

Camp Quest NorthWest Planning Retreat Notes

Camp Kirby (4734 Samish Point Road, Bow, WA)

March 15 – 17, 2013

Board Members in attendance:

President – Chuck Wolber

Vice President – Brennon Church

Secretary – Jami Blackann

Treasurer – Jerry Schiffelbein

Members at Large – Becky Friedman, Brian Demong

Other volunteers in attendance: Mike Keiser, Kayla Ritchie, Shawn, Nick, Dan, Bridget

Action Items:

Chuck: Supply of blank certificates for rewards.

Brennon: Contact Amanda about not allowing campers to bring snacks.

Current Camper Registration: 44 paid campers. (27 females. Our original female cap was 28, so we need to decide how to handle this.)

We still need a lot more counselors/staff members.

Becky organized the structure of this year's planning retreat, including outline and scheduling.

Objectives of Programming Session:

- To contextualize programming goals within the freethought and Camp Quest perspective
- To brainstorm educational activities that staff and potential staff can lead/deliver in the camp context
- To review brainstormed activities for salient themes and decide on a theme
- To compile a list of activities (with backups)
- To schedule activities within the week-long schedule matrix
- To develop a plan for distributing campers across activities
- To determine staffing needs for specific activities
- To begin a preliminary supplies list
- To work collaboratively to record activities using programming template

Retreat Schedule:

Friday 3-6 pm: Arrival, exploration of campgrounds, setup.

Friday 6-8 pm: Dinner prep and eating

Friday 8-9 pm: CQNW mission exploration

Friday 9-10 pm: camper age distribution/cabin assignments

Saturday 8-10 am: Breakfast, camp exploration, latecomers arrive.

Saturday 10 am-12pm: Brainstorm session and theme development.

Saturday 12-1:30 pm: lunch

Saturday 1:30-3 pm: camper distribution planning, scheduling, introduction to programming template, preliminary supplies list

Saturday 3-5 pm: programming development per individual choice
Saturday 5pm-10pm: Dinner prep, free time, Board members at Camp Kirby Auction.
Sunday: tidy, pack up, head out.

Our Mission:

Camp Quest provides an educational adventure shaped by fun, friends and freethought, featuring science, natural wonder, and humanist values.

Values we teach: integrity, empathy, creativity, critical thinking, and community.

Our Vision:

Camp Quest envisions a world in which children grow up exploring, thinking for themselves, connecting with their communities, and acting to make the most of life for themselves and others.

Our Goals:

- Develop supportive communities for freethinking families
- Foster curiosity, scientific inquiry, and critical thinking in young people to enable them to draw their own conclusions
- Cultivate reason and empathy as foundations of an ethical, productive, and fulfilling life
- Provide a safe and fun environment for personal and social growth
- Encourage exploration of the natural world
- Promote open dialogue that is marked by challenging each other's ideas while treating each other with respect
- Raise awareness of positive contributions made by atheists, agnostics, humanists, freethinkers, and other nontheistic people to our society
- Demonstrate atheism and humanism as positive, family-friendly worldviews

Our Values:

- Grassroots innovation – empowering local leaders, exploring new approaches, sharing what works
- Practicality – taking action, creating solutions, providing hands-on support
- Courage – speaking out, challenging ourselves and others, audaciously advancing our mission
- Integrity – standing up, engaging honestly, living our principles
- Cooperation – sharing ideas, working together, cultivating community
- Empiricism – testing ideas, building from evidence, rejecting what doesn't work
- Fun!

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Notes from the Brainstorming/Planning Session, March 16:

First Day of Camp:

Discussion about compressing the registration window from three hours to two hours because of darkness. It's Sunday, so it shouldn't be so hard for parents to arrive on time.

Have a purpose/problem-solving activity to unite the kids. Don't need super long time to mingle.

However, there's bonding that occurs when kids first arrive, settle in, and start playing together.

45-minute activity: Predator/Prey? How can we do this safely?

First Day Tentative Schedule:

- Rock, Paper, Scissors, Snake
- Two truths and a lie (fun way to get to know one another)
- Predator/Prey (outdoor game that simulates food chain and natural selection. Everyone divided into three categories: carnivores, herbivores, omnivores. Each group needs to collect so many food items, waters, etc. There aren't enough supplies to feed everybody.)
- Staff Scavenger Hunt (Activity that allows campers to get to know each other and the staff. Eventually leads back to Chuck, the camp director, at the main cabin.)

Big-Picture Discussion about Scheduling and Activities:

Lots of free choice. Let kids do whatever they want until activity fills up.

Every kid needs to try everything once. But what happens when they don't like the activity? – Make sure they're really stimulating, no sitting and talking (like Socrates Cafe). Can also give the illusion of choice (pick food chemistry or Alka-Seltzer rockets).

Socrates Cafe (read a short story to give them something to think about)

Archery/Wall Climbing scheduling: Can't have the whole camp doing these activities at the same time – not enough room. Need to have equally appealing activities that the kids can do.

