

# OMA TO Z



## ***A GUIDE TO THE OUTDOOR MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN***

*Compiled by the OMA Steering Committee and Partner Organizations*

*2020 Edition*

---

# Table of Contents

---

## **Association**

- [Mission and Vision Statements](#).....2
- [History](#) (Rex Miller and Dean Wenger) .....3
- [Camp and the Local Congregation](#) (Rex Miller) .....8
- [Archives](#) (William Kostlevy) .....10
- [Membership](#) (Mike Neff) .....11

## **Leadership**

- [Board](#) .....12
- [Board Policies](#) ....15
- [Mentoring Program](#) (Linetta Ballew).....16
- [The Four Horseman](#) (Rex Miller).....18

## **Events** (Linetta Ballew)

- [Annual Retreat](#).....19
- [National Conference](#).....22
- [Presence at Church of the Brethren Events](#).....23

## **Grants and Awards** (Shannon Kahler)

- [Environmental Grants](#).....25
- [Staff and Volunteer Awards](#).....28

## **Partners**

- [Youth Peace Travel Team/Peace Education](#) (Bekah Houff).....29
- [A Christian Ministry in the National Parks](#) (Marlin Houff).....32
- [Brethren Volunteer Service](#) (Emily Tyler).....33
- [Ministry Summer Service](#) (Becky Ullom Naugle).....34

## **Appendices**

- [Four Horseman Award Honorees](#).....35
- [Environmental Grant Recipients](#).....36
- [Staff and Volunteer Award Recipients](#).....38
- [Youth Peace Travel Team History](#).....40

## MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting, enlivening, and supporting the dynamic ministry of Church of the Brethren camps.

## VISION STATEMENT

Tending the Fires of Church of the Brethren camps.

## HISTORY

### *Kum Ba Yah*

For the “complete” history of the beginnings of Brethren camping and the origin of the Outdoor Ministries Association, please refer to the book *KUM BA YAH*, written by Linda Logan with the Outdoor Ministries Association and published in 2005.

### *The Early Years*

The Outdoor Ministries Association of the Church of the Brethren was affirmed at Annual Conference in 1977. This affirmation ended six long years of work by Walt Bowman, the first Outdoor Education Staff of the Parish Ministries Commission (PMC) of the General Board and Associate District Executive of the Southern Ohio District, and Bob Jones, Associate District Executive of the Virginia District. Several actions and situations occurred during those six years that made this organization possible. This included spearheading formative requests to the PMC through the Council of District Executives, a fortunate time of budget surpluses in the denomination, and a request that farming issues and camping be put together into a single staff position. Walt Bowman was the person selected for the camping portion of this position.

Other formative events were taking place in the camping world while these actions were being formulated and birthed. The first was a 1973 fall gathering of a group that called itself the Eastern Area Brethren Camping Committee. This event was so successful that the committee called for another meeting the next year when it gathered as the Northeastern Camp Committee and agreed to invite folks from other sections the next year. In 1975 this group that had morphed into the Eastern Church of the Brethren Camp Fellowship gathered at Camp Bethel and took on the vision of a volunteer network in camps across the denomination. Out of this event a questionnaire was developed for information that would lead to a public presence at Annual Conference.

Through the work of Bob Tully and Walt Bowman the Brethren Camps Committee (BCC) was called out to begin putting a structure together. The individuals in this first group were Arden Ball (Camp Mack), Anita Buckwalter (Camp Brethren Heights), Bob Jones (Camp Bethel), Joel Knepper (Camp Eder), Rex Miller (Camp Ithiel), and Graydon Snyder (Bethany Seminary). The BCC's first action was planning for a Consultation on Church of the Brethren Outdoor Ministries that occurred in March 1977 at the Grailville Retreat Center near Cincinnati, OH. This gathering of fifty-nine camp leaders, camp board members, Brethren leaders, educators and pastors worked through concepts and ideas presented by Walt Bowman, Eugene Roop, Bob Jones, and Graydon Snyder. Out of this event came the logo of the organization and the current structure for OMA. The BCC became the Steering Committee for the Outdoor Ministries Association.

Walt Bowman continued his work as national staff person for Outdoor Ministries until 1988. At this time budget pressures were mounting in the denomination to begin to decrease funding for some of the current ministries being supported by the denomination. Nancy Knepper was hired with a one year contract during this time of refocus for the denomination. Through pressure from several fronts the funding for this position was continued. With Nancy's leadership OMA began training events on sexual abuse, working with the National Council of Churches on the development of the "Sow the Seeds, Trust the Promise" curriculum, and the creation of the Youth Peace Travel Teams in cooperation with On Earth Peace, Youth Office, and Brethren Witness/Peace Office. It was also during this time that the recognition awards for staff and volunteers were begun.

Once again budget concern in the denomination raised its ugly head. OMA decided to work on faith and agreed to more than quadruple its budget support for Nancy's position. But this was also the beginning of the end for General Board support for the OMA staff position. The goals for the 90's signified the budget shift and Nancy's position was terminated in 1997.

The leadership of Bob Jones, Walter Bowman, and Nancy Knepper placed OMA on solid footing as it began the next leg of its journey without a paid staff person. We will be forever indebted to all of the leaders that played a role during this first 20 years of the association.

### ***Recent History of Brethren Camping***

The Outdoor Ministries Association Steering Committee approached Linda Logan in the late 1990's about compiling a history of Church of the Brethren camping. Ms. Logan's 2005 book, *KUM BAH YAH*, focused on the development of Brethren camping from its beginnings in the 1920's through the end of the 20th century. The following article examines how Brethren camping has progressed during the first two decades of the 21st century. In those ten years, Brethren camping and the OMA completed a difficult transition from paid national leadership to an all-volunteer force.

Ms. Logan detailed the beginning of this transition period (1997-1999) in the final few pages of her book. Without having Nancy Knepper directing the operations of OMA and its volunteers, it was necessary for OMA's Steering Committee to evaluate its activity and simplify tasks that were crucial to the Brethren camping ministry.

Two of these tasks were the OMA National Conference, held every other year, and the annual Directors & Managers Retreat. Beginning in 1997 the OMA National Conference became a tri-annual event. The 2003 OMA National Conference was held at Camp Blue Diamond in Pennsylvania. Johann Anderson, the author and compiler of the Songs and Creation music books series was the special guest. Johann shared his theories on group dynamics, management and singing. The 2006 National Conference was held at Camp Bethel in Virginia. A variety of Church of the Brethren General Office staff were the guests. Relationships and opportunities between camps and the Church of the Brethren Youth and Young Adult Ministries office, the Missions & Ministries office and the Congregational Life office, were explored. In 2009 the OMA National Conference was held at Woodland Altars in Ohio. Richard Dawson, a leader in United Methodist camping was the guest. Mr. Dawson focused on camp revitalization and the seven foundations of Christian camping.

In 2011 it was decided to discontinue the National Conference. The annual Director & Manager Retreat had evolved from 2000 to 2010 into a national style conference with speakers and activities designed to interest not only camp directors, but secondary staff and volunteers. Attendance doubled as more staff and volunteers attended the event. With this change the National Conference seemed redundant and unnecessary. In 2010 the annual Director & Manager Retreat was renamed the Annual OMA Retreat.

The OMA newsletter became a semi-annual publication in 2001 after a few years of hit-and-miss attempts in the late '90's. In 2019, the newsletter moved to an electronic format. The newsletter, which is sent to member camps and individuals and also available online,, details camping news in the Church of the Brethren, upcoming events, and camp staffing changes and needs.

For a year or two in the late '90's, OMA's annual camp and individual membership drives lagged. But beginning in 2000, concerted efforts were made to get annual membership renewal letters to camps and members. An increase in the number of member camps and their membership fees has allowed OMA to increase its budget and activities.

The Environmental Grant program has continued into the 21st century with grants given annually to a variety of Brethren camps. In 2011 an Environmental Grant program to churches was approved. As with camps, the church would need to match the grant. The maximum grant for member churches would be \$1000, \$500 for non-member churches.

The Staff and Volunteers awards continue to be given annually. These special awards honor the men and women who have made long-term commitments and sacrifices to benefit the summer camp ministry programs in their districts.

Though the traditional Annual Conference Run/Walk and the national summer camp offering project it supported were discontinued in the late '90's, OMA participation at Annual Conference continued with the traditional OMA luncheon, booth and insight session.

As Rex Miller, OMA Steering Committee member during the transition period, expressed "Many changes happened as we downsized, but we were not in despair. It was still very upbeat as we faced the realities we were dealing with. We were in a time of re-visioning our purpose and efforts."

