



## News From Mountain Friends Camp, 2018

### Dear Friends,

This summer we welcomed campers new and returning to our 9th summer of Mountain Friends Camp! It was a pleasure returning to the beautiful land and peoples of Collins Lake Ranch in Mora Valley, read on for articles from our awesome camp staff about our days and special events! If you believe in the value of Mountain Friends Camp, will you consider a donation? We have until the end of September to meet our fiscal year budget, and every gift makes a big difference to make sure we can meet our expenses and continue into our 10th year.

This summer I heard a new camper marvel that they'd "never made so many great friends before" and resolve to keep coming each year until they too could be a camp counselor, then heard from their family how much it meant to receive camperships that made this first sleep away camp possible. With your help, we can continue offering quality programs in an under-resourced area, and sharing our gifts. ~Anastacia Ebi, Director, Mountain Friends Camp

### Morning Meeting by Theo Bloyd

Every morning around 9:30, we head up a ways into the forest where we sat in a circle of stumps for about 30 minutes of silent worship. After sitting in silence/sharing from our hearts, we move to a few minutes for sharing Affirmations, the question or concerns, and announcements.

During Morning Meeting, some people would spend the time meditating or thinking on Things, while others will fidget with some pine needles/cones. I personally spend the time of silence contemplating things I could write in my notebook later. Some of my friends spend the time as a morning time to check in with their body/mind.

During our three weeks at Collins Lake Ranch, we spent two mornings hiking up the nearby ridge with lunch packed in our bags. Because we left so early in the day, we stop for a longer break and have Morning Meeting on the trail.

Morning Meeting is always one of my Roses here at camp, and I'm glad that we have this tradition here.

### Creative Camper's Choice and Spectacular Small Groups by Lydia Bateman

Camper's Choice and small groups are two amazing afternoon activities. First, campers choose from a variety of activities, including options such as lanyard making and lakefront activities. Lee, a fourth-year camper, enjoys Camper's Choice

because it allows us to be active immediately after resting during siesta. Her favorite Camper's Choice activities this session were games at the flagpole field and tie-dye. Cat, a new camper, enjoyed the opportunity to do tie-dye and woodburning this summer. Jada, a third-year camper, particularly enjoyed the solitude and self-



expression that watercolor painting near the lakefront provided for her this session.

In contrast to the active nature of Camper's

Choice, time with Small Groups provides an opportunity for quiet reflection. All campers and staff are sorted into small groups at the beginning of the session. We meet with our small groups each day for a check-in and worship sharing. Jada explains that "Small groups is good because we get to spend time with the people we love and talk about things we don't normally get to talk about". Lee's small group, the Closeted Croc-Wearers, "hasn't done a lot of worship sharing because we get along too much". However, Lee has enjoyed the opportunity to do craft projects, such as mandalas and prayer flags, during small groups. Overall, campers find value in small groups or, in Dylan's words, "small groups is, like, lit".



### Yurt Fever by Sky Ford

Flash. The flicker of lightning is visible momentarily through the yurt skylight. (For a split second the entire sky gleams bright.)

One one thousand.

Cards spill over the edge of the table onto the floor. "Your turn, your turn!" Kindness cards has been a camp classic for years. Red-Blue-Violet-Lavender, Red-Blue-Violet-Lavender; friendship bracelets woven by practiced hands grow steadily longer. On one edge of the yurt, someone softly strums a guitar.

Two one thousand.

The storm clouds begin to grow around 2:00 PM in Mora Valley. They blossom in the West, bloom into white cauliflower heads they roll over each other, casting mutual shadows in ever darker tones of gray-scale. By 4:00 PM, the lake shudders under a cold wind and rumbles echo between the hills. Storm Warning.

Three one thousand.

July is monsoon season in Northern New Mexico. After months of withering grasses, fire bans and the needle on roadside fire warning signs stuck stubbornly on "extreme", the clouds here finally relinquished the withheld waters as it seems, all at once, onto Mountain Friends Camp. Three afternoons in four, ample hours of indoor containment are part of the afternoon program.

Four one thousand.

"How far away is the lightning now?" "Can we go out yet?" "When will the rain stop?" Fortunately for us, Yurt Fever comes with the additional symptoms of good company, song singing, creativity, and games.

Five one-thousand.

