



# Youth Camp Chronicle

## Minnesota Elks Youth Camp

October, 2017

Willmar, MN

### The Camp Board

#### *North District*

Krazy Thompson Int'l Falls 1599  
Charlie Radika Hibbing 1022

#### *Central District*

Herman Wisneski PSP Brainerd 615  
Dave Zane Willmar 952

#### *Metro District*

John Miller (Chair) Hopkins 2221  
Tom Hoelscher Minneapolis 44

#### *South District*

Ron Sik Mankato 225  
Allen Rahn Winona 327



### From the Camp Board

Summer 2017 was a good one! 662 campers were served, camper selection was good and few major problems. Two major lightning storms did cost us a few bucks-wifi, tv, well pumps-but no building damage and no injuries. We were able to award a record number of scholarships to our staff and they are appreciated. We had one of our youngest staffs ever, they did well and many are returning in 2018.

Once again with the help of Joel and Kim and Bill Schindele, we will make the budget!! Family camp, soccer shoot and troops week all went well. Please continue to support Penny-A-Day—it provided us

with \$109,000 this year that we do not have to charge to the lodges. The conservation easement process with the DNR is in process and should be final soon.

You as members of the Minnesota Elks Association own and operate one of the longest running youth camps in the order. The key word is operate—you fund it—you get the kids—you provide the facility and you do a damn good job. You should be proud of the “Best Place on Earth” — the Minnesota Elks Youth Camp!

**John M. Miller PER**  
**Camp Board Chairman**

*Check out our web site*

[www.mnelksyouthcamp.org](http://www.mnelksyouthcamp.org)

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[MN Elks Youth Camp](#)

**Contact Us:**

[youthcamp@mnelks.org](mailto:youthcamp@mnelks.org)

**Visit Us:**

10860 County Rd 118

Nisswa, MN 56468

### This and That

#### **Owatonna House**

A great addition to the camp. It will be finished in April, 2018. Owatonna has put in some \$15,000 and the camp has matched it. Please take a look when you all come to camp opening. Lots of people involved that makes it happen. Stay tuned for the improvements in the Rochester and Winona Houses.

#### **Pontoon Boats**

Our boats are aging and we must start to plan for a newer fleet. We will need funding and sources.

Any member who knows a marine dealer or wants to help in the process, please contact the camp board.

Thanks.

## From Our Youth Camp Directors

Dear MN Elks Members:

August 1, 2017

We would like to thank all the Elks Members who have contributed to our wonderful State Project! It has been a tremendous experience having the opportunity to live and work at the “EC” for 17 summers and see such incredible improvements and exciting new ideas year after year. Also, we have witnessed more and more Elks Members stopping by to see the camp in action. It is known as the **Best Place On Earth** and truly shines when you can see the youth of Minnesota enjoying your efforts!

Our program has continued to present positive public relations by maintaining our annual programs like Troops Week, Elks Kids Weeks 1, 2 and 3 and Staff Appreciation Day. We also ran our fifth fun run fundraiser called “Four on the Fourth.” Our sixth year included a record 111 participants and raised some money for five staff memorial scholarships and program costs. Throughout the summer, we have maintained our Facebook page with hundreds of Elks Camp photos that were viewed by over 7,000 interested people! We also had a near record attendance of 670 campers!

We would like to thank our staff of 2017 for choosing a meaningful job mentoring these youth and making a real difference in the lives of these children. This is a very challenging job, which requires tremendous skills that many young people either do not have or choose not to share. Our staff goes above and beyond to create connections and a caring environment where all campers feel comfortable and welcome. Elks members can be assured that the camp program being provided is high quality and money well spent.

As Camp Directors for the Minnesota Elks Youth Camp and Fellow Elks Members, we would like to humbly express our gratitude to everyone connected with this fine state project. This is another example of the great deeds that can be accomplished by Elks members. We are very proud of the Minnesota Elks Youth Camp as the **Best Place On Earth** for helping youth, and we are happy to report the summer of 2017 was again a huge success! Hope to see you at camp next season!