A few of the OMA responsibilities became the special ministries of volunteers, who were willing to donate their time and talents to ensure continued participation by the Brethren. Marlin Houff, Camp Administrator at Camp Swatara, joined the board of ACMNP (A Christian Ministry in the National Parks) as the denominational representative of the Church of the Brethren. This organization oversees recruitment of people to serve summers in the National Parks in ministerial roles. Jerri Heiser Wenger, Executive Co-Director at Camp Blue Diamond, oversaw OMA's vital role in sponsoring the Youth Peace Travel Team until 2009, with Steering Committee members assuming the responsibility thereafter, beginning with Margo Royer-Miller. This ministry team of four young people traveled among Brethren camps during the summer camping season leading biblically-based sessions on peace and conflict resolution. Rex Miller, Executive Director at Camp

Mack, represented the Church of the Brethren on the National Council of Christian Churches Committee on Outdoor Ministries, the group of denominations that share responsibility for creating New Earth summer camp Bible curriculum. In 2006, the Church of the Brethren provided several writers for the curriculum entitled Peace Talks.

In 2015 the relationship with the National Council of Christian Churches took a major shift when the NCCC reorganized and dropped ministry committees. The Committee on Outdoor Ministries was blessed and closed. To enable the curriculum development portion of the work to continue Chalice Press took on a new role. As the publisher of New Earth curriculum, it began a new relationship with camping associations instead of denominations. The Outdoor Ministries Association continued as a participant in the design and marketing of summer camp curriculum. Rex Miller, Jerri Heiser Wenger, and Karen Neff served as the representatives to this design team. The New Earth label was blessed and retired, being replaced by InsideOut, a resource for summer camps. The printed curriculum was replaced by a DVD format and additional work was added for Day Camps and Family Camps.

The connectional link of denominational camping within the NCCC Committee on Outdoor Ministries was ultimately taken over by a new organization called Outdoor Ministries Connections or OMC. The Outdoor Ministries Association participated in the formation of this organization, but it ultimately became clear that the OMA needed to focus their efforts in the development of curriculum instead of the new OMC, since those relationships existed in other professional camping associations.

In 2017 the OMA steering committee began a process of visioning the future. Stan Dueck from the Church of the Brethren assisted in that two-year process. One of the major outcomes of that visioning was the unanimous decision to incorporate the association and set it up as a 501(c)3 organization. Rex Miller was asked to assist the Steering Committee in the development of by-laws. The by-laws were approved by the Committee and presented to the Annual Meeting of the OMA on Nov. 14, 2017. The Association members present approved and adopted the by-laws and the OMA Steering Committee morphed into the Board of the Outdoor Ministries Association of the Church of the Brethren. The first meeting of the Board occurred Nov 15, 2017 and Rex Miller was tasked with developing and filing for the 501(c)3 status with the IRS. That 501(c)3 was granted by the IRS in early 2018.

Brethren camping, with the help of countless volunteers, staff members, and the Outdoor Ministries Association, has come a long way in the last ninety years:

- From a few locally sponsored weeks of camp for high school youth to year round district and national programming for children, youth and adults of all ages,
- From rented or privately owned wilderness sites to multi-million dollar incorporated ministries with retreat centers, winterized facilities, certified staff and accredited programs.

However, in a sense, Church of the Brethren camping really has not changed at all. It's still about:

- Helping children and youth discover God, and the world God created,
- Teaching young people how to live in peace and understanding with God, others and themselves,
- Training young men and women to be leaders in their churches, communities and the denomination,
- The three “F’s” - Fun, Friendship and Faith

Brethren camping has evolved as dedicated leaders come and go, and the OMA adjusted to a changing denominational structure and its own organizational structure. Barry LeNoir, the Camp Director at Camp Bethel, summed it up well when he said, “We are focused on the future, on what we, as camps, can offer to build the denomination, and the church as a whole. Our camps are strong, vibrant ministries with thousands of faithful supporters and patrons. In the years and decades ahead, look for the Brethren camps to be leaders in the camping/conference industry as issues of peace, simplicity, environmental stewardship and Christian service come full circle.”

## CAMP AND THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

"Our camps and retreat centers are a key part of the whole ministry of the church." - Ken Hawkley, assistant director of discipling ministry for the Office of Congregational Life of the Executive Board of the Mennonite Church USA.

The above quote begs the question for the Church of the Brethren, "What is our understanding of our camps and retreat centers' relationship to the ministry of the church?" Are they there to provide just another summer option for the entertainment of our children, or is it something much deeper and life impacting? For years we have heard it said that many of our church leaders can look back to a summer camp experience as a life changing time for them. Several years ago a survey was given to incoming freshmen at Christian college campuses that affirmed that the camping experience was far more effective than youth programs, Sunday school, or church programs in pointing lives to the way of Jesus.

What is this relationship between camps and congregations that fosters this impact for the whole ministry of the church? It can best be described as a partnership. There are several aspects to this partnership to explore.

- Faith Formation - The numbers of hours of exposure to faith formation experiences in a week of camp exceeds the number of hours experienced in a year of Sunday school. The impact grows exponentially when you consider the exposure is without interruption of normal daily living issues. The partnership comes alive through local congregations providing mature Christian leadership as volunteers for the summer camping events. What better way to teach than to have leaders that live out the message that they are teaching. It is not so unusual that leaders who offer themselves also have their own faith strengthened through their experience at a week of camp. Faith formation also occurs at events for adults that congregations can hold at our camps. There is something that adds to the impact of an event if you can get away for a while from the daily interruptions of life to work on issues of faith.
- Creation Awareness - We read in John 3:16-17 that God sent his son into the "world" not only for those who should believe in him but that the "whole world" would be saved. All too often we have focused only on the human condition and have failed to acknowledge that as believers in Christ we carry responsibility for all of the creation that God pronounced as "good." What better place to get reacquainted with the world that God created for his pleasure than at camp. This rekindling of a relationship with creation is even more critical as we begin to hear evidence of the ability of exposures to nature beginning to reverse behavioral issues of children. (See Richard Louv's "The Last Child in the Woods.")
- Leadership Development - Camp is a place where children and youth are given the opportunities to take leadership responsibilities, often for the first time. In some camps there are formal programs on camp leadership training, but in all camps that are times

when leadership is encouraged and mistakes are accepted as part of the risk-taking that is necessary for learning.

- A Place Set Apart - In Mark 6:31 Jesus invites the disciples to "come away" with him to seek rest. This is one of the ministries that our camps offer to members of the church. They are special places set apart where people experience the presence of God. In a world in which the pace continues to increase, our camps serve as a place of refreshment, regeneration, and renewal. Some camps offer opportunities for Sabbath times as support to pastors and other church leadership.
- Ecumenical Involvement - One of the ministries that keep our camps as healthy ministries is the providing of hospitality to groups of many faiths. Is it possible that we have overlooked this ecumenical ministry as a vital ministry of the church? Being able to offer this ministry is often the very thing that makes it possible for us to have our camps available for our use in the summer. At a time when the numbers reported for membership in the church is cause for concern, the use of many of our facilities is continuing to increase as we serve others in the name of Christ.

It is essential for the church to come to a place where we understand the importance of this commitment to a partnership in ministry. If we reach that point then both the congregation and the camps and retreat centers can continue to grow in health. "As part of the body, camps and retreat centers are healthiest when the connections with congregations are strong. Together we can build each other up and reach out to those in need." - Ken Hawkley

## ARCHIVES

OMA has established an archive collection at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives in Elgin, IL. The purpose of this collection is to keep historical documents together, in a safe environment, and accessible for denominational use and research. Some of the items of interest for this growing collection include:

- Flyers, programs, minutes, and photos of National Conferences and Annual Retreats (formally Director/Manager Retreat)
- Environmental Grant project write-ups and photos
- Annual Conference insight sessions descriptions and program outlines
- Photos and citations of Staff and Volunteer Award recipients
- Newsletters
- Board and Membership Meeting minutes (formally Steering Committee)

Items should be sent to the current OMA Board Archivist, as designated by the OMA Board.. At the end of their term , the collected materials will be forwarded on to Elgin.

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Church of the Brethren Outdoor Ministries Association is open to current and past camp staff, volunteers, camp board members, congregations, and other individuals and families interested in supporting camping and outdoor ministries. Both annual and lifetime memberships are available to individuals. Memberships for camps and congregations are paid on an annual basis. A spring mailing to all current individual, camp, and congregation members is sent out by the Steering Committee to solicit membership renewals for that calendar year. Checks should be made out to the Outdoor Ministries Association and sent to: Outdoor Ministries Association, PO Box 229, Bethel, PA 19507.

Members receive the semi-annual OMA newsletter and information about events sponsored by OMA. They are also assured that their support helps to provide:

- a strong support network for camp managers/directors and other camp staff,
- representation of camps and retreat centers to the entire denomination through our presence at Annual Conference and with *Messenger* ads,
- the ministry of the Youth Peace Travel Team (in partnership with OEP and YYA),
- denominational representation in the ecumenical community through the development of the ecumenical *InsideOut* curriculum and A Christian Ministry in the National Parks,
- environmental grant opportunities for camps and congregations,
- recognition for outstanding staff and volunteers through our awards program.

## Outdoor Ministries Association Church of the Brethren



## BOARD

The Board of the Outdoor Ministries Association - COB is a board of ten persons who oversee the responsibilities of the Church of the Brethren's Outdoor Ministries Association. They are accountable to the OMA affiliated camps staff and the OMA membership.

