "Josiah's a genius! Listen to what he did.""

When asked to describe the importance of Pilgrim Lodge, Josiah tried his best to put the experience into words. "It changes you. Where could you get 110 high school kids together and have them be so accepting? That doesn't happen in high school. It's hard getting people to understand that, because it's hard to believe. You have to experience it to know what it's all about."

CHUCK & REBECCA ERB

The number of times Revs. Chuck & Rebecca Erb have been to Pilgrim Lodge: 2
Pledge to the PL Capital Campaign: \$15,000



As you can imagine, there's more to this story. Despite having only been to Pilgrim Lodge twice, once to pick up one of their grandchildren and once to attend Grandparent Camp, the Erbs have made a significant pledge to the Capital Campaign, allowing them to name two BURPs* (aka Boardwalk User Resting Places), one for each grandchild. More on that later. The Erbs both grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church which eventually merged with the Congregational Christian Churches to form the United Church of Christ. Chuck's family started going to family camp in Dunkirk, NY in 1945, and Rebecca's grandmother had gone to family camp on the shores of Lake Erie. Chuck and Rebecca are the third generation of their families to be "nurtured" at church camp with their children being the fourth and their grandchildren being the fifth. Their church camp roots are deep and wide.

When Chuck and Rebecca arrived at seminary, they compared notes with fellow seminarians and realized that, for many of them, it was their church camp experience which had led them into the church and onto this path. Since their ordinations in 1964 and 1966, Chuck and Rebecca have directed church camps at Living Waters in the Penn West Conference, Dunkirk Conference Grounds and Lisle Conference Center in the New York Conference, their own church family camp in Deering, NH and Wappingers Falls, NY, and at Camp White in the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference. He and Rebecca have directed summer camps, family camps, youth retreats, and confirmation camps. As Chuck said, "we thrived on it." By the time they arrived in Maine in 1998, they weren't interested in that level of involvement any more, but as we know, camp doesn't ever leave your soul, so it's not surprising they got connected to PL through their children and grandchildren. Their son, daughter-in-law, and grandkids (Matthew and Hannah) attend Woodfords Congregational Church in Portland, and Woodfords has an annual family weekend at PL. Matthew and Hannah they have gone to PL every year of their lives in September with Woodfords and have attended as campers since they were old enough.

As you can see, the church camp roots are strong in this family, so now it's easy to understand the Erbs' pledge. They see their pledge as a part of their tithing and call it an act of faithfulness - "from those to whom much has been given, much is expected" Chuck asserts. They decided to give at a level which would allow them to name something in honor of each of their grandchildren - a BURP. Matthew and Hannah were excited about the gift and have been involved in what the plaques on the burps will subtly say - the meanings of their names (Matthew means *Gift of God* and Hannah means *Grace of God*) with their initials below. The Erbs have also assisted the PL Campaign Committee by spearheading outreach to other grandparents of PL campers.

*A note about BURPs

BURP is PL-speak for the sections of the boardwalk that bump out for seating. While the name BURP is as old as the BURPs themselves, in the recent past, a camper figured out that BURP could stand for Boardwalk User Resting Place. It's just another wonderful example of camper ingenuity.

And while the ability to name a BURP makes it fun, the pledge is truly to ensure that PL is there for generations to come. Chuck summed it up nicely saying "we who have been nurtured for five generations by church camping want to make sure it is sustained in the Maine Conference. Pilgrim Lodge is a treasure, a marvelous facility on Lake Cobbosseecontee. Supporting PL makes sure there is a facility for our church constituency. Our greater task is to make sure that there is a constituency to attend PL. This is the challenge of the present church - to insure the vitality of the future church. We're called to nurture the generations that follow us." Amen!

"BUT HONEY, IT'S PL." BY QUINN GORMLEY

I was standing at the base of the chapel looking up at the 80 or so campers assembled for our first chapel service as Mission Middler 2013. It was a week of firsts for me—my first week as a counselor, my first time playing music in front of people in months, and of course, my first week as a woman. I'd gotten the call two weeks earlier from Beth, the week's dean asking if I'd be willing to fill in and counsel a girl's cabin for a week. Surprised by the offer, I asked her if she knew that I was transgendered, and if so, how on earth did she think it was OK for me to supervise teenage girls. All she had to say was "But, honey, it's PL."

