

Did you know...



THE CAMPFIRE

A Communication of Camp Fire USA

Almost everything—all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure—these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.
—Steve Jobs



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Onwards and Upwards

A message from Cathy Tisdale

What's More Important?

The Message or the Messenger?

I suggest the two have been inexorably linked. To be relevant to today's youth—and increasingly their families—we need to align ourselves with messengers they're listening to.

Yes, we're on Facebook. Yes, we text each other. Yes, we'll be on national television telling our story. And yes, we have a website (which, by the way is due for a major tune-up next year.) Yet, until now we haven't blogged—at least not from a voice speaking as a leader of our Camp Fire USA movement. That changes this month.

As an advocate for youth and families and the issues tied to their success in life, I will begin blogging as Cathy Tisdale, President and CEO of Camp Fire USA. The comments I post will reflect my perspective as a leader within the youth development movement. They will not necessarily always reflect all points of view within Camp Fire.

We need to get in the conversation and

stay there. We need to raise the critical issues and tremendous opportunities facing our youth and families through civil and productive dialog. Therefore, among other things, we need to blog.

Following is a sampling of my first post. I encourage you to link to the blog itself. Respond. Share. Let's send our message.

Cheers,

Cathy Tisdale

“If we really want to prepare our youth for life—including academic success—we can't expect everything to happen in the classroom. Hitting the “success” benchmarks of higher graduation rates and improved math and reading scores are a big part of the narrative, but they don't represent the full story.”

Check out Cathy's blog at <http://cathy-tisdale.posterous.com>.

Thrive Foundation Affirms Unanimous Support

Saturday, November 19, Geri Anne Elsen, Chief Operating Officer, announced game-changing news: “The Thrive Foundation for Youth Board of Trustees unanimously voted to fully support our proposal!” The grant represents \$1.3 million over three years. This will include providing subgrants to councils, system-wide training, and program evaluation.

Applications for Year 1 pilot councils (ten will be selected) will be distributed on December 2, 2011. Technical assistance conference calls for councils interested in applying will be held on Monday, December 5, with an application deadline of December 16.

Over the next few months Camp Fire USA and the Thrive Foundation will begin to implement the plan and Thrive partnership to fully integrate the Thrive Theory of Change into all Camp Fire programs.

THRIVE
foundation
FOR YOUTH

“And, I'm still picking confetti out of my purse!”

According to Rita K. De Young, Chief Executive Officer, Lone Star Council, the Camp Fire USA National Leadership Conference (NLC) held in Kansas City, Mo., October 20–22 “..met or exceeded all my expectations! It was a first-rate affair... it made council execs feel valued and appreciated.”



Rita continued by sharing, “I look forward to hearing more about the exciting rebranding efforts, great video, council assessment (I think), Thrive, and all the opportunities that lie ahead.”



Camp Fire USA Professional Development Experience

Emerging Trends, Vital Issues, Hot Topics, Visionary Thinking—You'll Find Them at the Emory Conference Center in Atlanta, February 25–28, 2012

This year's *Promise to Practice Professional Development Experience* will create a learning community for Camp Fire USA program administrators, direct delivery staff, managers, executive directors, and volunteers. To be relevant in our communities, we must continuously develop professionally. Through development, we will remain uniquely capable of providing the effective programs that have placed us at the forefront of the youth development movement. Read more on the Camp Fire Compass, or contact Deana Ervin, at deana.ervin@campfireusa.org, or Connie Coutellier, at ccoutellier@gmail.com.



Emory Conference Center

Early-bird rates through January 17, 2012. All-inclusive pricing ranges from \$375 to \$495 and includes the complete conference program, three nights' accommodations, five multi-choice buffet meals, two banquet meals, and continuous daily snack breaks.

Are You Part of the Ready by 21 Leader Network? Maybe You Should Be!

Ready by 21 is a positive youth development framework that helps to ensure that young people are ready for college, work, and life.

Are you involved with the *Ready by 21* movement but haven't signed up to be part of the leader network yet? Registered *Ready by 21* leaders have access to a growing array of networks, supports, and services offered for free or at special member prices, including toolkits, webinars, podcasts, trainings, and more.