### *Membership*

1. There are nine elected and two ex-officio members of the OMA Board.
  - a. Eight elected members shall serve terms of office of not more than three years. There shall be no limit to how many terms a member may serve, with the exception that no member may serve more than two consecutive terms. These eight members will be comprised of three camp directors/managers, two camp associate/second staff person, one Church of the Brethren pastor or theologian, and two camp volunteers.
  - b. All official meetings of the OMA Board will include an acting District Executive. The Chair of the OMA Board will arrange for a District Executive to be present at all or part of each official Board meeting.
  - c. One ex-officio member shall serve as the Denominational Representative. This member will be appointed by the Congregational Life Teams office.
  - d. The Board's treasurer shall serve as an elected member of the OMA Board for a term of one year. There shall be no limit to the number of terms the treasurer may serve.
2. The members of the OMA Board shall be adult individuals who have individual or camp membership in OMA.
3. The OMA Board will create a slate for upcoming vacancies in the staff, theologian, or treasurer positions. They will also recommend persons for the volunteer positions but additional nominations will be sought out from the OMA membership. This slate and recommendations will be distributed to the membership (via email, fall newsletter, postcard, etc.) as determined by the Board prior to the fall Membership Meeting. Additional volunteer nominations will be considered and a ballot will be created, if necessary. At the fall Membership Meeting, the slate will be presented and affirmed or rejected by a majority vote. If a ballot was created, members will vote and the person who receives the majority of the votes will fill each of the positions. If the slate is rejected, a new slate will be created and voting will continue until a slate is approved.
4. In the event an OMA Board member resigns, is unable to serve, or otherwise vacates the position prior to the expiration of his or her term, the remaining members of the OMA Board shall appoint a successor to serve the unexpired term. This provision does not apply to the Board position appointed by the Council of District Executives.

### ***Officers/Positions***

Positions shall be appointed annually by the OMA Board for a term of one year.

1. Chairperson - The Chairperson shall preside at the OMA Board meetings, the annual OMA Membership Meeting held during the Annual Retreat, and at any specially called meetings.
2. Vice-Chairperson - The Vice-Chairperson shall serve in the place of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.
3. Secretary - The Secretary shall keep the minutes and records of all OMA meetings, and shall perform generally all duties incidental to the office of Secretary.
4. Treasurer - The Treasurer shall supervise the accounting for all monies received and disbursed by the OMA Board, and shall supervise the preparation of reports with respect to the same, which reports shall be presented at the OMA Board spring and fall meetings and the annual OMA Business Meeting held during the Annual Retreat. They shall also be a signatory on the OMA banking account(s).
5. The following responsibilities will be assigned to Board members at the annual reorganization:
  - a. Membership Coordinator – The Membership Coordinator will receive and confirm all new and renewed memberships. They will also maintain the membership database list.
  - b. Grants and Awards Coordinator – The Grants and Awards Coordinator will solicit and receive applications and nominations for the Environmental Grants and Staff and Volunteer Awards. They will also secure plaques and citations for the awards.
  - c. Youth Peace Education Coordinator – The Youth Peace Education Coordinator will work with other denominational partners to administrate the ministry of youth peace education.
  - d. Mentoring Coordinator - The Mentoring Coordinator will monitor new staff additions at member camps, recruiting and connecting mentors to serve for a three-year period.
  - e. Archivist - The Archivist will collect all documents as indicated in the Archives section above, forwarding these documents each year.
  - f. Communications Coordinator - The Communications Coordinator will develop regular communications with the membership of OMA and produce an electronic newsletter periodically.
  - g. Publicity Coordinator - The Publicity Coordinator will monitor social media accounts and periodically update and maintain the website.
  - h. Actions Monitor - The Actions Monitor will maintain a list of actions agreed upon by members of the OMA Board and will send this list to Board members a month prior to the semi-annual Board meetings.

### ***Meetings***

Regular meetings of the OMA Board shall be held no less frequently than three times a year. One meeting will be held in the spring, one in the fall, and one at the Annual Retreat. The location, and/or manner, of the meeting will be selected by the Board. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute the quorum needed to conduct business. The conduct of all meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order or such alternative rules as may from time to time be adopted by the Board.

### ***Responsibilities***

The OMA Board shall conduct business on behalf of the Outdoor Ministries Association. Responsibilities of the Board include, but are not limited to:

- Providing OMA financial reports
- Conducting annual membership and camp membership drives
- Appointing representatives to the *InsideOut* committee, and receiving reports from these representatives
- Arranging and conducting the Annual Conference OMA Luncheon and the OMA Display
- Overseeing and updating content on the OMA webpage
- Soliciting requests for OMA Environmental Grants from member camps and selecting the recipients
- Soliciting nominations for OMA Staff and Volunteer Recognition Awards and selecting the recipients
- Overseeing the publication and disbursement of a semi-annual OMA newsletter
- Appointing mentors for new staff members of OMA member camps
- Granting scholarships for leadership development, including individuals pursuing studies in Outdoor Ministries at accredited institutions or to attend the Annual Retreat or National Conference
- Oversee the Annual Retreat Planning Team

## BOARD POLICIES

### ***OMA Bank Accounts***

*Adopted at 10/8/19 OMA board meeting*

The positions authorized as owners of the Outdoor Ministries Association - COB bank account(s) include Board Chair and Board Treasurer. When necessary due to ease of location or other factors, the Board Vice Chair may be added to an account as an owner.

The Board Treasurer is authorized to sign checks. If the Treasurer position is vacant, the Board Chair shall be authorized to sign checks. Only one signature is required on checks.

No one may open or close a bank account for the organization without the approval of the Officers of the organization. The approval must be recorded in writing and kept with the organization's financial records.

# MENTORING PROGRAM

## *Purpose*

To provide support and encouragement, accountability, and training to persons serving for the first time in an outdoor ministry position within the Church of the Brethren during their first three years.

## *Program Structure*

1. A Mentor/Mentee relationship can be initiated in two ways. First, a camp or outdoor ministry center can request a Mentor to be assigned to new staff persons when they begin their duties. Second, the OMA Board, after becoming aware of a new staff member, can make contact with a camp or outdoor ministry center and offer to assign a Mentor to them.
2. Once a request is received or the offer accepted, the Board will discern who a good Mentor might be and invite that person to serve. The Board will continue to work until a suitable Mentor agrees to serve.
3. The Mentor Coordinator will contact the Mentee to let them know who their Mentor will be and that they will be in touch soon. A copy of this Mentoring Program information sheet and the current OMA to Z document will be sent to both the Mentor and Mentee by the Coordinator.
4. After accepting the position, Mentors will carry the majority of the responsibilities for the program.
5. The Mentor Coordinator will connect with Mentors and Mentees approximately six months after beginning the program to ensure that the relationship has been established and to identify any issues that need to be addressed.
6. Mentors and Mentees will be requested to complete an evaluation form at the 1 year and 3 year marks to help assess the mentoring relationship and program.

## *Mentor Qualifications*

1. Be a current, active member of the Outdoor Ministry Association.
2. Have served in a position similar to that of the Mentee for at least 3 years.
3. Willing to commit to a 3-year Mentor term and accept the Mentor Responsibilities.

***Mentor Responsibilities***

1. Within two weeks of agreeing to serve as a Mentor, make an initial contact with the Mentee to make introductions, provide an overview of the program, share contact information, and begin the relationship.
2. Maintain regular contact with the Mentee by phone, e-mail, or mail. (Regular contact is understood to be, minimally, monthly during the first year, every other month during the second year, and quarterly for the third year.)
3. Arrange an in-person visit with the Mentee during the first year, as feasibility allows. (This visit should, ideally, take place at the Mentee's camp; however, it could also happen at the OMA Annual Retreat, Annual Conference, the Mentor's camp, or another designated location.)
4. Be available and open to discuss questions, concerns, or issues from the Mentee related to outdoor ministry.
5. Encourage OMA membership for both the Mentee and their camp.
6. Invite Mentee to attend OMA events including the Annual Retreat and the Luncheon and Insight Sessions at Annual Conference.
7. Share about professional growth and leadership development opportunities available through OMA, including financial assistance from the Four Horseman Fund.
8. Promote participation in OMA programs including nominating persons for Staff and Volunteer Awards and submitting proposals for the Environmental Grant program.
9. Assist in other areas of the OMA Mentoring Program as needed.

## THE FOUR HORSEMEN

### *Leadership Development and Funding “Brethren-Style”*

In the late 1920s a team of roving camp leaders (Perry Rohrer, Dan West, Chauncy Shamberger, and Alvin Brightbill) jokingly called themselves “The Four Horsemen.” Chauncey Shamberger was the national young people's director for the Church of the Brethren and the others were secured with funding by the Board of Religious Education.

The four team members traveled together in Shamberger's old Studebaker, dubbed “Sweet Chariot”. This quartet carried the camping vision across the country to camps each summer during these early formative years. One report called the four the “Traveling Salesman” for Brethren camping. The work these men did for Brethren camping was amazing! These “Four Horsemen” set the stage for Outdoor Ministries in the church. Their leadership set a pattern not only for camping but also a pattern of leadership development for the church.

