

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Camp Fire USA Celebrates Centennial Birthday on March 17th

[Kansas City, Missouri – March 10, 2010] - From its humble beginnings 100 years ago, Camp Fire USA has never wavered from its mission of building caring confident youth and future leaders.

On Wednesday, March 17th local Camp Fire USA councils across the nation will recognize the centennial birthday with activities ranging from traditional birthday parties and luncheons recognizing outstanding youth to community service projects. Some are combining the birthday celebration with Camp Fire USA's annual Absolutely Incredible Kid Day, a call to adults to write letters of appreciation to children on March 18th.

Founded in 1910 by Dr. Luther and Charlotte Gulick, Camp Fire Girls was the first non-sectarian organization for girls in the United States. Dr. Gulick chose the name "Camp Fire" because campfires were the origin and center of early community life. This focus on the outdoors, nature, and conservation continues to be a centerpiece of Camp Fire activities.

Today Camp Fire USA has evolved into a contemporary non-profit organization serving youth, with a new name to reflect the times, while maintaining its core values. As early as the 1950s, Camp Fire was calling for greater inclusiveness of all groups within society. In 1975 boys were encouraged to participate, and today 46% of Camp Fire USA youth are boys. Camp Fire is unique in its inclusiveness serving everyone regardless of race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, or sexual orientation. "We realize the dignity and worth of every individual," states Pamela Wilcox, Interim CEO of Camp Fire USA. "Our programs are focused on changing young people's lives. Through their interaction and involvement with Camp Fire USA, girls and boys build confidence, independence, and develop an awareness of who they are and what they can become."

“We call our program areas the ‘Four Cs’ – Care, Camps, Contribute, Connect ,” states Geri Ann Elsen, Vice President of Programs and Services. “ We care for children with after school programs, offer camps where kids can explore and learn respect for the environment, inspire youth to contribute to their communities with service projects, and connect children, adults, and families together in small groups and clubs. We provide over 30 million program hours to thousands of children in hundreds of communities around the country.”

While March 17th marks the actual founding date, Camp Fire USA’s centennial keystone event is planned for Saturday, July 31, 2010. On that date, across the nation, a special lighting of commemorative campfires will be held at precisely 7:30 p.m. in each time zone at a place to be announced by each local Camp Fire USA council.

This Centennial event will be open to everyone. “It’s our opportunity to celebrate the promise of a continuing legacy that has left an indelible mark on millions of youth, alumni and hundreds of communities,” states Wilcox.

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Camp Fire USA is celebrating 100 years of building caring, confident youth and future leaders. We do this by providing quality programs nationwide for children, youth and families that reflect our “Four Cs”: We CARE for children with after school programs, offer CAMPS where kids can explore and learn respect for the environment, inspire youth to CONTRIBUTE to their communities with service projects, and CONNECT children, adults, and families together in small groups. Camp Fire USA , headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, has 84 councils in 31 states. Last year Camp Fire USA provided nearly 30 million program hours, to over 300,000 youth, in hundreds of communities across the United States. For more information, visit www.campfireusa.org.

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