US NAVY SEA BEES HELP CAMP IN A BIG WAY!

We’re so thankful for being connected to a network of talented, generous, and dedicated volunteers that help us improve our camp in so many different ways.

For many years the SeaBees, a construction unit for the US Navy, has both led and assisted in construction projects at Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer. Two of their most recent projects have been our Big Red Adirondack Chair (BRAC), built in April 2012, and a brand new Archery Range on Kon-O-Kwee, built in October 2012.

The BRAC has already been placed in a handful of locations around camp, but is a consistent attraction regardless of location as a cabin meeting spot and photo-op destination.

The new Archery Range comes outfitted with a steel roof over the archers’ heads for protection from the elements and shade, a cloth backstop that stops arrows dead without damaging them, integrated pvc ground quivers for arrows, a multi-level storage unit for all the archery equipment, and it also adds two additional shooting lanes which allow six archers to aim for a bullseye at the same time.

In past years the SeaBees have helped with the construction of the wraparound deck on the Camp Spencer Climbing Barn, the bridge and deck at the Sugar Shack campout & campfire area, as well as the Camp Office & Milton Porter Medical Center, which is among the most advance camp medical centers in the nation.

If you know of an individual or group that would like to contribute to a volunteer service or construction project, call the camp office today!
UPCOMING EVENTS

You don’t have to wait until Summer to enjoy Kon-O-Kwee. Check out the great events and opportunities we have coming starting with Breakfast with Santa on Saturday December 8th - Call the camp office to reserve your family’s spot!

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Enjoy the morning of December 8th at camp with Holiday activities, a delicious breakfast, and a visit with the big guy in Kramer Hall!

Register with Linda for one of our two sessions, the first from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and the second from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at 724-758-6238 ext. 2604 or email Linda at: lflora@ymcapgh.org

Cost is $5.00 for children 10 and under, $10 for participants over 10 year old. See you there!

CABIN FEVER FESTIVAL

Just when you can’t take being cooped up inside any longer...

Bring the whole family to Kon-O-Kwee Spencer from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. on Saturday March 2nd, 2013. for a fun-filled day of camp activities and a home cooked lunch!

Cost is $5.00 for children 10 and under, $10 for participants over 10 year old. See you there, snow or no snow!

THE HERO’S QUEST

The Adventure Continues! Sign up the family for the 2nd Hero’s Quest on Saturday April 20th & Sunday April 21st, 2013.

This epic adventure is designed to bring families closer together, inspire family members to help each other, and build confidence & identify unique abilities through various activities.

While the event is designed for families with kids age 7-13, all are welcome to attend & participate for just $50 per household.

THUNDER over KON-O-KWEE

Enjoy an EARTH SHAKING experience at Kon-O-Kwee on Saturday May 11th loaded with Camp activities, inspiring entertainment, a giant bonfire, and Zambelli Fireworks.

Don’t miss this 2013 Summer Kickoff Party!

Also, Keep an eye out for your invitation to the Mother’s Day Brunch on May 12th and for TRY-Camp on June 8th & 9th, 2013
**CAMP NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh has recently named Zach Hoffman to the position of Executive Director for Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer. Zach’s experience in camp management dates back to 2002, after graduating from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania with a BA in English, when he served as the Associate Director of Camp Mount Luther, the outdoor ministry of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In 2006 & 2007 Zach served as Resident Camp Director for the YMCA Triangle Y Ranch with the YMCA of Metropolitan Tucson before coming to Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer in January of 2008 when he was hired as Program Director before being promoted to Resident Camp Director in January of 2009.

**Zach & Alesia Hoffman have lived and worked at Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer since 2008.**

In his new role Zach will manage the daily operations of the camp and provide leadership to the Kon-O-Kwee Spencer staff and program participants. Zach assumes this responsibility from Rick Deer, Vice President of Camping Services for the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, who now dedicates his time to overseeing the operations of all three camps and various camping initiatives on an Association-wide basis.