In honor of these youth leaders and those who followed in their footsteps, the Four Horsemen Fund was set up to provide for leadership development opportunities for camp leaders. These funds help provide scholarships for events and training, for professional growth, and other opportunities to help strengthen leadership. This endowment fund is funded with gifts from camps, churches, and individuals. Many of the gifts from individuals come as memorials in memory of past leaders, as well as bequests through wills. Other support comes through auctions at OMA gatherings and offering projects. Membership fees at the level of Half Annual and Lifetime Membership also support this fund.

# ANNUAL RETREAT

## *Purpose*

A dedicated time for Brethren camping leaders of all levels to gather for professional growth, faith formation, and Outdoor Ministry community development

## *Key Components*

- Spiritual Growth – local or denominational leader(s); daily worship including at least one devotion and one worship each day
- Professional Growth / Strong Educational Component - focus on a current issue; keynote presenter; continuing education credits (CEUs) available through partner organizations
- Workshops - leadership and/or roundtable discussions for various areas of operation
- Recreation – local opportunities on-site and off-site; field trip
- Annual OMA membership meeting
- Camp Sharing
- Family Friendly - events/activities for family members who attend; space and supervision for children as needed
- Schedule – mid-November; three or four days in length (evening first day to noon on last day)

## *Location*

The retreat is held at a Church of the Brethren camp. Currently, twelve camps have the winterized facilities necessary for hosting the retreat, but additional camps can be added to the rotation as that becomes possible. A geographical rotation among the camps has been established to move around to different areas and, hopefully, spread out travel costs for the majority of camps. Every six years, the retreat is held at a camp on the West coast, alternating between Camp Koinonia and Camp Myrtlewood. Camp Ithiel is sometimes added more frequently due to its attractive location!

<b>PA Camps</b>	<b>OH, MD, VA Camps</b>	<b>South, West, and Midwest Camps</b>
Camp Blue Diamond	Inspiration Hills	Camp Ithiel
Camp Eder	Shepherd's Spring	Camp Koinonia
Camp Harmony	Brethren Woods	Camp Mack

Camp Swatara	Camp Bethel	Camp Myrtlewood
--------------	-------------	-----------------

Upcoming retreats will likely be held at the following locations:

2022 – Brethren Woods	2028 – Shepherd’s Spring
2023 – Camp Eder	2029 - Camp Blue Diamond
2024 – Camp Mack	2030 - Camp Ithiel
2025 – Inspiration Hills	2031 - Camp Bethel
2026 – Camp Harmony	2032 - Camp Swatara
2027 – Camp Koinonia	2033 - Camp Myrtlewood

### ***Planning Committee***

There will be a planning committee made up of four members:

1. Representative of the host camp (“host”)
2. Representative of the previous host camp (“sofa”)
3. Representative of the upcoming host camp (“chair”)
4. One representative selected by the OMA membership meeting (3-year term), with preference given to representatives from camps who are active in OMA but whose camps are not able to host the event.

### ***Responsibilities***

- Chairperson
  1. Organize planning committee and oversee the planning process
  2. Provide OMA Board with initial event information (dates, theme, keynote speaker, and major components) by the March meeting
  3. Provide event evaluations to the next planning committee and to the Board by the March meeting
- Host Camp
  1. Mail out publicity materials to OMA camps and members, Board members, district and denominational liaisons
  2. Receive and process registrations
  3. Confirm registrations with participants
  4. Receive registration and/or lodging fees
  5. Distribute stipends and reimbursements to leaders and others, as necessary

6. Assign housing and provide linens, as necessary
  7. Assist with transportation needs, as necessary
  8. Provide space for all aspects of the event
  9. Provide food service
- Planning Committee
    1. Arrange for keynote speaker, spiritual leader, workshop presenters, and roundtable facilitators
    2. Plan recreational opportunities and field trip
    3. Establish event schedule
    4. Set registration fee and/or lodging fee to cover all housing, food service, leadership, activity, and publicity costs
    5. Prepare marketing/publicity materials
    6. Arrange for childcare, as needed
    7. Gather supplies
    8. Create retreat program with schedule, camp map, leadership information, etc.
    9. Provide leadership during the event including coordinating camp sharing, welcoming and introducing keynote, spiritual, and workshop leaders, coordinating recreation opportunities, etc.
    10. Arrange for and distribute thank you gifts for leaders
    11. Create evaluation form and allow time for completion
    12. Distribute contact lists for attendees to all participants
  - Publicity
    1. April 1<sup>st</sup> - Initial event announcement with dates, theme, keynote speaker, and major components sent via mail and e-mail
    2. July 1<sup>st</sup> – Full event brochure, including schedule and educational offerings, and registration form available at Annual Conference
    3. July 15<sup>th</sup> – Full event brochure, including schedule and educational offerings, and registration form sent via mail and e-mail (encourage camps to invite key summer staff and volunteers while they are still actively serving at camp!)
    4. Make phone calls to all member camps by September 15<sup>th</sup>
    5. Utilize OMA and denominational webpages, as well as social networking sites, to advertise the event

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE

For many years a National Conference was sponsored and organized every three years by the National Conference Planning Team. This team was composed of a camp employee from the facility where the conference will be held and three other OMA members. The members of the team and the location of the National Conference were chosen at the Membership Meeting held during the Annual Retreat (then Director/Manager Retreat). The members held their position on the team until the conclusion of the National Outdoor Ministry Conference.

The event was typically held during the second or third weekend of November, often in conjunction or close proximity to the Annual Retreat (then Director/Manager Retreat). Activities were concentrated around a guest speaker(s) and a central topic of universal interest to professionals, staff, board members, volunteers, and others in the wider church and outdoor ministries community. Topic concentrations focused on stimulating music in our camps, recruitment and usage of volunteers, facilitating youth in their exploration of ministry, and hearing from outdoor ministry professionals from the ecumenical community. During the conference an auction was held to raise funds for either the Four Horseman Endowment Fund or some other designated OMA Steering Committee (now Board) approved project.

Unlike the annual OMA Director/Manager Retreat the OMA National Conference was open to anyone who has an interest in Outdoor Ministries or the particular topic for that conference.

In 2010, the former Director/Manager Retreat was renamed the Annual Retreat and expanded to include a wider range of persons involved and interested in outdoor ministries. This change prompted the termination of the cycle of National Conferences until a need for this event resurfaces.

## PRESENCE AT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN EVENTS

### *Annual Conference*

OMA participates at the denomination's Annual Conference with a booth, luncheon, and insight session(s).

Each year, OMA purchases booth space in the exhibit hall. The centerpiece of the display is a map with the locations of all OMA sites. Many persons enjoy locating their camp or finding the camp nearest to their home. Display activities, games, and worksheets provide opportunities for interaction and exploration about OMA. These items vary from year to year based on themes and locations. Tables at the booth include the following information:

- OMA brochures, including membership information
- Four Horseman Endowment Fund brochures
- Environmental Grant brochures and submission forms
- Staff and Volunteer Award submission forms
- Summer Curriculum Material
- OMA stickers

Space is also available for OMA member camps to bring brochures about their camp facilities and programs.

The OMA luncheon is an exciting part of each Annual Conference. It's like a national camp reunion! The luncheon begins with a "roll call" of camps where participants are able to excitedly cheer for their home camp. After a prayer and/or sung grace, a delicious meal is enjoyed. The program for the luncheon always includes the presentation of Staff and Volunteer Awards. Someone from the camp, camp board, or district staff presents the framed citation and a wooden plaque to the winner, reading the text of the citation. The winners often share a few words, and photos are taken. Winners, one guest, and the award presenters receive complimentary tickets to the luncheon. An association update on various OMA programs and events is also given. Group singing, presentation of Lifetime Achievement Awards or Four Horsemen Awards, and reports from the youth peace education program have also been part of the luncheon. The luncheon is closed in prayer.

In cooperation with the denomination's General Secretary and Congregational Life Ministries office, OMA strives to offer an insight session each year. This session is centered around a topic of interest to the denomination and outdoor ministry. The topic may be connected with the Annual Conference theme, summer curriculum, or another denominational emphasis. Usually this session is led by a camp professional who is a specialist on the selected topic, but it may also be a

panel of speakers. OMA's insight sessions are known for their lively discussions, helpful interactions, and fun games or activities.

### ***National Jr. High Conference***

OMA strives to have a presence at the National Jr. High Conference with a booth in the exhibit area or agency/organization event, and by providing leadership for workshops, large group sessions, recreational activities, or other areas as asked by the planning team. An OMA video featuring all of the camps has been produced for presentation. The emphasis at this conference is on camper recruitment. In the past, the Youth Peace Travel Team has also represented OMA throughout NJHC as they led.

### ***National Youth Conference***

OMA strives to have a presence at the National Youth Conference with a booth in the exhibit area or agency/organization event, and by providing leadership for workshops, large group sessions, recreational activities, or other areas as asked by the planning team. An OMA video featuring all of the camps has been produced for presentation. Areas of emphasis at this conference include youth camps and opportunities to serve as a staff member or volunteer. In the past, the Youth Peace Travel Team has also represented OMA throughout NYC as they led.