Leaders will have the priority opportunity to apply for learning stipends, matching grants, or technical assistance subsidies. **Registration is free—sign up today!**

Do You Ever Wonder About the Value of Your Time?

According to the Independent Sector, the leadership network for charities, foundations, and corporate giving programs, the 2010 national value of volunteer time is \$21.36 per hour.

Visit its website, www.independentsector.org, to see what the value of the volunteer time is in your state.



Key Dates, Trainings, and Conferences

December 2011

December 23–30

Camp Fire USA National Headquarters Closed—Season's Greetings.

January 2012

January 16

Martin Luther King Day of Service.

www.mlkday.gov

February 2012

February 21–24

American Camp Association Conference, Atlanta, Ga.

www.acacamps.org

February 25–28

Promise to Practice Professional Development Experience, Atlanta, Ga.

www.campfireusa.org

March

March 15

Camp Fire USA Absolutely Incredible Kid Day®. www.campfireusa.org

March 17

Camp Fire USA 102nd Birthday!

www.campfireusa.org

April

April 2–4

National AfterSchool Association Convention, Dallas, Texas.

www.naaweb.org

April 11–14

National Service-Learning Conference, Minneapolis, Minn.

www.nylc.org

Proud Moments

Balcones Council Helps Restore Soil After Fire

Over 200 youth attending Balcones Council after-school programs helped create seed balls to reestablish the native grasses and flowers in the burnt soils of the Bastrop, Texas, area. A major wildfire struck Bastrop County in September 2011. The fire destroyed 1,650 homes, caused \$250 million in property damage, and destroyed the majority of Bastrop State Park. Only 50 to 100 acres of the state park's 5,926 acres remained untouched following the wildfire.

Mission Moment

*Sandra Ballard, Employment Program Director,
Lone Star Council*

After surviving a very difficult childhood experience, Renisha Hill's inward pain soon turned into an outward life of rebellion toward all authority. She got in trouble with her mom, with teachers at school, and with the law. She didn't trust any adult figure in her life. Constantly living in fear, wondering when and if another incident would happen to her again and faced with the harsh reality that she could no longer trust her mother to protect her, she left her mother's house at the age of 15, never to return again, seeking safety and shelter amongst her friends and their families. Though it was difficult, she managed to stay in school, graduate, and receive her diploma from Madison High School.

Now a single mother, Renisha had to think about her future and ability to provide for herself and her child. After other agencies refused to come to her because her neighborhood was too dangerous, Renisha's apartment manager recommended the Camp Fire USA Employment Program to help her in her efforts. Renisha had no transportation to come to a Camp Fire location, so we brought the program to her. Camp Fire's Employee Program Manager, Sandra Ballard, became Renisha's mentor.



Renisha commented, "I'll always be thankful for Camp Fire because the program director, a great mentor and motivator, skillfully equipped me in developing a sellable resume, completing applications the correct way, interviewing, knowing the expectations of employers, professional interaction with employers and co-workers, job search, staying focused, maintaining a positive attitude, and most of all . . . self-respect. In my job search, I implemented the skills and knowledge I learned from the job readiness training and I'm happy to say I've gained employment! Now I'm able to take care of me and my child. I've moved . . . and I have a safe place of my own to live!" Her final thoughts: "You did what you said you would do. You delivered. Thank you for teaching me how to trust again."





Everyday Junk Boosts Visibility for Central Alabama Council

On October 1st, 2011, Camp Fletcher raised community awareness through a “Junk In Your Trunk Community Yard Sale” and “Fletcher Folk Festival,” a fun, daylong event that raised awareness for Camp Fletcher and Camp Fire USA's youth development programs.



Camp Fire USA National Art Competition Medium Is Fibers

The medium for the 2011–2012 Camp Fire USA National Art Competition is fibers. The fiber medium includes any art that is created by using fibers—such as yarn, cloth, or string—and may include such artwork as macramé, painting on cloth, weaving, knitting, sewing, tie-dye, photos on cloth, and more.

