

To: Pocantico Hills Board of Education
From: David Levine, Director PHDC
Date: October 28, 2010
Subject: Final Camp Report- 2010

The economic situation in the country made 2010 a difficult year for families, businesses and communities all across the nation. The camping industry was not immune to the financial distress felt by people who considered sending their children to camp a privilege rather than a necessity. However, even in this gloomy atmosphere it gives me pleasure to report that Pocantico Hills Day Camp had an increase in enrollment and a profit of \$ 39,187.33 . The fact that PHDC showed a profit was the result of a number of procedures that were implemented prior to and during the camp season. These include:

1. Budget- I worked very closely with Jay Scotto-Friedman to establish a workable line by line budget.
2. Expenses- The expenses were carefully planned and monitored to insure profitability.
3. Salaries- I made sure the salary guidelines established by Jay were adhered to.
4. Non Residents- We increased the amount of non resident campers from **53 in 2009** to a **total of 72 in 2010**. This increase was due to a number of factors:
 - A) The good reputation of PHDC
 - B) Tours- I arranged to have parents come into the building all year long to meet with me to discuss the camp program and to take a tour of our facilities.
 - C) Summer 2009 tours- I arranged to have interested parents come to see our camp in operation during the 2009 season. They viewed activities including the pool, athletic fields, wilderness, fun factory, home economics, etc.
 - D) Staff- Our warm, caring staff makes this a great environment for kids to be safe and have fun.
 - E) Extensions- We had numerous campers originally sign up for 3 weeks and then extend for the entire season.
 - F) Payment flexibility- We worked with families regarding payments by stretching out the due dates to give the children the opportunity to be at PHDC for the full 6 weeks.
 - G) Pre camp parent meeting- This meeting which was held on June 10, 2010, introduced the "key" staff members to mostly new parents. We answered all questions and concerns and had over 35 people in attendance.
 - H) Year Round Secretary- We are in the "age of communication". Parents need to have their questions answered quickly whether it refers to camp dates, rates, schedules, payments, etc. Sharon Rubeo as the Camp Secretary is a tremendous asset to the success of this program. She knows how to communicate with the parents, work with the campers, handle the buses, and take care of all the camp payments etc.

SUMMER 2010- A review

The 2010 summer camp season was extremely challenging but also very rewarding. We encountered an enormous amount of obstacles but still managed to make it a safe, fun and a rewarding experience for the campers. I attribute the success of the season to a cooperative

and flexible staff, the understanding of our problems by the parents and the unbelievable cooperation of the custodians.

Some of the major issues we faced included:

1. The pool- The frequent failures of the pool pumping system caused The Department of Health to demand that the pool be closed. The water levels were not up to standard because of the pump failures and when they were temporarily fixed it took many hours for the water to reach acceptable levels. This in combination with their insistence that PHDC rewrite the entire section of the camp manual pertaining to the pool caused many days of limited pool use. We compensated for this during the hottest summer on record by using the slip and slide, hoses, water games on the athletic field and an increased amount of out of camp trips.
2. Construction- Due to the construction in the building we were very limited on camp facilities. We had no use of the gym, auditorium, camp lunch areas, parent pickup area, and classrooms. This necessitated many changes in the program and in functioning camp areas.
3. Closure of rooms- The construction also forced the camp to constantly change rooms and move equipment and supplies.
4. Vacate camp – We were forced to take the entire camp on a trip when dangerous construction equipment was being used.
5. Parent Pickup- We had to change the parent pickup area and utilize the upper parking lot due to the construction equipment in the old bus circle.
6. Tent- We were forced to rent a tent for the summer so we could have a shady area for studio, camp fair and in camp entertainment.
7. Constant schedule changes- Due to the construction, we had to make constant changes in the schedule.
8. Traffic patterns- All previous walking patterns had to be adjusted due to the construction.
9. Hiring- Additional staff had to be hired to insure the safety of the children as they walked near construction areas.
10. Rainy Days- Our facilities were very limited necessitating numerous spontaneous changes to the regular rainy day program.

These problems although quite a burden, did not prevent 2010 from being a very successful season. Here are some of the new programs that were instituted:

1. Trips- Many new trips were added for all grades.
2. In camp entertainment- We had a clown, a magician and a animal act entertain the entire camp.
3. Inter camp games- Grades 3-teens went off the grounds to other camps to participate in soccer, basketball, volleyball and dodge ball games. We were victorious in a majority of these athletic events and the campers behaved beautifully and exhibited good sportsmanship. I have already gotten requests from campers to expand this program.
4. Art- This was introduced for grades 3-teens.
5. Reading- A new program in reading was designed for pre K-Grade 3.

