

FENCE POST

Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp / Fall 2018 Newsletter

Under Construction

New Staff Housing/Retreat Building

On July 30, construction began on the new Summer Staff/Seasonal Retreat cabin at Sky Ranch! Alan Hauser, of Hauser Architects, was hired to help design the 2,940 sq. ft summer staff/seasonal retreat cabin. Sean Rogers, of Hillside Construction, was hired to oversee construction of the building and its infrastructure. **We are tremendously thankful for the generous contribution of an anonymous donor making this project possible.**

The cabin will have 4 bedrooms with individual bathrooms capable of housing 32 summer staff. It will also include a large meeting room and two exterior bathrooms to service the other cabins on the

western edge of camp. This winterized cabin will allow us to locate all the summer staff in one area of camp.

Relocating staff will provide two more cabins in the center of camp for camper use and will free up another cabin for adult sponsor use. During the non-summer months, the increasing number of retreat groups would use this heated cabin. The goal is to have construction of the new building completed by late this fall.

Justin Miller is the site manager supervising all contractors providing labor for the new cabin including: S & L Concepts, R-T Electric, Phillips Carpentry, MJ Masonry, AJG Management, Rocky Mountain Water Solutions, and Gudenkauf Construction.

Total cost of the building is over \$560,000. Sky Ranch is seeking to raise an additional \$80,000 for the infrastructure (water, new septic/leach field, upgraded electrical service) needed to support this building. To help, please call Brad Abbott at (970) 493-5258 or email brad@skyranchcolorado.org.

Sky Ranch is also working with Kent Garvin to replace the current maintenance shed with a 3000 sq. ft. pole building. This gracious gift, the 'Garvin Garage', will be located on the eastern edge of the property, south of the summer staff parking lot. This is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream for both Kent and Sky Ranch. The elimination of the current maintenance building will allow us space in the center of camp to eventually build a covered pavilion.



From the Executive Director

Building on Firm Foundations



By Brad Abbott

Construction on the new summer staff/fall retreat building began in late July. During the first month of construction I was amazed at all the work that took place to establish the foundation. Trees and stumps were cleared, a very large hole was dug, footers were framed and poured, holes were dug for the new leach field, trenches were dug for new water & electric lines, cinder block was laid & insulated, the crawlspace walls were framed and floor joists placed & stabilized. There was a lot of activity!

Then one day I arrived on site to see that the floor was in place, the foundation backfilled, and the trenching complete. Suddenly, all the hard work of the past month was gone: hidden beneath the floor and the ground. I find

parallels in this building process with our Christian faith life. There are foundational pieces of faith that help God build Christian lives and communities that reflect God's love.

To build anything you first need a solid foundation. The foundation of a building is essential to support the rest of the structure and provide stability and shelter. Our Christian life of faith is no different. Our faith foundations support us when the storms of life appear and the weight of the world threatens.

Sky Ranch works with families and congregations to build strong foundations of faith. The work we do at camp cannot always be seen. At camp, campers and staff, are immersed in caring community. The foundation of faith is God's unconditional and abundant love for all people shown

through forgiveness, grace and mercy.

At camp we challenge kids spiritually with the word of God in song, story, conversation, and action. We remind them of the tenets of their faith. We raise and deal with their doubts and questions. We help them believe. Through Word and Sacrament, we proclaim that we are indeed children of God and we belong to God forever!

Sky Ranch was established on firm foundations: sound Biblical teaching, Gospel-oriented staff, a dedicated board and wise stewardship of funds, land and buildings. I am thankful for all the partner congregations, donors, staff, board and volunteers who continue to ensure that the foundations of this ministry are solid and strong.

From the High School Program Director

By Hannah Anderson

In the midst of high ropes, hiking, meals, games, sleepouts, and more—we always return to our summer Bible Study theme to share the Gospel with our campers and guests. This summer, we explored what it means for God to be *Beyond Belief*. In our theme, we looked at the ways in which community, creation, abundance, and action help us to experience God's love and grace before going forth to share those gifts with others.

