

## Ferncliff's Solar Program Wins Major PW Grant

*\$200,000 for Solar Projects for Haiti and Solar Panels for Ferncliff*

Birthdays are special. So are Birthday Offering grants from Presbyterian Women. Applications pour in from around the globe. Just a few projects are selected. This fall, Solar Under the Sun was one of three selected. The award is \$200,000. Half will be spent to meet critical community needs through solar energy projects in Haiti. The other half will initiate a variety of solar energy applications at Ferncliff.

The new solar installations will give mission teams experience to use in low income communities around the world. They will also help Ferncliff save energy and 'go green.' There will be a net metering system to feed



*"Enough sunlight hits the earth every hour to supply the earth's energy needs for a year."*

energy back into the grid. There will be a small scale pump and irrigation system. There will be solar for lighting and solar for heat. Ferncliff will be a classroom of solar initiatives that will lift up both mission and sustainable practices.

The first two projects will be completed soon: a solar powered DC pump that will provide water for the garden and irrigation and a new entrance sign with solar powered lighting.

Using solar energy is a means of caring for creation. Supporting cleaner energy options is a way we express our gratitude to our Creator.

### Senator David Pryor to Speak as Ferncliff Celebrates

*75 Years*

Ferncliff's Board of Directors is pleased that former Governor and Senator David Pryor will speak at Ferncliff's annual dinner on February 3rd. Senator Pryor grew up at First Presbyterian in Camden. He came to Ferncliff as a camper and then returned to be a camp counselor.

The annual dinner is a gathering



of friends of Ferncliff to celebrate the past year and look forward to the years ahead. This year will be Ferncliff's 75th anniversary. Reserve your seat for February 3rd by calling the office – 501-821-3063. The cost is \$15 and can be paid by check or credit card. Reception at 5:30 and dinner starts at 6:00.

# Summer Camp is a Game Changing Experience for Campers

## We Had A Great Summer In 2011

There are measurable results: 755 campers from 57 congregations, eight Camp-in-a-Van programs at local churches, 20 different camp offerings, 26 summer staff, and eight international counselors. These are good numbers, but they don't tell the life-enhancing impact of summer camp on campers and counselors.

The results that really count are the transformative experience and the long term positive impact. It is harder to measure those changes. We sense it in the smiles and laughter during the daily activities. We feel it in the hugs and high fives as campers leave for home. We hear it in the sharing and singing. However, we typically don't get to see the longer term impact the experience has had on them.

Steve Baskin, a leading author and camp researcher boldly declares: "A week at camp is the most powerful development experience for youth other than loving parents." Our experience leads us to agree. Think about it — independence, problem-solving, faith development, healthy habits, making new friends, encouraging creativity, hearing about God's amazing love, growing in self-esteem. In the camp experience the whole person grows.

## We Are More Enthusiastic Than Ever About The Coming Summer!

We will continue the themes that are distinctive and special about Ferncliff: Creativity, Creation Care, and Mission. Look for new themed camps like Camper vs. Wild, Critter Camp, and Camp Quest and traditional favorites like Night Owl, Solar Camp, and Fern Chef Cooking Camp. This coming summer (yes it is coming!) the theme will be Secrets



of the Kingdom: The Parables of Jesus." We will have FUN exploring parables that Jesus used to teach what it means to live in His kingdom. Campers will see the meaning and application of these stories to their own lives.

We appreciate your support of the summer camp ministry. Feel free to contact us with questions, suggestions and feedback.

### Parents and Campers told us this past summer:

*"There isn't enough room to write all the good things she has shared. She loved the songs and skits, shared them with her little sister and cousin, and now they want to go to camp, too. :-)* Ferncliff Parent

*"I can't wait to go back next year!"; "Seeing new creations was life changing." . . .* Ferncliff Camper

*"I've heard just about every song and game. From a child who doesn't talk much, she's still telling us things three hours after pickup. She liked hearing about other countries from the foreign counselors. Great experience for her!!" . . .* Ferncliff Parent

