

GBC FOR SYRIA: A CANADIAN SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE

BY KIM GRAYDON

"Yes, I think they loved camp. I met a Syrian camper and she said she was having the time of her life and she loved it. I got to know this girl named Dalya. She was super nice and she said she loved this camp and if she could she would live here".

Saige – Glen Bernard Camp camper.

Welcome to Summer 2016! What makes a successful summer camp? Community, fun, inclusion, learning new skills, collaboration, being immersed in nature, friendship, meeting new people, bonding

over new experiences and maybe most important of all, learning who you are. For the Glen Bernard community, our 2016 summer success was highlighted by GBC for Syria: A Canadian Summer Camp Experience program.

GBC for Syria was a special salute to 95 years of shared camp experiences, camp values and camp skills. Owner and Director of Glen Bernard, Jocelyn

Palm, extended an invitation to 26 female Syrian newcomers to spend a week at GBC this past summer. The plan was for 24 newcomers but as is common with girls, there were two more friends and could they please join too?! Of course!

Campers breathe life into a camp and our Syrian campers left us filled full of joy, gratitude for getting to know them and hope for the positive impact camp made on them. We know that the Syrian campers met new friends, experienced many firsts: swimming, horseback riding, climbing in the high ropes, vegetarian lasagna, flying down the zip line, canoeing, dumping a sailboat, sleeping away from their families and finding a new camp family.

And what about the impact made on us?

It was a significant and wide reaching one. Our campers were their best selves. One of our camper surveys stated "every day we worked on including everyone. We made sure all of us were together". The girls looked after each other. For our Syrian campers, that meant they knew where to go at all times, they had a friend to take them to the washroom in the middle of the night, someone to give them encouragement when it was time to jump into the lake!

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Ansam & friends getting a lesson from Joc on proper stroke technique

For many of our campers, it personalized the news headlines they had been reading for months. Some of the Syrian girls shared their personal experiences with their cabin mates and staff. There is nothing more impactful in terms of education than listening to someone who has experienced what you are learning about. One particular example that stands out is the enormity of empathy one Syrian camper exhibited in her opportunity to learn how to swim. She confided that she felt lucky to be able to try swimming and that she should leap at the chance but that she was having trouble with it as so many Syrians had drowned trying to escape to safety and she wished they too could have had this opportunity to learn to swim. Maybe they would be alive today. In this moment, campers did what they do best. They hugged her and without words, she knew she was listened to and understood.

Summer camp is an invaluable experience to give to children. It helps kids to learn respect for someone else's opinion, being kind even when someone isn't being nice, devise solutions for how to live and get along with each other, appreciate people's differences and how to have just good plain old fun! The interpersonal skills campers acquire are invaluable tools for their future. Negotiating friendships, business deals, teamwork challenges? No problem. They have the experience and they learned it at summer camp.



Final hugs goodbye before boarding the bus back home



Campers greet their new Syrian cabin mates, Period 1

SPOTLIGHT ON CAREER CONNECTIONS

BY KIM GRAYDON

JULIE PEZZACK, PRINCIPAL AND VICE PRESIDENT, CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

When I think of Julie Pezzack, better known at camp as Pezzack, I think of a person I looked up to as a camper and then as a staff member. Pezzack had a way of drawing people in with her humour and also with the fact that she was an amazing sailor so I felt safe in her boat! She could also eat a lot of chocolate pudding, which was pretty impressive in my opinion. I knew she had likely gone on to do other impressive things with her career so I asked her to be our feature alumni for Career Connections.



Janet Mowat, Sharon Malone, Julie Pezzack recording camp songs for GBC's CD

Julie is one of the Principals and Vice President of Stratos' Corporate Sustainability Practice. Stratos is a consulting company, based in Ottawa and Calgary, whose clients range from government, businesses and civil society organizations seeking counsel for environmental, socio-economic and governance issues. With her Masters Degree in Environmental Studies from Dalhousie



Shelagh Allen & Julie Pezzack at GBC's 90th anniversary celebration in Toronto, May 2011

University, Julie's specialties are environmental, social and governance management, stakeholder and indigenous engagement, performance measurement and disclosure.

With her focus on helping organizations improve their environment and social performance, and working to strengthen Indigenous relations, I wondered if camp had influenced her

choice? She said "My family was not very outdoorsy so it was really camp that exposed me to the natural environment and all its wonders. I especially loved going out on canoe trips, living outside and exploring Ontario's amazing wild spaces".

After a year spent travelling and volunteering in Africa, Julie decided to focus herself on social and environmental issues, which took her back to school to get her Masters. As a special project, a group of students Julie was part of started a consultancy and developed an environmental management system for a large hotel in Halifax. She discovered how much she enjoyed consulting and pursued it after her degree.

Like any given day at camp, Julie's work is constantly evolving and changing. Each day brings something new, which as we know makes life interesting! In conclusion, Julie commented "The camp's motto Live Lightly and the appreciation for Indigenous culture all definitely influenced where I ended up. I feel so fortunate that I had an opportunity to go to GBC growing up as it really did play a huge part in shaping who I am as it did for all the GBC'ers that I met along the way, many of whom are still good friends today".