I do not get to spend much time with campers anymore, however, I was still lucky to witness moments where kids experienced moments of faith that were *beyond belief*. Many days, groups would climb Stormy Peaks and would radio back to camp from the summit. From the deck of the lodge, we grabbed binoculars and tried to

find the groups on the summit, usually without much success. The kids would return, exhausted and excited at the same time—sharing their mountaintops experiences with anyone who would listen.

Of course, in these literal summit experiences, it is easy to be in awe of God's work in Sky Ranch. But God is also at work in the smaller, mundane moments of camp. God's community was *beyond belief* each morning, when sleepy campers and staff trudged to the meadow for First Word. God's abundance was *beyond*

belief when the giggles of campers echoed from their campsite late at night. God's creation was *beyond belief* as our youngest campers watered the garden beds and tasted fresh radishes.

Because of these gifts, we are blessed to send out campers and guests, empowered to act and serve in their own communities. While we want our campers to have mountaintop experiences that are *beyond belief*, we are grateful for the ways in which seeds of faith are planted for lives of love for our campers & staff.

Explorers Camp—New in 2019!

Not quite ready to attend camp on your own? Campers who have completed 1st-3rd grade can bring their favorite adult to camp for the Explorers Program. Enjoy all the camp favorites, make new friends, and do it all with a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle!

July 31-August 2, 2019 | \$200 per participant

From the Youth & Outreach Program Director

By Jeff Fairfax

Each summer we hire young adults and ask them to take on an immense responsibility of caring for kids, helping to facilitate an encounter with Christ on the mountaintops. As a team, our summer staff work long hours, preparing meals, scrubbing the shower house, driving to day camp sites, and planning worships. This summer, many of our staff were familiar faces around camp.

Whether they were former campers, staff-in-training, or returning staff, these dedicated young adults returned to Sky Ranch to grow and develop their

skills. Each summer, it's exciting to see our staff mature and grow into who God is calling them to be.

As we look ahead to the winter recruiting season for the 2019 summer staff, think about the young people in your life. They have lots of opportunities for growth next summer- internships, summer classes, travel, and volunteer programs. Each of these choices has its merits. However, choosing to work at summer camp, especially for multiple summers, shows a special commitment to living out the mission of Sky Ranch.

The young adults we hire leave

camp in August with new energy, leadership skills, and willingness to collaborate. They go out into the world to share these gifts on campuses, in their fields of study, and in their post-grad professional lives.

Outdoor Ministry is the largest young adult leadership development program within the ELCA. We are grateful for the ministry of the 2018 summer staff and already look forward to welcoming our next summer staff. We welcome your recommendations for future summer staff members. Be sure to pass along our application and let us know when a young person you know might be a good fit!

This Changes Everything

Reflections from the ELCA Youth Gathering

This Changes Everything was the theme for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas. Little did I know how true this phrase would become. This summer three Sky Ranch staff and 95 youth and adults from the Rocky Mountain Synod (RMS) boarded two charter busses and set out for a week of service, learning, and growth.

Our first stop was El Paso, Texas, where we spent a day learning about Border Servant Corps (BCS). BCS is a ministry of the ELCA that advocates for border rights, fosters relationships, and provides services for immigrants in the Border Lands of El Paso and Las Cruces. We divided up into five groups and spent the day doing different activities in the

community and listen to their stories. While my group was looking out at the fence between El Paso and Juarez one of the high schoolers said, "When I think about the border I picture it in the middle of nowhere, not in the middle of peoples' lives."

After an overnight stop in San Antonio, we made it to Houston! The first day was our service day, where we were sent out in church groups to do service projects around Houston. The next day was our interactive learning day, where we spent the day in a large convention center filled with activities—from high ropes and sports to Lutheran college exhibits and self-exploration booths. The last full day, all the youth from

community. It was amazing watching the youth engage with

RMS gathered to worship and get to know each other.