Dividing Brainstorming Activities into Categories:

Biology:

- Dissecting owl pellets
- Birding
- Water quality test, microbes
- Marine microbiology
- Evolution
- Cryptozoology. Weird creatures. Transitional fossils.
- Genetic mutation
- Dendrochronology
- Human ancestry
- DNA extraction
- Terrarium
- Magic berry, altered taste

Philosophy/Skepticism:

- Meaning of Life (Socrates Cafe using story prompt)
- Lottery, probability, Monty Hall, Plinko board
- Mathematics
- Bio dissection (hearts, brains)
- Magic

End of the World prophecies/history
Psych 101 (optical illusions, 3D drawings)
Fortune telling
Cold reading
Mentalism
Creation myths
Socrates Cafe
Famous freethinkers
Magnetic bracelets
Media literacy (analyzing ads, marketing, headlines)
Scientific terminology (dihydrogen monoxide)

Aesthetics:

3D Printing
Finger painting, forensics, stamp art, crayon rubbings
Kite building
No-sew t-shirts
Paper pasta building
Flint knapping
Yarn crafts and rope crafts
Leatherwork
Beading
Tie-dye batik

Chemistry:

Hydrogen generators
Breaking water
Water filters
Food chemistry
Solar oven

Physics/Engineering:

Cloud chamber (how you view cosmic rays. could be demonstration)
Kite building
Water rocket (pressurized 2-liter plastic bottles)
Soldering Workshop
Model rockets
Aluminum casting (making molds)
Solar oven
Musical instruments
Radio, Ham to ISS
Vortex cannon
GoKarts
Hovercraft
Laws of Thermodynamics
Randomness (radioactive decay)

Universal time, age of the universe (hike)
Rube Goldberg machine

Cultural Stuff:

Survival series (potable water, build a fire, how to build a quick shelter, first aid, etc.)
World religions

10 activities throughout the whole week. Campers rotate through them, no repeats. Every activity has one leader, and at least one assistant. Kids have a marking on their badge which indicates their pod. Back of badge has meta information, like their animal for the extinction game. Also encourages kids to keep their name tags on them.

AM programming (Educational focus):

Block A
Block B

PM Programming (Physically Active focus):

Block C
Block D
Block E

Physical afternoon activities:

kayak, waterfront, archery, climbing, team event option, hiking
How to make other activities just as interesting as archery and wall climbing?
Reward: Immunity from mass extinction, or from kitchen patrol. Achievement cards.
Birding, hikes: Needs a dynamic leader.
Water balloon fight.
Broomball.

Nick, regarding music: Campers must submit advanced requests for music up to the day of the dance. That way staff can look up the lyrics beforehand. Also avoid getting completely bombarded with requests.

Mike stand. Dan has one to donate.

Evening Activities:

Sunday night: finish up training, campfire story (invisible tree octopus, Jim Corbett)
Monday: Egg drop, campfire (first wave goes back a 9pm, second wave goes back at 10pm)
Tuesday: predator/prey, campfire
Wednesday: Talent show, campfire
Thursday: Dance, no campfire
Friday: Skits, final campfire with smores

Snacks: Tell parents/campers not to bring them, because of allergy concerns. However, we should talk to other camps about developing a policy like this, since parents might not like the idea. BRENNON: Contact Amanda about not allowing campers to bring snacks.

How do we handle certain accommodations? Reasonable: Banning all peanut products because some kids are allergic. Unreasonable for now (discussion not over yet): Refusing a camper who hasn't been vaccinated because of parents' beliefs. Since the other campers/staff are vaccinated and not immuno-compromised, this wouldn't put the camp at risk (even if it's frustrating).

We'll make reasonable accommodations for reasonable requests.

Closing Activities:

Camper rewards (best of, most improved in, etc.): Everyone gets one. Decided on the second-to-last night. CHUCK: Supply of blank certificates for rewards.

Morning: Kids are allowed to be in pajamas on the last day.

When parents are picking up their kids, we should have cabin counselors, activity assistants, and CITs giving demos about activities campers participated in.

Main Lodge Activities:

Extinction Event

Free thinker (lunch)

World religion (dinner)

Announcements (will be shorter because they're not choosing activities. experimenting with pods this year)

Mail (lunch)

Illusion of Choice occurs during Swimming/Archery/Climbing/etc. block.

Where else can we go if it's raining?

- Art barn
- Main lodge
- Lounge by female bathrooms

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ACTIVITY TEMPLATE

Submitted by: Person(s) who developed up the activity.

Led by: Person(s) leading

Date/Time: When during CQNW 2013

Max/Min Campers: range

Objective: What campers will do/learn/experience.

Example: to conduct an experiment in XYZ; to learn and tie 4 different nautical knots; to become familiar with various freethinkers' philosophies; to learn about structures by constructing and testing a bridge; to understand 3 major logical fallacies.

Guiding Question: The point of inquiry or interest for the activity; the broad question you want campers to answer or experience by the end of the activity.

Example: in the knitting class: "How do people create textiles?" The radioactive decay and dendrochronology activity: "How does nature record the passage of time?" The early human ancestors lesson: "How did hominids evolve?"

Concepts: broad cognitive or social concepts/skills.

Example: cooperation, finding patterns, physical vs. chemical changes, radioactive decay, team-building, using all 5 senses, species identification, forming hypotheses, etc.

Background: History or foundation that's useful for an instructor/asst. to know; answers to questions campers might ask.

Materials: list

Procedure: list

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Camp Fire Samish & Camp Kirby's 7th Annual Birthday Dinner & Auction

- Saturday, March 16
- Volunteers in attendance: Chuck, Jerry, Jami, Becky, Lou, Brian, Kayla, and Shawn.
- An impromptu vote was held among the board members present to have CQNW bid on Skagit Radio Sports Advertising, up to \$1,000. From now until December 31, 2013, the winner gets sixty 30-second ads.
- Yeses: Chuck, Jerry, Lou, Jami, and Brian
- Abstained: Becky
- Motion passed.
- CQNW had the winning bid for \$650.