



**Camp Fire USA**  
**RIVER BEND COUNCIL**

*2008 Annual Report*



**When kids get  
to learn how  
beautiful their  
world is, they  
can make it even  
better.**

River Bend Camp Fire is creating new experiences for the youth of our community. All of our programs are co-ed, youth-oriented, and inclusive. Our kids develop the self-reliance and confidence that comes from exploration and creation. We teach youth about community and how they can make the world a better place. For over 80 years, River Bend Camp Fire has given thousands of kids an opportunity to grow.

#### **National**

Camp Fire USA is one of the nation's leading not-for-profit youth development organizations, currently serving nearly 750,000 children and youth annually. Camp Fire USA, with national headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., provides all-inclusive, coeducational programs in hundreds of communities across the United States. Founded in 1910, Camp Fire USA's outcome-based programs include youth leadership, self-reliance, after school groups, camping and environmental education and child care.

*Today's kids.  
Tomorrow's leaders.*

## From the Executive Director



**I volunteered to join Camp Fire for 3 reasons.** First, I wanted to save our community. Communities are suffering. Kids communicate through text messages and computer screens, not conversations and relationships. Our kids are not learning about their neighbors or their communities because they are not participating in them. We need organizations like Camp Fire to teach our kids about community so we can have healthy communities to look forward to in the days to come.

The second reason was to save Camp Tannadoonah. It is a treasure that needs to be preserved for future generations. It is a place where all kids can be on the same level and learn to care for one another and the world they live in.

And third, I believe that Camp Fire is relevant and that it can thrive in our communities if we can get the message out. These past two years, my convictions and beliefs have only grown stronger: we need organizations like Camp Fire to help us remember what the value of community and the outdoors does for each of us.

The past year has been a tough but very productive year for Camp Fire volunteers and staff. We have not been given easy outs to the problems that plague most organizations like ours. But, step by step, we are finding our way. As we enter 2009, we are hopeful. We are starting the year with a balanced budget. We have begun to communicate with those interested in Camp Fire with our newsletter. We are seeing early enrollment and encouraging signs of increased numbers for our programs. We have reached out to our families with ways to earn their way to camp or club. Our facilities are being evaluated so we can plan for the future. This spring, we will complete the Murphy Sports Complex at Camp Tannadoonah and honor the efforts of those who started the project. And we are currently conducting a search for an Executive Director. I could not be more optimistic for the future of Camp Fire.

I know we have only bigger and better things ahead. I would be remiss not to thank all those who have stepped up to keep the council's fire going. Many have come and gone, but all have been crucial to the process of turning the council around and ensuring that Camp Fire will be here for future generations. I hope that we all gather some day to celebrate the great things we have done here.

*Maureen Koscielski*

**Maureen Koscielski**  
Executive Director

## Staff



**Amber Holleman Grundy, Ph. D.**  
Director, Camp Tannadoonah

Amber has been involved with Camp Tannadoonah since 1985 as a camper, counselor, waterfront director, and board member. She has been director for four years. In May 2007, she earned her doctorate in Developmental Psychology from the University of Notre Dame. She currently works during the school year as an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Notre Dame, and a Postdoctoral Research Assistant at Bethel College.



**Elaine Veevaete**  
Director, Camp Tawanchi

Elaine has enjoyed working with Camp Fire USA's Camp Tawanchi for 35 years and has been the Director for 25 years. She has served the Council as Self Reliance Director and was selected by National Camp Fire USA to assist in field testing an update for the self-reliance program. Elaine holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and Sociology from Bethel College.



**Peggy Laskowski**  
Director, Club Program

Peggy has been a Camp Fire Leader for 14 years and the Club Director for nine years. Recently, she has also spent the last four summers working as the Chef at Camp Tannadoonah. Her husband serves as a co-leader and their three children are all involved in Camp Fire programs, two earning the Wo-He-Lo award.