Each day ended with a mass gathering worship where speakers delved deeper into the daily theme. Our time in Houston ended Sunday morning with one final worship where the whole stadium shared communion. After worship, we boarded the busses and made our way back to Denver.

Communing with 30,000 Lutherans changes everything. 2,419 miles on a charter bus with 95 youth and adults engaging in the border conversation changes everything. 3 days in Houston at the Gathering changes everything. God's love, grace, and hope changes everything. That trip CHANGED everything.

-Nicci Watson
2018 Camp Counselor
Fort Worth, TX

RENDEZVOUS

Join us onsite for a week of hiking, rafting, service projects, and more! Camp in rustic platform tents and cook over the fire, all while building community in Christ.

FOUR WINDS

Explore service, justice, & faith through service-learning programs. Learn about poverty, refugee issues, addiction recovery, or trail conservation.

HIGH WILDERNESS

Dive into God's creation by backpacking in the Rocky Mountains. Trips are customizable for all ability levels and offer a place apart to experience the Gospel in new ways.

CONTACT THE SKY RANCH OFFICE TO START PLANNING YOUR 2019 HIGH SCHOOL TRIP TODAY!

For participants who have completed grades 9-12 and their adult leaders. Prices start at \$465. Email hannah@skyranchcolorado.org for more info.



Summer of 2018—By the Numbers

1,194 SUMMER CAMPERS

1,036 RETREAT GUESTS



2,558 HOURS OF SERVICE

277

TRIPS DOWN THE ZIPLINE



DAY CAMPERS **561**

K-8 CAMPERS **469**

HIGH SCHOOLERS **164**



53% OF CAMPERS WERE FIRST TIME PARTICIPANTS



Sights of Summer

Sky Ranch is a community like no other, filled with love and kindness and acceptance for absolutely everybody.

-Ryan Barnhouse, 2018
Camp Counselor

I see transformation every week in the campers. On Sunday when they arrive, most campers are a little shy and nervous... However, throughout the many experiences of camp, the campers are transformed by the end of the week. On Friday they are promising to keep in contact with other campers they met five days ago, singing loudly and proudly at worship and allowing themselves to have a child-like faith.

-Marie Hynek, 2018 Onsite Coordinator

When I was younger, I was ashamed of my faith because I felt it held me back from hanging out with my friends. My friends were never religious, so often times, I would be ridiculed for my faith as well. This is the first time in a long time I've felt free to worship and express my faith without judgement. For that, my faith has grown immensely.

-2018 Summer Camper







WORK AT SKY RANCH!



APPLICATIONS OPEN



NOVEMBER 15



Stories from Summer

We are the Church

This summer, I had the amazing privilege of being a counselor at Sky Ranch. The first time I drove up the long dirt road and passed the sign with the blue lettering, I knew that I would have an amazing summer; but I never imagined that this would be the best summer of my life thus far.

I have never felt more genuine, more the person that God made me to be, than I did up on that mountain. There is a reason for that. The people that make up the Sky Ranch community – the campers, counselors, sponsors, anyone who is even remotely involved with the camp – see you and welcome you as you are.

When you come up that long dirt road and pass the sign, you

can forget all the stresses and negativity that you left behind... and just be. I had many campers tell me how meaningful it was to be in a place where they could feel comfortable being themselves.

At Sky Ranch, we sing a song titled: *We are the Church*. In that song, the main message is that the church is not a building. Instead, the church is God's children living out their lives to do God's work. In the same way, Sky Ranch is not a camp. It is the people, the community, and the family living out their lives to love one another as God loves us.

-Mykala Coe
2018 Camp Counselor
Littleton, Co

Love and Laughter to Share

I was recently told that we, in ministry, must be intentional about the stories we tell. Our stories are an opportunity to spread the love of God! This year, upon coming home from Sky Ranch, I find myself telling stories about times of laughter and joy from my weeks on Traveling Day Camps.

