



Children's Oncology Camping Association - International

Fireside

August 2008

My Dear Friends,

For most of us, the camping season is winding down and we are in the midst of packing away the silly string, closing down the cabins and packing up the waterfront. Our minds fill with the memories of our children. I can still clearly see the face of Vivian, a new camper this year, as she rose to the clouds in the most colorful hot air balloon. I can still hear the laughter that filled our dining hall during our meals. Camp 2008 may be over, but the memories will live on forever.



For Camp Ta-Kum-Ta, it was a bitter, yet sweet ending. After 24 years of renting the same facility, it was time for us to say goodbye. In early spring, we were notified that the camp ground we have been renting would no longer be available after this summer. Once the initial shock settled, we realized that this turn of events provided us with an opportunity - it was time for Ta-Kum-Ta to build our own home. After months of searching and careful negotiations, we found a new home and are in the midst of running a capital campaign to purchase the property and build an amazing facility. You may remember from the last newsletter that as part of our staff training this year, we created stars to represent the children that have passed and that the stars would guide us on our journey around the world (this past summer's theme). Truly, these stars, our children, guided us home.

It was important to us that our children see the facility before going public with the announcement. On Friday of our camp week, we loaded 4 buses and hit the road without telling anyone where we were going. As we pulled into the property, I had the distinct honor of standing up in the bus and saying "Welcome Home Camp Ta-Kum-Ta, Welcome Home" (Ty Pennington, eat your heart out). The realization of owning our own space sent both the children and the staff in to a whirlwind of smiles, applause and tears of joy.

After touring the property, we shared our closing dinner together, under a large tent, as a family, at our new home. During the meal, it began to rain and the sun appeared through a small hole in the clouds and the largest, clearest double rainbow appeared in the sky directly over our new home. It was as if our children that had passed were welcoming us home. Magic - pure magic. Adversity arrives at each of our doorsteps at different times. We never know when its going to happen but, it is up to us to weather the storm, learn the lessons, and find the silver lining. If nothing else, I have learned from our children that even in our darkest hour, there is light.

It has been an honor to serve as your President for the past two years. This experience has changed me in profound ways. I look forward to laughing with you, hearing your stories, sharing in your adversity and finding the light that collectively shines upon all of us. I sincerely look forward to seeing each of you in November.



Be well.
dennis.

Name Toss

Group stands in a circle; leader gives one member of the circle a bean bag (or tennis ball, etc.) and instructs him/her to toss it to someone in the circle who hasn't touched it yet. Leader informs group that the two objectives of the game are: 1) everyone touches the bean bag once, and 2) you are to say the name of the person who touches the bean bag after you do. Once the bean bag has made it all the way around the circle, there are two variations for the rest of the game:

A) The leader tells group to continue tossing the bean bag in the same order, then adds additional bean bags to make the task harder. This variation is often used to illustrate how important communication is in delegating or passing off people/tasks. Leader can add other analogies, such as having a bystander walk through and try to assist in delivering the bean bag to its intended target (compare this to people who identify a work problem and try to help it without taking the time to figure out if it's already been/being handled.)

B) The leader now says he/she will time the group to see how fast they can complete the circuit. Reminding the group of the two original objectives, the leader asks if the group can collectively make the process more efficient to speed up the process. The group may suggest several things, including: close in the circle to make tossing easier, line everyone up in the order they are to receive the bean bag, stand close enough to hand off the bean bag instead of tossing it, have everyone touch the bean bag simultaneously and just say each name in order, or touch the bean bag in unison and call out the names in unison, too. Wherever the group ends up, the leader should not be the one to suggest changes to the process and should praise the group for its innovation. The purpose of this innovation is to get the group to "think outside the box." You can then ask the group how often they set self-imposed limitations on themselves or others, based on their assumptions regarding the "rules."



Commons (A silly mixer that will help people relax and stop taking themselves so seriously)

Everyone pairs up, standing back to back. On the count of three, each pair turns to face one another. As they turn, they must do one of three things simultaneously: put thumb to nose and wave fingers at partner, put thumbs to ears and wave fingers at partner, or simply stick out tongue and "blow a raspberry." If partners duplicate each other, they get a point. All pairs must get three points before they can sit down. Everyone should play at the same time, though not counting together. Only the first "count of three" is in unison to get the activity started. The real fun is when the majority of the group is done and all watching the last stragglers struggle to finish. (Hey, if you can't laugh at each other, what good is camp?)