"Your turn, your turn!" Red-Blue-Violet-Lavender. Pitter patter pitter patter. Mountain Friends Camp is like heaven they say.

Ka-boom

Five miles away. Lightning warning. All campers to remain within the yurt.

### Magnificent Mora by Lydia Bateman

The first session of camp was filled with opportunities to engage with the broader Mora community. The Mora Mountain Mamas, a local community-building organization, invited us to their annual ice cream social at the Collins Lake Ranch Activity Center. We enjoyed live music, a delicious lunch, and connecting with the dozens of guests who came to take part in the festivities. Thanks to the Mamas for their warmth, and helping us celebrate two staff birthdays!

We had a second opportunity to learn about Mora on our field trip to the Mora Health Fair. The Health Fair is an event created to raise awareness about the variety of organizations in Mora. Campers enjoyed participating in a session on non-violent communication, exploring a fire truck, and playing on bounce houses. We set up our own Mountain Friends Camp booth (pictured with our Counselors-in-Training above), and led several group games. We appreciated meeting neighbors and expanding our community!

### Alien Invasion by Lydia Bateman

During the second session, an unexpected alien invasion put our plans on pause. The aliens stole all of our kitchen spices and left several coded clues.

While we were solving clues, one of our counselors disappeared! That evening, one of the alien invaders, Neezle, came to visit us in the hopes of getting more spices. We discovered that the aliens had thought that our S.P.I.C.E.S (the Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship) were the same as spices you can eat. In order to explain the difference, we divided into small groups to create skits about each of the Quaker testimonies.

After Neezle understood, he was happy to return our spices and our counselor. Neezle promised to teach his alien friends and family about the Quaker testimonies. The aliens used spaceships that we had created from recycled materials earlier that day to return to their home planet.

### Powerful Plorkers! By Lydia Bateman

Amidst a myriad of exciting special days, our daily schedule forms a strong foundation for our time here at camp. Plork (play + work) is an activity treasured by campers and staff alike. We do work projects to improve Collins Lake Ranch and to show gratitude for our community. Even though we are working hard, we have fun working together with our friends.

Today, an enthusiastic group is working to collect logs and pieces of wood. Kylie, the counselor leading the project, explains that New Mexico's drought "necessitated thinning out the forest" to prevent



forest fires. In addition to reducing the risk of forest fires, the wood will be used for firewood and mulch. John Carlo, who celebrated his tenth birthday with us this summer, is particularly enthused about how this plork allows him to make tonight's campfire possible.

Jada, an experienced third-year camper, is working with a determined group of campers and staff to write thank you letters to the individuals and companies who

donated to our camp. Jada's favorite plork project was tying knots to create a bathmat. She is happy to know that the bathmat will be used for our bathhouse here at camp when it is finished.

Cat and Lee are hard at work in the kitchen to make our lunch. They are making seven-layer dip, and both cite kitchen plork as their favorite plork activity. We are grateful for the campers who help make us delicious food.

Plork helps us to contribute to our community and is always a valuable part of my camp experience. After all, *when working together, work turns into play!*



### Food!! By Theo Bloyd

Every day at Mountain Friends Camp we have three wonderful meals prepared by our kitchen staff/campers participating in 'Kitchen Plork' in the morning.

For every meal, one or two campers to help make a menu to be read out during our circle. These menus generally have alliterative names for the parts of the meals such as "Crazy Cereal", "Simplicity Salad", or "Plentiful Pancakes". On "Backwards Day" we had breakfast and dinner switched up. It was wild to have cereal for dinner, and spaghetti tacos for breakfast, but it was still really tasty.

The food here at camp is beloved by both campers and staff, and we are really thankful to the kitchen staff for the love they put into each meal.

#### Quaker Quiche

Recipe by Beverley Weiler

#### Ingredients:

- Frozen hashbrown patties
- Soy chorizo
- Shredded cheese
- Eggs
- Milk

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Oil a large, flat baking pan.
3. Line bottom with hashbrown patties.
4. Add cooked soy chorizo.
5. Sprinkle cheese on top.
6. Beat eggs with milk.
7. Pour eggs and milk over patties, chorizo, and cheese.
8. Bake for 1 hour until done.

*Don't forget the vegan version!*

### Keep in touch, and see you next summer!

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