### ***Young Adult Conference and National Young Adult Conference***

OMA has a presence at the Young Adult Conference and National Young Adult Conference with a booth in the exhibit area or agency/organization event, and by providing leadership for workshops, large group sessions, recreational activities, or other areas as asked by the planning team. An OMA video featuring all of the camps has been produced for presentation. An emphasis at these conferences is for staff and volunteer recruitment. In the past, the Youth Peace Travel Team has also represented OMA throughout YAC and NYAC as they lead.

### ***National Older Adult Conference***

OMA seeks to have a presence at the National Older Adult Conference with a booth in the exhibit area or agency/organization event, and by providing leadership for workshops, large group sessions, recreational activities, or other areas as asked by the planning team. An OMA video featuring all of the camps has been produced for presentation. Areas of emphasis at this conference include camping memories, volunteer opportunities, intergenerational camps, outdoor ministry programs for older adults, and financial commitments to OMA and local camps.

### ***District Conferences***

OMA is represented at individual District Conferences through the camp(s), retreat center(s), or outdoor ministry center(s) that are part of that District.

## ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

### ***Objectives***

This program is intended to encourage Brethren camps and congregations who are members of the Outdoor Ministries Association to develop new & innovative programs in the field of environmental education. This program seeks to fulfill the church's stewardship mandate (*see Creation: Called to Care, a position paper of the 1991 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren*).

### ***Background***

In 1991 the Church of the Brethren adopted a position paper on the environment entitled: "Creation: Called to Care." In that paper all members of the church were invited to:

1. Affirm the goodness and beauty of God's creation.
2. Acknowledge our special responsibility for stewardship of the Creator's good earth.
3. Learn of the environmental damages facing the planet.
4. Recognize that our practices and styles of life have had an effect on the environment.
5. Pursue a lifestyle that is wise and responsible in light of our understanding of the problems.
6. Exert our influence in shaping public policy and insisting that industries, businesses, farmers, and consumers relate to the environment in ways that are sensible, healthy, and protective of its integrity.
7. Become involved in organizations and actions to protect and restore the environment and the people in our communities.

Congregations and Districts were also challenged to participation by these actions:

1. Become ecologically sensitive in the conduct of their programs and to bring all under the control of a caring stewardship.
2. Pursue courses of action that promote environmental protection and social justice.
3. Investigate the adequacy of environmental policy and protection at the state and local levels of government
4. Encourage environmental awareness programs in Brethren camps that do not have such programs.

In response to this call to action the Outdoor Ministries Association set up a new program to assist camps in meeting this challenge. This program was intended to encourage Brethren camps

throughout the denomination to develop new and innovative programs in the field of environmental education. Funding for the grants comes from gifts from camps and individuals as well as proceeds from auctions at OMA events. The OMA Board awards grants on an annual basis toward projects to camps who request funding and meet the criteria for the projects. The area of environmental education is broadly defined as the application of Christian principles and ethics to environmental issues and stewardship development in a camp or outdoor setting. The maximum available to a camp for a single project is \$1,000. Although matching funds are not criteria for the initial grant approval, it is encouraged that the environmental grant be used as leverage in seeking other funding support.

At the 2011 spring meeting of the OMA Steering Committee, a program to support congregations in the pursuit of programs to promote environmentally friendly practices and/or educational programs was approved. As with camps, the churches are encouraged to match the grant. Congregational membership in OMA determines the amount of the grant available with a maximum of \$1000 for member churches and \$500 for non-member churches.

The objective of the Environmental Grant Program is to provide incentive to camps and congregations to undertake projects and activities that provide interactive and experiential activities to camps and guests to help them become more acquainted with this wonderful creation that we all live in. This grows out of the greater understanding of the "Creation: Called to Care" where we are reminded that "the Creator-Redeemer seeks the renewal of the creation and calls the people of God to participate in saving acts of renewal. We are called to cooperate with God in the transformation of a world that has not fulfilled its divinely given potential or beauty, peace, health, harmony, justice, and joy (Isa.11:6-9, Mic. 4:3-4, Eph. 2:10, Rev. 21:1-5). Our task is nothing less than to join God in preserving, renewing and fulfilling the creation. It is to relate to nature in ways that sustain life on the planet, provide for the essential material and physical needs of all humankind, and increase justice and well-being for all life in a peaceful world."

From the beginning of the Environmental Grant program twenty (20) camps have received grants for a wide variety of projects. Projects have included a variety of nature walks and boardwalks, pond, pond observation deck, bird blinds, outdoor education equipment and supplies, butterfly garden, open air greenhouse, environmental building design, hybrid power system, Wildlife Development Project, Environmental Stewardship Project, lighting upgrades, and a go green program with organic vegetables and rain water collection.

Environmental Grant applications can be located on the OMA website or by contacting the Grants and Awards Member of the OMA Steering Committee.

### ***Procedure***

On an annual basis, the OMA Board will award grants to current members toward a project in environmental education. Environmental education will be broadly defined as the application of Christian principles and ethics to environmental issues and stewardship development in a camping setting. Multiple year proposals will be considered but funding for each year will be contingent upon satisfactory progress reports to the OMA Board.

Although matching funds are not criteria for the initial grant approval, it is encouraged that the environmental grant be used as leverage in seeking other funding support. Second year funding will require matching funds and a progress report. Grants of \$500 will be awarded with a maximum of \$1,000 per project.

Applications shall be submitted, neatly typed, to the address indicated on the form. Supporting documents, endorsements or further details may be included. The Outdoor Ministries Association Board shall advertise the grant program in the OMA newsletter and by other means. A deadline for all proposals is March 1. Applications received after the deadline will be considered during the next granting cycle. The Board's decisions on the awards at its spring meeting will be final.

Each proposal shall include:

- Goal of project
- Rationale of project
- Plan for evaluating and reporting on the project
- Plan for use as teaching program
- Outline of plan of action including personnel involved with their specific skills and abilities
- Initiation date & place
- Use of funds including a detailed budget
- Length of time to complete project
- Amount of funds requested from OMA and other sources

Rationale used in evaluating a proposal:

- OMA membership is required
- Proposal indicates adequate thought leading to successful implementation
- Quality of goals proposed (originality)
- Unique, innovative and original aspects of the project
- Is it a one-time event or an on-going program?
- Number of camper days affected at the camp
- How will the results be circulated to other camps and local groups?
- Effective use of funds including additional funds from local congregation, camp board, or outside groups

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The Outdoor Ministries Association initiated a new leadership awards program in 1987. Beginning at the Outdoor Ministries luncheon at Annual Conference that year, an award was presented to a camp staff person and another to a camp volunteer. The awards give special recognition to persons providing outstanding leadership in the camping ministry and honor the men and women who have made long-term commitments and sacrifices to benefit the Church of the Brethren camping ministry.

### ***Staff Award***

The nomination form for camp staff person reads, "Qualified nominees for this award are persons employed in a Church of the Brethren Camp on a part-time or full-time basis. The camp making the nomination must be a current member in good standing of the Outdoor Ministries Association. The nominees will be judged on long-term commitment to outdoor ministry, significant contribution to the development of a district outdoor ministries program, visionary leadership and a minimum of 10 years of service."

### ***Volunteer Award***

The nomination form for camp volunteer reads, "Nominees for such recognition may be members of district camp boards/committees, district board, counselors, directors or individuals committed to outdoor ministries. The camp making the nomination must be a current member in good standing of the Outdoor Ministries Association. The nominees will be judged on long-term commitment, creativity, vision, service and leadership in the area of outdoor ministries and service to the total church."

### ***Nomination and Selection Process***

The nomination forms are provided each fall, and at the spring meeting, the Outdoor Ministries Association Board chooses a person from the nominations to receive the award. Staff and Volunteer Award Nomination Forms can be located on the OMA website or by contacting the Grants and Awards Member of the OMA Board.

## YOUTH PEACE TRAVEL TEAM (YPTT)/YOUTH PEACE EDUCATION

The first Youth Peace Travel Team (YPTT) was formed in the summer of 1991 as a cooperative effort of a number of General Board programs and Outdoor Ministries. Since that year a team has been fielded every summer. The members of the Youth Peace Travel Team travel to camps throughout the Church of the Brethren. The goal of the team's work is to talk with other young people about the Christian message and the Brethren tradition of peacemaking.

The Youth Peace Travel Team was originally a cooperative effort of OMA, On Earth Peace, and the denominational Peace and Youth Ministries offices. In 2013 (?) the team sponsors became On Earth Peace, Outdoor Ministries Association, the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board's Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office and Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, and Bethany Theological Seminary.

Three to four college students between the ages of 18-22 were selected each summer by representatives of each sponsoring organization. The team members were part of the Ministry Summer Service (MSS) program and therefore took part in the orientation led by the Church of the Brethren Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office. Either before or after MSS orientation, the team spent several days in an orientation geared specifically toward their ministry as YPTT. Topics covered included, but were not limited to: the Biblical basis of peacemaking, Brethren tradition as peacemakers, presentation skills, boundaries and expectations of camps, dynamics of privilege and power, and leading workshops in an outdoor setting. They also worked at what it meant to be a team which included training in conducting family meetings, traveling to camps, communicating with camp leaders, financial details, etc.