And so I stood there in the chapel, wearing a long green dress, listening as Beth preached on New Beginnings. My girls, the lovely ladies of cabin 4, sat in the front row smiling and giggling, fast friends already. All I could think about was how absurd it felt that I was exposing this vulnerable part of my life, living in a way often ostracized by the rest of the world, yet no one else seemed to care. The camp community was more interested in affirming my status - everyone's status- as a child of God than my gender. It got to the time of the service when we wake up the echo. Beth introduced the phrase. We counted down, and then we all shouted out over that beautiful vista "YOU'RE WELCOME HERE!!" "But honey," I remembered, "it's PL."

DAVID & DOTTY-KAY STILLMAN



David and Dotty-Kay's connection to Pilgrim Lodge literally goes back to the beginning, the very beginning. David grew up on Lake Cobbosseecontee as his parents had a cabin a couple miles down the lake from what is now Pilgrim Lodge. On one of their regular summer evening boat rides, they noticed that a large camp facility was for sale. As members of South Parish UCC in Augusta, David's father knew that the Maine Conference was looking for a facility to be the home of its expanding outdoor ministry program. The minister of South Parish was on the



Conference committee seeking a facility, and as they say, the rest is history: PL's history.

In 1964, David got a call asking him to counsel at PL. Their first child went to his grandparents for the week, and Dotty-Kay, pregnant with their second, accompanied David to PL, and they both served as counselors for the first time. David and Dotty-Kay continued to counsel, and even after moving to Washington, DC for work, they returned the next two summers to PL for a week in the woods. Their experience at PL turned out to be deeper and more profound than they could have expected involvement in outdoor ministries could be. Their experience at PL led David to decide to make a change in his life and attend Bangor Theological Seminary. After seminary and a move to Mount Desert Island to serve at the MDI Larger Parish, PL called to see if David was interested in becoming a dean, and the Stillmans' years of deaning began. They packed up their four kids and headed up to PL where David deaned and Dotty-Kay counseled and after a number of years, Dotty-Kay deaned and David counseled. David and Dotty-Kay figure that they have attend counseled and deaned over 60 weeks combined. That's over a year at PL!

However, their contributions to PL don't end at the 60+ weeks on the boardwalk. David served on the Outdoor Ministries Committee for seven years and as chair for five. Dotty-Kay was on the OMC for 13 years. More recently, they have deaned Grandparents Camp and the Shipboard Camp on the Maine Seacoast Mission boat SUNBEAM. Here's just a tiny list of some of their other major contributions to Pilgrim Lodge.

- Dotty-Kay designed the PL logo during her time on the OMC.
- Dotty-Kay put together the very first PL songbook, *Make a Joyful Noise*, and their son Dan designed the cover.
- You know that huge *Give us this day our daily bread* sign above the kitchen in the dining room in the Lodge? Yup, Dotty-Kay designed it and then constructed it with the help of the campers and counselors in 1975 during a week David was deaning.
- Together they revived Family Camp in the 1980s and co-deaned it for several years.

It's not surprising after reading a list like that to find out that all four of their kids attended PL as campers for as many years as possible. Their oldest child, Dan, has been both a camper for years and then a counselor and his two children, Dylan and Bailey, attended Grandparent's Camp with the Stillman's and have since both been campers "on their own." Their daughter Doreen was also a camper and a counselor, and attended Family Camp in 1986 with her husband and infant daughter Charli, who continued to attend as a camper when she was old enough. (Dotty-Kay said it was a dream come true to dean a camp with one of her own grandchildren as a camper.) Their third child, Darin, was a camper from grade 3 through high school. Darcy, their youngest, claims to have been attending PL the longest – from an infant and toddler in Dotty-Kay's backpack, while her parents were deaning and as a camper from 3rd grade through her high school years, then as a counselor, and now as camper again with her mother and sister at Women at the Well. Darcy also continues to be a counselor at Senior High Camp. I think it could easily be said that David and Dotty-Kay have done an extraordinary amount to make campers' PL dreams come true over the years. And this is from two people who never attended PL as campers. The PL spirit got 'em!

One would be hard pressed to not understand why David and Dotty-Kay believe in the power of PL and why it is important to donate to the Pilgrim Lodge Capital Campaign. "We need to keep the camp up physically, so our seasonal facilities don't deteriorate," says David. "If we're committed to this kind of ministry we really have to also be committed to providing the funds. For those of us who come out of a mainstream moderate to liberal Christian tradition, we feel it is so important to be able to offer young people an inclusive kind of vision for understanding and living out the Christian faith."