The purpose of the Camp Fire USA National Art Competition is to encourage creativity and explore art as a career. Participants in any Camp Fire program—such as club, after-school activities, child care, Teens in Action, or camp—can participate in learning about the fibers art medium. Participants can choose from several activities. These activities can be completed individually or as a group. When a youth creates a fiber art project that qualifies, he or she may enter that art project in a local Camp Fire USA National Art Competition. The National Art Competition is conducted through local Camp Fire councils. Each council may determine specific competition deadlines and local resources. Information and resources for the National Art Competition can be found on the Camp Fire Compass. For more information, contact DD Gass, at dd.gass@campfireusa.org.

Local United Way Volunteers Build Swinging Bridge for Camp Fire Camp

With rotted support beams and in much need of repair, the bridge at the Camp Fire USA Sapulpa Camp, Green Country Council, Inc., has been off-limits for years.

“I’ve been with Camp Fire USA for six years and we’ve never been able to use the bridge,” said Susan Bencke, Program Services Coordinator.

Yet, thanks to the work of dozens of Tulsa volunteers, kids will once again be able to cross the creek. The work was part of Day of Caring, the official start of the Tulsa Area United Way’s annual fundraising campaign.

“We’re here to improve lives and strengthen the Tulsa-area community,” said Mark Graham, President and CEO of the Tulsa Area United Way.

Susan said the work the volunteers do each year at the three Camp Fire USA camps is irreplaceable. “We would never be able to get this much work done with just ourselves,” she said.

Salute to Veterans

Since 1975, in cooperation with the Veterans Administration, Camp Fire USA has supported the Salute to Veterans. This is an opportunity for youth to be part of a patriotic and inspiring activity. The purpose of the Camp Fire USA Salute to Veterans project is to help children learn about veterans, develop a sense of caring, and give service to others. This project takes place around Valentine's Day as part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Salute to Veterans Week. All youth participating in Camp Fire programs, including club, after-school, and camp, are eligible to complete the project activities. The project sheets and resource information are available on the Camp Fire Compass. A recognition emblem and national project beads are available on the Online Store for those wishing to award youth who complete the project.

Change in American Camp Association Standards

Over the past 18 months, the accreditation standards of the American Camp Association (ACA) have been reviewed, revised, and reformatted. Recommended by the Accreditation and Education Task Force, this process has been a thorough and thoughtful review of one of ACA's core programs. While the actual content of the majority of the standards has not changed, all of the standards have been reviewed, and many have been reworded to focus on the practice that must be in place in order to meet the standards. The purpose of ACA's accreditation program has not changed! Education remains the focus. For more information, go to <http://www.acacamps.org/news/accreditation-process-guide-2012-edition-now-available>.

Program Quality Staff Training Update

First Texas Council and Lone Star Council held Youth Work Methods training for staff in early October and invited all area Texas councils. Also in attendance were Balcones Council, West Texas Council, and Southeast Texas Council. The 33 participants represented direct delivery staff from after-school programs, Teens in Action, and preschool programs. In addition, program administrators and one executive director attended.

According to Lyn Lucas, Vice President of Group Services, First Texas Council, the training was a great success. Comments included:

- I liked the hands-on and practical things that I can take back with me.
- Great info and easy to implement with kids. Experienced, wise facilitators—great job of sharing ideas with fun!
- Nice to have the opportunity for other councils to come together to improve programs.
- All the information is able to be applied to the site I work at and is all beneficial.
- The interaction was awesome. The instructors made the info easy to gain and apply.
- It was good to see how other Camp Fire USA councils run their programs.
- I loved that we were constantly engaged in activities and dialogue about relevant information and how to implement them into programs.

For more information on Youth Work Methods training, contact DD Gass, at 816-285-2004 or dd.gass@campfireusa.org

Still picking confetti out of my purse *(continued)*

Thanks for your efforts to put Camp Fire USA back on the map. I left there pumped to ensure that we do the same at the Lone Star Council."

