

END OF SUMMER REPORT 2023



ALDERSGATE
Camp & Retreat Center







DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Reflecting on this past summer at Aldersgate fills my heart with immense joy and gratitude. As the Director, I am thrilled to share the remarkable growth and success of the summer as we embraced the true spirit of faith and friendship that defines our camp experience.

Our camp experienced an unprecedented increase in registrations, a true testament to the dedication of our team and the exceptional programs we offer. The response from campers and families has been overwhelming and we welcomed a record number of young adventurers eager to embrace the challenges and excitement that awaited them.

Throughout the summer, we witnessed the transformative impact camp has on young people. From thrilling outdoor adventures to creative arts, each moment at camp was filled with laughter, friendship, and personal growth.

As we plan for the future, we are committed to enhancing our programs and expanding our offerings to open the camp experience to more youth and young adults. The enthusiasm and energy we witnessed from our campers and staff has inspired us to set our sights even higher, with fresh ideas and plans in the making.

Looking ahead, we envision many summers brimming with new opportunities for growth, discovery, and joyful moments. Our mission to provide a sacred space, empowering all in faith and friendship to change the world, remains unwavering.

JOHN MICHAEL SPELMAN
ALDERSGATE CAMP AND RETREAT
CENTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



CAMPER EXPERIENCE

**"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior"
(Luke 1:46-47)**

This summer, the Dining Hall sparkled, not only with a new coat of paint but with the gleam of ornaments and lights. We decorated for the coming of Jesus as we explored the Advent story in worship each day. Campers lit Advent candles on the "candle-log-bra" representing Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love.

Summer 2022 was the beginning of a new camp tradition, our Collaboration Worship. Campers wrote prayers, created art, and practiced songs each afternoon, culminating in a fully camper-led worship experience on Thursday evening. Campers left Aldersgate ready to engage and be involved with their local churches this Advent season.





DAY CAMP

Providing quality childcare in a Christian environment.

With over 100 campers each week, Day Camp at Aldersgate continues to grow! With increased attendance, we're making sure Day Camp still feels like a community with an all-camp morning meeting, daily special events, and a closing campfire.

Aldersgate Day Camp offers children a memorable summer experience filled with fun, learning, and personal growth. Our vibrant program fosters independence, social skills, and a lifelong love for the outdoors. In the safe and supervised environment of Day Camp, kids develop teamwork, problem-solving abilities, and self-confidence through engaging activities like sports, arts and crafts, and nature exploration. They form lasting friendships, unplug from screens, and create cherished memories.

Our Methodist roots emphasize values of compassion, love, and hospitality, creating a nurturing space where campers can feel accepted and supported by their peers and counselors. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of belonging and kindness, promoting a positive and uplifting atmosphere that enriches the overall camp experience. Aldersgate plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded, resilient, and happy young people.



OVERNIGHT CAMPS

Overnight enrollment roars back to life!

Overnight Camps at Aldersgate were alive with laughter and joy! Returning to pre-COVID levels, Overnight Camps gave campers the space to learn and grow away from home.

Traditional camp continues to provide a classic camp experience for all ages. This year, various programs were added for 7-8 year old campers to expand our offerings to even more young people.

Adventure programs continue to fill-up with five different camps offered; Trailblazers (ages 7-8), Pathfinders (ages 8-10), two sessions of Navigators (ages 11-13), and Challenge Camp (ages 14-16). Each camp experienced nature and adventure programming at their own level. Trailblazers slept in a tent outside the cabins, while Challenge Camp roughed it all week at Pioneer Field.

Living Arts focused their energy around another musical, Matilda Jr, and showed all that “even if you’re little, you can do a lot!”

Aldersgate offers a unique opportunity for campers to experience the enduring principles of our Methodist faith, creating a sense of empowerment, unity and fellowship. This not only enhances a campers' personal growth but also contribute to a lasting sense of community that transcends the camp experience.



STAFF

An international community united in mission.

Welcoming 40 seasonal staff, Aldersgate became an international community once more. With staff coming from Serbia, Mexico, France, Scotland, South Africa, Malta, England, Australia, Ireland, and Romania, campers were able to learn about cultures and live in a diverse community from people all around the world.

The staff united in the mission to provide a sacred space, empowering all in faith and friendship to change the world. Our staff guaranteed that campers were encouraged to embrace new experiences, build connections with their fellow campers, and enjoy a safe and memorable week.

Two weeks of staff training provided staff with hands-on knowledge to give our campers the best summer ever. Our staff training process is comprehensive, emphasizing the holistic well-being of our campers while giving staff the tools they will need to create lasting memories. Training includes guest speakers from the camp industry, the United Methodist Church, and other community organizations we partner with. We equip our team with the knowledge and skills to prioritize camper mental, emotional, and physical health, ensuring their safety and fostering a supportive environment.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Aldersgate awarded 2 staff scholarships in 2023!

Staff were given the opportunity to apply for a scholarship through Camp Aldersgate. Staff submitted responses in whatever form best expressed their feelings to the question:

"All summer, we have been exploring the Advent story and lighting candles to remember the themes of Advent. Where have you seen Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love at camp this summer? "

The 2023 recipients of staff scholarships are:

Fabrizio Sergio Dias Cisneros ('22, '23)

Anna Santos ('22, '23)



SPIRIT OF ALDERSGATE

The Aldersgate staff recognized two of their own for living out the mission of Aldersgate.

Abby James-Vickery ('20, '22, '23)

Arthur Vernoux ('23)

These staff were chosen by their peers as the best representatives of living out the mission by keeping Aldersgate a sacred space, empowering all staff and campers, living out their faith, being a good friend, and changing the world.

Abby's peers described her as welcoming, supportive, and a leader. She is always there for everybody, going above and beyond to ensure everyone feels welcome and supported. Even on challenging days, she never fails to make camp enjoyable and uplifting for campers and staff. Kind-hearted and hardworking, she is someone you can always rely on - she has been praised for balancing being a leader and a friend and providing emotional and spiritual support.

Arthur was described by his peers as always kind. He is loved by both campers and staff. He consistently went above and beyond, staying late at campfires and jumping in to help others even after he was released from work. Being around him is a joy as he brings life to every event, adding humor that brightens everyone's day. He lives out the camp's mission by supporting campers and staff whenever he can.



REGISTRATIONS

Aldersgate hosted over 1150 weeks of camp this summer!

Day Camp numbers have steadily grown over the past few years, especially after returning from COVID. We expect continued growth at Day Camp and are planning future upgrades to continue to grow day camp programs.

Overnight registrations were up almost 40%, returning to pre-COVID numbers. We expect registrations to continue this trend and look forward to busy summers coming up!





CAMPERSHIPS

Aldersgate, and our partners, awarded nearly \$12,000 in campership support this summer.

Aldersgate remains committed to providing camp experiences for campers who would not normally be able to attend camp due to financial restrictions.

To further this mission, Aldersgate partners with many United Methodist churches that provide scholarships for children and youth from their congregations to attend Aldersgate camps.

The year, Aldersgate maintained our relationship with Angel Tree Camping, a ministry that provides camp experiences for children and youth with an incarcerated parent. These campers are able to attend camp at no cost to their family and encounter a sacred space that empowers them to grow in faith and friendship.



ALDERSGATE

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