David points out that although Pilgrim Lodge's core constituency is young people, "local churches benefit significantly from having adults going to PL as counselors and deans. Adults, just as much as youth, are inspired at PL and bring that enthusiasm back to their home churches." Even though their years and years of service to PL and impact on its rich history is worth millions (if you ask me) the Stillmans have also made a \$1,000 pledge to the campaign. David describes the general climate at PL as "accepting in terms of coming to understand and have a relationship with God. It's an open, affirming, challenging approach, and a person can go and not feel that they have to accept a certain narrow view of the Christian faith. But they can fit in and find what fits with their spirituality. That kind of inclusiveness is so important in this polarized society, and that has been a rich part of the PL experience."

ELI & BEN DISALVATORE

When Chris DiSalvatore was a camper at PL in the mid-80s, he never imagined he would tear up when describing the experiences of his two sons at PL as a debt that can never be repaid. Fast forward many years to when their oldest son, Elijah, was old enough to attend PL. He had grown up hearing about it and was incredibly excited to go, but Chris and his wife Kathy were worried. Eli has Asperger's, and life for him when he was young was really difficult. But they took a leap of faith, and off Eli went to PL.

The PL Director, Bryan Breault and his staff worked closely with Chris and Kathy, calling them every night to keep them abreast on what was going on with Eli and how they were responding to it. Chris gushes to this day about Bryan and his team. "The amount of effort they put into it was remarkable. Other places bailed on him very quickly. School was not a welcoming place. Our neighborhood wasn't a welcoming place, but PL was. Kathy and I were beside ourselves. It is a debt that can never be repaid."

As Eli continued to attend camp, the frequency of the phone calls from Bryan were fewer and fewer until they disappeared altogether when Eli was in middle school. "He had just internalized the program. Everyone knew him. He knew what to expect. He thrived there." At the end of middle school, Eli headed to Arts Alive and over the years developed a deep connection with Dean Sally Colgrove (featured in our January newsletter). Sally took Chris aside after Eli's junior year and told him that if Eli ever wanted to come back to PL as a CIT that Chris should call Sally because she wanted Eli to CIT for her. Since graduating from high school, Eli was a CIT in 2013 and plans to be on this year too.



Talking to Eli, now 20, he knows what efforts PL made in order for him to be a part of the camper community. He started going in 3rd grade and remembers the extra effort the PL staff put in so that he could attend. He's proud that they only needed to do that for a few years and then he didn't need it anymore. When asked to describe why he loves PL so much, Eli didn't have to hesitate for a minute to nail the PL experience on the head. "I've never encountered anything that's like PL. There are feelings of happiness and acceptance and kindness that are just nowhere else. You don't have any barriers between you and the rest of the world there. It's great! You can be yourself, and no one will pick on you."

Eli's younger brother Ben, now 17, also started going to PL as early as he could. He had seen Eli go, and he wanted to go too. He's gone every year since and will be attending his final summer as a camper this year. When asked what makes him want to go back every year, Ben said, "Oh man. Everything. The people there – great friends, kids, adults, counselors."

Like many campers, Ben also got involved with the State Youth Council and is the current SYC President though his term ends this month, which is bittersweet. When asked why people should donate to the PL Capital Campaign, Ben's first reaction is to say, "it would be a really long conversation." Agreed. "Not only is the place itself beautiful – serene lake, loons at night, cabins, campfires – that's not the point of PL. It's for boys and girls to have not only a religious experience but also to meet new people and become friends with people from places you didn't know existed. It's, by far, the best place to be in the world."

Ben is capping his PL experience and his Boy Scout tenure by doing his Eagle Scout project at PL. He's connecting the farmhouse to the blue and orange trails which will include building a brand new trail that includes one 14' bridge and one 103' floating boardwalk! Ben thought long and hard about his Eagle Scout project and realized that "I would not be the guy I am today if it wasn't for everything I learned at PL. The ideas about respect we learn in Boy Scouts and at PL go hand in hand, and if I could do even a smidgen for PL of what PL has done for me, I would do it."

Kathy and Chris both mentioned how PL served their boys differently. Each had needs, and though they were completely different, they were both met. Both had poignant and powerful experiences. "Imagine that heaven was a place," Eli says. "That's PL. Everybody genuinely cares. It's not just business as usual. People come first."



Pledge now. Give now.

