



FACILITATING AN ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST ON THE MOUNTAINTOPS

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SKY RANCH LUTHERAN CAMP

FENCE POST

Fall 2017 Newsletter

NEW CONSTRUCTION AT CAMP!



A sketch of the new facilities shop and storage garage, donated by Kent Garvin.

accommodate 50 people, and an exterior bathroom for adjacent staff cabins to use. The winterized cabin will be located on the

Thanks to the generosity of two donors, Sky Ranch will be building two new structures next year! Kent Garvin, former Board President for Sky Ranch, has committed to fund and direct the construction of a new maintenance building. AND, an anonymous couple has gifted \$300,000 to Sky Ranch toward the design and construction of a new summer staff/seasonal retreat cabin. Why? Read more on page 10.

western edge of the property. During the non-summer months, the heated cabin will be used by the increasing number of retreat groups. The new meeting area will allow us to serve more than one group at camp at a time. By locating all the summer staff in one area of camp, we will have three more cabins in the center of camp for camper and adult sponsor use.

The 3,000 square foot Maintenance Building will be a pole barn set on a concrete slab. It will offer sufficient space to store tools, equipment, and plenty of indoor workspace. The building also includes a 435 square foot living quarters. The structure will provide ample room to work on projects indoors. It will be located on the eastern edge of the property, just south of the summer staff parking lot. By relocating the maintenance building, we can clear the center of camp for programmatic use. The old maintenance building will continue to fall down and eventually be replaced with a covered pavilion and greenspace.

Thank you to Kent Garvin and our anonymous couple for their leadership in helping to rebuild the camp's foundations - literally! Thank you for your trust and vision! These gift's help us address current needs of accommodating an ever-increasing number of campers, but also positions the ministry to serve for generations to come. These legacy gifts acknowledge that Sky Ranch is built on firm foundations: sound Biblical teachings; a Gospel oriented staff; a dedicated board and management; and wise stewardship of funds, land, and buildings.

The summer staff/seasonal retreat cabin will have four bedrooms with individual bathrooms, housing up to 32 summer staff, a meeting area that will



The staff building will house 32 individuals & have meeting space for 50!

BRAD ABBOTT—EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8

These words seem appropriate as we celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation this fall. The spirit of the Reformation—the freedom to practice a relevant faith—has guided the Sky Ranch Board and staff as they creatively and openly review the relevance of our ministry to meet a changing culture. While our mission remains the same, “to facilitate an encounter with Christ on the mountaintops”, in Christ we are freed to change programs to keep faith relevant. 2017 has been a year of changes for Sky Ranch! The year began with two new Program Directors and continued with changes in facilities and summer programs.

Program changes include a new ‘block schedule’ on-site with coordinators for each age group, programming where campers have a voice in cabin activities, and several new programs for summer 2018. These changes enable us to be more effective in serving our growing number of campers.

Facility updates include heat for the Christ Lodge bedrooms, replacing the main water line from the pump house



to Christ Lodge, and adding over 1000’ of new water lines throughout the property. These changes, along with replacing the dishwasher in the Lodge, reduced our water use by over 700 gallons per day!

The Board of Directors are actively reviewing and updating policies to meet current realities. Their work on the strategic plan produced a site plan that identifies activity use zones throughout the property. This positions us to better serve our present camper numbers and

proposes a vision for facilities that will support our programming and staffing needs in the future.

I am excited for what the future holds for Sky Ranch as we continue to minister to new audiences. Recently, Sky Ranch has received two major gifts: one will result in the creation of a **new maintenance building**, the other is an anonymous gift of \$300,000 towards a **new summer staff/seasonal retreat cabin**. These generous gifts will impact this ministry for years to come (see front cover). To provide the needed infrastructure for these buildings, Sky Ranch will need to raise an additional \$120,000. Consider a special gift to support these projects! I am thankful for the leadership of these donors and for all those who give to support this ministry. Outdoor Ministries like Sky Ranch are the most effective way the to develop the next generation of leaders.

Our mission is happening because of your support! As we observe the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and prepare for the 55th Anniversary of Sky Ranch, we are continually reforming this ministry to be relevant to Christ’s followers today. Thank you for your part in making this ministry thrive.

Contact Brad to donate to this special appeal—Brad@SkyRanchColorado.org.

2017 ADVENT RETREAT

Join us for a weekend in the mountains celebrating the season of Advent! With devotions, worship, fellowship, and activities for the whole family, this is the perfect way to begin the holiday season.