Cathy Tisdale, Camp Fire USA President and CEO, couldn't be more pleased with the feedback. Per Cathy, the team responsible for developing the content and experience of the NLC worked toward three objectives: (1) challenge assumptions, (2) provoke thought, and (3) encourage reflection. According to Cathy, "We wanted participants to leave the conference committed to a unified direction and armed with a refreshed mindset, workable knowledge, and new tools. And it was imperative that councils continue to see that what we say at national headquarters is what we do and deliver. All of us at national headquarters have been delighted and encouraged at the feedback we've received from Rita and many others."

During Cathy's opening remarks Friday morning, she shared her personal commitment to encouraging Camp Fire USA leadership to gather for this yearly conference. "It's one of the most important meetings of the year," Cathy stressed. "Discussing the issues we've introduced at the conference provides "heft" for the movement. Confronting our challenges and sharing our thinking only helps us sharpen Camp Fire's commitment to kids and families."

Next year's conference will build on this year's learning and excitement. "Onwards and Upwards," concluded Cathy.

(A complete survey report from participants can be found on the Compass.)



Alaska Council Has Much to Celebrate

The Alaska Council is great testimony to the idea that consistent hard work pays off. Its tenth annual fund development breakfast, Champions for Children Breakfast, netted some great results.

According to Barbara Dubovich, Chief Executive Officer, the council:

- Had the largest number in attendance, ever—nearly 500!
- Surpassed its goal and all other Breakfast total contributions!
- Surpassed the million-dollar amount in total dollars raised in ten years!

The council also had nine new members sign on to its Champions for Children Society (each making a five-year pledge to the agency.)

Scholarships for Outstanding Volunteers

DoSomething.org and Foot Locker are partnering up to give out twenty \$20,000 scholarships to high school athletes that have shown leadership both on and off the field. These incoming college freshmen will receive funding for college, not for scoring the most touchdowns but for their character and commitment to volunteerism. Nominations are due by December 19, and applications are due by January 9. For more information, go to www.DoSomething.org/FootLocker.

Additional Grant Opportunities

Grant: School Garden Grant Program

Purpose: Provides grants, curriculum resources and mentorship to 1,000 schools to launch or expand school garden projects.

Funder: The Whole Kids Foundation.

Eligibility: Nonprofit K-12 schools or school districts, nonprofits working in partnership with one or more K-12 schools.

Deadline: Dec. 31.

Amount: 1,000 grants of \$2,000 each.

Contact: <http://wholekidsfoundation.org/gardengrants.php>

Kohl's Cares: Associates in Action Programs Provide Assistance AND A\$\$istance

At the 2011 National Leadership Conference and Voices in Action: Kansas City Youth Summit, you may have noticed Kohl's smiling volunteers directing traffic between the ballrooms, the fifth-floor meeting rooms, and the lunch buffet. Six Kohl's associates from the Blue Springs Distribution Center and two of their children joined the national staff and other volunteers to provide hospitable services and guidance on Saturday, October 22 at The Westin Crown Center in Kansas City.

If you have a Kohl's retail store or distribution center in your community and your council is a 501(c)(3), consider exploring a similar win-win partnership! When Kohl's associates volunteer their time in their communities, for every five Kohl's volunteers who each work a minimum three-hour shift in support of education-based initiatives, Kohl's will provide a \$500 grant to your organization!

A simple application form at the start of the project as well as an electronic volunteer verification and report form at the conclusion of your volunteer-involved project are required. For more information, visit: <http://www.kohlscorporation.com/communityrelations/Community04.htm>.

Executive Director Evaluation Survey Form

Despite the fact that board members may have little to go on and not much experience with executive director/CEO evaluations, it's still important to conduct them. The value of executive evaluations and the discussions—if held in good faith—result in better-aligned expectations and goals for the organization and for the executive. <http://blueavocado.org/node/716>

Meaningful Budget Work by the Board

For many nonprofits, the annual “approval of the budget” is the cornerstone of board financial oversight. However, this annual approval is frequently an empty ritual—one in which board members peruse a budget that they are unsure is realistic or appropriate to the planned activities. The better option is to spend the time it takes to understand the realistic financial requirements. <http://blueavocado.org/content/meaningful-budget-work-board>.