6. Teen program- This included more trips and a different bike trip.
7. Sports clinic- We introduced a separate athletic period of basketball in preparation for the inter camp games.
8. "Make Your Own Sundae"- We instituted 2 days of ice cream sundaes for the kids with an enormous amount of topping choices.

What is in store for 2011?

You cannot stay completely stagnant in the camp business. Therefore we are investigating a number of new programs for 2011. I have already begun meetings with Assistant Director Laura Hansen and Camp Secretary Sharon Rubeo to discuss changes for 2011. These may include:

1. Woodburning- "Woodshop Bob" would like to introduce a new, safe method of creating wood projects. Stay tuned.
2. Dance Program- We are considering a separate dance program for grades 3-teens.
3. Project Adventure- We are looking into the possibility of a teen day trip to a project adventure facility.
4. After camp dinner pizza party- This would involve grades 1-2 with dismissal at 7:00 p.m. on those days.
5. Inter camp games- I will try to set up more athletic games against other camps for grades 3-teens.
6. Grade 5 over night- This might involve go karts and horseback riding and boating.
7. Tennis program- I would like to see greater use of our tennis courts.
8. New trips- The trip program in 2010 was very successful. We will change some of the trips and also add many new ones.
9. Film making- We may make this a separate class apart from studio to attract the serious future "Hollywood" directors and producers.
10. Additional traditional sports- We hope to include a form of softball for grades 2-teens.

Recommendations

In order to enable us to plan adequately and to insure a successful camp program, I would like the Board to consider the following suggestions.

1. Camp Dates- Tuesday July 5- Friday August 12, 2011.
2. Camp Rates- Retain the same rates for camp and for the activity fees.
3. Sessions- Keep the same 3, 4, 5 and 6 week sessions.
4. Teens- All teens expecting to go on the bike trip must sign up for 6 weeks and participate in a minimum of 6 mandatory bike training sessions.

5. Teen staff should have the right in consultation with the Camp Director to deny the bike trip with cause to any camper who either does not qualify or has not exhibited behavior worthy of the trust and cooperation needed for this excursion.
6. We should retain the pre and post camp care program with the same rate structure. For the safety of the children it is necessary to have 2 staff members running the afternoon part of the program.
7. Tennis- I would like to explore the possibility of offering private tennis lessons on a fee based schedule during after camp hours.

Health Issues- We were extremely fortunate last year to have NO major injuries, NO 911 calls, and NO ambulances for campers or staff. I attribute this to our caring and diligent staff and especially to the effort and care provided by our terrific NURSE LYNNE.

In conclusion, I think it is necessary to acknowledge the contributions of a number of people who all contributed to making this such a great camp and a wonderful place for the children.

“Key Staff”- For many years I have said that directing this camp is not a one person operation. We have a fabulous group of people working together in the camp office. Assistant Director Laura Hansen provides all of the camp energy and spirit and works with me very closely in planning all of the camp activities. Camp Secretary Sharon Rubeo handles almost everything in a very busy camp office. She is a tireless, efficient worker who knows almost all of the children as well as the parents and is always eager to help in any way possible. Nurse Lynne Jackson cares for all the campers as if they were her own children.

The Boss- I want to thank Jay Scotto-Friedman for his guidance, support and leadership in helping to solve a number of camp issues. His assistance in solving many of the construction related issues was especially appreciated.

The Principal- My thanks to Stan Steele for his help in explaining and dealing with some of the Pocantico student issues.

The School Office Staff- Everyone in the building during the summer is somehow involved in the success of the program. I want to acknowledge Gina, Mary, Olive Jo Ann, Linda, and Jane for all that you did to make camp run smoothly.

The Pool- Under difficult circumstances, the pool staff led by Mike Wisniewski did a marvelous job in providing as much instruction as possible.

THE CUSTODIANS- My special thanks to Nunes and the entire custodial staff. We could not have survived without your help. Whether it was driving buses for trips, making repairs, moving furniture etc, the custodians were always there for camp and their work was appreciated.

The Board of Education- I appreciate your suggestions and support and I am anxious to begin planning for another great year.

I am looking forward to 2011 and I anticipate with the addition of a new pool and more activities that this will be an even better summer.

Happy Camping