

# **Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center**

2017 Annual Report to the Central Southern Illinois Synod (CSIS)

Friends in Christ,

As we reflect on all the blessings, operations, and challenges at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) in 2017, we remain steadfast in our service to our outdoor ministry of 44 years in the Central Southern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, out of love for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are continuously grateful for our 640 acres of God's beautiful creation; for the opportunity to use our outdoor ministry to provide experiences connecting the Word of God with the World of God; and for the future hope, change and restoration that is yet to come for both our guests and staff.

The year 2017 brought great change and many firsts to our ministry. For guests, we welcomed the first home school training retreat for youth and parents from 3 states. Our Freedom Tree Village hosted its first Lyle Griner *Peer Ministry Leadership* training weekend event with leaders from 13 congregations from all 3 Illinois synods! October brought us more youth to weekend retreats than any of our 2017 summer months. To add to the excitement, we hosted the first movie crew in the past 13 years to shoot the film *The Flickering Light* by Robb Chase. For staff, the Executive Director took his first sabbatical and loved his time with family and travel. End of year we welcomed our new Program Director, Michelle Heinrich, who came to us with 10 years' experience as the Youth and Family Coordinator at Faith Lutheran in Rochelle. We are excited to see the new leadership and innovation she will bring to the programming at LOMC!

Property saw tremendous change with the opening of the newly constructed Pastor Norman A. Nelson Program Center. On May 27, 2017, we dedicated our building with many of our beloved Pastors, including Pr. Norm, along with Pastor Dave Elliott officiating the dedication among friends and donors of LOMC. The new building's first summer season and ensuing months brought great change in ease of process flow for our Program Department and our entire camp operations in general. As a result, we experienced the benefits of a modern nature center for outdoor education; better care and control of program equipment storage; better management of guest overflow, and more private meeting space for Pastors, youth groups, and our Board of Directors' meetings.

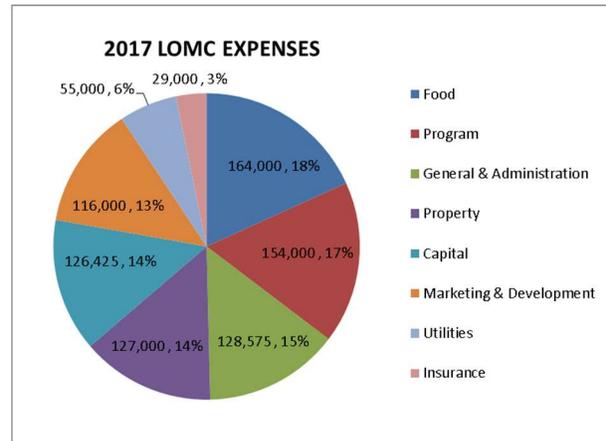
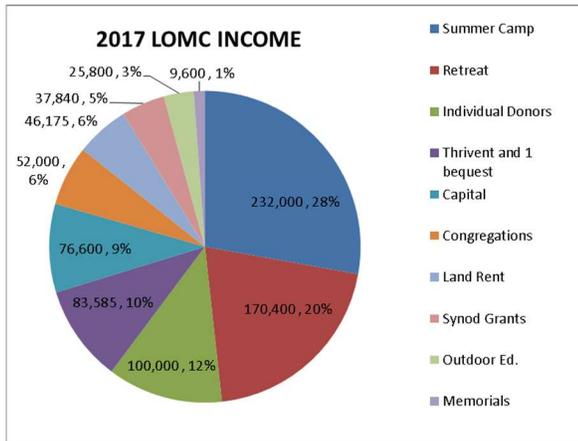
We continue to be inclusive, offering something for everyone. Our guests and programs are many, where ALL are welcome to participate in what LOMC has to offer. Retreats included (but not limited to) Women of the ELCA conference, scrap bookers, quilters, Bible studies, Cub Scout troops, the Muslim Youth of North America, family reunions, special occasions, and more. Over 1000 guests joined us for overnight and daytime summer camp, Faith Works confirmation camp, and family camp — all managed by the Program Department with 31 summer staffers. We continue to offer our guests great adventures, like our thrilling 1,200-foot-long zip line, pond canoeing, swimming, archery or

team building, such as our low ropes course. Our overall attendance by retreat and event guests came to 1,370, which was more than our 2017 summer camp attendance of 1,030. However, collectively, these numbers are approximately 14% lower than the previous year's attendance.