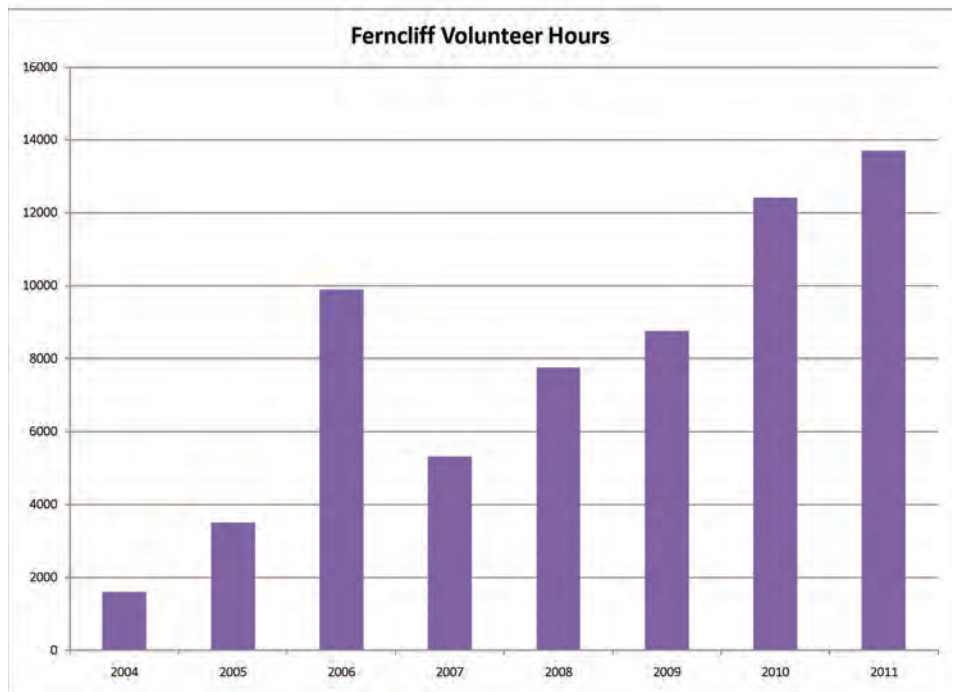
*"I had a God moment!" . . .* Ferncliff Camper



# Disaster Abounds, So Does Ferncliff's Outreach

Ferncliff's Disaster Assistance Center (DAC) has become a beehive of volunteer service. Churches across the country respond with compassion to disasters by organizing hands-on mission projects. They assemble Church World Service (CWS) disaster kits: hygiene, school, baby and clean-up bucket kits. The kits are shipped either to the national CWS warehouse in Maryland or to Ferncliff's DAC. Every day kits arrive and are receipted, inspected, and prepared for shipment to disaster sites. As of the end of October, we had received 57,421 pounds of kits from 38 states. Shipments this year have gone to Vilonia, AR; Tuscaloosa, AL; Johnson City, NY; Raleigh, Windsor, and Lumberton, North Carolina; Ohatchee, AL; Minneapolis, MN; and Yaound, Cameroon!

One portion of the 10,000 sq. ft. DAC is equipped for woodworking. A retired group from Second Presbyterian has been using it to make new beds for Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home. They have made 45 beds for youth who are delighted with their new furniture. Their next project is making portable showers that can be shipped to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance volunteer sites.



## Retired Professionally, Not Philanthropically!



As Bill Branch retired after having served as General Presbyter of the Presbytery of Arkansas from 2001 – 2008, his contributions to Ferncliff were recognized with the naming of Branch Cabin.

Bill and Liz continue to be actively involved with Ferncliff through mission and disaster work. This past year they approached Ferncliff about establishing an endowment to cover the maintenance costs of Branch Cabin. Working with the Ferncliff Endowment Committee and the Texas Presbyterian Foundation, they established the Bill and Liz Branch Endowment.

*Thank you, Bill and Liz,  
for the forward thinking of this legacy endowment.*

# How Our Garden Does Grow!

## *Camp Garden is Becoming Camp Farm*

One of the best decisions we made last year was to add a camp garden. It started out with 12 raised beds dug and planted by an Americorps team of volunteers. It then grew with the addition of a gazebo, rain barrel water catchment system, composting bins made from used pallets, a worm farm, and a chicken house/pen.

This year we will add more raised beds, create some vertical gardening demonstrations, install a trellis entrance, plant 20 blueberry bushes, add a solar powered irrigation system, and build a goat pen and yard. Our campers love coming over for hands-on learning about gardening, nutrition and animals. Our camp garden will now be our camp farm!



### **For Those Who Would Like to Make a Designated Gift**

#### **Life vests – \$18 each for 30**

We have had the cheaper orange life-jackets, but they are bulky and impair mobility. The vests are easier to clip on. We'd love to be able to make this upgrade for summer 2012.