The Traveling Day Camp in Lander, WY was a bit different because our campers were so young. More than half of our campers were in second grade or younger. Our first day, which was Creation day, a local family generously brought their llama for the kids to pet. While starting to lead Bible study, I clearly

remember my kids, spotting the large animal through the window of our classroom, running to the glass and yelling, "A CAMEL!!!" It was all they could talk about for the rest of the day.

Most of all, the story I tell from this week is one that made my heart swell. Two kindergarteners, who were very excited about being at Day Camp, ran to my station and hugged me. They hugged me with such force it was like a bowling ball hitting pins: all 3 of us fell backwards in laughter. It happened to be on Wednesday: Abundance Day.

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From the Board of Directors

By Eric Schranck

During the past few years I searched for a way to become more involved with Sky Ranch for one reason: to ensure this wonderful community and incubator of leaders survives and thrives for many years to come. So...this summer when presented with an opportunity to become a member of the Sky Ranch Board of Directors, I gladly accepted. When I was a youth camper at Sky Ranch I experienced the deepening of my relationships with friends and God in this majestic mountain setting. When I spent the summer as a Four Winds counselor I learned to question and think critically...it shaped who I am today.

I thought I knew what Sky Ranch was all about. Then, I watched both my children attend camp as campers. I saw how much fun they had and how they looked up to their counselors. Little did I know, that was just the beginning. Both of them worked at Sky Ranch as counselors for several years, and during that time I watched them grow in ability, confidence and faith. In fact, they grew in ways that left me in awe and with no doubt Sky Ranch develops counselors into leaders in their communities and the church.

To me, there is no better place than Sky Ranch for children and families to explore their faith and feel closer to God, and for future leaders to grow in their faith and to develop their skills and talents. I feel blessed to have this opportunity to serve on the sky Ranch Board of Directors and I'm looking forward to doing my part to ensure future generations are able to share in this experience.

Don Alpern
Christ Lutheran, Highlands Ranch

Kayla Aspeslagh
Trinity Lutheran Sem, Columbus, OH

Dss Kristen Baltrum
Bethlehem Lutheran, Longmont

Pr. Paul Judson
Lutheran Campus Ministry, Fort Collins

Kim Kelty
Glory of God, Wheat Ridge

Pr. Ruth Ann Loughry
King of Glory, Loveland

Pr. Rob Moss
Lutheran Church of the Master, Lakewood

RC Reiman
Ascension Lutheran, Cheyenne, WY

Lindsay Reiten
Trinity Lutheran, Fort Collins

Eric Schranck
Joy Lutheran, Parker

Mike Weier
Bethany Lutheran, Cherry Hills Village

Pr. Leslie Welton
Rocky Mountain Synod Liaison

Gene Elder (Past President)
Zion Lutheran, Loveland

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For kindergarteners, this theme was challenging to understand. As we collapsed on the ground in giggles and hugs, I said to them, "Boys! Your abundance of love was so powerful, it knocked me over!" In response, one of the boys gasped, looked me in the eyes and said, "Oh my gosh! I'm just like Jesus!" In that moment, I was reminded exactly why we do ministry: because like Jesus, we have so much love to share.

-Christine Vincent
2018 Camp Counselor
Bettendorf, IA



ADVENT RETREAT

November 30-December 2, 2018
\$80/adult | \$50/child | max \$250/family
Register today at www.skyranchcolorado.org/advent-retreat

Your Gift Makes a Difference!

For 55 years, tens of thousands of campers have “Encountered Christ on the mountaintops” at Sky Ranch. Our legacy is one of changed lives. Your giving helps to continue the transformative ministry that is Sky Ranch. Here are some encouraging statistics posted by the Northwest Minnesota Synod, Congregations Magazine – March/April 2001, and Luther Seminary:

- Over 50% of Seminary Students attribute the **#1 reason** for going on to seminary is because of **their experience at an outdoor ministry like Sky Ranch.**
- Over 75% of paid Youth Directors accredit the primary reason for serving in the youth

ministry to their Camp experiences.