December 1-3, 2017

All ages welcome: \$80/adult, \$50/child, max of \$180/family

Call Ally to register at 970-493-5258!

HANNAH ANDERSON—PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The only constant at camp is change. Not only are the seasons constantly changing, but our community shrinks and grows. Our campers get older and new campers arrive. New vegetation grows in the burn area and old beetle kill trees fall down. The most drastic changes of the year are the arrival and departure of summer campers. After staff arrive in May and go through training, everyone waits with eager anticipation for the buses and vans to drive up to the road. And then, at the end, the staff wave as the campers depart camp for the last time each season.

This summer, our camper numbers held

steady—with a large increase in retreating participation. We were blessed with an absolutely incredible staff who came from all over the US to serve at camp. We are looking forward to the construction of new buildings which will open new opportunities for our programs! Things at Sky Ranch are great!

As we look ahead, we find ourselves at a place where we can be innovative—seeking to meet the needs of our campers in new and exciting ways. We are thrilled to be taking congregations to the Youth Gathering and are also excited to run some new programs! While you can check out the Program

Brochure or website for specifics, new programs include middle school backpacking and a service road trip, where staff travel around the Front Range and run service days to bring camp and community together. As camp continues to compete with other obligations, we strive to be the place apart that children long for AND we work to bring camp to kids—regardless of their circumstances.

Camp is changing—just as it always does! We rejoice in the newness of facility updates, the energy of summer staff, the enthusiasm of campers, and the excitement of new campers!



JEFF FAIRFAX—PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Rejoice! What do you think about when you hear the word *rejoice*? Maybe it's singing, laughter, happiness, fun, or silliness; these are just a few of the words our campers used this summer as we explored our summer theme: *Rejoice!*. There is a lot to rejoice about looking back at this summer and fall. Sky Ranch facilitated an encounter with Christ for over 1,400 individuals this summer alone, through onsite camp, service learning and high wilderness trips, family camp, traveling day camps, and weekend retreats. While we look back at the summer and Rejoice about the community that was, we are equally excited about what is to come.

This fall, camp has not seen many quiet days; weekend retreats have kept staff and volunteers busy. Our fall hosts, Margaret, Katie, and Victoria, kept camp open and running, hosting a variety of

retreats and programs such as congregational groups, Coyote Howl Confirmation retreats, Environmental Education, and more!

Thank you for donating \$1,718 towards our summer offering to support Habitat for Humanity and Kids at Their Best!

Looking ahead, registration and summer staff applications are available on our website. While we won't be able to visit camp in the coming months because of snow, we will hit the road, joining the Rocky Mountain Synod for the Synod Youth Gathering in January, Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza in Houston, and staff recruiting

throughout the US. We Rejoice knowing that the months ahead are filled with opportunities for us to grow our community and partner with local groups to support ministries in their communities.

Each Friday throughout the summer we collected an offering for two community organizations serving our communities. Habitat for Humanity in Fort Collins is continuing their work to provide affordable housing and advocating for fair and just housing policies. Kids at Their Best, based in Fort Morgan, works within rural communities to provide enrichment activities to kids. Through generous donations from campers, adult sponsors, parents, pastors, and so many more; we are excited to have raised \$1,717.81 for these two community organizations.

40 YEARS LATER: 1977 SUMMER STAFF

In our Spring newsletter, we featured our 1977 summer staff photo, asking alumni to share memories of their camp at camp. Even 40 years later, former staff still remember Sky Ranch fondly!

From Cynthia Stenehjem Sparks:

Cheers to Summer of 2017 at Sky Ranch.

It is a hoot to see a photo of the Summer Staff of 1977 in the recent Sky Ranch newsletter. In the photo, Twig Mills is the one in the middle of the bottom row, next to Bob Kuehner. As a member of the backpack staff during the summers of 1976 and 1977, I cherish fond memories of celebrating the glories of the mountains with our campers on backpacking trips in Roosevelt National Forest and Rocky Mountain National Park. In the picture, I am second in from the top right. I've got my arm around Terry Sanderson, and to my left are Steve and MaryKay Helling. Deb Kozel and Leon Tetzloff are on the top left. Dan Anderson is in the second row furthest left. Bob Kuehner was a great director. Lots of fun with the staff and with the campers.



