

# Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center

Annual Report to the Central Southern Illinois Synod (CSIS)

Friends in Christ,

As God transforms us from the inside out, so too is He bringing about change at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC)! In our 41<sup>st</sup> year, over 10,000 guests came to our 640-acre site near Oregon, Illinois. Over 170 ELCA congregations sent and supported youth and adults to our camp for learning God's word, growing in healthy self-esteem, strengthening faith in Jesus, bonding with fellow believers, and building stronger connections to their home congregations. At the end of the year, our guests included 60 youth and adults from the Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA). They spent some of their time learning how to manage our country's reaction to their faith, as well as taking in all that LOMC has to offer with fun activities amidst the quiet, serene beauty of the outdoors. Overall, our guests continue to come back to our congregational retreats, summer camp, outdoor education, confirmation retreats, family reunions, concerts, volunteer work events, Autumn Fest, adult enrichment programs, trainings, and much more!

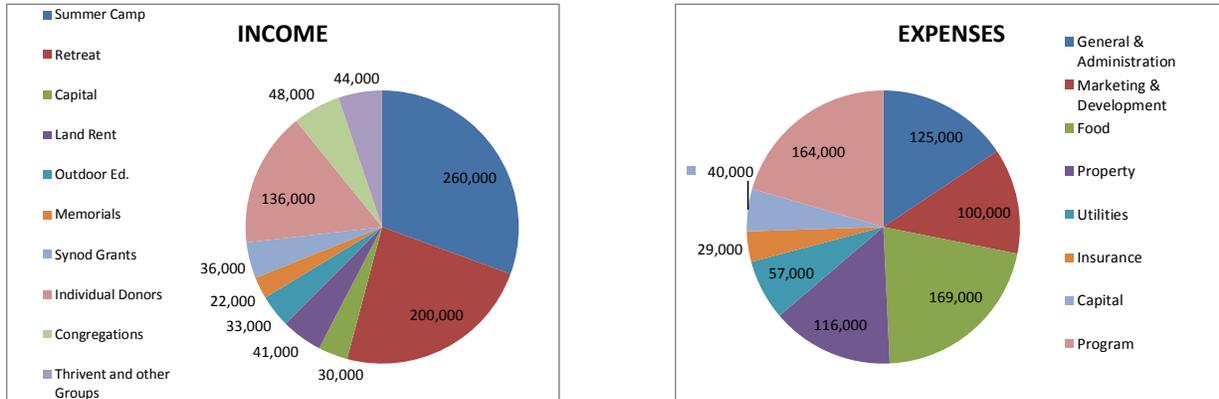
Our devoted 2015 staff of 30 counselors shared God's love with over 1,000 campers last summer. They exemplified the hands and feet of Jesus, working tirelessly 6 days a week, to share God's word in the outside world with our campers. The impact on our kids is so profound and life lasting, that many of our campers eventually become counselors themselves, and even take their love for Christ into their careers. In particular, two of our dedicated counselors Kati and Christine Young, sisters from Lisle, IL, started attending camp when they were just 2 and 4 years old! Present day, they feel that *"working at LOMC has been a cornerstone in our relationships with our God. We have been able to mature in our faith alongside each other at camp. Kati feels most impacted by the power of prayer in a place where God's presence is so easily felt. For Christine, LOMC is the place where she is accepted and loved for who she is as a child of God."* This story applies to anyone who works in our camp ministry, as we understand that transformative learning happens quickly and deeply in our natural environment, yet with intentional programming of sharing the Gospel.

The 2015 LOMC budget was \$850,000. LOMC is fortunate to have very diversified sources of income. Our guests at summer camp, retreats, and outdoor education account for 60% of the annual income. We are very grateful that another 32% of LOMC's annual income comes from our donors, congregations, synods and Thrivent Financial making it possible for LOMC to charge an affordable rate for retreats and summer camp. For example, the base registration fee for a week of summer camp is \$390, but the actual cost is more than \$500 per camper. This marvelous balance of multiple income sources allows LOMC to continue a policy of not turning away any child for economic reasons. The final 8% of LOMC's total income came from land rental fees and money donated for capital projects.

On the other side of the ledger, it is noteworthy that LOMC has minimal administrative expense while the vast majority of expenses are for program and related services. We are very grateful

for the generous giving by congregations, individual donors and synods that made it possible for LOMC to build and dedicate the John Califf Memorial Garden, add an extension to the zip line landing platform, and build a brand new human Foosball court. Thank you for making a difference and for new beginnings in the life of young people who, through your generosity, will attend summer camp and youth retreats!

A look at the specific dollar amounts on the following income and expense graphs tells the story of where our money comes from and where it is spent.



As we have worked on preserving our facilities and traditions, we are excited as we plan for investing in our future. LOMC is overflowing with gratitude for a **\$60,000 matching grant** towards constructing a new multipurpose activity center to be named the Pastor Norm Nelson Program Center, in honor of Pastor Nelson’s work and support of youth ministries. Individual donations to the building project are now matched dollar-for-dollar, thanks to this generous grant, until the combined goal of \$120,000 is reached. The new facility will enhance LOMC’s programs and activities designed to build Christian community, faith development, congregational leadership training, and environmental education.

The *2015 Annual Ministry Report* offers more detailed ministry stories, program information, facility improvements, and financial reports from the past year in an easy-to-read format with photos and feature articles. Please email or call the camp office if you would like a copy.

The LOMC Board and staff looks forward to a very promising year of growth and service in 2016 as we roll out a Major Gift Campaign, not only for the new construction of our multipurpose Rev. Norm Nelson Program Center, but also to restore our cabin siding in the Freedom Tree Village. We will be explaining our campaign initiatives and plan in more detail at our **“RE-IGNITE”** launch meeting. **Any and all alumni are invited to this event over the Memorial Day Work Weekend, Friday May 27 – Sunday, May 29** to hear how we intend to raise funds for these project goals. In addition, the alumni project for that Work Weekend is to paint the outside of the Freedom Tree Village.

With all this transformation, two things remain the same...growth and gratitude. God intended for us to grow...grow in our faith and grow in serving one another. The LOMC Board of Directors

expresses gratitude to the congregations of the CSIS for your continued support of God's work at LOMC! Board members serving from the CSIS in 2015 were Bishop John Roth, Rev. Dennis O'Brien, Jason Fisher, and John Gregg. Thank you for your partnership in this amazing outdoor ministry!

In His Service,

Russ Senti, Executive Director

Adriana Plocinski, Development Director