<http://www.pilgrimlodge.org/passiton>

MANY HANDS HILL

Rev. Bryan S. Breault, Director of Outdoor Ministries

The Pilgrim Lodge Capital Campaign is approaching its final push. We've passed the 1.5 million mark and now need to zero in on that last stretch. Perhaps there are some donors capable of large gifts out there that we've missed, (and please, don't be shy if you're one of them) but friends, it looks like churches, associations, and lovers of PL will make up much of this final distance. I had a moment last week when suddenly, this did not appear to be such a remote possibility.



Excited and energized by the coming season, watching Pilgrim Lodge come alive with activity and excitement, I opened a box of new T-shirts and was really pleased with how they turned out. "Peace, Love, and Pilgrim Lodge" in three symbols pop out blazoned across the front of the shirt. I asked my wife Deb to snap a shot and posted it to the PL Facebook page. I guess others shared my enthusiasm as in the next day or so over 200 people clicked the "like" button. I, and another staff member, shared the post on our own pages garnering another 75 or so "likes" (in Facebook speak).

Suddenly it occurred to me that those who clicked the "like" button were really expressing both their enthusiasm for the shirt, and it follows, for PL itself. Well over 250 people in just a day or so. There were lots of comments asking "how can I get one?" or pleading "gotta get one." Now, some of those people have already pledged to the campaign, and others may have clicked the like button in two places, but in general, that's a lot of liking. Suddenly the question occurred to me: what if each of these people pledged \$1,000 to the campaign? We'd be half way up that home stretch to the finish line!

But *a thousand dollars?* That's a lot of money for most of us. Then it hit me. A thousand dollars over the five years of the campaign's payment is only \$200 a year. Further, if we give monthly that's less than \$17 a month. That is not quite so scary. I mentioned this in the comments of the T-shirt post, and it didn't quite get 200 "likes." OK, maybe 6. But I think the concept is solid. If you like, or love, PL can you manage to give 20 bucks a month or so? Can we help you with automatic payments to make it easy?

A lot of people have put (and are putting) a tremendous effort into making PL viable for the future. Can you please help us with twenty dollars a month or so? I can't even entertain the thought of this final stretch being the Heartbreak Hill that finds us gasping and stumbling in sight of the finish line. Rather, let's make it Many Hands Hill and get over the top – together. See you at camp!

LAURA BARRANTES



When asked to make a pledge to the Pilgrim Lodge Capital Campaign, longtime camper, counselor, and dean, Laura Barrantes didn't blink. After 25 years of Pilgrim Lodge, "I couldn't wait to give back in a substantial way that would help ensure PL would be there for years and years to come." Laura, who grew up in Scarborough but now lives outside Washington, DC in Silver Spring, Maryland, and her husband Todd Humora have made a \$10,000 pledge to *pass it on*.

According to Laura, "it wasn't a hard sell to pledge, and I thankfully have a partner who understands how much Pilgrim Lodge means to me and how it led me to be who I am today." Laura's first year at camp was 1985, the summer before starting 5th grade, and from then on, going to camp was priority number one each summer. Summer jobs were only taken if she could take a week off for camp. After she was too old to be a camper, she counseled, and then deaned Middler Spirit and Best of Both Worlds. Since the summer of '85, she's only missed four summers. Laura is grateful that her parents sent her to Pilgrim Lodge that first summer years ago. Given that they had never attended summer camp themselves, how could they possibly have known that almost 30 years later, Laura would still have a Pilgrim Lodge box in their basement in Scarborough that she hauled out every summer for her week on the boardwalk?

"As an adult, a summer week at Pilgrim Lodge rejuvenates me for the coming year. It fills my soul back up. Yes, you're exhausted. Yes, you use all your energy every day, and yes, you lose your voice by Friday morning, but you *are* rejuvenated. It doesn't make sense to most people, particularly co-workers who see you take a week of vacation to head into the woods with 110 middle schoolers. But it makes sense to me and many of the lifelong friends I made at PL as campers, as counselors together, or as counselors as a dean" says Laura. While Laura enjoyed her post-camper roles at PL, it's the camper experience that is the top priority. "As a counselor and dean, we have to remember that campers come first. They are why we serve and why PL exists. It's the camper experience that brought most of us here in the first place. The PL Capital Campaign will make sure that the physical campus is around for the next kid being sent to camp for the first time, so they can fall in love with the boardwalk and the BURPS. The volunteers and staff who bring the boardwalk to life will ensure that campers make lifelong friends and return for summer after summer...as campers and more."