



PASSING IT ON

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PILGRIM LODGE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



CAMPER SPOTLIGHT: 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. Over the coming months, we'll be sharing the stories of PL campers which will highlight the impact that Pilgrim Lodge has on members of our conference and underscore the need to *pass it on* to future generations of Mainers.



Josiah with a camper at the Pilgrim Lodge during Best of Both Worlds 2013

Josiah first came to Pilgrim Lodge with his family for Family Camp, and he wasn't 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."

Not one to stop discovering new ways to experience PL, Josiah signed up to be a CIT this past summer in addition to being a camper. He 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." *(continued on page 2)*

MESSAGE FROM A CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR

I think Capital Campaigns are magic! They have all the right ingredients: dreams, vision, hopes, loyalty, commitment and love. CapCamps (my abbreviation) let us remember what is special about a place to each of us. And this definitely describes our campaign for Pilgrim Lodge. No matter who I talk to, there is a story to share and it begins: "I love PL because...!" We all have a favorite theme week, counselor, dean, grace, meal and spot. There is something for everyone.

So our job is to make sure Pilgrim Lodge is there for the next generation – no matter what age they are – "We want to pass it on."

What can we do? Pledge, let your church neighbors know this is important, tell your friends. Pass this newsletter along to others. Please contact me if you questions, comments, or suggestions.

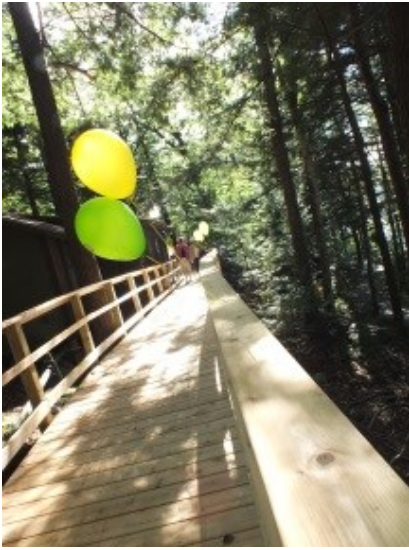
Pam Gormley, Co-Chair
Capital Campaign Committee, pgormley@msln.net

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www.pilgrimlodge.org/passiton



Above: The new PL Boardwalk and future campers enjoying the new boardwalk at the September 15th Blessing Event

The One Great Thing

Rev. Peter Heinrichs, PL Campaign Consultant

The *We Want To Pass It On!* Campaign for Pilgrim Lodge has topped \$1.3 million (\$1,320,000)! In addition to the \$750,000 lead gift from the Maine Conference, the Campaign has received more than \$350,000 in pledges from forty friends, alums, and family of PL. The pledges range from \$500 to \$150,000.

That's a terrific beginning, but we're only getting started!

There's one great thing about this campaign – the passionate loyalty of the PL family to the camp experience. As consultant to the campaign, I have had a chance to talk with dozens of people across Maine about PL. I have heard so many stories of lives changed, laughter and songs remembered. The one BIG thing I have heard is that PL is a place where lives get changed. Across generations I hear that "PL has shaped my life."

I know that some of you are wondering when you are going to hear from the campaign and be asked to make your pledge. (This is music to my ears!) I invite you to go to the Pass It On webpage at www.pilgrimlodge.org/passiton. While you're there, I hope you will check out the wonderful brief video Bryan Breault put together about Pilgrim Lodge over the years. Look for the video tab at the top of the page! But that's just the beginning.

We are expanding the campaign! We are planning a series of mini-campaigns and area events to bring together different PL groups. Look for more information in future campaign newsletters about events in Bangor, Portland, Boston and other areas. We hope you'll come share memories and thoughts about what PL means to you. You'll be hearing from us!

Our goal is \$2,000,000 from individuals and churches who love PL. That's roughly \$850,000 to go. How can you help? Have you made your PL pledge? Can you encourage your church to make a pledge? Do you know a foundation we can talk to? I invite your input and thoughts. Please email me at peheinrichs@gmail.com or call me at 207-615-2212. I have made my pledge. If you have not already, can you make your pledge to *Pass It On*?

CAMPER SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED

The deans of Best of Both Worlds felt they had something special in their CIT. Dean Laura Barrantes writes "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."

Family camp, island camp, boardwalk camp, and being a CIT are just a few of the many ways people connect with Pilgrim Lodge. While those pathways to PL might be very different, the



Josiah and campers ready for Hike Day at Horton Center during Best of Both Worlds 2013

connections to the place and the bonds with the people are remarkably consistent - lifelong friends created in a place and moment in time where you felt ok being yourself.

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DONOR PROFILE: LAURA BARRANTES



Laura & Todd as counselors at PL (1999)

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.

PILGRIM LODGE

\$2 m

\$1.75 m

\$1.5 m

\$1,320,000 raised as of 11/5/13

\$1.25 m

\$1 m

\$.75 m

\$.5 m

\$.25 m

\$0 m

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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."

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THE UNBROKEN LINE OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. Bryan S. Breault, Director of Outdoor Ministries

Each day I'm at Pilgrim Lodge, I have at least one moment, when I am pulled out of my thought process and startled by the natural beauty before me. I'm stunned into awe. I've developed a small, comforting spiritual discipline of simply saying "thank you" out loud every time this happens, sometimes as just a whisper. After such a moment, it's impossible to return to my previous thought process without a new perspective. Sometimes the shift is fleeting, sometimes profound.

There's a natural connection between our camp and Thanksgiving. The story of the harvest feast at Plymouth is set around 1621. At that time, there was already contact between the Abenaki people of the Kennebec and European settlers. The Pilgrims were our forbearers in faith (hence, the name "Pilgrim Lodge"), and our site is on land revered by the Abenaki people. Both the Pilgrim's and Native American spirituality are present at Pilgrim Lodge.

In fact, most campers can tell you that the name of the lake, "Cobbosseecontee," means "the place where the sturgeon are plenty." Another interpretation is "the place of abundance." While one might point out these are simply descriptive titles, it sounds to me like those names are infused with a sense of gratitude.

And so now and then, in those awe struck moments of gratefulness that come to me whenever I am on the property, I think of those people of the Abenaki tribe and wonder if they ever saw the sunset between our two islands, or the sparkle on the forest canopy, or the race of red squirrels through the trees, or the dance of the dragonflies, or the beauty of a spider-web in the morning dew, and did they ever say "thank you" under their breath? Of course they did.

Each of these captivating moments of natural beauty is accented by other moments of gratitude. I'm continually astonished at the outpouring of love and dedication from our volunteers and staff; the kindness between campers; and beauty of their budding self-esteem and spiritual awareness; the work of those who went before us to create Pilgrim Lodge and preserve its simple beauty.

Recently, on a crisp autumn day as the leaves began to fall and the sun slanted in across the lake, a fresh moment of thankfulness came upon me. I looked down from the new boardwalk at the just completed Chapel accessibility trail and thought of all that went into their planning and building. I thought of all the other blessings and opportunities that the capital campaign will bring; and of all those trusting and standing ready to offer their gifts; of how this land has been sacred for so many, for so long, and how it is up to our generation to make sure it remains as such for future generations. The words leapt out with clarity and depth: "Thank you."

Below: The 2013 Pilgrim Lodge staff giving thanks for the new boardwalk by sharing a meal together—the boardwalk's first Thanksgiving you might say...



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"BUT HONEY, IT'S PL."

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."

By Quinn Gormley