

The Vincentimes

Volume 4, Issue 2

Winter 2015

Camp Vincent ... Come Play with Us!

Although we have had a trying year, we persevere and carry on. We want to thank our supporters and the Vincentimes for giving us the space to bring you up to date on all camp matters.

Our History

In 1970, Mr Joe Johns (whom we lost this year) along with Kent Deanery Particular Council members Emiel Laevens, Trefle Laprise, and Henry Faubert purchased the land that was to become Camp Vincent.

Since St Ursula's parish was building a new church, the PC purchased the old prefabricated church for \$1.00. It was disassembled and rebuilt on site to be used for camp offices, staff sleeping quarters and a large auditorium/recreation hall. Winter Works of the federal government participated by covering the wages of six staff to rebuild.

The chapel from St Joseph's Hospital property was also moved and converted to a craft hall and added a storage room to the back of it.



Joe Johns' widow and family at our dedication and tree planting ceremony

Washrooms and a large dining hall, with a kitchen and walk-in cooler were also constructed.

A provincial government grant of \$11,000 was used to build a 30'x40' pool.

A bequest from the DeShaw estate in the amount of \$65,000 was used to assist under-privileged children to attend camp, as well as for camp maintenance.

Camp was officially opened for the summer of 1971.

The first summer accommodated 71 children. Our current capacity of 724 children was soon achieved.

When the camp first opened, the charge was \$45 per week and children came from across Chatham, Windsor, Sarnia, London and surrounding areas. Today, children still come from these areas and beyond, including as far away as St Catharines. No child is refused at the camp.

What Do the Campers Say?

I would say that camp is my home away from home, but it's so much more than that. Camp is my home. It's the one place where you can be yourself and feel like you belong. It's a truly unforgettable thing to experience, and I can't express in words how grateful I am that I was able to experience it firsthand. Camp is a place where you can

come out of your shell and make friendships that last a lifetime. It's a place where you can just be you. ~ Chloe

My favorite thing we did was canoeing because I got to look at the things God gave us. ~ Young camper

Camp is one of those places you

would call home; it's a place to be yourself and no one can tell you not to be. Camp is not only just summer camp, it's memories. ~ Savannah

I have never felt like I have belonged or had a purpose. Camp gave me that and friends to go along with it. Thank you for giving me my life back. ~ Counsellor in Training

Shoestring Budget Breaks under Major Repairs

Like most non-profits and charitable organizations, we are used to operating on a shoestring budget ... but this year our shoestrings broke and we have been left with great debt. Our biggest challenge this year was the major repairs needed at camp.

In addition to replacing the original pool, which we still owe \$25,000 for by June 1st 2016, there were other related costs, such as tiling the area around the new pool to drain the land; landscaping around the new pool; and refilling the old pool.

Then there were some unexpected expenses this year: blocked toilet issues at four different cabins; blocked drains in the girls shower room; six full septic tanks which needed to be drained.

We were hoping to get away without any large capital projects in the

next two years in order to get back on track; unfortunately, there are some looming projects and the list of work keeps growing.

Our pool house, which holds all of the electronic equipment, is leaking and the roof must be replaced before this winter. It is long overdue and we cannot take the chance on ruining all the expensive new equipment.

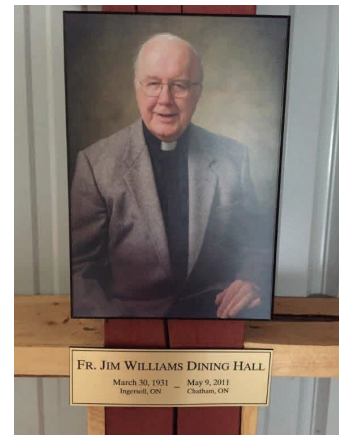
The Director's house is in need of a complete new bathroom.

The nurses' quarters will also be in need of a new shower and removal of the old tub which is in a deplorable state. Thankfully the sink and toilet in the bathroom are okay.

The staff kitchen will need new fridges; the three in there now are very old and we've discovered black mold, so we must get rid of these.

They are scheduled to be picked up by the contracted company for the SaveON program. At least that part is free.

Much of the camp is in need of a good scrubbing and a new coat of paint. If we can get a group of volunteers together, they could help with this aspect ... there is still cost involved for supplies, but the alternative of hiring painters makes even the simplest tasks a major expense.



The new addition to our dining hall was named in honor of Fr. Jim Williams, who also contributed greatly to our new pool

Saving Where We Can

Having a beautiful new salt water pool, a little larger than our original, sounds like a luxury. But the old pool was in no shape to be used anymore. Plus the children are really enjoying this upgrade and it should serve us well for many years to come.

We know there will be costs related to this pool and are doing what we can to keep these in check. For example, this year the pump ran 24-7 which resulted in an atrocious hydro bill. However, if we can install a programmable timer to shut the pumps down after the last swim of the day and restart before the first swim the next day, it could amount to considerable savings. We've also considered solar panels just to run the pumps, but the start-up cost for that is unattainable right now.

We like to re-use what we can, where we can. For example, we were able to re-use some of the fencing around the new pool. We also re-used the original pool house as it is a cement block building and very solid. The thought at the time was to use it temporarily and build a new one a little closer to the new pool, but again this is not in the cards as we see it now.

