



Friends Camp Association of PA, Inc.

Camp Onas Annual Report

October, 2014 to September, 2015

Holly Mueller Hecht

Executive Director/ Camp Director

Matthew Hecht

Camp Director

Contributors:

Joshua Laker, Assistant Director;

Sue Neiger Gould, Former Director;

Cory McMillen, Summer Staff

What a Summer!

This year, Camp Onas was once again filled with the songs and sounds of campers and staff enjoying the outdoors, living simply, and building community .

Our performances ... Dance, Drama, and Music programs graced the stage weekly, and brought our community closer together – with boys, girls, and campers of all ages participating in preparing, performing, and (of course) watching us sing, act and play the summer away. Our staff added a hybrid Evening Activity this year called “OnasStock”, combining live music performances with carnival activities ... it was a ton of fun for campers and staff alike.



Arts and Crafts ... our Arts and Crafts directors brought a lot of new and wonderful ideas to the A&C program. They continued camp standbys like lanyard (“gimp”) and yarn projects while also bringing in elements of fine art and progressive activities. Their program allowed campers more time, space, and coaching to practice, grow, and improve their techniques.

Sunday Meeting for Worship was well-attended by Friends from different meetings within Bucks Quarterly Meeting – many of our visitors were moved to share thoughts and songs during worship, and their presence and messages deepened the spiritual experience and significance of our summer Meetings for Worship.

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Campers getting into the spirit at OnasStock

From the Directors

There is an amazing thing that happens in the first few days of each session. There is a moment when we look around at all of the campers ... maybe at an assembly, maybe during meal, or the start of a camp-wide game ... and we see about 150 campers feeling at-ease, relaxed, confident, and living in the moment.

They are not dressed to impress – usually by this point they have a fine layer of red Camp Onas soil covering them from head to toe. They are not worried about who they will sit with at lunch, or what material items they have or do not have. They aren’t thinking about what might be going on at home or in other parts of the world. They are just being kids, fully present, relaxed, and experiencing the joy of belonging to a community while living and playing outside.

We call it “settling in” or “being at ease”. And when you see it, it is unmistakable. To us, it signals that campers are experiencing a classic Onas session ... where they will have fun, relax, belong, grow, and leave yearning to come back. Whatever you want to call it, when you see it, you know it’s something very special, and something we hope you are proud to be a part of. **Thank you for helping campers experience Camp Onas!**



Theme Weekends ... remained a highlight of the summer for all. This year's Theme Weekends were: Narnia (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe), Fairly Odd Parents, The Fantastic Mr. Fox, and Avengers.

Nature Programming ... several of our staff participated in a workshop during pre-camp orientation that asked them to think differently about "nature activities," and making them more accessible. We talked about what constitutes a nature activity, and why connecting to the environment is important to us as individuals and as a community. They came up with new and modified activities designed to help kids connect with the natural world by encouraging curiosity, exploration, and experimentation. Counselors led activities this summer that made use of the natural surroundings and materials available at camp ... from habitat building, to nature journaling, to quiet free-form exploration, sculpture-building, and other activities, campers and counselors enjoyed a reinvigorated connection to the environment through the activities.

Service ... Older campers volunteered for a third summer at Manna on Main Street in Lansdale, where they helped prepare and clean up for a meal. Our graduate campers also prepared one simple lunch meal for the whole camp, where we ate a cold vegetarian lunch using minimal bowls, plates, flatware, cups, etc. The meal served as a backdrop for conversations about waste, conservation, food scarcity, and simplicity.

And the **Renovated Pool** was enjoyed by all ... operationally, it ran smoothly this summer, and it remains a central part of camp where we can come together, relax, play, and cool off.



Our Special Campaign to Honor Sue Neiger Gould

We successfully wrapped up our special fundraising campaign for the Neiger Gould Camper Fund in September, 2015. A huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped us honor Sue by contributing to the campaign ... we hope you feel good knowing your donations will help Onas campers for years to come.

The Neiger Gould Camper Fund is a special fund at Camp Onas which was initially created to honor Russ and Jane Neiger, who directed Camp Onas for more than 20 years. The Camp Onas Board of Directors renamed the fund in 2014, to honor Sue's Onas legacy, along with those of Russ and Jane.