Each summer, camps were contacted to learn of their desire in hosting the team for one week during the camping season. There had been times in YPTT history when teams were designated geographic areas for the summer. In recent years, the experience was spread across the country and aimed to include one experience each summer to entice young people to apply to be on the team (National Youth Conference, west coast camps, fun Annual Conference location, etc.). Expectations were that the team would be given room and board and supplied with laundry facilities. To help cover the extensive transportation costs, a \$250 donation was requested from the host camp. In return, the team provided sessions and workshops around the topic of living together peacefully, Christ's call to be peacemakers, and learning to communicate with each other in a peaceful and constructive manner. While it was best that the team not be used as counselors, they were available to be used in the many facets of summer camp including campfire leading, Bible study, recreation, small group leaders, and as those extra adults often needed in various settings.

Applications for young adults interested in serving on the YPTT were obtained from the Church of the Brethren or On Earth Peace websites. The YPTT application was a joint application with MSS. Members received the MSS college scholarship stipend of \$2500 (see Ministry Summer Service information).

In the summer of 2019 the representatives of the sponsoring organizations met to discuss the future of the Youth Peace Travel Team. After one summer of cancelling the team due to lack of applications and two summers of supporting a one person Youth Peace Advocate the decision was made that the ministry of the Youth Peace Travel Team was no longer sustainable. The following text is taken from a press release written by Becky Ullom Naugle, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Church of the Brethren and was released by the Church of the Brethren Newslines on September 8, 2019.

“The following statement is an announcement about the Youth Peace Travel Team from the cooperating sponsors including the Church of the Brethren’s Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological Seminary, and the Outdoor Ministries Association:

***“See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them” (Isaiah 42:9).***

The Brethren movement began in a context rife with conflict. Since those first sisters and brothers entered the Eder River for baptism, the peace witness of Jesus in the New Testament has been an important pillar of our faith.

One of the ways the denomination has expressed its commitment to peace education for youth and young adults over the last 30 years has been through the Youth Peace Travel Team. The members of the Youth Peace Travel Team travel to camps across the denomination, teaching about peace, justice, and reconciliation. The goal of the team’s work was to talk with other young people about the Christian message and the Brethren tradition of peacemaking. For the past 28 years, this has been happening in Bible study sessions, campfires, over meals in the dining hall, on the recreation field, and many other camp and denominational youth program settings.

The first Youth Peace Travel Team was initiated out of a creative vision of several Church of the Brethren programs in the summer of 1991. Between 1991 and 2016, a team of three or four young adults has been fielded every summer. Yet for the last three years, the number of program applicants has dwindled. For two of those years, one young adult took on the work of peace education as the Youth Peace Advocate. The other year, there was neither a team nor an individual to fill the position.

Because this way of doing peace education seems to be becoming less effective, the sponsors have decided to end this program and seek more effective ways to encourage peace education. The sponsors include the Church of the Brethren’s Youth/Young Adult Ministry office and Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological Seminary, and the Outdoor Ministries Association.

The sponsors are committed to the Church of the Brethren’s call to build peace and form disciples of Jesus as peacemakers. Young adults who are interested in peace work should apply to be an intern through Ministry Summer Service (MSS) or On Earth Peace. MSS will continue to partner with camps to provide interns prepared to do peace education, and the program will make an

increased effort to provide interns with peacemaking formation as a part of orientation. On Earth Peace offers a variety of paid internships for young adults throughout the year.

While it causes sadness to end the Youth Peace Travel Team program, we entrust ourselves, our young people, and our peace witness to God, who is surely doing a new thing--even if we cannot perceive it yet!"

In 2021, OMA entered into an agreement with OEP to develop a program that would train peace educators at each camp that desired it. The camp identifies an individual or individuals who work with the camp program to provide peace education for the summer. In some cases, these educators could take on some district-wide responsibilities if mutually agreed. OEP develops and conducts the training for educators who then work with the camp staff to integrate into the camp program.

Camps would be responsible for any wages or salary for educators; however, these educators can be volunteers. The position may be an opportunity to engage a ministry summer service intern.

## A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE NATIONAL PARKS (ACMNP)

ACMNP is A Christian Ministry in the National Parks. This organization is an interdenominational non-profit ecumenical ministry that provides worship services in many of the national parks throughout the country. The organization is overseen by a volunteer Board of Trustees and a volunteer National Board. The National Board consists of denominational representatives, other invited contributing volunteers, alumni of the program, and representatives from the hosting parks and concessionaires. The Church of the Brethren has had a volunteer National Board member since the 1970's. Rev. Robert Houff was the COB representative until 1998. Marlin Houff (Administrator at Camp Swatara) succeeded his father on the National Board beginning in 1999 to present. Participation on this board is supported by a budgeted expense item in the OMA budget and by a contribution to OMA for this participation by an individual member. The remaining expense of participation is the responsibility of the volunteer. The Church of the Brethren denomination does not provide any financial support or contribution to ACMNP, but has continually supported the board member's continued participation as a representative of the Church of Brethren through the Outdoor Ministries Association. The board member provides an annual report to the OMA steering committee of his/her participation.

Persons interested in learning more about ACMNP should visit their website at: [www.acmnp.com](http://www.acmnp.com) or contact Marlin Houff at [mhouff@campswatara.org](mailto:mhouff@campswatara.org).

## BRETHREN VOLUNTEER SERVICE (BVS)

Brethren Volunteer Service ([www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org](http://www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org)) was founded in 1948 and has close to 7,000 alumni. BVSers serve in one-year (or more) volunteer assignments with the project site providing housing, food, and a small monthly stipend (\$100 for a first-year volunteer). There is also a discounted project fee for COB camps that is paid to BVS to cover insurance and travel for the volunteers. Most volunteers do not know their assignments before attending a three-week orientation with BVS. At the orientation the volunteer will work with staff in selecting and getting to an assignment. There are about 80 positions in the United States and around the world.

BVS connects with OMA in many ways and has done so for many years. The most visible is the relationship BVS has with OMA camps as project sites where the Church of the Brethren camp receives volunteers from BVS for one-year assignments. Current camps that are project sites include Camp Bethel, Camp Eder, Camp Mack, Camp Mardela, Camp Myrtlewood, Camp Swatara, and Inspiration Hills Camp. Many other camps have hosted BVSers over the years. In the last 20 years those have included Camp Harmony, Camp Ithiel and Camp La Verne. BVS is always open to camps coming on board as projects sites and will work closely with staff in the placement of volunteers.

In the past few years, BVS has also begun partnering with OMA camps for its three-week orientations. These take place three times a year (twice in the summer, and once in the fall). During orientations, the BVS staff and volunteers do all of their own cooking, and programming, as well as a workday for the camp that is hosting. BVS is always eager to hear from camps who are willing to welcome an orientation group.

Over the past 15 years BVS has also invited current volunteers to serve as counselors at summer camps where counselors come in for one-week periods of time (not hired for the summer by the camp.) This varies year to year depending on the volunteers' interest and availability, and the camps' need.

The short-term service ministry that BVS operates has also historically partnered with OMA camps for a week in the summers. Camps host Jr. High or Sr. High youth and their advisors who have committed at least five days of their summer to creating intentional community with others who see service as a way of living out their faith. Some camps that have hosted these groups in the past include Camp Blue Diamond, Camp Brethren Heights, Camp Harmony, Camp Mack, and Camp Stover. The BVS office would welcome camps to be in touch about partnering in this way as well.

One of the core values of the Church of the Brethren is service. BVS recognizes that young people will often get their first exposure to how those outside of their home congregation live out their faith at camp. Where it's possible, BVS tries to have information available to campers and staff about BVS. The hope is that camp leaders look at BVS as a step in a person's life as they develop their faith journey, passing along this value and culture of service to campers and other staff.

## MINISTRY SUMMER SERVICE (MSS)

Ministry Summer Service is a leadership development program for college students in the Church of the Brethren, provided through the Youth/Young Adult Ministry office and the Ministry office. Students, or interns, involved in MSS spend 10 weeks during the summer working in a local congregation or church related organizations such as: district offices, camps, and denominational programs.

MSS provides an excellent opportunity for young adults to explore ministry as a vocation, or to simply learn what ministry is all about in a particular setting. The Bible is a record of God calling people to challenging tasks. MSS is no exception. Through MSS, God calls congregations and other ministry settings to reach out in the ministry of teaching and receiving. Likewise, God calls young adults to explore the possibility of church work as their vocation.

Interns are required to spend one week in orientation at the beginning of the summer. This usually takes place at the Church of the Brethren offices in Elgin, IL. Interns then spend nine weeks working in their placement site, developing leadership skills and exploring a call to ministry. Interns receive the following in exchange for their participation:

- \$2,500 tuition grant
- food and housing for ten weeks
- \$100 per month spending money
- transportation from orientation to their placement
- transportation from their placement to home

Each intern is linked with a mentor from the ministry site. Mentors are required to attend part of the orientation in Elgin, as well as meet regularly with the intern during the summer through meetings, devotions, prayer, study, etc...