Sincerely,

Joel & Kim Baumgarten  
Minnesota Elks Youth Camp Directors

### Wish List for 2018

- New cabin by Dakota
- Two signs: At the service and bus entrances “Welcome to Elks Camp- **Best Place On Earth** Mission: To provide youth with a life changing experience”
- Drinking fountains at Lodge and Markee
- Two washer/dryer combos in Dining Hall and Girls Wash House
- Field Lights x 4 (on current posts)
- 25-50 hp outboard tiller motor
- New pontoon and motor for Pelican Beach
- New faucets for Boys and Girls wash house
- Blankets (150)

### Fix List

- Continue to stain/paint sheds and other buildings—cabins
- Continue to fix all split rail fences
- Wire essentials for power outages
- Service all vehicles-carts/truck/mowers/tractor/boat motors
- Have all pontoons ready-Dylan Exe
- Replace the wood on the floor of beach cabana (too many splinters)
- New air conditioner in Cheyenne and Mohegan cabins
- Power to stage area and prop shed and light in prop shed
- Wall in main room of health house
- Mohegan electrical
- Girls shower house (old showers) continues to drip

### Donations Wish List

- 3 heavy duty hand pull garden wagons for campers to put leaves and sticks
- 3 backpack blowers
- 10 push brooms
- 10 flashlights
- 10 youth life jackets
- Bug spray
- Monies toward archery equipment
- Laundry detergent
- Snacks (qty of 110) - fruit snacks, juice boxes, prepackaged snacks
- Paper goods (paper towels, toilet paper paper plates & cups)
- Monies for sunscreen (need specific kind to prevent swimmer’s itch)
- Charcoal (20 bags)
- Tonka sand toys

## What Elks Camp Means to Me : by Clare Hamer

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Trying to fit “What Elks Camp Means to Me” onto one page is nearly impossible. This place has been a huge part of my life for as long as I can remember. As I near the end of my possible last summer ever, it is hard to put into words what this place has done for me. Elks Camp has always been a home, a place for people to get away, a place to be loved and somewhere where you can be who you want to be. It will always be near and dear to me.

As a kid, this place was continuously the highlight of my summer. I loved coming here and being a part of something so cool. I could be myself, be weird, and was accepted. I would do silly things up on the stage, make art, and become friends with staff, which led to lifelong friendships or coworkers of mine. I finally was old enough and I have been working here since. Clearly the people who were working there did their job well, because I loved coming every year and wanted to someday make kids feel the way the staff made me feel. I was so grateful for the way I was treated and wanted to do that for others, when I finally was able to work here I was hooked. After two years, I got myself an Elks Camp tattoo (I was finally old enough to) and that is still one of my favorites I have. I love telling people why I have it and what it means to me. I know many people do not believe when I tell them we change some kids lives, but this summer camp is more than a summer camp it's a home and an escape. These kids have gone through a lot of things I will never be able to fully understand what it is like to be in their shoes. Giving kids some love and attention is the least I can do. It is never a chore, yes there are many struggles and frustrating times but I choose to come back.

This past year I have been looking at my experience much different than the last years. This could be my last year because I would like to move to Utah and start a career in Recreational and Art Therapy which I discovered I loved because of camp and working with these kids. I promised myself a different attitude and outlook this year. We always watch the F.I.S.H. video during training. I have really taken the video to heart this summer. I'm doing my best to be there, play, choose a positive attitude and make their day. These steps are so easy and so effective. I choose to be positive and push through the tough days because these kids deserve that. I am there for them because I want this place to be safe, welcoming and fun. I am being paid to make art with kids and so many other activities that equal playing. I would love to spend every summer here if I could but sadly all good things come to an end.

Camp has been my summer home for 12 summers and I can't even imagine what it will be like to leave. It has shown me how to grow and change for the better. Because of camp I have gained many skills on working with others and children, and then being able to expand and grow from that. I started off thinking I would not enjoy working with kids to loving everything they do or say and cherishing time I get to spend with them. I'm so grateful to camp and every coworker I have had. But, in the end who knows maybe I will be back next year and many years after, I'm never afraid of change and always ready to take on a new task and I can thank camp for that.

## What Elks Camp Means to Me : by Paul Wenner

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For the last three summers I have been fortunate enough to work at Elks Cap. I can still remember before my first year that I was very hesitate to take the job to work at camp, but I am so glad I convinced myself to take that step. At first, I thought that working at camp would be a fresh start from high school and a good transition for college, but little did I know how much more this place would truly mean to me. In my first couple weeks working as a counselor, I remember feeling anxious, nervous and all sorts of “what am I doing” emotions, but as time went on I gained so much confidence in myself and I grew as a stronger counselor and person.

My favorite part about being a counselor was being able to connect with your kids and knowing that you are making an impact on their lives. My time as a counselor gave me so many unforgettable memories and life values that I will cherish and continue using for the rest of my life. Being a head counselor has really shown me what it takes to be a good leader. Having a leadership role at camp has given me the confidence to make decisions in other aspects of my life. As head counselor, I have also gained so much more knowledge in how to deal with conflict. Dealing with kids with behavioral issues has taught me a lot about patience and communication. One of my favorite parts of being a head counselor is being able to leave a positive impact on all the campers. In my thank you letters, a lot of them say that they are thankful that I try to make them happy and smile. To me, it is very heartwarming that I can make someone's day with energy and positivity.