I still have my Kelty Pack and I still have the boots I wore those summers. I figure they have at least 500 miles on their treads. They carry sentimental value to this day but gosh are they ever heavy! My current hiking boots are light as a feather in comparison. I even have the pressed mountain flowers Kim Kuehner gave to me in a hand-made

card. So many special memories were sparked by seeing the photo of our staff that summer. Nice to see Sky Ranch still has that special magic!

May Christ forever dance in all the hearts at Sky Ranch! Cheers!

Many blessings, Cynthia



Sky Ranch participants ride in the back of a well-decorated truck by the Backpack Center. Taken in 1976 or 1977.

**May the whispering of God the Creator and His Magic
Forever be in your ears.**

**May the power of God the Spirit
Haunt your soul and keep it aglow.**

**And may you always be blessed with joy
Knowing that Christ Dances in your Heart.**

—Twig Mills

“Can’t believe that it has been 40 years! Wonderful memories, wonderful people. I am in intermittent contact with Wes Westfall - it has been great to reconnect with him. I would love to hear from other people from that staff like Ann Linton, Lisa Damrow, Judy Nelson and Ruth McKenzie.”

—Tim Bungum

ALUMNI REUNION—JULY 6-8, 2018

2018 ALUMNI REUNION

Alumni staff from the 80s and 90s are invited to Sky Ranch for a weekend of community, worship, fun, and more!

July 6-8, 2018

Register at:
SkyRanchColorado.org/2018-Alumni-Reunion

90s or Now?

Get excited for the 2018 Reunion by guessing if the photos below are from the 90s or from 2017!

Answers on page 11



Watching campers grow in faith and confidence week after week fills my heart with so much joy. These kids encourage and love one another in a way that is contagious to everyone around them.

—Christine, counselor



Backpacking made me feel closer to God than ever before. I learned that even when something is difficult, that God and my community will help me.

—Sam, high school camper



Sights of Summer 2017





Sky Ranch means love, patience, faith, and joy to me. It is a community of supportive people that are dedicated to fostering positive faith-based experiences for young people.

-MJ, counselor



Thank you for a great summer!



I have rejoiced in the opportunity to meet people from diverse backgrounds, share in moments of faith, and marvel at the beautiful landscapes of Colorado.

-Margaret, offsite guide

RUTH ANN LOUGHRY: BOARD MEMBER

Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry is the pastor at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Loveland, CO. She joined the Sky Ranch Board of Directors in 2015.

When Brad Abbott asked me several years ago to consider being on the Sky Ranch board, my thoughts quickly floated to my own nephew who had just returned from his first experience at camp. He was so excited to go again the following summer. That, in turn, carried my thoughts back to my own experience at summer camp as a young girl. Learning Bible stories, singing around the campfire, making s'mores, midnight hikes and daytime crafts; camp had everything I loved (including cute counselors to adore from afar)! Thus I was eager to assist the Board with oversight so that other youth could experience God, too.

As a parish pastor, I still delight in going to camp. But I view it from another perspective. I delight in seeing youth from King of Glory learning Bible stories, singing around the campfire, up

on the ropes course and oogling cute camp counselors. (God can use anything to form faith, right!?) Read below the note I wrote to our congregation after this summer's time at Sky Ranch.

I just got back from a quick trip up to Sky Ranch to see how our kids were doing this week. Again I am reminded that we as a congregation simply cannot duplicate a camp experience for forming faith and building relationship with God. Youth lead specific parts of worship: the prayers, the sermon, the benediction. They know the responses (the Lord be with you, and also with you). They sing crazy songs. Our students slept out overnight and cooked s'mores over the fire. The young adult counselors are from all over the country and they too are having life changing experiences. Several told me it was the best summer of their life. It is powerful for our youth to witness the joy and faith of other young adults. Plus they are in a remote, gorgeous mountainous region where their cell phones do not work! They are forced to make new friends and see God's glory in the sun, clouds, trees and streams.

All this is to say, "Thank you, King of Glory!" Remember that Easter breakfast so long ago? You gave generous donations and from those all of our youth had financial assistance getting to camp this year. You are part of Sky Ranch even though you may never have seen the camp

itself. Because of your gifts, the lives of youth and their faith are impacted in incredible ways. Thank you!

I would say the same to any of you reading this article. You may have never stepped foot onto camp, but your prayers, your financial gifts, your encouragement of campers makes you a part of what God does at Sky Ranch. It's so important. Get youth out of their 'hood' and God moves in. I've watched it time and again. God changes lives at camp. Youth at King of Glory remember...my nephew remembers...I remember. Will you?