Thursday, November 13

1:00 pm – 4:30 pm (Just \$60before September 26)

Preconference Workshop with Camping legend - Bob DitterDiscussion – best camp practices and camper safety

4:45 pm – 6:45 pm (This is a free mixer and discussion forum for camp directors)

Directors' Forum – A chance for camp directors to catch up and discuss current issues within their programs

3:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Participant Registration

7:30 pm – 10:00 pm

President's Reception

Ice Breakers w/ Jim Cain

Welcome by President



Showcase Your Camp!

Go to www.coca-intl.org
for information on Best of
Show, Spirit of COCA-I,
Tentative agenda, and more.

The "Best of Show" COCA Awards

*Does your camp have the right stuff to be named "Best of Show"?
Enter your camp organization in the "Best of Show" COCA Awards.*

Awards will be given for the "Best"

- Video
- Fund Raising Event
- Brochure
- Camp Program or Activity
- Volunteer Recognition Activity
- Website
- Newsletter
- Camp T-Shirt

2008 COCA-I Conference

November 13 - 16 - Tempe, Arizona

Hosted by Camp Rainbow and Arizona Camp Sunrise

Held at the Tempe Mission Palms www.missionpalms.com

Hotel Accommodations call 800 547-8705 Mention group name Children's Oncology Camping Association

Room rate is \$169 per night with an additional \$10 per night hospitality fee (includes wireless internet)

Space is limited for the Thursday Directors Forum starting at just \$60 extra. Watch the COCA-I website for on-line registration and get signed up early.

Conference Fees for Members:

Early Registration (until September 26, 2008) \$ 325 \$USD

Regular Fee (Sept. 27 - Oct. 17, 2008) \$400

Late Registration (after October 18, 2008) \$500

Single Day Rate \$250

Non-Members \$500

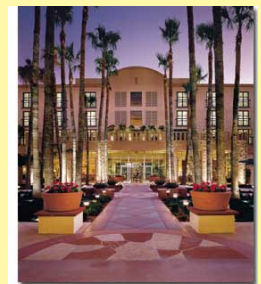
Thursday Pre-Conference Fees for Members:

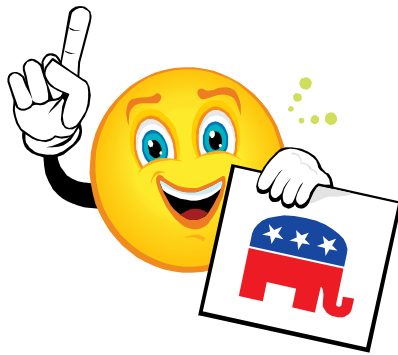
Early Registration (until September 26, 2008) \$60 \$USD

Regular Fee (Sept. 27 - Oct. 17, 2008) \$75

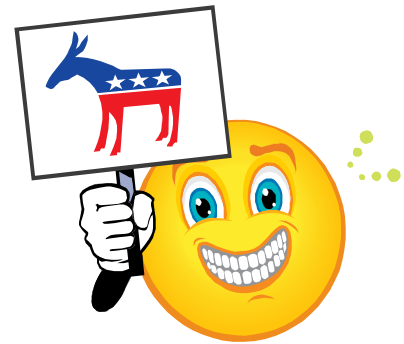
Late Registration (after October 18, 2008) \$100

Non-Members (if space is available) \$150





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NEW - COCA-I VOTES 2008

No it is not the United States White House Election, but even more exciting and equally as important is the COCA-I Board of Directors Election for the 2008 terms. Attached to this edition of Fireside is information about a NEW Nomination Process put forth by the Administration Committee of the current board.

This new process allows you to consider positions for the board prior to the conference. Nominations will also be accepted at the conference. A list of vacancies are provided as well as skill sets that are required. Further job descriptions of each position will also be available. For some positions, there is an incumbent who is up for re-election and this is also noted.

It is our hope that you will take the time to read the document and consider being part of this growing organization on a different level. Please also share this with other members of your camp who may provide a positive impact to COCA-I.

Sincerely,
The Administration Committee of the COCA-I Board