#### **Tents – \$75 each for 4**

We have not had new tents in a decade. We can get 6 person tents for \$75 – nearly half price. With some of our camps for older youth we would love to take them on a campout to enjoy more of our 1200 acres.

#### **Trees - \$100 each for 6**

Between the weather and beavers, we lost a number of trees. Winter is the best time for tree planting and we will have Americorps volunteers to help.

#### **Mini-Bows - \$111 each for 4**

We have excellent compound bows for our campers, but we need some so our smaller campers can be successful.

#### **Blueberry Bushes - \$120**

We hope to plant 20, two year old blueberry bushes in our camp farm area so campers can have the fun of harvesting and enjoying them for years to come.

#### **Conversion Kit for camp truck to run on used cooking oil - \$1,200**

We have a 1981 Volkswagen diesel pickup we want to convert to run on the used cooking oil from our dining hall. We will call it "The French Fry Truck" and use it for luggage and light chores.

#### **Solar Powered Pump and irrigation demonstration system for the garden - \$1,500**

We will put a DC pump in a used well, connect it to a solar panel, and whenever there is sun it will fill our 250 gallon garden irrigation tank and the irrigation system for our blueberry bushes.

*\*if the designated item been subscribed, the gift will be used for related projects unless the donor asks to be contacted.*

# AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps

Before we left Denver, our Team Leader Lizzy, had only one negative thing to say about our upcoming project at Ferncliff. Having worked there before, she knew that going to Ferncliff for the first project of our term of service meant the team's expectations for our following projects would be unreachably high. We were about to be spoiled.

A few days later, on Nov. 13 we were riding in a 15-passenger van, finally breaking the border of Kansas into Oklahoma on our way to the camp. The atmosphere in the van was light-hearted and smelled of Doritos — in mere hours we would arrive at Ferncliff, which would be our new home and workplace for the next month, and the sense of newness and adventure was dizzying.

As brand new members of the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), a 10-month residential, national service program for 18-24-year-olds, our 12-person team, along with the 27



**Holly (upper left) and fellow Americorps team members installed new beds in the conference center and helped send the old ones to a local homeless shelter.**

other teams from the Denver campus, had just finished one month of lengthy training sessions and we knew how to effectively give CPR, how to run a Red Cross disaster relief shelter, and how to safely use power tools. What we didn't know yet is how true Lizzy's assertion would prove to be.

Ferncliff has hosted NCCC teams since 1999, and they have been seasoned into the ideal project sponsor. Firstly, they always have work for us. It's surprisingly common for project sponsors to underestimate the amount of work 12 people can tackle in a short time frame. Even though first round is the shortest, with NCCC projects ranging from one to two months, operations manager, Steve, said he expects to get eight weeks of work out of us, and so far I think we've risen to the occasion.

Not only is the work plentiful, it is meaningful. Knowing that the goat enclosure we're about to build will make little eyes light up is a worthy reason to get a few blisters swinging a hammer. We're proud to help figure out the solar-powered irrigation system, which will water the blueberries, and also serve as a teaching tool, enabling others to care for creation as they do here at Ferncliff.

I really can't talk about being spoiled without mentioning our accommodations — the stuff NCCC dreams are made of. We live in two cabins across the lake from the dining hall. We could call our friends and brag about the electricity, much less our own kitchen, a television and DVD player, hot showers (after you toss out a bug or two), and paddle boats and sand volleyball whenever we want!

Though they may be setting the bar high in Arkansas, my team, Water 1 is so grateful to get to be here at Ferncliff camp.

*Holly Lavecchia of Warren, Minnesota  
Americorps NCCC  
Water 1 Team Member*



**AmeriCorps team members moved this barn to create a larger playfield in the youth camp area. The barn, which has gone from being a Garden Shed to the Archery Storage Shed, will be reused as the Waterfront Barn for life jackets and paddles shed!**

**Team members Sarah, Amanda and Meggan installed a trellis tunnel entrance to garden. They also added 25 blueberry bushes, a solar powered irrigation system and six more raised beds.**





The past several years churches and donors have made it possible for Gloryland Pastor's Choir to come to summer camp. They are from North Little Rock, Eudora and Wynne. We are very proud that they have been selected to represent the USA at the International Choir Olympics! This summer they will leave from Ferncliff to go to Cincinnati to compete.

*Best wishes Gloryland!*



**Ferncliff Presbyterian Camp**

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