The Governance/Support Model for Nonprofit Boards

Much of the confusion about board responsibilities is confusion between what the board does (as a body) and what individual board members should do. Most of the prescriptions for boards confuse the two, saying “The board should _____” without making the distinction. This straightforward model for boards has been embraced by thousands of boards throughout the United States. <http://blueavocado.org/content/governancesupport-model-nonprofit-boards>.

Nonprofit Conflict of Interest: A Three-Dimensional View

Most nonprofit discussions about conflicts of interest are similar to those in the for-profit sector: they focus on financial benefit to board members or staff to the detriment of the nonprofit organization. The classic examples: the nonprofit buys something unnecessary or overpriced from a board member's business or the nonprofit hires an unqualified, overpaid family member of the executive director.

But nonprofit conflicts of interest are often more subtle, more multidimensional, and more unexpected than these classic examples. For instance, what about the board member who also sits on the board of a competitor? Is this a good idea that facilitates collaboration, or does it pull that person in two different directions? What about relatives of the executive director who hold important staff positions, but as volunteers? And perhaps least talked about: what about the potential benefit/conflict for a board member who is also a parent/client/beneficiary? <http://blueavocado.org/content/nonprofit-conflict-interest-3-dimensional-view>.

Changes in Council Executive and Board Leadership

Resignation of Executive Director/CEO:

Christine Brousseau, Central Oregon Council, Bend, Ore.

Incoming Board Presidents/Chairs:

Stephanie Golka-Smith, Orca Council, Tacoma, Wash.
 Sara O'Connor, Gem State Council, Chubbuck, ID
 Barbara Rosetti, Alaska Council, Anchorage, AK

There was one Wohelo award this month— Karen Corbin of Balcones Council!

Bobbie Walker Henderson, Executive Director, Camp Fire USA Green Country Council, Presented Two Well-Deserved Awards at the October ELSA Meeting Prior to the National Leadership Conference



Gayle Orange, Executive Director,
West Michigan Council



Rosemary Pezzuto, CEO,
Patuxent Area Council

The Executive Leadership Strategic Alliance (ELSA) Leadership Award was presented to Gayle Orange, Executive Director, West Michigan Council. The Leadership Award recognizes major contributions to strengthen the development and advancement of ELSA among officers and steering committee members.

The ELSA Service Award was presented to Rosemary Pezzuto, CEO, Patuxent Area Council. The Service Award recognizes outstanding service to ELSA by a Camp Fire USA CEO/ED.

Watch for information regarding the nominations for the ELSA cochair position and the opportunity to vote for your nominee in the upcoming ELSA Survey Monkey that will be sent to all EDs and CEOs in December.

Leadership News



Youth Events at National Leadership Conference Were Awesome!

By Lauren Lampe, Incoming National Youth Advisory Cabinet Chair

The Camp Fire USA National Leadership Conference, Youth Forum, and Voices in Action: Kansas City Youth Summit were held in Kansas City in October. These events were planned and led by National Youth Advisory Cabinet members and provided opportunities for youth from different councils all over the United States to come together to make a difference, exchange ideas, and meet new people. The Youth Forum started off Thursday evening with a youth session in which all the youth discussed how Camp Fire had helped develop their leadership skills. This was a way to get to know each other and share what this organization has done for them.

Friday, the youth spent the whole day together finding their voice and expressing issues that were important to them. They were able to expand their leadership skills through different activities in groups. For example, in the elevator speech activity, we gave each person 30 seconds to describe a Camp Fire program to their partner. It gave each of the youth the chance to talk about Camp Fire in their own way while giving them the experience.

On Saturday, in addition to the Camp Fire USA youth, 125 youth from the Kansas City area attended the Youth Education Summit. Throughout the day, youth worked in groups, developing plans to make a difference in the educational systems of their communities, with a focus on dropout rates. This message was carried through the summit by giving youth the chance to post their comments on a Youth Summit Facebook page, State Farm's 26 Second Campaign, and by reporting back to the group at large on their discussions.

It was an awesome day! Overall, the National Leadership Conference, Youth Forum, and Youth Summit gave youth in Camp Fire USA the opportunity to come together and discuss current issues in education that we are all passionate about.