Zach has attended summer camp in some fashion since 1988, as a Camper, CIT, Counselor, Trip & Travel Director, Summer & Summer Program Director. In 1998 Zach met another camp counselor, Alesia, who eventually made him her husband in 2004 and now serves as the Director of Dining Services at Kon-O-Kwee Spencer. Together, the two enjoy hiking, paddling, and cooking together as well as spending time outdoors with their dog, Bisbee.

We congratulate Zach and wish the best for him in his future at camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer.

**JUNA CAMPER RAISES CAMP SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS**

Mario Martin, a rising third year Juna camper, gets early exposure to philanthropic giving through the Send Kids to Camp program.

**Mario remembered.**

Mario remembered the day he helped his dad recruit campers for the summer of 2012 at the Thelma Lovett YMCA. That day he heard his dad use the phrase “Send Kids to Camp” over and over again. He remembered getting the explanation that going to camp is something that Kon-O-Kwee and the YMCA wants every kid to be able to do, but not everyone is able to afford.

Mario remembered his own experiences at camp, starting as a Juna 1/2 week mini camper in 2011 and proclaiming: “Next year I want to go for a whole week!” Then in 2012 when he was picked up after one week an exclaimed: “Next year I want to go for two-weeks!”

Mario remembered his friends, his brothers in the Juna Village and his sisters in the Gena Village. He remembered the special memories and fun times they had had together.

Mario remembered these things so vividly that he knew there had to be a way that he could help...

In a touching gesture of selflessness and generosity, Mario decided that he’d like to donate money in honor of his birthday, and in lieu of any birthday presents for himself from friends or family, to the Send Kids to Camp (SKTC) scholarship program.

On Thanksgiving Day, just a few weeks after Mario’s birthday, he presented Camp Director Zach Hoffman, with a $500 check destined for the scholarship fund.

Through SKTC camp scholarship program and the Building Bridges program, we are able to see that anyone who wants to attend camp is never turned away due to inability to pay.
Superhero Week
Superheroes & Super-villains all over Camp! This is always one of the most popular themes summer after summer for crime-fighting hilariousness!
**Week 1:** June 23 – 28

American Pride Week
A camper favorite! One week of extreme patriotism - Lots and lots of flags, apple pie, fireworks and American pride. Bring your red, white and blue to camp with you to camp
**Week 2:** June 30 – July 5

Safari Week
Take a trip through the African Savannah, the Australian Outback, and the Amazon Rainforest, encountering exotic animals and faraway lands. Come ready for adventure!
**Week 3:** July 7-12

90’s Week
Its time to celebrate some of the greatest music, games, and clothing styles of all time! Campers will have a blast styling their hair, dressing in Zubaz pants, and listening to MC Hammer!
**Week 4:** July 14 – 19

Circus Week
Clowns, strongmen (and women), animals, trapeze artists, jugglers, magicians & contortionists all over camp! Join us under the Big Top Week Five!
**Week 5:** July 21-26

Disney Week
Who doesn’t have a favorite Disney character? There’s been so many over the years! Come have an instant classic of a summer camp week!
**Week 6:** July 28– August 2
Outdoor Environmental Education

Fall marks the close of another great OEE season. This fall and next spring we’ll host more than 5,000 students in our living classroom:

FALL SCHOOLS

A special thanks to all of our schools who use Camp Kon-O-Kwee as their home for residential outdoor education and day trips in the fall:

- Peebles Elementary
- Hosack Elementary
- Franklin Elementary
- Marshall Elementary
- McKnight Elementary
- Bradford Woods Elementary
- Ingomar Elementary
- Southside Elementary
- Midland Elementary
- City Charter High School
- Montessori Children’s Academy

Outdoor Environmental Program Focus: Connect to Water Quality

Connect to Water Quality is a lesson for grade 5 or 6 students with a focus upon the chemical and biological health of a freshwater stream ecosystem. During this lesson, the students explore how physical, chemical and biological changes can affect life in a freshwater stream in both positive and negative ways.