Camps can be a part of MSS by hosting an intern. It is expected that the intern serve in as many facets of camping as possible, such as: counseling, leading camp programs, office work, training opportunities, time spent in the kitchen and on maintenance, board meetings, and visiting congregations.

## FOUR HORSEMAN AWARD HONOREES

The Four Horseman Award is given to persons who have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to the work of outdoor ministry and who exemplify the character of the original Four Horseman by promoting outdoor ministries within the Church of the Brethren. This award is given on an occasional basis as determined by the OMA Board.

1994 – Chauncey Shamberger

1997 – Walter D. Bowman

2002 – Arden Ball, Bob Tully, and Raymond Peters

2006 – Nancy Knepper

2018 - Rex Miller

## ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT RECIPIENTS AND PROJECTS

### CAMP PROJECTS

Brethren Woods – Environmental Study Trail, Rain Barrels, and Weather Station

Camp Alexander Mack – Butterfly Garden, Hybrid Power System for Nature Center

Camp Bethel – Pond Observation Deck, Adventure Village Platforms

Camp Blue Diamond – Outdoor Education Materials, Compost System

Camp Carmel – Erosion Control

Camp Eder – Rain Barrels

Camp Harmony – Goose Pond, Nature Cabin

Camp Ithiel – Environmental Design for Dining Hall, Nature Books and Supplies, Environmental Stations and Supplies

Camp La Verne – Nature Center

Camp Mardela – Board Walk, Interpretive Guide Stations, Wood-Burning Water Heater, Outdoor School Program

Camp Myrtlewood – Environmental Stewardship Project

Camp Placid – Energy Efficient Light Bulbs, Earthen Dam

Camp Swatara – Bird Blind

Inspiration Hills – Wildlife Development Project

Shepherd's Spring – Open Air Greenhouse, Water Ram Pump

Woodland Altars – Bird Blind

Inspiration Hills - Alternative Gardening

Mt Hermon - LED Lighting Experiment

Mardela - Papersaver Hand Dryers

Blue Diamond - Interpretive Trail Signs

Inspiration Hills - The Cost of Water

Brethren Heights - Lighting Stewardship

Alexander Mack - Community Garden

Pine Lake - Pollinator Garden

CONGREGATIONAL PROJECTS

Skyridge – Soil and Land Project

Community of Joy – Community Garden

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENTS

- 1987 – Staff: William “Bill” Hare, Emmaus; Volunteer: Hazel Heisey, Brethren Woods
- 1988 – Staff: Charlene Clark, Woodland Altars; Volunteer: Lefty Hoal, Bethel and Clay Sheets, Carmel
- 1989 – Staff: Bob Jones, Bethel; Volunteer: Carl Williams, Shiloh
- 1990 – Staff: Arden Ball, Mack; Volunteer: Ray Verbeck, Koinonia
- 1991 – Staff: Tom Ness, Blue Diamond; Volunteer: Cassel Mammau, Swatara
- 1992 – Staff: Roger Crusier, Woodland Altars; Volunteer: Lucille Reber, Ithiel and Wayne Buckle, Mid-Atlantic District Camps
- 1993 – Staff: Patty Shoemaker, Woodland Altars; Volunteer: Orlin Lett, Myrtlewood
- 1994 – Staff: Kathy Snyder, Placid and Curt Rowland, Eder; Volunteer: Roy Frysinger, Swatara and Rufus Petre, Blue Diamond
- 1995 – Staff: Myrtle Conner, Bethel; Volunteer: Julia Laprade, Bethel
- 1996 – Staff: John and Margaret Jones, Myrtlewood; Volunteer: Hazel Hoover, Peaceful Pines and Virginia DuBois, Peaceful Pines, and Donn Kesler, Mack
- 1997 – Staff: Doug Phillips, Brethren Woods; Volunteer: Paul Bowman, Brethren Woods
- 1998 – Staff: Kathryn Oltman, Ithiel; Volunteer: Al Brubaker, Ithiel
- 1999 – Staff: Neal Harvey, Harmony; Volunteer: Linda McMurray, Swatara and Aaron Martin, Swatara
- 2000 – Staff: Rex Miller, Shepherd’s Spring; Volunteer: Milton Ewert, Peaceful Pines and Eugene Miller, Blue Diamond
- 2001 – Staff: Ken Kline Smeltzer, Peaceful Pines; Volunteer: Jan Hurst, Shepherd’s Spring
- 2002 – Staff: Marlin Houff, Swatara; Volunteer: Elaine Forcier, Peaceful Pines
- 2003 – Staff: None; Volunteer: Martha Cole, Placid and Sandy Kopp, Swatara
- 2004 – Staff: Deb Glenny, Blue Diamond; Volunteer: Morris Firebaugh, Emmaus
- 2005 – Staff: Dean and Jerri Heiser Wenger, Blue Diamond; Volunteer: Shari Hoopingarner, Mack

2006 – Staff: None; Volunteer: Alvin Walbridge, Mardela and Arthur & Shirley Crane, Peaceful Pines and Betty Kreider, Mack; Lifetime Achievement: Bill Hare, Emmaus

2007 – Staff: Andy Levin, Myrtlewood; Volunteer: Joe Henderson, Carmel and Frank & Barbara Hart, Peaceful Pines

2008 – Staff: Lloyd Moyer, Swatara; Volunteer: Clifton Smith, Shepherd’s Spring and Norris & Gary Martin, Bethel; Lifetime Achievement: Clay Sheets, Carmel

2009 – Staff: Lloyd & Leroy Lapp, La Verne and Bob Patalano, Inspiration Hills; Volunteer: None

2010 – Staff: Michael Kauffman, Mack; Volunteer: Alfred & Patricia Wiley, Peaceful Pines

2011 – Staff: Barry LeNoir, Bethel; Volunteer: Steve Frazier, Mardela

2012 - Staff: Joann Ebling, Swatara; Volunteer: Doug & Sally Ruby, Shepherd’s Spring, Swatara, Mardela

2013 – Staff: Phyllis Leininger, Mack; Verne Leininger, Mack; Raymonde Rougier, Woodland Altars

2014 – Staff: Ann Cornell, Shepherd’s Spring; Paul Witkovsky, Blue Diamond

2015 – Staff: Bill & Betty Hare, Emmaus; Volunteer: Bob Schall, Mardela; Ralph Miner, Emmaus

2016 – Staff: Mike Neff, Ithiel; Volunteer: Glenna Moncrief, Shepherd’s Spring; Hazel Lauver, Mt Hermon

2017 - Staff: Gieta Gresh, Mardela; Volunteer: Lyle Neher, Pine Lake; Volunteer: Becky Phillips and Brenda King, Brethren Heights

2018 - Staff: Ray Kline, Shepherds Spring; Volunteer: Uwe Mirsch, Myrtlewood; Lifetime Achievement: Rex Miller, Mack, Shepherds Spring and Ithiel

2019 - Staff: Wallace and Marty Cole, Carmel; Volunteer: None

2020 - Staff: None; Volunteer: Tim Joseph, Brethren Heights

2020 - Staff: Barbara Wise-Lewczak, Pine Lake; Melissa Hinton, Koinonia; Volunteer: Steve Brunk, Pine Lake; Gary Benesh, Carmel

## YOUTH PEACE TRAVEL TEAM HISTORY

1991 - ANDY LOOMIS, CHRIS BROWN, JOY KRAYBILL, AUDREY OSBORNE

Camps: Bethel, Brethren Woods, Carmel, Ithiel, Swatara

Training: Bethel

Transportation: Rental Car

1992 - CHRIS FORNEY, DARIN KEITH BOWMAN, ERIN KRAMER, DEMETRA HECKMAN

Camps: Eder, Mon-Dak, Shepherd's Spring, Inspiration Hills, Emmanuel, Harmony

Training: Woodland Altars

Transportation: Air & Rental Car

1993 - JENN UNGEMACH, JESSICA ELLER, JEFF CARTER, ANDREW BRUNK

Camps: Mack, Stover, La Verne, Peaceful Pines, Myrtlewood

Training: Mack

Transportation: Train

1994 - BRIAN KRUSCHWITZ, RHONDA MELLINGER, BECKI WHITTAKER, MATT GUYNN

Camps: Emmanuel (1 week of training, 2 weeks of camp), Pine Lake, Colorado (2 weeks of camp), National Youth Conference, Annual Conference (Wichita, KS)

Training: Emmanuel

Transportation: Air

1995 - STEVE BRADY, SARAH STAFFORD, MELISSA BENNETT, MATTHEW MILLER

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Blue Diamond, Bethel, Shepherd's Spring, Ithiel

Training: Inspiration Hills

Transportation: Air & Volunteer Shuttles

1996 - HEIDI BECK, REBEKAH HELSEL, SARAH MARIE HENDRICKS, J.J. WHITE (HALF OF SUMMER)

Camps: Woodland Altars, Carmel, Mack, Emmaus, Emmanuel, Bethel

Training: Woodland Altars

Transportation: Air & Volunteer Shuttles

1997 - JACKI HARTLEY, JESSICA LEHMAN, NATHAN MUSSELMAN, MIKE BRINKMEIER

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Harmony, Shepherd's Spring, Mardela, Brethren Woods, Ithiel, Hammond's Mill, Swatara

