



**CROSSWAYS**  
CAMPING MINISTRIES

# IMPACT REPORT

Ministry Reflections of 2023





# Ministry REFLECTIONS

Our 2023 theme, "Holy Trinity, Wholly Love," invited campers to explore the characteristics of and relationships among the Holy Trinity. We asked questions like, "How does God reveal God's self through creation? What does it look like to follow Jesus in our lives? Where is the Holy Spirit calling us to speak for the voiceless?" Our campers impressed us with thoughtful questions and engaging faithful conversations.

In many ways, camp is the ideal place to explore these rich questions. Campers can smell, touch, and hold creation as we wonder how God reveals God's self. As we discern what it means to follow Jesus, role models and mentors surround us, actively working daily to embody that journey. We develop our programming to cultivate advocacy, compassion, and teamwork skills. These skills enable campers to become leaders who respond when the Spirit calls.

Throughout this year, we saw the impact of camp at work. We welcomed campers whose experience at camp will be the only time they hear the name of Jesus proclaimed this year. We met basic needs like hunger and clothing for campers alongside their need for belonging and encouragement. We welcomed retreat participants who craved connection and had not found a welcoming camp to call home. Volunteers found purpose in their service. Young Adult camp staff grew in leadership and discerned meaningful future plans.

Thank you for the ways you support the ministry and mission of Crossways. Your financial support, volunteer time, partnership, and advocacy help people experience the love of God at camp.

**Robyn Koehler**  
Crossways Chair of Operations



## Exceptional YOUNG ADULT STAFF



"Working at camp has helped me foster teamwork, communication, and adaptivity while providing a supportive environment that deepened my faith and created a sense of community that I will always cherish. I have grown greatly as a leader and have become much more confident in myself."

*Mary Kreklow*

We're all here to find God in more places than just the church. It's special to be able to see God in the nature and see God in the wind. You can see the magic of God's Creation everywhere. Like seeing campers come together to yell amen across the lake and hear the echo back. It's that special connection you're seeing in more than just the sanctuary.



*Justin Mildebrandt*



"I am most proud of the summer staff I got the opportunity to work with. No matter the situation the outcome was always so beautiful. To be able to create something so magical every week for the campers who come to our camp; that is God's work."

*Briley Fenner*

I'm glad I said yes to joining this team because I've seen how all the different skills that staff members bring strengthens our community. We have people that have strong leadership skills, communication, or excel at leading new activities. All these gifts together make camp such a fun place to be.



*Hallie Fecteau*



# Strategic PLANNING

Crossways Camping Ministries is stepping forward in faith to Follow Christ's Call. Through strategic planning, the Crossways Board of Directors has thoughtfully developed a vision with a supporting plan that moves our vital ministry forward.

- **Moving Administrative Operations to Ministry Sites**

Thoughtful discernment led to move the administration and operations of the Crossways mission to the ministry sites. As a result, the Board of Directors decided to eliminate the Registration Manager position as of September and close the physical Administrative Office (located at Zion Lutheran, Appleton, WI) at the end of 2023.

- **Collaborative Leadership**

An innovative approach to staffing will bring Crossways into a Collaborative Leadership staffing model. In place of an Executive Director position, a rotating Chair of Operations will lead amongst their peers in two-year terms to ensure collaborative and mission-centered decisions.

- **Innovative Programming and Efforts Towards Inclusion**

To serve a broader spectrum of God's beloved children, Crossways continues to develop innovative programming with an effort toward access and inclusion.

In this coming year,

- Campers of all ages can expect a high-quality, faith-centered program at all three ministry sites.
- Congregations will continue to be valued ministry partners with access to resources, responses, and information in an effective manner.
- Assuring supporters, we will manage resources responsibly and effectively to amplify the impact.