Jesus (played by Hannah Turner) rides her donkey into Jerusalem during confirmation intensive, where youth from the Rocky Mountain Synod (including King of Glory!) reenacted Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Board of Directors

- Don Alpern
Christ Lutheran, Highlands Ranch
- Kayla Aspeslagh
Trinity Lutheran Sem, Columbus, OH
- Dss Kristen Baltrum
Bethlehem Lutheran, Longmont
- Pr. Ron Bockhaus
Shepherd of the Mountains, Estes Park
- Gene Elder (Past President)
Zion Lutheran, Loveland
- Pr. Paul Judson
Lutheran Campus Ministry, Fort Collins
- Kim Kelty
Glory of God, Wheat Ridge
- Pr. Ruth Ann Loughry
King of Glory, Loveland
- Warren Miller
Bethany Lutheran, Cherry Hills Village
- RC Reiman
Ascension Lutheran, Cheyenne, WY
- Mike Weier
Bethany Lutheran, Cherry Hills Village





WORK AT SKY RANCH!

Applications are open now!

Counselors, Offsite Guides, Coordinators, Kitchen, and more

Apply at SkyRanchColorado.org

HOP ON THE BUS TO HOUSTON

Sky Ranch continues to partner with the Rocky Mountain Synod to provide a service learning bus trip to the ELCA Youth Gathering. This summer we are headed to Houston, Texas to explore, learn, and serve alongside the residents of Houston. Close to 100 youth and adults will be joining us this year as we start our journey to Houston. Along the way we will spend two nights in El Paso, one day partnering with Border Servant Corps and Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey

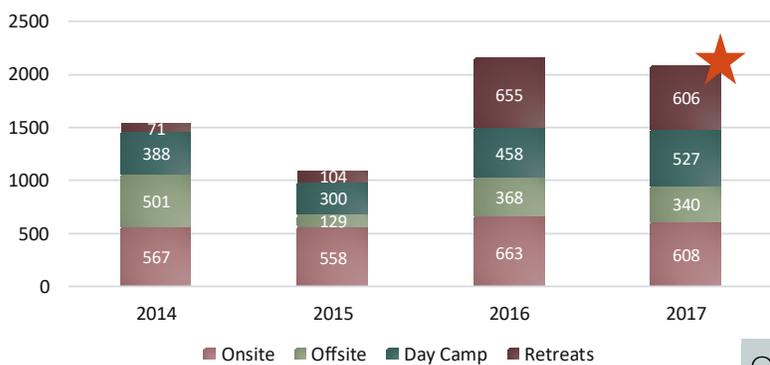
for an educational border immersion experience. Our third day will be spent traveling to San Antonio where we can spend time along the Riverwalk and learn about the Alamo. Once in Houston youth will spend the week exploring and living out the theme, *This Changes Everything*. Sky Ranch will be at the Gathering providing additional resources and support as needed throughout the week.



2017 SUMMER NUMBERS

It was another great summer of ministry at Sky Ranch! Through onsite & offsite programs, Traveling Day Camp, and weekend retreats, we served over 2,000 people!

Sky Ranch: By the Numbers



★ Please note that 2017 retreat numbers are still growing! We have had 606 retreaters from January-August of 2017.

Our campers & staff come from all over the country. 24 states were represented at Sky Ranch this summer!

WHY GIVE? DONORS SHARE THEIR STORIES



The leaves are changing colors and the temperatures are dropping. Winter is certainly on its way! But in the office at Sky Ranch, there is hope for spring and summer. Each year, the staff looks forward to hearing campers' voices as they arrive. But this fall there is extra gladness in the hope of hearing hammers and saws!

Because of a very generous gift, Sky Ranch will soon have a new building for staff housing. Currently staff who aren't in charge of campers sleep in Tubman, Stringfellow, and the Nature Center—which are overcrowded and have no plumbing. In the new building, staff will have their own space and a little bit of privacy. They can relax on weekends with a place to hang out after a busy week of being 'on' with youth 24/7. A meeting room within the building will also be used by outside groups or counselors during the week. The

building will open up other facilities for additional campers which only increases revenue and forms faith! In the fall, outside groups will utilize the building, further increasing the bottom line.

The anonymous donors say they chose to give because the Lord has blessed them. "In giving, the blessing returns to where it needs to be. We are giving back a portion of what God has given us. The ministries of Sky Ranch are really important to people of all ages." But their decision was also inspired by Sky Ranch staff: "The staff Brad [Abbott] brings in are tremendous and [his] ability to manage the whole thing is outstanding!"