In Development, three new special event fundraisers were implemented this year with great success. First, we hosted our first ever LOMC Giving Day in May on the Tuesday following Memorial Day Work Weekend. The purpose of this one day of online giving was to raise \$5,000 to send kids to summer camp. The day was met with great enthusiasm as people gave through our Web site and followed us on Facebook to watch our goal not only be achieved but surpassed. In total we raised \$6,940 from 76 donors, which was approximately \$2,000 more than our goal. We also gained 34 new donors from that event. Second, at Autumn Fest in October, we hosted our first Silent Auction in the main dining hall during the lunch hours. We had 17 items donated to the auction. The bids coupled with a direct donation brought in \$935 of funds that went to our Annual Fund.

Last but not least, LOMC joined the global #GivingTuesday movement for our third and final new fundraising event of 2017, held the Tuesday following Thanksgiving and solely run through Facebook. We applied and received approval for a matching grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for \$1,000. We received \$5,737 in donations from 72 donors, plus \$1,000 matching, giving a grand total of \$6,737! Of the 72 donors, 22 were NEW donors to LOMC. A specific request of \$500 went to our Memorial Funds, and the remaining \$6,237 went towards our Annual Fund. Overall these fundraisers not only helped the camp financially, but it raised awareness of the camp on a new level, gained new donors, and widened the methods in which to give, providing great new opportunities to support our ministry.

Overall, LOMC is fortunate to have very diversified sources of income. The 2017 LOMC operating income plus campaign gifts totaled \$834,000. Summer camp continues to be our greatest source of revenue at 28% of our total income, and this year revenue from retreats (20% of income) surpassed capital income. Individual donors are our third greatest contributor to operating our ministry at 12%, and congregational giving moved to sixth at 6% of our total income. We are thankful for the congregational giving from the Central Southern Illinois Synod of \$7,660, approximately 15% of the entire annual congregational giving of \$52,000 total. Below are a graph representation of income/expenses and the percentage of each source:



On the other side of the ledger, the vast majority of expenses were for food (18%), program (17%), administration (15%), and property (14%), with food and program being our top two expenses in our operating budget. The construction needs continue to increase as the age of camp shows signs of wear and tear. Several of our facilities are in dire need of repair and remodeling so that we may properly provide lodging and facilities to ensure safety, efficiency, comfort, and the standards that guests would expect during their stay.

As we work hard on preserving our facilities and traditions, we are excited and grateful for all those who invest in our future. Our capital campaign in 2017 received 49 donations totaling \$21,555, finishing out pledges for phase 1, \$7,300 of which will go towards Phase 2 of the campaign called *All Things New* to remodel our camper bunkhouses and meeting facilities. The objective of this final phase is to make Timbers and Meadows Villages “new” with refurbishing the siding and bathrooms in all 6 of the buildings. More importantly, investing in our campers ensures an eternal future. We received \$23,100 in camp scholarships for the year, utilizing \$18,180 for summer of 2017 to send 105 children to camp, who may not have been able to attend and hear God’s word otherwise.

The LOMC staff and 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 2017 were Bishop John Roth, Jason Fisher, Rob Gieraltowski, John Gregg, and Rev. Dennis O’Brien. We look forward to a year of growth and change in 2018 as we continue to serve out our mission of connecting the Word of God with the World of God. Thank you for your partnership in this amazing outdoor ministry!

In His Service,

Russ Senti, Executive Director

Adriana Plocinski, Development Director