I cannot begin to thank everyone how as made my camp experience so great and memorable. Being able to work with such a kind and loving staff truly makes a difference in the campers lives as well as mine. Working at Elks Camp was one of the best decisions that I made in my life and I am forever grateful that I decided to work at the Best Place on Earth.

## How Elks Camp Changed My Life : by Ellie Walz

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Elks Camp has changed my life by giving me the opportunity to change the lives of others. The one child that stands out the most to me is a girl named Moya. I first met Moya my second year as a staff member. I was working in the kitchen that year but I was a cabin buddy for Moya's cabin so I got to get to know her very well over the week.

When I first met Moya I quickly learned that she would be a more difficult camper than most. Her negative attitude and constant complaining would test my patience. I stepped in when I could to help the counselor deal with her temper tantrums. I soon found out the behind all of Moya's behaviors and outbursts. It was a Thursday and she had received a letter from her mother. In the letter she was told that her father was being deployed overseas again and she would not get to see him before he left. She then followed to open up to her counselor and myself about her home life. She told us that her mother often bullies her, tells her how ugly and awful she is and doesn't seem to care about her.

Hearing about her home life made me realize how much more important her week at camp was and why she acted out like she did. To her, any attention is good attention and camp is the only place she can get that attention. I always knew that the campers were sent to camp because they had rough home lives but hearing about Moya's family first hand made me fully appreciate the job I was doing.

The next year I was a counselor for the Mohegan cabin and Moya was put in my cabin. Having previously dealt with Moya I knew I was going to have a testing week ahead of me. I made sure to give her the extra attention she needed. Whenever I would start to get frustrated I just remembered why she was acting the way she was acting.

By Saturday morning I was at my wits end with Moya. As her bus arrived and her name was called I was surprised by her reaction. She was hugging me and telling me that she didn't want to leave. Even though she had complained about nearly everything we did during the week she actually had a good time. Her thank you note to me is what really affected me. In her note she wrote, "Thank you so much! You changed my life!" Hearing that I had made a difference in her life made all the tough times and frustrating moments worth it. Because of camp I now know how simple it is to change a life.

I am now halfway through my sixth year at Elks Camp. All the Lessons I have learned at Elks Camp I use in my everyday life. Patience, compassion, problem solving and working with diversity are just some of the skills I have learned at Elks Camp that prove valuable in any job or leadership opportunity. Without camp, I would not be the person I am today. I would not be perusing a job in education, working with children throughout the school year or being a welcome week leader on campus. Elks Camp has changed my life in more ways than I can ever possibly explain and for that I am forever grateful.

## A Life Lesson Through Elks Camp : by Brittany Baumgarten

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I have been involved with Minnesota Elks Youth Camp since I was 8 years old. I came as a camper for many years and also lived up here with my parents until I started working as a counselor or on the program staff. It has been such a unique and beneficial experience that has definitely influenced my career path which will involve helping youth.

As a child, I always had a very shy personality. I was very quiet and did not talk to people that I didn't know well. Now that I have had many years of experience in the kitchen, as a counselor, helping at Markee and a few other jobs, I have learned how to be myself and meet lots of new kids/staff members easily. These vast experiences have also helped me gain many leadership qualities by leading my own ten kids every week as a counselor. Since I have been around camp for so long, I have learned to help many of the other staff members understanding the numerous activities and how to relate to the kids.

Throughout the years spent at camp, I have learned important ways to help the campers feel comfortable at camp and to relax and avoid homesickness. Homesickness is a difficult issue for most staff members because of how persistent campers can become as they are insisting to go home. Patience is another attribute I have gained since I have been working at Elks Camp. There are some very difficult campers sent to camp with a number of negative experiences with authority figures and are very wise with their ability to bend rules and cause problems for whatever situation they are involved. These are youth who need to have an excess of attention and patience because of the difficult situations that they have experienced in their lives. These campers have enlightened me as I have grown to be more compassionate, caring and patient. I have noticed the growth most as I have had the opportunity to work as

*(Continued on page 5)*

(A Life Lesson Through Elks Camp Continued from page 4)

the relief counselor where I have assisted staff with the most needy and homesick campers who act out.

Elks Camp has helped me to realize how fortunate my life has been and how great it can be to help others. This experience has really opened up my eyes and makes me appreciate my blessings while developing the desire to make a difference for others. My camp experience as a whole has made me recognize how much I love to work with kids. Even when I can no longer come back to camp, I still would like to use the skills I have acquired as a counselor and work with children. I am currently in my second year of Dental School at the U of M. I would really like to specialize in orthodontics, so that I could continue to work with kids.