The fund functions similarly to an endowment. Money from its dividends and interest are used each year to provide financial aid and/or fund special projects that directly benefit campers, while the principal remains untouched. Contributions to the Neiger Gould Camper Fund will help Onas campers for years to come.

Over the course of the campaign, about \$9,500 was raised through the donations of friends, camp families, staff, board members, and alumni. Thank you to everyone who participated and donated!



Operations & Improvements

Camp Operations ran efficiently and effectively this year. Camper enrollment for the summer was once again full, and we were joined by 497 individual campers throughout the summer.

Our summer staff was once again comprised 100% of former campers and counselors, and an especially young staff brought a lot of enthusiasm and energy to our summer program, with the careful guidance of a large and experienced Senior Staff.

We maintained our accreditation with the American Camp Association (ACA), with a smooth on-site visit this past summer. Our visitors were impressed by our campers, staff, facilities, and camp program.

Our Summer Maintenance staff completed several projects this summer, many involving a lot of digging. Leaking water fountain lines were dug up and replaced, and the “Benches” area where we hold opening and closing campfires was redone. The work our maintenance staff and CITs did this past summer will make camp a more comfortable and enjoyable place for campers and visitors well into the future.

Our renovated swimming pool ran smoothly, and was enjoyed by all.

Other improvements included: Renovating, painting, and cleaning up the staff laundry room — a project counselors helped with over Spring Break, 2015. Replacing all of the old, inefficient fluorescent lights in the Texas Building with energy-efficient LED lights. The Boys Side Showerhouse water heater was replaced with two on-demand units, which will be more energy-efficient, and provide bathers with a continuous supply of hot water. And, in Dellview, the water heater was replaced with a newer, more efficient model, and the vinyl floors were replaced. (While still Camp’s newest building by far, Dellview turned 20 this year!).

Off-Season Group Use 2015	
Group Type & # of groups	people served
Schools-8	537
Friends Schools-2	81
Recreation and Retreats-5	133
Faith Based Groups-3	160
Young Friends Week-long gathering	27
Onas Sponsored	263
Family Camp Weekend	116
Total groups served-21	1,093

Becoming Myself at Camp

Written by Cory McMillen, former camper, counselor and Senior Staff member

When I came to Camp Onas ten years ago, I had little self-esteem and zero confidence resulting from two years of being bullied. Being around kids my age made me nervous because I was made fun of everyday at school. Minutes after arriving these nerves were subdued and my new bunkmates were helping me set up my bed and instantly friends in my eyes. They encouraged me to go on the Pioneer where I met my best friend and learned that even though I was just a tiny 12 year old I could do anything, even hike a mountain. It was on this trip where my love and admiration for Camp started.

For the first time I was encouraged to be myself, and in just two short weeks my life changed for the better. I have returned to Camp every year, mostly as a staff

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A Message of Thanks from Sue Neiger Gould

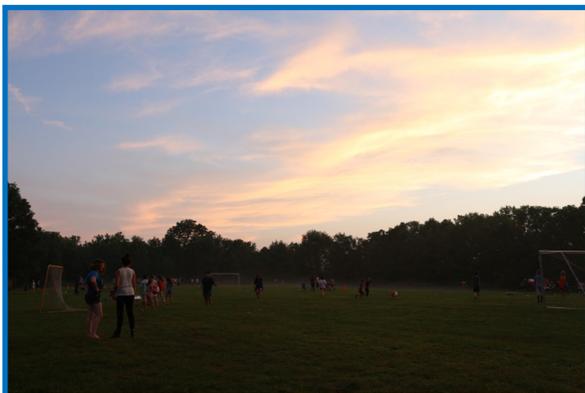
The connection of the Neiger Gould family with Camp Onas spans over 4 decades. As campers and counselors, cooks and nurses, maintenance directors and camp directors we loved our time and work at Onas. The Neiger Gould Camper Fund, formerly the Russ and Jane Neiger Camper Fund, continues this connection in the very best way – by providing funds to help kids come to camp and to help develop projects that directly benefit campers. We are deeply grateful to the 200 people that contributed nearly \$10,000 to the Neiger Gould Camper Fund in the last year and a half, bringing the fund’s total to \$82,000. This past summer, I visited Camp Onas with my grandson for a swim in the newly renovated pool, which the Neiger Gould Camper Fund



A photo of Sue and Campers in Dellview, 2012

helped to finance. It brought me such happiness to watch the fun campers were having swimming with their camp buddies. As a family, we are delighted that the Neiger Gould Camper Fund will help campers for years to come experience the simple yet profound joys of Onas. To all those who contributed, our sincere thanks.