The students begin by sporting knee boots for their journey into the creek. The students first observe, test, and document the chemical makeup of the water. The students tests for pH, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, temperature, and turbidity. The chemical makeup of the water will help the students learn and discover the biological life that is found within the stream.

After documenting their chemical findings, the student re-enter the creek with nets for the most exciting part of the lesson: catching animals. The students focus on catching macro-invertebrates. The students collect dragonfly nymphs, caddis fly larva, and giant water bugs just to name a few.

Through their chemical and biological findings, the students are able to determine the health of the creek. The lesson wraps up with a discussion about the factors that play into the health of an aquatic ecosystem.
Anyone who goes to camp knows that the activities are fun, but it's really about the PEOPLE! In our new Where Are They Now segment, we catch up with some of our alumni:

When did you start coming to Kon-O-Kwee? As a camper, I started off in 1982, having attended three years as a Sena camper and two years as a Vena camper. I skipped my last year of Vena to become a CIT. I think my last year at camp was 2007. I did have a multi-year hiatus, where I wasn’t there on a daily basis. While during my tenure, I was a CIT, counselor (Juna and Sena), Sena, Teen, and Explorer village director, program director, and Aunt Barb’s assistant.

What are your favorite camp memories? Some of my favorite memories: Uncle Nate’s Candlelight speeches, Latice Daniels and Big Billy Smalls from Juna, Teen Candlelight, Old School Capture the Flag vs. Watered-Down Capture the Flag, Explorer Campout@Moraine, Teen Bracelet night on the Peninsula, Beach Day at DV, SED Camp, Down with Dippy, “I Will Always Love You”, yelling from Eagle’s Nest, Sena Bead ceremonies, Faust Lounge with J-Stoke, My “Alex” hoodie from Teen T-shirt Trade, CIT weekends, the Batdance. Tony Pony’s polyester party suit, Flags, Aunt Kristin cracking my tooth with a Chicklet, 4-EVA, Elisabeth Easel & the BSB, Corn Growing contests, all the candles around the water @ Candlelight, Mikey Mason during the Sena Bead ceremony, My very first cabin (cabin 28), My very first Sena cabin (cabin 39) Sena! Pain! We love it! Sena! (It’s not our fault!) the first time we had The Promise, followed by American Pie.

What do you do now? I’m an elementary principal at University Park Elementary School, part of the Gateway School District.

How has camp made a difference for you? Camp Kon-O-Kwee has helped make me the man I am today. It was at camp that I decided I wanted to be an elementary school teacher.

Camper, CIT, Counselor, Village Director, Volunteer: Uncle Brian Werner
**Summer Camp 2013:** Surprise your child, teen or that special kid in your life with a **Kon-O-Kwee Gift Box:** A session of summer camp at a reduced rate and a camp t-shirt in a box! Give your kids something to be excited about **after** the holidays. Give the gift of friendship and fond memories that will last a lifetime. **Reserve your summer camp session with a $75.00 deposit before Wednesday, December 19th** and receive your Kon-O-Kwee Gift Box in time for the holidays and **SAVE...$25 Off for One-Week Campers and $50 Off for Two-Week Campers!** For summer camp pricing and registration, visit: [www.ycamps.org](http://www.ycamps.org)

**1/2 Week Camps: Campers Age 7-9**
- Mini A: June 23-26
- Mini B: June 30 – July 3
- Mini C: July 14-17
- Mini D: July 28 – 31

**1 Week Camps: Campers Age 7-13**
- Week One: June 23-28
- Week Two: June 30 – July 5
- Week Three: July 7-12
- Week Four: July 14-19
- Week Five: July 21-26
- Week Six: July 28-August 2

**2 Week Camps: Campers Age 7-15**
- Session A: June 23-July 5
- Session B: July 7-19
- Session C: July 21-August 2

**High Adventure: Campers Age 14-17**
- Session A: June 23-July 5 – Great Allegheny Passage Bike Trip & Vagabond Backpacking
- Session B: July 7-19 – Kinzua Canoe Trip & Vagabond Backpacking
- Session C: July 21-August 2 – Kinzua Canoe Trip & Vagabond Backpacking Trip

**Sneak-Peek**
Because campers **Choose Their Own Adventure,** daily schedules vary based on each camper’s choice, Village, and what day of the week it is. The schedule below is for a 10 year old camper (Sena/Fawna) on a Wednesday at Kon-O-Kwee, but is typical for most any camper age 7-13.

