

SUMMIT

SUMMER 2015

New summer camp combines art and adventure

The Diakon Wilderness Center and the Carlisle Arts Learning Center joined forces this year to offer a camp experience combining art and adventure.

Offered from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the wilderness center campus, the five-day Art and Adventure Camp is open to children ages 10 to 15. Activities such as hiking, rock climbing, low and high ropes courses and canoeing are interwoven with specific nature-oriented art projects.

This combination appeals to the broad interests of children, says Becky Richeson, executive director, Carlisle Arts Learning Center.

“Going into the woods is fantastic. Kids love it,” she says. “But I also think stopping and pausing when

you are out in the woods to think about what it means and capturing some of that meaning through art is a natural fit.”

Apparently children agree, because enrollment in the three scheduled camp sessions took off shortly after registration opened.

“It has been great collaborating with the Carlisle Arts Learning Center on this project,” says Michael Savario, adventure specialist. “They offered a lot of assistance with marketing the program to the local community and have a successful history of hosting summer camps and activities.”

But it isn’t only the art and adventure that are attracting more participants; rather, it’s the

environmental education component and the opportunity to participate in stream studies, Savario believes.

“We have a great stream and will let the kids explore it,” he says, adding that they will also work with the Diakon Wilderness Greenhouse & Native Plant Nursery to learn about native plants.

“We have so many resources here at the wilderness center and are eager to share them with the community. Each year we offer more opportunities for children and families to experience our services—and we’re excited to see that continue to grow.”



Student turns circumstance into opportunity

Wade Besecker believed he had been misjudged, but he never once used that as an excuse.

Little more than one year ago, Besecker found himself enrolled in the Center Point Day Program after a fight landed him on probation.

“I didn’t think I deserved to be there,” says the 18-year-old. “But I kept to myself and did what I had to do.”

While that meant working hard in the classroom and studying for his GED, it also included participating in automotive vocational training at the Diakon Wilderness Center.

“I enjoyed how the program worked and that we got to pick the program that interested us,” he says, adding that it led to an internship with Faulkner Subaru in which he learned technical aspects of the business, as well as customer relations.

“In a way it helped me decide what I want to be. I want to go to school for my inspection license and find a shop where I can inspect vehicles.”

As the internship ended and Besecker completed the Center Point Day Program, he transitioned to The Bridge Program, where he worked with Alex Thomas.

“He is one of the hardest workers I ever met,” says Thomas, program manager. “School didn’t come easy, but he worked hard studying and practicing.”

When the day came to take his GED test, Thomas took him to the exam and waited until he was done.

“I think I was more nervous than he was,” he remembers. “I knew he deserved it.”

Able to access the scores online, Thomas called Besecker to share the results.

“I was speechless,” Besecker says of learning he passed. “All of my teachers had pushed me to get my GED and better myself. Their support really benefited me.”

Looking back on what he accomplished, Besecker believes his participation in the Center Point Day Program was a good thing despite his initial objections. Armed with his GED, he has a full-time job and expects to enroll in community college this fall.

“Everything happens for a reason,” he says. “I look at Center Point now as a good thing. It helped me to achieve and to realize what I want to become.”



Wade Besecker with Alex Thomas, The Bridge Program program manager.

Upcoming Opportunities to Volunteer at the Diakon Wilderness Center

July 26 • at the Diakon Wilderness Center

Aug. 23 • at the Diakon Wilderness Center

Sept. 26 • at the Diakon Wilderness Center

For additional information on volunteer days or on how you can help, please call the Diakon Wilderness Center at (717) 960-6700 or email us at wildernesscenter@diakon.org.



www.diakon.org/dwc

Volunteer activities range from working in our greenhouse and gardens planting, pruning, and weeding, to general wilderness center campus landscaping or trail maintenance. Volunteers have the opportunity to work alongside our youths doing mulching, staining, and repair work, etc. Volunteer hours are 9 a.m. until noon.

Greenhouse grand opening attracts hundreds

More than 300 people turned out for the grand opening celebration of the Diakon Wilderness Greenhouse & Native Plant Nursery in May, buying nearly 500 plants and helping to raise almost \$4,000 for the center. Master gardeners as well as Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources staff members were on hand to help answer questions.

Kate Austin of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation provided a mini workshop on designing, siting and planting a rain garden.

Following monthly weekend hours in June, the native plant nursery will be open this summer by appointment and reopen with regular hours in September and October.

For more information, contact Kim Patten by calling (717) 960-6740 or by emailing pattenk@diakon.org.



Save the Date — Outdoor Adventure Challenge Sept. 19

The fourth annual Outdoor Adventure Challenge will be held Sept. 19 on the beautiful, wooded 170-acre campus of the Diakon Wilderness Center.

Registration is at 8 a.m. with start time 9 a.m.

The course is off-road and includes some steep inclines. All pre-registered participants will receive a long-sleeved tech T-shirt (if they register by Sept. 1), as well as lunch, free parking, and use of the zip line, Alpine tower, high ropes course, and the new Giant Swing located on the wilderness center campus.

Registration is \$35 by Aug. 31, \$45 after that.

Spectators pay a \$15 fee for lunch and challenge activities. All of the proceeds benefit Diakon Wilderness Center programs that aid at-risk youths.





Drug Court Wilderness Weekend offers positive experience

Following the success it found with the Youthful Offenders Program, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, has turned to the Diakon Wilderness Center to offer a program for participants of its drug court program.

Offered four times in 2015, the Drug Court Wilderness Weekend brings together groups of young adult males who are dealing with drug addiction and related issues for a three-day wilderness experience.

"Bucks County was looking for us to focus on the skills that can translate into participants becoming positive and productive members of society," says Anthony Brau, assistant director of the Weekend Alternative Program.

"We are not a punishment. We are a positive environment for them to be in and see things from a different perspective."

From Friday afternoon until their return Sunday evening, participants are in constant motion. Activities range from rock climbing and hiking to "pro-social" discussions.

"We try to take them out of their environment and deliver a good wilderness experience while creating pockets of discussion time," says Brau. "We are creating a meaningful, memorable experience. It may mean nothing to one member and yet mean incredible opportunity for another."

Targeting young males ages 19 to mid-20s, this type of program can make up for missed opportunities in their youth, Brau notes.

"That age group is hungry for something else. Their brains and maturity level have developed more than younger adolescents," he says. "They start to see the bigger picture and become more invested in their future. They find the drive for something better and are willing to do what it takes."

For more information on the program, contact the Diakon Wilderness Center at 717-960-6700.