-Sue



Playing games on the Boys Field as the sun sets

Camper Enrollment

	2015	2014	2013
Total enrollment	603	606	597
% full	101%	101%	99.5%
Boys	303	294	291
Girls	300	312	306
600 available spots. (564 2-week, and 36 1-week)			
Number of campers	497	489	475
Boys	255	243	246
Girls	242	246	229
One week campers	36	42*	28
Boys	18	15	14
Girls	18	27	14
*In 2014, there were two additional one-week sessions for girls.			
One session campers (2 weeks)	353	334	325
Boys	189	180	187
Girls	164	154	138
Two session campers (4 weeks)	107	113	122
Boys	48	48	45
Girls	59	65	77
Returning campers from '14	344	319	334
% of eligible campers	86%	85%	84%
Boys	84%	81%	82%
Girls	87%	90%	86%
% of eligible Friends	87%	91%	87%
New campers	153	170	141
New Boys	83	86	88
New Girls	70	84*	53
*In 2014, there were two additional one-week sessions for girls.			
Number of Friends	91	94	85
% Friends	18%	19%	18%
Graduating Campers	86	88	90
# of Friends Graduating	25	13	16

Becoming Myself at Camp

Written by Cory McMillen, former camper, counselor and Senior Staff member, Continued from page 3

member and turning into the driveway always gives me the feeling of freedom. Onas has become my home without walls and my safe haven. It just took me a few years to realize that the home without walls we all referred to was as much the structural walls of a building as the walls we put up within ourselves. These walls always come down when camp starts and I transform into a fearless and confident person who will take anything head-on. At first this confidence only appeared when I was covered in red dirt and safe within the 72 acres of camp but recently it has helped me to be the best version of me in all aspects of life.

Over the past year I took my first steps out of Neverland and into adulthood. I graduated college, moved away and had to make “big kid” decisions, one of which changed a lot of what I was planning in life. Throughout all of this I had camp as the familiar face, encouraging me to do what I thought was right and what would make me happy. Having



Above: Cory McMillen and a camper during a game or Prisoner's Base

my camp family with me along the way helped to bring the camp version of me into the real world. I finally found myself and became comfortable with who that person is, it may have taken a while but I am happy I finally found her. The confidence I gained and the person I became at camp is something I can take with me anywhere I go and it will stay with me long after the red dirt stains fade. There is no place I am more thankful for being a part of and I truly would not be myself if it weren't for Onas.

Quaker Campers

Bucks Quarterly Meeting	
Bristol-1	Newtown-10
Buckingham-6	Plumstead-3
Doylestown-5	Quakertown-2
Fallsington-0	Solebury-5
Lehigh Valley-5	Southampton-0
Makefield-0	Wrightstown-1
Middletown-8	Yardley-6
Total number of campers from BQM:	
2015-52	
2014-50	2013-40
2012-48	2011-45

Friends Meetings outside of BQM 25 Meetings Represented by 39 Campers		
Abington-2	Brooklyn-2	Central Phila.-1
Centre, NC-1	Chestnut Hill-2	Downingtown-3
Fifteenth St-1	Frankford-1	Germantown-1
Haverford-1	Horsham-2	Kennett Sq.-1
London Grove-2	Media-1	Moorestown-3
Pittsburgh-1	Plainfield-1	Plymouth Mtg.-2
Princeton-3	Valley-1	West Chester-2
West Grove-1	Westtown-1	Willistown-2
Wilmington-1		
Total Friends Meetings represented, including Bucks Quarter Meetings:		
2015 - 36		
2014 - 39	2013 - 35	2012 - 32
		2011 - 39

