

## **2017 REPORT FROM MAR-LU-RIDGE**

Ecclesiastes 3:1 – “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:”

We experienced many seasons at Mar-Lu-Ridge in 2016, and we grew stronger as a community as we traveled the trails together. Our year began with an epic snowstorm that brought 4 feet of snow to The Ridge. As the snow melted, we quickly returned to the work at hand. Cabin 6 underwent an extensive renovation project which involved replacing the fuel oil tank and modernizing the bathrooms.

February was “I Love Camp” month, and many people shared reasons #whycamp is so special by posting photos to our social media sites. One former camper and staff member noted that in a busy world, MLR is “a place and a people to go to for deep breaths, warm hugs, and genuine conversations.” Another member of our community shared that MLR “taught me about radical community, love, and acceptance.” Jesus is present here!

As we prepared for the season of summer camp, we were pleased to receive gifts and grants that helped us in very important ways. The Lutheran Home and Hospital Foundation provided funding for medical supplies, lifeguard training, AED/CPR training, and an additional AED. Divinity Lutheran Church, Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, and The Loats Foundation provided Scholarship money so that all children could experience an amazing week of camp regardless of their family’s ability to pay.

A generous matching gift encouraged a record number of donors to participate in our Spring Appeal for the benefit of Summer Camp. These gifts were used to support programming and staffing needs, helping us field a successful and memorable camp season. Our review by the American Camp Association was a success – we passed with flying colors for all standards, and we are proud to continue providing safe programming and facilities for our campers and retreat guests.

Our work would not be possible without the support of countless volunteers, donors, alumni, camp families, congregations, and community members who believe as we do, that summer camp changes lives. Experiences such as conquering the rock climbing course or swimming the length of the pool, meeting new friends and saying a prayer out loud during worship, are all part of faith formation.

Mar-Lu-Ridge has been working in the lives of young people for over 57 years and we remain committed to serving the diverse and exciting population of guests and campers.

In every season, Christ is at the center of all we do. Thank you for the privilege of leading this ministry. It is a joy to walk alongside all of you.

Peace. Sarah Lefler, Executive Director