



# Spring 2009 Mechuwana Newsletter

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**In 2008 we celebrated 60 years of camping at Mechuwana.**

## **Mark Your Calendar – July 25, 2009**

Last summer we had a beautiful service celebrating this wonderful ministry. Many people expressed their feelings that Mechuwana should have an alumni day every summer. The Site Committee also thought it was a great idea. So we are planning to have our annual Alumni/reunion day on JULY 25TH. We hope that this becomes an annual event keeping us all closer and letting people renew friendships.

## **A new way to communicate**

We are using a new software program that allows us to send out newsletters, emails, flyers, and forms by email. We have already begun building our lists. Would you please take a few minutes to send us your email address so we can update our database?

Please send it to [mechuwana@fairpoint.net](mailto:mechuwana@fairpoint.net).  
**Thank you for taking the time to do this.**

## **Helping families during these hard financial times**

We are committed to helping families come to Mechuwana. **No one is ever turned away at camp because of an inability to pay.**

This year we have had many more request than usual for camperships. Any donation to the campership fund is very much appreciated.

## **Payment Plans For Families and Churches**

You may set up a payment plan with us to pay for your camp. We can give you until the end of the year to pay the balance off.

This includes the deposit. This means you can sign your campers up now and work out a payment plan with us. Churches giving financial assistance to campers, you can wait to pay that bill until the fall of 2009. This will give you the summer to help raise funds. **Thank you to all the churches that help families and offer scholarships. It's a pleasure to be in partnership with you.**

## **New Retreat Building Very Popular**

This fall Mechuwana finished the first of five retreat buildings. Each building has 5 rooms with a bathroom/shower in each room. The building also has a large living room/meeting room. It has a state-of-the-art radiant floor heating system that has proven to be extremely efficient. The building has been set up to have a solar hot water system and solar electrical. When the system is completely finished, the building will produce more power than it uses.

## **Retreat Building Number Two**

Because of a wonderful donation by the trustees from Your Choice in Augusta, Mechuwana will begin construction of the second retreat building this spring. The foundation was put in last fall. The septic system for the first three buildings is also completed. Groups have been lined up to begin work starting the first of June.

## **New Buildings Critical For The Future of Mechuwana**

The new retreat buildings allow Mechuwana to continue to expand its year-round ministry by offering space that adults find more comfortable. Bookings for fall, winter and spring continue to grow. In the past we have not been able to accommodate large

groups or multiple groups. With two new buildings we will be able to offer groups the space they need. When we are able to have 3 retreat buildings, we feel it will make a huge financial impact.

The buildings also allow us to do more creative types of camping during the summer. Camp programs like senior camp, digital photography, and sewing camp are easier with the newer facilities.

As finances get tighter at the Annual Conference level, being able to create new forms of revenue become vital to the long-term survival of this ministry.

### **Update on Campbell's Soup Labels for Education**

Thank you to everyone who continues to save these labels for us. Through these programs we have been able to purchase two new computers and other office equipment. We also receive enough money for a few scholarships every year.

There has been a change in **Campbell Soup Program. You now only have to cut out the Bar Code - nothing else is needed. On the Labels for Education you need to watch the date because they do expire. Again thank you so much for doing this.**

### **Friends of Mechuwana**

This program began two years ago after a large group of Mechuwana supporters gathered to discuss the future of our ministry. It had become clear to everyone involved that action needed to be taken to ensure our financial future. This has become even more critical in the last year as we witnessed a number of church camps in other denominations close due to lack of funding. It has become very apparent we need to be as proactive as possible. The "Friends" program is one of those ways. Our goal is to match the \$500,000 that has

been pledged to us by the "Together For Tomorrow" campaign done by the Annual Conference.

To date we have 177 families and individuals who have pledged over \$150,000. Our goal is to have more than 300 families and individuals by the end of 2009. You can see more about this program on our website at [www.mechuwana.org](http://www.mechuwana.org), or you can call the office and we can send you a brochure. In short, we are asking people to pledge \$100 a year, which can be paid monthly, quarterly, or annually for five years. You may wish to pledge more, and that is wonderful if you are able. 100% of the funds are put into our endowment fund where the principal is never touched. The interest is used for camperships and deferred maintenance, both of which help us keep the cost of camp down.

If you are not a member, please consider joining today. Together and with God's help we can make sure this ministry is here for generations to come.

### **Youth Program**

Did you know that we can directly trace our Youth Program back to the 1890's? Through the years the rallies have been a vital part of thousands of young people's spiritual lives. We at Mechuwana are truly blessed to have amazing youth. All you have to do is witness a worship service put on by our youth or witness the emotions of the last rally for seniors. The bonds of love and the feeling of family and community are so powerful. As one youth put it during our last service, "The rallies are where I can come and not just be accepted but be loved, and know that God is real." Youth more than 100 years ago probably said the same thing.

This program would not be possible without the leadership of Beth Dimond, Beth's

leadership and dedication to the youth of our Conference has been a mainstay for many years. Hundreds of youth have been inspired by her tremendous love for the youth. And Beth could not do it alone. Rian Lewis, our music ministry and worship leader, has been here for many years as well. The volunteer chaperones, the backbone of the youth program, are an amazing group of adults who come willing to share of themselves and provide guidance to the youth. Thank you to all, for keeping this ministry alive for more than one hundred years.

### **Young Adult Program**

This is truly one of the most exciting developments in our ministry in years. Through Beth's leadership and a very active young alumni group, we have been working hard to keep young adults active in our ministry. In the past few years we have had young adult gatherings all over New England. The gatherings can be as simple as getting together in the Boston area for a fun day or meeting at the Old Town UMC for Christmas caroling. More than 150 young adults have attended these events over the past few years.

For the past two years at Christmas-time, young adults have gathered at Mechuwana for a potluck dinner with fellowship and games. More than 80 people have attended these dinners. We are finding more and more that this age group wants to stay connected to our ministry and to each other. We are also finding that they bring new friends into the group that want to experience this type of fellowship. Now when our youth graduate from high school, we have a wonderful program to tell them about. Keeping young adults involved is so vital to the future of our church and camp.

### **CAMP WISH LIST**

- Tempura paints (dry or liquid)
- Art paintbrushes
- Storage containers with lids
- Regular paintbrushes
- Paint rollers
- Hand tools of any kind
- Working power tools
- Plastic spoons, forks and knives
- Paper plates and cups

### **Special wish list items**

We are looking for a few larger items:

- Canoes and boats of any size
- Canoe paddles
- A snow blower in working condition or easy repair
- A pop-up or hard shell camper in good condition
- A truck or SUV for maintenance

**Your donations to Mechuwana are tax deductible**

**THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS,**

Norman Thombs, Camp Director