Donations & Camperships

2014-2015 Contributions

Thank you! Our donors helped us offer Camper Aid to a record number of campers, devote resources toward some much-needed improvements, and pursue our fundraising goal for the Neiger Gould Camper Fund. **Thank you to all who contributed — your support helps Camp Onas provide a fun, safe, and inclusive program for kids.**

Contributions to Camp Onas in 2015:

Alumni, Board Members, & Friends:	\$24,959
Camper Families:	\$10,160
Camp Store Purchases:	\$2,555
Friends Meetings:	\$900
SCOPE Grant:	\$1,300
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS:	\$39,874

The **Neiger Gould Camper Fund** was used to help with our swimming pool renovation this year. The fund is presently valued at nearly \$83,000.

Camperships

We were again able to help every family who requested financial assistance this year. Continuing the trend we've seen in recent years, more aid was requested, and more aid was awarded this year than last.

50 Campers attended Camp Onas with the help of the Camper Aid Fund.

Range of aid: \$100 - \$1,285

27 campers received \$500 or more

23 campers received less than \$500

Aid Awarded in 2015

From Camper Aid Fund	\$16,133
From SCOPE	\$1,300
<u>From Annual Fund & Other Revenue</u>	<u>\$9,952</u>
Total Aid Awarded 2015	\$27,385

Total Aid given in 2014 —\$25,923

Total Aid Given in 2013—\$23,980

Total Aid Given in 2012—\$20,500

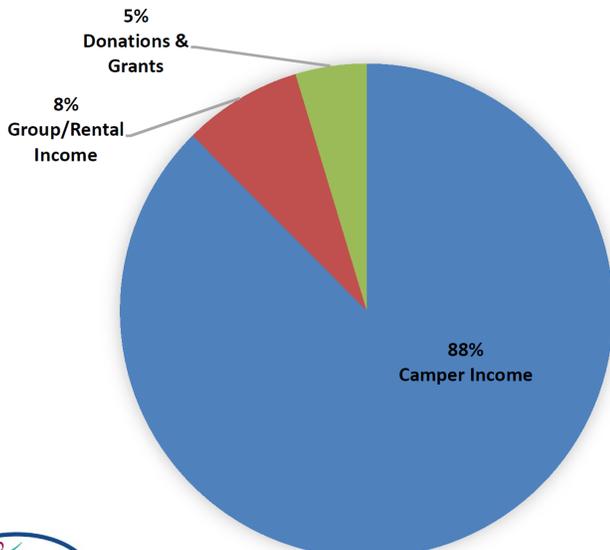
Total Aid Given in 2011—\$19,915

Finances at a Glance

We are committed to careful stewardship of our resources. Our goal is to balance the requirements of operating and maintaining our camp with the needs of our program so the greater part of expenditures goes to providing a quality program at a price families can afford.

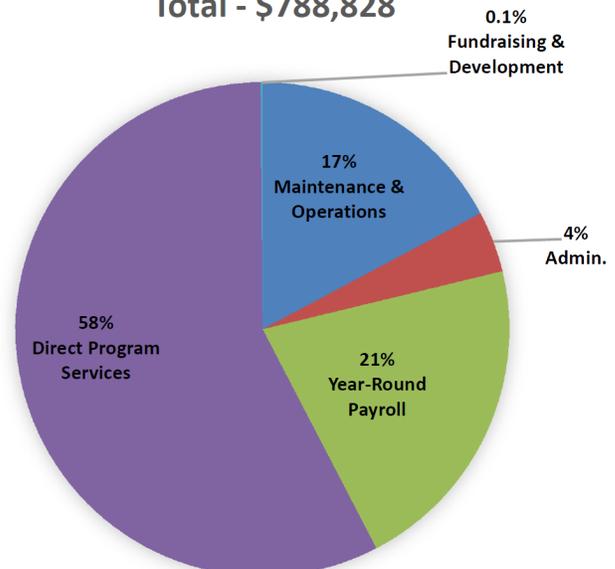
Revenue Sources

Total - \$850,695



Expenditures

Total - \$788,828



Camp Onas is proud to be an accredited member of the American Camp Association.