To read more about Julie and Stratos, click here: www.stratos-sts.com/.

FAMILY WEEKEND 2016

Family weekend is one of our favourites because we get to see campers and their families again. We also reconnect with alumni and their children as well as families who are considering sending their daughters to GBC. It is an excellent opportunity to



Symantha Rush, Julie Kellock Gyorgy, Andrea Webb, Sue Kneider at their annual Webers stop on the way to camp

see the camp in person and take part in many of the activities GBC offers.

With perfect camp weather, the weekend was awesome! The activities were a ton of fun: climbing, kayaking, sailing, mountain biking, crafts in K'Scope, tennis and the annual camp tour with the ultimate tour guide: Joc Palm!

Thank you to all who attended and a special shout out to the regulars and out of town'ers. We know your time at camp is special, but we must acknowledge your gathering at Webers is also part of the tradition!

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REMEMBERING MARILYN BLACKWELL



(standing): Annelies McConnachie-Howarth, Alison (Short) Martins, Kelsey Ingram, Isabelle Siciliano, Marilyn Blackwell
(kneeling): Annie Dearden, Molly Farmer

Marilyn Blackwell spent every summer of her life on the shores of Lake Bernard. Her parents were cottagers and the tradition continues today.

Marilyn brought her talents and enthusiasm to GBC as a member of the staff in Bunny camp for several summers.

As a kindergarten teacher and camp leader she shared her magic by getting kids to try...to think and do with their very best effort. At the piano she was a master, could play whatever was needed in the moment at the drop of a hat.

Marilyn and her husband Bob have three children, Chris, Peter and Wendy. Wendy Blackwell Crane was a GBC camper and staff member and now has a cottage with GBC history, Shangrila. Chris Blackwell and spouse Sherrie Berdusco have two daughters who are campers, Darby and Ally. Marilyn attended every special five-year GBC anniversary from the 60th celebration in 1982 where she led the Grace to the 90th anniversary where she attended both the celebration at the Wychwood Barns in Toronto and the open house at camp in August 2011.

In 1978 when I became the Director, Marilyn saved the day by playing the piano for the musical productions because there were no piano players at various times who could accompany the cast. Always sharing with humour and thoughtful contributions we all have happy memories of Marilyn. The Blackwell family has been and continues to be loyal supporters to GBC. Marilyn left us on January 31, 2017. Love goes on...like the sea, eternally.

- Joc Palm

GBC ALUMNI SHINE LIGHT CAMPAIGN



Two GBC alumni, Janice Wright and Alison Hill, have initiated a fundraising campaign to enable the Syrian newcomer campers to return to GBC this summer. They have called the fundraising campaign "Shine the Light" in honour

of the obvious metaphor, but also in honour of the glorious flash-light that led them through their darkened nights at camp.

We realize that for financial reasons, many Canadian children do not have an opportunity to go to camp and there are wonderful

charities that assist these children. GBC has a longstanding history of providing financial support continuously to all types of campers. We are mindful of this and so if you prefer to donate to one of these registered charities, for which you will receive a tax receipt, please do so (i.e. Kids in Camp). However, for the purposes of this request, we have chosen to focus on providing financial support for the Syrian newcomer girls. The focus on Syrian campers assists these newcomers to adjust to their newly adopted homeland.

To read Janice and Alison's letter to alumni or to find out how you can contribute, please visit:

www.gbcamp.com/progsacts/GlenBernardforSyria.php



2017 Calendar of Events

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|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Period 1 | • July 1 - July 21 |
| Period 2 | • July 23 - August 12 |
| Alumni Canoe Trip | • TBD |
| Period 3 | • August 14 - 27 |
| Fall Family Weekend | • September 8 - 10 |
| Women's Weekend | • September 15 - 17 |

TWO-WEEK SESSIONS: (ages 8 - 11)

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| Period A | • July 1 - July 14 |
| Period C | • July 23 - August 5 |

ONE-WEEK SESSIONS:

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| Period B (ages 6 - 8) | • July 15 - July 21 |
| Period D (ages 6 - 8) | • Aug 6 - Aug 12 |
| Period E (ages 6 - 8) | • Aug 14 - Aug 20 |
| Period F (ages 11 - 13) | • Aug 21 - Aug 27 |

BUNNY CAMP: (ages 4 - 6)

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| Bunny 1 | • July 15 - July 17 |
| Bunny 2 | • August 6 - August 8 |

SPECIALTY SESSIONS:

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| Canoe Trip 1 | • July 15 - July 21 |
| Canoe Trip 2 | • July 23 - July 29 |
| Canoe Trip 3 | • August 6 - August 12 |
| Canoe Trip 4 | • August 6 - August 12 |
| Young Keen Riders 1 | • July 15 - July 21 |
| Young Keen Riders 2 | • August 14 - August 20 |
| Aquatic Leadership 1 | • July 23 - July 29 |
| Aquatic Leadership 2 | • August 14 - August 20 |
| Wilderness Canoe Trip | • August 14 - August 27 |
| Theatre Program | • August 14 - August 27 |

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