- Over 75% of the 20-30 year olds participating in their congregation relate their current participation directly back to their experience at an outdoor ministry like Sky Ranch.

We have witnessed it first hand for 55 years at Sky Ranch! A camper becomes a counselor and a counselor becomes a pastor, youth director or a leader in their congregation. At a time when young adults are quickly disappearing from the pews in our congregations, or have left altogether; we have the gift of their presence in abundance at camp. We know it through experience, we read it in the statistics and we believe it without a doubt! Sky Ranch makes a difference to our youth and ultimately to our church!

Program fees only cover 65% of

the costs to run camp, the remaining 35% comes from congregational membership and individual gifts, like yours. For many years your board has made a conscious decision to keep camper fees low, allowing for all children to attend camp. When you give to Sky Ranch, your gift supports high quality programs, facilities and staff. Your gift provides an interactive Christ centered experience that changes lives.

God has entrusted a vibrant Gospel centered program and 117 acres of mountaintop creation to our care. **Please pray about how you can make a difference;** a difference that will have a long-lasting impact for many youth, adults, families and our world. **Your Gift Gives Opportunity; Your Gift Builds Faith; Your Gift Grows Faithful Leaders!**

Summer Offering Update

At each closing worship this summer, we collected an offering for two community organizations serving our synod. Homeward Alliance (formerly known as Homeless Gear) is based in Fort Collins and operates a spectrum of programs and initiatives, including providing critical survival gear, employment services, homelessness prevention and more.

Our second offering recipients are the yearlong volunteers of Border Servant Corps, a congregationally-based nonprofit in Las Cruces, NM and El Paso, TX. BSC promotes justice, kindness, and humility through the intentional exploration of community, simplicity, social justice, and spirituality in the southern border region. Through generous donations from campers, adult sponsors, parents, pastors, and so many more, we are excited to donate \$1,244.04 to these two organizations.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting these invaluable organizations! Contributions from our campers, parents, pastors, and lay leaders are a crucial piece of sharing our ministry with our neighbors.



Thank you to our Fall Hosts!

If you find yourself at Sky Ranch this fall, you'll meet our fall hosts: Margaret Chell (pictured left) and Victoria Benson (right). Margaret and Victoria are both graduates of Pacific Lutheran University. Margaret is working until she departs for the Peace Corps in November. Victoria recently finished an Americorps program doing trail maintenance and environmental stewardship in Massachusetts.

Our fall hosts work with our retreat groups and do maintenance work around camp to prepare for the winter. If you see them at camp, be sure to thank them for their hard work!



Fall Property Update

Each year, Sky Ranch is blessed with individuals, congregations, families, and campers who contribute their time and talents to keep camp facilities and grounds well maintained, safe, and ready to welcome guests. In addition to the current construction of the new staff and retreat facility, the following projects were completed this summer and fall:



- Constructed new picnic tables
- Constructed new benches for Backpack Center
- Mulching and maintenance of paths around camp
- Constructed covered grill area in the Chuckwagon
- Trail work on property and in the National Forest
- Tree & Stump removal for building construction
- Replaced benches at Sondance worship area
- Finished replacing heaters in cabins
- Built a covered shelter for nurse's golf cart
- Reconstructed the Archery Range
- Built a new archery storage shed
- Built internal metal frames for platform tents
- Replaced basketball hoops at Rec Area
- New stairs for program director's loft
- New bench and storage outside lodge
- Shower house lighting improvements
- Replaced exterior siding on Bonhoeffer cabin
- General painting and staining around camp
- Replaced Exterior door on Camp Store
- Installed water tower at Beaver Flats



Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp
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NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
FORT COLLINS, CO
PERMIT 627

**2019 SUMMER
REGISTRATION OPENS
NOVEMBER 15**

**GROUP HOLDS ARE AVAILABLE
BEGINNING OCTOBER 15**

**VISIT SKYRANCHCOLORADO.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