Training: Brethren Woods

Transportation: Volunteer Shuttles

1998 - LORI VAN ORDER, LINETTA ALLEY, RACHEL CARROLL, LIZ GEISEWITE

Camps: LaVerne, Stover, Pine Lake, Peaceful Pines, National Youth Conference, CA churches (LaVerne, San Diego, Shalom Ministries/Tijuana, Modesto, Live Oak)

Training: Mack

Transportation: Air & Volunteer Shuttles

1999 - CHANDA EDWARDS, AMY RHOADES, ERICA SWEITZER, WENDY MATHENY

Camps: Brethren Woods, Mack, Blue Diamond, Emmaus, Emmanuel

Training: Brethren Woods

2000 - MYRA MARTIN-ADKINS, PETER DOBBERSTEIN, DAN ROYER, MARSHALL CAMDEN, MEGHAN SHELLER

Camps: Swatara, Shepherd's Spring, Annual Conference (Kansas City), Brethren Woods, Bethel, Eder, Brethren Heights

Training: Swatara

Debriefing: Brethren Heights

2001 - KATIE BEST, SUSAN CHAPMAN, RACHEL LONG

Camps: Shepherd's Spring, Song and Story Fest (Shepherd's Spring), Annual Conference (Baltimore), Blue Diamond, Galilee, Emmaus, Eder, Mack

Training: Shepherd's Spring

Debriefing: Mack

2002 - CARLE GAIER, BEN KREIDER, CHRIS PALSGROVE, DANIEL RADCLIFF

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Annual Conference (Louisville, KY), Stover, National Youth Conference (Ft. Collins, CO), LaVerne, Myrtlewood, Peaceful Pines, Koinonia

Training: Inspiration Hills

Debriefing: Elgin (David Radcliff)

Transportation: Air, Bus, Volunteers

2003 - ERICA SCHATZ, LAURA SWEITZER, MANDY WAMPLER

Camps: Woodland Altars, Brethren Heights, Annual Conference (Boise, ID), Mack, Pine Lake, Emmaus, Hammond's Mill

Training: Woodland Altars

Debriefing: Elgin (Kim Stuckey)

Transportation: Rental car, bus, air, volunteers

2004 - TIFFANY CARTY, CARRIE FRY-MILLER, JEFF MCAVOY, MATT WITKOVSKY

Camps: National Young Adult Conference (Snow Mountain Ranch, CO), Shepherd's Spring (twice), Brethren Woods, Annual Conference (Charleston, WV), Blue Diamond, Bethel, Harmony, Swatara, Waynesboro Church of the Brethren

Training: Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Richmond, IN and YPTT training at the Northview COB, Indianapolis, IN

Debriefing: New Windsor, MD - Brethren Service Center (Phil Jones, Karen Roberts, Kim Stuckey, Jerri Heiser Wenger)

Transportation: Volunteers, air, bus

2005 - BENJAMIN BEAR, NICOLE FOWLER, BENJAMIN RITCHEY-MARTIN, RACHEL MCFADDEN

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Brethren Heights, Ithiel, Annual Conference (Peoria, IL), Mack, Woodland Altars, Emmaus, Blue Diamond, Shepherd's Spring

Training: Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Richmond, IN, and YPTT training at the Inspiration Hills in Northern Ohio

Debriefing: New Windsor, MD

Transportation: Volunteers, air, bus

2006 - KAREN DUHAI, CHRISTINA MCPHERSON, CORRINE LIPSCOMB, MARGARET BORTNER

Camps: Mack, Mt. Hermon, Pine Lake, Annual Conference (Boise, ID), Wilbur Stover, Myrtlewood, National Youth Conference, LaVerne, Peaceful Pines, Koinonia

Training: Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Richmond, IN, and YPTT training at Mack

Transportation: Air, bus, volunteers

2007 - AUDREY HOLLENBERG, AMANDA GLOVER, EMILY LAPRADE

Camps: Woodland Altars, Eder, Harmony, Annual Conference (Cleveland, OH), Shepherd's Spring, Mardela, Blue Diamond, Swatara, LaVerne CoB Peace Camp.

Training: Ministry Summer Service in Elgin, IL and YPTT Training at Woodland Altars

Transportation: Bus and volunteers

2008 - GABRIEL DODD, SAMANTHA CARWILE, MELISA GRANDISON, JOHN-MICHAEL PICKENS

Camps: Pine Lake, Bethel, Ithiel, Mack, Blue Diamond, Annual Conference (Richmond, VA), Brethren Heights, Emmaus, Peaceful Pines, Young Adult Conference (Estes Park, CO)

Training: Ministry Summer Service in Elgin, IL and YPTT training also in Elgin

Transportation: Plane, bus, and volunteers

2009 - MARIANNE HOUFF, CHELSEA GOSS, JESSICA FLORY STEURY, BETHANY FUNKHOUSER

Camps: Mack, Mardela, Inspiration Hills, Swatara, Galilee, Eder, Blue Diamond

Other: Work Camp in New Windsor, Annual Conference (San Diego, CA), Jr. High National Conference (Harrisonburg, VA)

Training: YPTT Orientation at Blue Diamond (1st time to be held prior to MSS) and Ministry Summer Service Training in Elgin, IL

Transportation: CBD van to Elgin and Mack, used On Earth Peace vehicle for most of summer (first time), flew to Annual Conference

2010- MARCUS HARDEN, TIMOTHY SOLLENBERGER HEISHMAN, CAMBRIA TETER, HANNAH WYSONG

Camps: Mt. Hermon, Stover, Peaceful Pines, Annual Conference (Pittsburg), Pine Lake, National Youth Conference, La Verne, Hammond's Mill

Training: YPTT Training at Blue Diamond and Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Elgin

Transportation: Air, local rides

Debriefing: Schrock Farm, Missouri

2011- MARK DOWDY, TYLER GOSS, KAY GUYER, SARAH MARIE NEHER

Camps: Woodland Altars, National Junior High Conference (Elizabethtown, PA), Shepherd's Spring, Bethel, Annual Conference (Grand Rapids, MI), Emmaus, Galilee, Brethren Woods, National Workcamp at Camp Mardela

Debriefing: Camp Mardela

Training: YPTT Orientation at Inspiration Hills and Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Elgin

Travel: Planes, trains, and automobiles

2012- KATIE FURROW, HUNTER KEITH, KYLE RIEGE, MOLLY WALMER

Camps: Mt. Hermon, National Young Adult Conference, Inspiration Hills, Swatara, Annual Conference, Pine Lake, Blue Diamond, Mack, Eder

Training: Mack

Transportation: planes, automobile

Debriefing: Eder

2013- JACOB CROUSE, AMANDA MCLEARN-MONTZ, HEATHER GENTRY

Camps: Mack, Eder, Shepherd's Spring, Bethel, Ithiel, Mardela, Brethren Woods, Mt. Hermon

Training: Mack

Transportation: automobile, air

Debriefing: Mt. Hermon

2014- JAKE FRYE, CHRISTY CROUSE, CHRIS BACHE, SHELLEY WEST

Camps: Mount Hermon, Colorado, Stover, Annual Conference (Columbus), Song and Story Fest (Inspiration Hills), Blue Diamond, National Youth Conference, Pine Lake, Hammond Mills, Koinonia

Training: Brethren Woods

Transportation: plane, automobile

Debriefing: Koinonia

2015- KERRICK VAN ASSELT, BREAN WENGER, ANNIKA HARLEY

Camps: Brethren Woods, Bethel, National Junior High Conference, Swatara (2 weeks), Ithiel, ECHO Workcamp (FL), Annual Conference (Tampa), Peaceful Pines, Brethren United Adventure (NC with campers from Ithiel, Harmony, Brethren Woods, Bethel and Carmel)

Training: Brethren Woods

Transportation: Air, rides, megabus

Debriefing: Swatara

2016- SARA WHITE, JENNA WALMER, PHOEBE HART, KIANA SIMONSON

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Mardela, Brethren Woods, Annual Conference (Greensboro), Ithiel, Pine Lake, Brethren Heights, Harrisburg (PA) Workcamp, Brethren Heights

Training: Bethany Theological Seminary

Transportation: Air, rides, train

Debriefing: Harrisburg, PA

2017 - NO TEAM

2018 – LAURA HAY, YOUTH PEACE ADVOCATE

Camps: Southern Ohio Creative Arts Camp, Camp Stover, Camp Harmony, Camp Emmaus, Camp Pine Lake, National Youth Conference, Hammond Mills Camp

Training: Online

Transportation: Air, rides

Debriefing: Online

2019 – NOLAN MCBRIDE, YOUTH PEACE ADVOCATE

Camps: Camp Colorado, Camp Blue Diamond, Brethren Woods Camp, Camp Ithiel, Camp Mack, Camp Brethren Heights, Camp Emmaus, Camp Pine Lake

Training: Online

Transportation: Air, drive own car

Debriefing: Elkhart, IN

2019 – END OF PROGRAM