More from the kids ...

There is no way I'd rather spend my summer than being at camp. It's familiar. It's fun. It's home. And there's no place like home. Thank you for the best eight sum-

mers of my life. Especially the last three. ~ Camp Counselor

My favorite part of camp was when the whole camp got together and had a campfire and sang campfire songs and told stories about our lives and how you should be a friend and not a bully. ~ Young camper

My name is ____ I was in cabin 7 and I love camp. My favorite thing we did was everything because all of it is so fun. ~ Young camper

Save our Pool!

The original pool built in 1970 needed replacing, so a contractor was hired and we were gearing up for a great summer. Shockingly, the contractor did not uphold his agreement and there was great concern that the 2015 campers would not have a pool at all!

Thankfully, our community came to the rescue. Quality Pools stepped up to build the pool, coming on board on June 1st. Six weeks later, despite the wettest June in memory, they had a pool up and running. They also provided a large discount in supplies, as did Fox Pools, Shock Doctor who did the electrical, and Simpson's Fence who did the fencing and re-used as much of the old fence as they could.

While the pool was not ready for the first two weeks of camp, as we also had delays getting things inspected for the official opening, we had water activities planned in the canoe pond. But when it was all done, our new salt water pool was a hit with our campers. The children were ecstatic. They said it felt good on the skin and was warmer than the old 'cement pond'.

Our biggest thanks to all of our donors for making this happen.



From left to right: Kerri Wright and Valerie Butterfield receiving a cheque for \$15,000 from Hydro One to help fund the new pool

Working towards the Future

We have met with interested parties in London and came away from that meeting feeling that, barring our pool adventure, we were on the right track. A 3-year proper business plan is being worked on as we speak, with an ensuing budget and fund raising of utmost importance.

We need to find enough funding to fulfill our mandate and get a camp going that is self-sufficient and able to improve. An operating capital, which has never existed, needs to be implemented.

We are working on a letter to solicit donations and trying to find corporate sponsors.

Also, we have touched base with the Union Gas Retirees Volunteers worked on the Chatham Store with outdoor painting and landscaping two years ago. It is beautiful and has held up nicely. We know they do not have a project yet for this summer and they may be available

to spruce up the directors house with cleaning and painting. They usually have a large crew that comes out and can donate up to \$1000 for the project. So, fingers crossed, that they will be able to help the camp.

Despite this challenging year, we are still very optimistic for the future. We would like to thank everyone who has supported us, financially and in-kind, from individuals to companies.

Please support our camp as well as you can as we take up this large commitment to a new level which will guarantee that the camp will exist for years to come.

Thank you,
Valerie Butterfield,
President, Kent Deanery Particular Council

Camp Counsellor Says ...

I don't think that I would ever be able to put into words what my experience here at camp has been like. It truly is an extraordinary gift to be in a place where you can truly be yourself and discover things about yourself that you never knew. I actually developed my abilities to sing and lead while I was here. Now, I'm involved with my school's choir. With every child that I come into contact with at the camp, I want them to discover their hidden talents like I did. I believe that camp is a place where you truly feel like you're living with a new family that loves and accepts you for who you truly are and I wouldn't trade this feeling for anything in the world.

**SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT
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The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Mission:

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is: To live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.

Values:

The Mission of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul implies that as Vincentians, we:

See Christ in anyone who suffers;
Come together as a family;
Have personal contact with the poor;
Help in all possible ways.

Upcoming Dates

December 4, 2015 — Voting Closes for the ONRC Presidential Election

January 15, 2016 — Deadline for newsletter submissions (please note: we cannot guarantee all submissions will make the next issue, but will do our best to include in upcoming issues)

January 31, 2016 — Annual Reporting Begins. Conference reports due.

February 28, 2016 — Particular Council Annual Reports due

March 30, 2016 — Central Council Annual Reports due

April 15-16, 2016 — Ontario Regional Council Spring Meeting, hosted by Conférence Jesus-Marie-Joseph, Orleans (Ottawa)

2016 Dates & Rates

The camp can accommodate 724 children and youth over the summer.

Although we subsidize many children through donations and conferences, we have adopted a voluntary tier program. Tier 1, at \$250/week, is our historically subsidized rate, but does not reflect the true cost of operating the camp. Tier 2, at \$300/week, is partially subsidized for those who can pay a little more. This rate more closely covers the cost of a week at camp, but does not take into account maintenance or future projects. Tier 3, at \$350/week, more closely accounts for the true cost of camp and includes a small additional amount for future projects and maintenance.

Week	For ...
July 10 th – 15 th	Girls, ages 6-15
July 17 th – 22 nd	Boys, ages 6-15
July 24 th – 29 th	Girls, ages 6-15
July 31 st – Aug 5 th	Boys, ages 6-15
August 7 th – 12 th	Girls, ages 6-15
August 14 th – 19 th	Jr Co-ed, ages 6-11 & 14-15
August 21 st – 26 th	Sr Co-ed, ages 11-15

We are already getting ready for a great summer 2016 experience. Be sure to check www.campvincent.com for more information.