

Synod Report 2012

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center

2012 was another year of growth and exciting new ministry for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) Oregon, Illinois. God has been good as always. This report highlights some of the ministry opportunities that are taking place.

Since its beginning three years ago, Freedom Lutheran Church has been worshipping 'in the woods' on site. LOMC is only the second ELCA outdoor ministry Camp to have an every Sunday of the year worshipping congregation on site. LOMC and Freedom Lutheran have formed a task force to define the nature of this partnership in ministry. Pastor Jeff Schlesinger was installed as mission developer on December 16, 2012. He is excited about this ministry and the opportunity to create new ministry "in whatever form God leads us."

A feasibility study will be conducted in spring, 2013 to determine financial support for a capital \$5.7 million campaign to raise funds for an Indoor Activity Building, Welcome Center and new Dining Hall. Included in the feasibility study will be 40 individual interviews and six focus groups. The professional fund raising consulting firm of Gronlund, Sayther and Brunkow from Sioux Falls, SD is assisting LOMC in this process.

The 2013 summer camp theme will be "Living in Love." The Bible text is 1 Corinthians 16:14 "Let all that you do be done in Love." Each day campers will learn more about the importance of loving others. Nine congregations will host the annual Swing Choir Tour from July 19-26. Host congregations are St. John, Sterling; St. John's, Ashton; Irving Park, Chicago; St. Timothy, Naperville; St. James, Rock Island; St. John, Peru, Good Shepherd, Champaign; Zion, Kewanee and Prince of Peace, Freeport. Choir members are entering grades 9-12 and new members are always welcome.

Outdoor Education at LOMC is a good way to get groups into the outdoors. Many youth suffer from Nature Deficit Disorder due to lack of time in the outdoors. Students come from Chicago and suburbs and downstate. They study the trees, birds, bees, wildlife and plants. They participate in activities such as pond canoeing, fishing, archery, hiking and wilderness skills as they learn about our natural environment. During fall 2012, 1,500 youth participated in outdoor education at LOMC. Outdoor education is also offered in the spring and plans are to extend it into the winter with new programs.

The Northern Illinois Synod has designated LOMC as the coordinator for the Synod Lutheran Youth Organization. Staff members and youth delegates meet regularly to plan synod youth activities and share ideas for congregation youth activities.

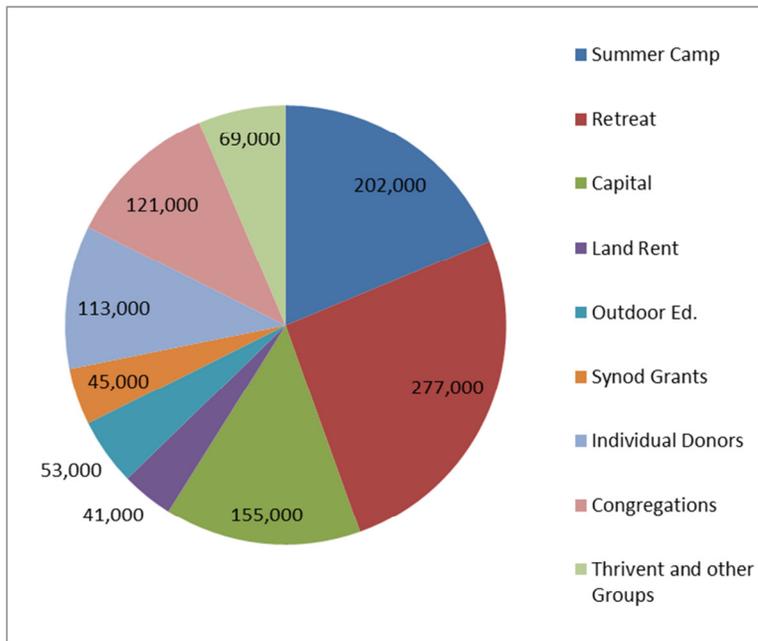
Each year the camp presents three awards for exceptional service in support of the ministry. The 2012 awardees are Kristine Mayer (First Lutheran, Rock Island); and Jim and Debbie Granger (Grace, LaGrange for Spirit of LOMC; St. John, Bloomington as Congregation of the Year and Erik Jensen and Christine Young as Counselors of the Year. Congratulations to the 2012 award winners.

The camp received significant support from 250 Thrivent Financial members who designated LOMC to receive their Thrivent Choice dollars. In addition, Thrivent Financial branches matched the offering from 2012 Swing Choir tours. Thrivent Financial members volunteered during Memorial Day Work Weekend and assisted with the cost of materials.

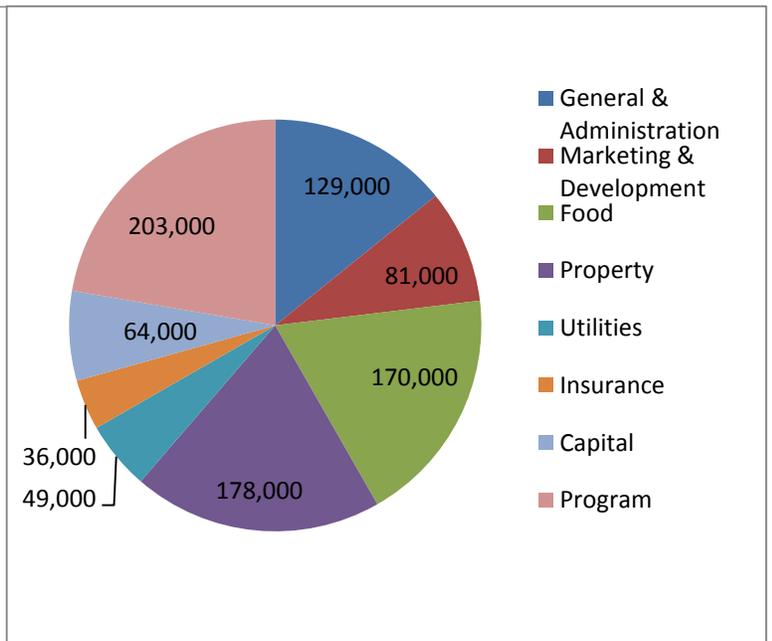
Several capital projects were completed thanks to financial assistance from Lutheran congregations and donors. The projects included a new walk-in freezer, swimming pool upgrade to satisfy the requirements of the Virginia Graham Baker Act, building a new kitchen storage room, removal of a retaining wall at the pole barn, re-landscaping the area and re-roofing the administration building.

LOMC had a positive year with income exceeding expenses. This is due to staff doing an exceptional job holding down expenses. At the same time congregation and individual donor support accounted for more than 20% of the annual budget. Below are pie charts which give a detailed description of the 2012 financial year.

Income for 2012



Expenses for 2012



The Board of Directors is comprised of 26 volunteers from throughout Illinois and representing all three ELCA synods. We are grateful for their input and guidance. Each board member serves on at least one of the committees. Committees are Executive, Finance, Development, Program and Property. Board members from the Central/Southern Illinois Synod who served in 2012 are:

Bishop John Roth, Rob Gieraltowski, John Gregg, Rev. Dennis O'Brien, Rev. Julia Rademacher and Rev. Elise Rothfusz.

We invite you to join the 13,000 people who come to the church in the outdoor setting for a retreat, family reunion, family camp, summer camp, concert or special activity such as Memorial Day Work Weekend or Autumn Fest. Thank you for your prayers and financial support throughout the year.

Russ J. Senti, Executive Director