## 2008 Board of Directors\*

Douglas Blair, Jim Dominello, John Engel, Chas Grundy, Kathy Horn, Maureen Koscielski, Russ Matthys, Marty McKiernan, Bret Robertson, Ani Johnson (*Youth Representative*)

\* As of December 31, 2008



### Camp Tannadoonah

Our resident camp is a traditional overnight camp, set in a wooded area along the shores of beautiful Birch Lake in southwestern Michigan. Camping activities for boys and girls include sailing, swimming, archery, games, and lots of outdoor enjoyment.

Campers	2007	2008	↑ 30%
	351	459	



### Camp Tawanchi

Located in the heart of Mishawaka in beautiful Merrifield Park, our day camp provides supervised summer activities and games, including archery, swimming, crafts, and more.

Campers	2007	2008	↑ 19%
	254	303	

#### City kids learn to ride, one step at a time.

A summer highlight at Camp Tawanchi was provided by the Knute Rockne Kiwanis Club\* when they brought along three horses so that our campers could experience riding. For most, this was an exciting first-time adventure! However, in the case of one reluctant girl, just getting on the horse was a challenge. First, the instructor demonstrated that the horse was gentle. Then, he gently lifted the girl up, where she sat along side him for several minutes before asking to get down. That afternoon, the little girl returned for the second riding session. This time, she allowed herself to be lifted on the horse, and let the instructor walk the horse slowly. Finally, she gave him the okay to let the horse run! A huge smile erupted, and she realized that her fear of horses had been overcome. This year, she might even learn to ride the horse all by herself.

\* Special thanks to the Knute Rockne Kiwanis Club (Tim & Trish Mc Bride & John Engel) and the Mishawaka Park and Recreation Department for making this past summer a huge success!

## Camp Fire Club

11 Leaders    44 Youth    6 Club Groups

The Club group program brings families and communities together in youth development, service projects, and fun events. This year, the kids volunteered for the Goodwill Doll Project, Zoo Boo, Valentine's for Vet's, Christmas Caroling, and Dinner with Santa.

"It's wonderful being part of an organization that meant a lot to me as a child and that helped me understand the importance of doing for others, enjoying the outdoors, and appreciating everyone in one way or another."

**Peggy Laskowski**  
Director



## Self-Reliance

The Self-Reliance classroom and after-school education programs helps youth learn important life skills needed to take care of themselves and others in various situations. Skills include good nutrition, kitchen safety, basic first aid, proper use of the telephone/internet, fire escape planning, and saying "no" to dangerous situations.

Youth Served	
2nd and 3rd Grade "I Can"	676
First Aid	145
Count on Me	227
Babysitter	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1062</b>

## Camp Fire USA River Bend Council

### Balance Sheet, December 31, 2008

#### ASSETS

Cash	
Petty Cash	\$ 50.00
Checking	21,704.41
Savings	5,374.98
Investments	4,719.81
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Inventory	8,102.70
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Fixed Assets	118,245.27
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<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 158,197.17</b>

#### LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Accounts Payable	23,192.47
Payroll Liabilities	424.08
Accrued Retirement	16,961.00
Line of Credit Land Sale	61,600.00
Promissory Note	\$ 8,000.00
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Total Liabilities	110,177.55
Retained Earnings	(150,716.80)
Fund Balance	196,356.75
Net Income	\$ 2,379.67
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Total Equity	\$ 48,019.62
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<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 158,197.17</b>



*Hands-on experience  
in "Going Green."*

At Camp Tawanchi, day campers worked along side the city gardener to help improve the environment by planting flowers, spreading mulch, maintaining the bird bath and feeder, and making sure that flower beds were watered and weeded. Next summer, we plan to build a compost pile for raising our own worms for fishing in the nearby St. Joseph River! Other "green" activities included a day trip to Solid Waste Management, where children got a first-hand look at waste collection, and learned how to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle! Aluminum can tabs were also collected for the Ronald McDonald House.





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