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## Letter from Jill Pasewalk, National President and CEO

There are not many organizations who can say that they have thrived for nearly 100 years, and as Camp Fire USA approaches its Centennial in 2010, we can look back on the innovations that are a significant part of our legacy. Our beginning as the first interracial, non-sectarian organization for girls in this country in 1910 to now—creating youth leaders in environmental stewardship and service and expanding to serve all children, youth and families is a bold statement in today's world.

This year we have proactively gathered our Camp Fire USA system to boldly refocus the priorities of the national office to ensure the care and growth of our local councils for the next century.

As part of this new direction, we hope you enjoy this edition of a publication we are revitalizing: *The Spirit of Camp Fire USA*. Inside, we have highlighted a few stories of the many ways that the national office has supported local councils, raised awareness, and provided youth-led opportunities for training and service-learning at our National Youth Forum. We are also looking to harness technology to share the great news about Camp Fire USA and to identify and reconnect with the estimated 40 million Camp Fire alumni.

Camp Fire USA develops the personal resilience, intellectual curiosity and social values youth need to ensure success in life. More so now than ever, the future depends on people who are dedicated, responsive, and responsible stewards of themselves, their community and the earth.

Long before nature became re-branded as the environment and the diminishing diversity of ecological systems emerged as a global crisis, Camp Fire USA focused on the development of programming and the cultivation of skills that would enable the individual to find one's self through discovering one's confluence with nature. However, the Camp Fire movement attracts participation not because of the programs we promote, but because of the values we stand for—creative expression, respect for the environment, rights and opportunities for equality of participation for all, and a determination to surmount the challenges of individual and family life. We create the opportunities for youth, families, and volunteers to exercise those values through initiatives that lead to self-sufficiency.

Our upcoming Centennial signals not only a moment for us to look to the past, but a moment for us to bring definition to the future. Camp Fire USA's mission of building caring, confident youth and future leaders and our commitment to providing safe places, high quality programs, and caring adults for all the children and youth we engage will never waiver. We are working to enhance our mission with new strategic priorities. These are focused on increasing visibility and increasing investment in Camp Fire children and youth and the impact they are having on local communities through their participation in Camp Fire programs.

*But, we simply cannot do it alone. We need your help.*

Please consider investing in Camp Fire USA today. Your contribution will help leverage our rich heritage and ignite the powerful impact of Camp Fire for all children, youth, and families this year and for generations to come.

Very sincerely,

National President and CEO



Camp Fire USA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contribution is deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

## Camp Fire USA Youth *Speak, Reach, Ignite Change* at the National Youth Forum

Youth members of the Camp Fire USA National Youth Advisory Cabinet (YAC) planned an amazing National Youth Forum, held in Monterey, California this month. They were joined by 65 young people from Camp Fire councils across the country where they camped a night at Camp Campbell in the Santa Cruz redwoods, participated in activities to promote positive group dynamics and understanding, and heard nationally renowned speaker Josh Shipp talk about overcoming tragedies to live life to the fullest. The workshops, held at Asilomar State Park Conference Center, included *Building Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships, Teen Advocacy, Creating a Quality Camp, Teen Business Planning, and Igniting Change through Public Speaking.*



These youth also planned a service project while at the Forum. As true environmental stewards, they chose to help restore the endangered habitat of the monarch butterfly. While it was tough work, especially in the rain, the teens understood that this was a critical part of maintaining the butterflies' presence in Natural Bridges State Park.

As one of the YAC members stated, "We put on some really good workshops to help them understand what Camp Fire USA YAC is and how they can start a local YAC. We got them to tell about their councils so that they can learn from what the other councils are doing and how they can bring it back home."

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## Camp Fire USA Kids Celebrate National Volunteer Week at the White House

President George W. Bush celebrated National Volunteer Week (April 27–May 3) in the East Room of the White House with leaders in the national service field.

Participating in the event were Camp Fire USA kids from the Camp Fire USA Patuxent Area Council (Maryland) who have earned the President's Volunteer Service Award; the council's Chief Program Officer, Rosemary Pezzutto; and Kelita Bak, National Vice President of Advancement.

They were joined by USA Freedom Corps Director Henry Lozano; David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service; Ron Tschetter, Director of the Peace Corps; members of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation; and many other distinguished guests.

Pictured with the Patuxent Area Council kids are Mr. Lozano (center, top photo) and Jean Case (center, bottom photo), CEO of the Case Foundation and Chair of the President's Council.



## Help Camp Fire USA Harness Technology and Utilize Web 2.0 to Share the Camp Fire Story

Camp Fire USA is pleased to announce that it has received a \$150,000 challenge grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency. The goal of the grant is to enhance awareness of Camp Fire's community preparedness service-learning initiative and activities through a new national Web site with online social networking and Web 2.0 features.



Please help Camp Fire USA leverage this federal investment with a donation today!

We need to match the grant dollar for dollar, and the funds will enable us to build, launch, market, and maintain this new functionality for our Web site. A youth-led committee will work with national Camp Fire USA staff and a selected technology firm to design and oversee the creation and ongoing enhancements of our current youth site. This tool will also help us identify, reconnect with, and collect stories of those who have been a part of the Camp Fire family over the past 100 years. By increasing visibility through technology, we also hope to engage more volunteers and mentors in local councils across the system.

### What is YOUR Connection to Camp Fire USA?

Were you a Camp Fire kid? Do you know someone who was a Camp Fire kid? Perhaps you or someone you know served on a local council's board of directors or volunteered as a program or club leader? We would love to hear your story!

As we work to match the federal investment for Web 2.0 and are in the process of revitalizing our Web site, we are interested in collecting stories from those who participated in Camp Fire over the years and will highlight as many as we can on the new site. Until then, we encourage you to register on the current alumni Web site at <http://www.campfireusa.org/alumni/> and post your story there.

*I loved Camp Fire. I was a Blue Bird, Camp Fire Girl, Horizon Club member, C.I.T. at Camp Wyandot, counselor at Camps Moore and Otonwe. It was just a great, wholesome way to grow up.*

*- Ms. Johanna Ryan*

Please take the opportunity while you are on the Web site to find a council near you and connect with Camp Fire USA, locally. As changes and improvements to the site are made, we will let you know!



 <p><b>Camp Fire USA</b> Today's kids. Tomorrow's leaders.</p>	<p><b>NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS</b></p>
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## Camp Fire USA 2008 Fun Facts

Did you know that...?

- 24 Camp Fire USA councils were incorporated between 1910 and 1929.
- Half of all Camp Fire USA kids involved in our programs today are boys.
- More than a third of all councils partner with schools to offer before- and/or after-school programming, and of those reporting, provide nearly 9 million program hours for children and youth each year.
- 68 percent of councils reported that they own the resident camp facilities used to provide environmental education and programming.
- In the 2008 Outcome Measurement Survey, of the youth participating in Club/Small Group programming, 87% demonstrated skill in caring, 89% in confidence, and 81% demonstrated leadership skills.
- 710 youth participated in more than 500 hours of programming this summer through the Camp Fire USA *Hold on to Health* initiative, supported by the MetLife Foundation.
- New Camp Fire USA council executive directors–CEOs are actively involved in over 100 hours of year-round training provided by the National Office.

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