**7:30 a.m.**
Wake Up! Wash Up!

**7:30 p.m.**
PARTY! music, dancing, snacks, & games

**8:15 a.m.**
Flag Raising

**8:15 p.m.**
Snack

**8:30 a.m.**
Breakfast

**9:00 p.m.**
Clean Up, Quiet Down

Moondance #1

Moondance #2

Moondance #3

**9:30 a.m.**
Canoeing

**9:30 p.m.**
Cabin Devotions/Daily Reflection

**10:30 a.m.**
Nature Crafts

**10:00 p.m.**
Lights Out

**11:30 a.m.**
Blacklight Ga-Ga

**12:30 p.m.**
Lunch

**1:30 p.m.**
Recharge - Rest Hour

**2:30 p.m.**
Free Swim @ the Pool

**3:45 p.m.**
Ravenwing - High Ropes: Continuous Tri-Circuit & Zip Line

**5:15 p.m.**
Flag Lowering

**5:30 p.m.**
Dinner

**6:30 p.m.**
Firefly - TroneZone Splash Pad
“Mom, no-one was my best-friend, we were all brothers.”

That’s the statement every parent hopes to hear on the drive home from camp. It indicates growth, self-confidence and a sense of belonging – all important values that YMCA Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer has been sharing with children for over 86 years.

But for so many in our region, camp isn’t a financial possibility and too many kids never get to experience a week of supervised, wholesome, outdoor fun.

**Do you worry about these children? Do you wonder about their future? Do you ask yourself if a small investment now will place a child on a course to future success?**

We have great news!: the A. L. Spencer Foundation has made a generous gift of $40,000 and challenged us to raise an additional $60,000 so **200 low income children are able to spend a week at camp next summer.**

Send Kids to Camp provides scholarships to children from financially struggling families.

While camp may seem like a luxury to some, for children in need the experience provides a summer that otherwise has no safe, healthy or constructive activity. **Camp keeps kids out of danger and provides a foundation for future success.**

**But we need your URGENT help! We must hear from you by December 31st to access the Spencer Foundation’s matching funds.** Will you make a life-changing gift and help us get 200 children to camp this summer? There are so many ways to help:

- Your gift of $300 will help pay for one child to experience a full week of adventure, friendship & fresh air.
- $150 will cover one week of hearty, nutritious meals served family style where everyone shares and helps to clean up.
- $50 helps provide simple essentials for a child in need like a sleeping bag, swimsuit and the all-important flashlight.

If you believe that Camp helps children develop self-esteem, overcome challenges and build confidence – then please, **send your gift today – so the Y can make a commitment to 200 children in the New Year.**

Act now and please be generous! Call the camp office today to help us provide a positive life experience for 200 low income children next summer.

Thank you and happy holidays from all of us at YMCA Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer!
The Chief’s water-bearer had two large pots, one hung on each end of a pole, which she carried across her neck.

One of the pots had a crack in it. While the other pot was perfect, and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the mistress’s house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to Chief Connoquenessing.

The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream: "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your mistress's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some.

But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

"That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them."

"For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate Chief Connoquenessing’s table. Without you being just the way you are, I would not have this beauty to grace his home."

Tales & Legends from the Great Chief Connoquenessing:
Questions?

Please contact us with questions about any of our programs and events at:

1-877-YMCA-KOK & Register Online at www.ycamps.org

Follow us on Facebook @ YMCA Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer