

Mikell Camp and Conference Center, Report to Council 2013

Mikell Camp and Conference Center and Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center are owned and operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. We have had the pleasure to offer the ministry of hospitality to numerous public and private schools, church retreats of non-Episcopal denominations, business groups, Episcopal parish retreats, youth groups, vestry retreats, folk art weekends, recovery group weekends, spirituality weekends, clergy retreats and of course our summer campers.

The Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center offers Georgia approved curriculum to public and private schools in Georgia and beyond. Under the leadership of director Rich Bowerman, Blue Ridge enjoyed a record setting spring. Classes include forest ecology, wetlands ecology, predator/prey, owl prowls, stream ecology, and evening offerings of Cherokee and Appalachian culture as well as a reenactment of the Underground Railroad. Much of Blue Ridge's business is repeat business, which reflects a high quality of programming.

Our summer camp program engaged the theme of "Longing to Belong." Our deans and their staff did a fantastic job of helping the young people of our Diocese explore ideas of community, inclusiveness, and acceptance of our imperfections and those of others. We enjoyed nearly 750 campers plus, 20 high school-aged counselors per week, 20 college-aged summer staff, and the deans and their staff learning what it means to live in Christian community.

There have been exciting improvements to Mikell. Thanks to a generous gift from Frieda Yeary in memory of her husband the Rev. Jim Yeary, a new conference meeting space has been created. The room is underneath Osborne Lodge and includes an ADA paved ramp to the space, a huge wooden deck, a new conference table that seats 12 in new upholstered chairs, a climate controlled environment with gas burning fireplace, ADA compliant bathroom, kitchenette, ceiling mounted digital projector with screen, polished and stained concrete floors, and the room is wired for HDMI and has Wi-Fi. This space is a beautiful and needed new addition.

Progress is being made to raise funds to build a new lodge in memory of the Rev. Hendree Harrison. This lodge will replace the present Bishopstead and will be similar to the new Osborne Lodge.

Thanks to the efforts of Ethel Wright, Nancy Brockway and the wonderful artists of the Folk Art School stained glass workshop, new stained glass windows are being installed in the chapel. Many are already in place. During Work Camp this past August, one of the projects was to clean and improve the chapel. It is looking better and brighter, and with money being raised by the gifts of the stained glass windows, plans are in place to improve the chapel further by making it handicap accessible, new floor coverings, new electrical throughout and the installation of bathroom facilities.

And even though it's not quite as exciting as the above, we've made over \$25,000.00 of improvements and repairs to our septic system.

If you would like to support the efforts of the construction of the Harrison Lodge or are interested in sponsoring one of the stained glass windows in the chapel, please contact the office at Mikell.

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