A new five star booth at the National Convention. Thanks to Lauren Barber, Owatonna Lodge for the design. Thanks to our dedicated team of (L to R): Randy Richmond, John Miller, Lisa Richmond, Ron Probst and Jeannie Probst for their dedication to manning the booth and supporting the Youth Camp.

## Other Wishes

- Repair:
  - Bikes
  - Rack on 4-wheeler
  - Flooring/railings on Palm Beach (loose deck)
  - Railings/side panels on all pontoons
  - Secure cup holder/end of seat area on Palm Beach
  - Door frame on Pole Bar
- Paint:
  - Cabins, Owatonna House, Lodge
  - Finish shelter at Markee
  - Storage shed at Woodtick
- Replace:
  - Front two tires on big wagon
  - Chain on small wagon

## Reminders

- Elks kids and grandkids sessions are for Elks kids and grandkids—pretty simple—please do not send your own kids to the first four (4) sessions. We need to protect our non profit status.
- Please do not reserve a spot for Elks Kids and Grandkids week and cancel a few days before the session starts. It is not fair to the ones waiting.
- We experienced several cases of lice this summer. We need to check our own kids for lice as well as a lice outbreak can easily cost us \$8,000

The camp board wants to keep offering these sessions as a benefit of membership but we need the rules to be followed for the benefit of all involved.

Thanks.

## Thank You!

I am so pleased to see that the Elk's Youth Camp is doing well and my Grandfather Joseph F Cibuzar who owned these lands before they became part of the Elk's Camp would be extremely pleased to see everything is in working order! So on behalf of the Joseph F Cibuzar family - thank you so much for making his dreams come true.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie McTernan RN,  
Adult Nurse Practitioner  
Baxter Minnesota

## 2018 Camping Schedule

### Session 1: June 10 - June 16th

|                     | Boys      | Girls     | Total     |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Bemidji             | 10        | 8         | 18        |
| Duluth              | 12        | 12        | 24        |
| Eveleth             | 14        | 10        | 24        |
| Fergus Falls        | 2         | 2         | 4         |
| International Falls | 7         | 7         | 14        |
| Virginia            | 9         | 6         | 15        |
|                     | <b>54</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>99</b> |

### Session 2: June 17th—June 23rd

|             | Boys      | Girls     | Total      |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Dakota      | 2         | 2         | 4          |
| Faribault   | 6         | 6         | 12         |
| Hopkins     | 11        | 10        | 21         |
| Minneapolis | 8         | 8         | 16         |
| Red Wing    | 10        | 8         | 18         |
| St. Cloud   | 2         | 2         | 4          |
| Stillwater  | 10        | 8         | 18         |
| Wadena      | 6         | 6         | 12         |
|             | <b>55</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>105</b> |

### Session 3: June 24h—June 30th

|             | Boys      | Girls     | Total      |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Alexandria  | 12        | 14        | 26         |
| Hibbing     | 10        | 8         | 18         |
| Mankato     | 12        | 6         | 18         |
| Willmar     | 8         | 6         | 14         |
| Worthington | 5         | 7         | 12         |
| Hutchinson  | 6         | 7         | 13         |
|             | <b>53</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>101</b> |

### Session 4: July 8th - July 14th

|           | Boys      | Girls     | Total      |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Brainerd  | 13        | 11        | 24         |
| Owatonna  | 16        | 18        | 34         |
| Rochester | 12        | 12        | 24         |
| Winona    | 13        | 8         | 21         |
|           | <b>54</b> | <b>49</b> | <b>103</b> |

All lodges will be in the first four weeks, followed by an expanded Troops Week with a few Elks kids and grandkids in week 5. Weeks 6 and 7 will be Elks kids and grandkids as before. This year all lodge and troops camper fees will remain at \$75.00. Elks kids and grandkids camper fees will be \$150 for members and \$200 for guests. The sign up info will be posted on the web site

<http://www.mnelksyouthcamp.org>

Any questions or lodge quota changes should be referred to a Camp Board member listed on the front page. Remember all lodge camper fees are paid by the raffle proceeds and not by the individual lodges.

**Session 5: Troops Week** + Elks Kids & grandkids  
July 15—July 21

**Session 6: Elks Kids & Grandkids Week**  
July 22—July 28

**Session 7: Elks Kids & Grandkids Week**  
July 29 -August 4

**Elks Family Camp:** August 10—12

**State Soccer Shoot Out:** August 24—26