The couple learned generosity from parents who modeled it—a mother who was generous with her time and finances. When working through their estate, they decided they wanted to gift

funds now, while they could still see the blessing of that gift. Brad shared how this new building will meet a real need. "It excites us to be able to see the money be put to use! Instead of giving him a dollar amount or determining where it would go, we asked Brad what was needed."

Kent Garvin has also chosen to give a very generous gift to Sky Ranch. The initial plans for Garvin's Garage are now in place. It is a long-time dream coming to fruition. Way back in the 1980's, Kent brought youth from his church in Mankato, MN to Sky Ranch. He made a promise to God: "Lord, if you ever bring me to Colorado, I will get involved and participate at some level."

God made good on that promise and so did Kent. Kent saw Sky Ranch through some difficult times when the board made him Interim Director. He is delighted that the camp is now flourishing once again. "This is as close to heaven as you'll get in this life. The geography makes the ministry so incredible."

Mr. Garvin has seen the necessity of a garage for years. "We had maintenance [staff] driving back and forth to Fort Collins every day! Covering their gas alone was crazy!" Kent feels happy and privileged to make this dream a reality. He says, "It proves that God is at work in the background of our lives over the years to fulfill [God's] needs."

Sky Ranch is deeply grateful for the substantial investment of both of these donors. For as the seasons come and go, both buildings will serve Sky Ranch and the Lord. Thanks be to God!

Thank you to RuthAnn Loughry for taking the time to interview our major donors!



YOU can give! Your donation—large or small—makes a difference!

Visit SkyRanchColorado.org/Donate-Today

THANK YOU TO OUR FALL HOSTS!



Each year, the majority of our summer staff depart in mid-August to return to school, work, and family. We are blessed to have fall hosts who stay behind and continue working throughout the fall! We are so appreciative of the three women who shoveled snow, cooked, cleaned, did maintenance projects, and provided excellent hospitality to our fall groups! Katie Anderson, Victoria Benson, and Margaret Chell all worked hard to keep camp running this fall and we can't thank them enough!

From top to bottom: Margaret enjoys the slip-n-slide on a sunny afternoon; Katie & Victoria repaint the floor in the lodge; Katie, Margaret, & Brynn do some fall hiking to Comanche Reservoir; Katie & Victoria relax in the meadow while looking for bears.

FALL PROPERTY UPDATE

The snow has started falling, but we are still hard at work on our property! In addition to the two new buildings that will be built in the coming year, staff have continued to press forward and accomplish a variety of projects to ensure that Sky Ranch is hospitable and welcoming for all! Since this spring, the following projects have been completed:

- Final installation of cross at Outdoor Chapel
- Paint the lodge floor
- Reconfigure and revitalize chuckwagon eating area
- Woodchip cabin areas
- Paint nurses' cabin
- Install awning on back kitchen door
- Install laminate floor in BPC packout area
- Install new wiring and wall heaters in lodge basement
- Run new water line from pumphouse to lodge
- Run water spigots to raised garden beds and chuckwagon
- Run water line from showerhouse to campground
- Install commercial coffee maker in lodge
- Install new Hobart dishwasher
- Develop nature trail
- Build new benches for Backpack Center, showerhouse, and cabins
- Install irrigation for greenhouse
- Build new staircase on kitchen dock

As the fall retreat season winds down, winterization is in full swing. This means preparing generators and plows, turning off the water, and locking the doors for the season. A huge thank you to the volunteers who make these projects a reality!



90s or Now Answers: A-90s, B-Now, C-Now, D-90s

Please note that campers are no longer allowed to climb on the bell tower.



Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp
805 S Shields St
Fort Collins, CO 80521
970.493.5258

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ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
FORT COLLINS, CO
PERMIT 309

Brad Abbott—Executive Director
Brad@SkyRanchColorado.org

Ally Pluchek—Office Manager
Ally@SkyRanchColorado.org

Hannah Anderson—Program Director
Hannah@SkyRanchColorado.org

Jeff Fairfax—Program Director
Jeff@SkyRanchColorado.org



God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams!

Ephesians 3:20

Join us as we explore our 2018 Summer Theme: Beyond Belief. Learn about God's unimaginable love for us, dive into God's unending grace, and consider how God is calling YOU to live an extraordinary life!