*Rev. Richard L. Block*

**Rev Rich Block**  
Board President  
Crossways Board of Directors



## Mission & VISION UPDATE

After input from listening sessions, discussion, and prayers of discernment, the board voted unanimously to adopt the following mission and vision statements:

**Crossways Mission Statement:**

Following Christ's call to cultivate inclusive communities, equip servant leaders, and create formative faith experiences.

**Crossways Vision Statement:**

Crossways will establish space and programs for people of diverse ages, abilities, and backgrounds to connect their daily lives with the calling to care for neighbor and creation.

## NARRATIVE BUDGET

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
<b>Program Revenue</b>	\$612,785	\$578,200
<b>Contributions</b>	\$485,998	\$305,500
<b>Other Income</b>	\$170,321	\$14,300
<b>Covid Relief Funds (PPP, ARPA)</b>	\$91,708	\$0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,360,812</b>	<b>\$898,000</b>

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
<b>Program Expenses</b>	\$492,306	\$469,589
<b>Facilities Expenses</b>	\$160,433	\$127,651
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>	\$373,157	\$289,454
<b>Loan Principal</b>	\$17,465	\$18,266
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,043,361</b>	<b>\$904,960</b>

<b>Net Balance</b>	<b>\$317,451</b>	<b>\$(6,960)</b>
--------------------	------------------	------------------

Thanks to  
**OUR SUPPORTERS**

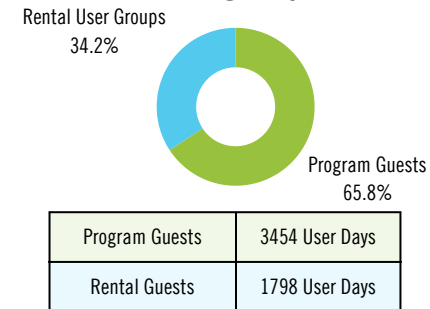
**\$31,091**

Camper Scholarships

**\$22,880**

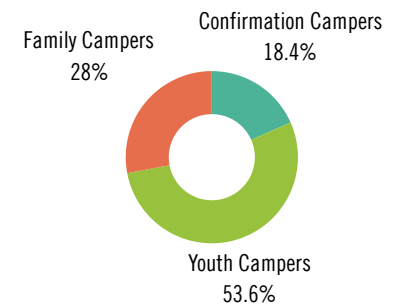
Tier Pricing Scholarships

### 2023 Usage Report



\*Usage is calculated based on lodging and meal service taken by each guest at 1/4 per meal or overnight.

### Number of Campers by Type



Confirmation Campers	144
Youth Campers	420
Family Campers	219



# Spirit of COMMUNITY

The Spirit of Community was strong at Imago Dei Village. Maya, a summer staff member, found community in an unexpected place. As a former camper, Maya thought that large groups of full cabins were what made community at camp. As a staff member, though, Maya found her favorite week of camp to be the smallest program she had worked with! "The campers created such a strong community with one another," Maya said.

Maya saw the camper community rally around two campers needing extra support. One camper was returning, and one was a first-time camper. Both campers attended Confirmation Camp with their congregation and experienced homesickness. Both boys began withdrawing from the all-camp games despite being competitive and athletic. Maya recalls, "This is one of the main times I saw members from all the cabins come to check in on them."

The boys sought out staff at different points when the homesickness became too much. "This was a learning moment for me. Consoling a homesick kiddo, especially one who is crying, was something I thought I'd be bad or uncomfortable with. Instead, it came naturally remembering my time as a camper who was homesick." In addition to the tender care of staff members, their peers continued to provide support. "One of the campers had an older sister in my cabin who had noticed he was having a hard time. All the girls in my cabin checked up on him with his sister and on her behalf

throughout the week. There were also moments of reassurance from the boys' cabin peers, saying things like, "I miss my mom too; it's normal!" They made an extra effort to include him and make sure he was having fun to distract him from his homesickness."

Building a community like this is work, but Maya saw the benefits of those connections pay off in a meaningful way. "These kids reflected emotional vulnerability in our nightly devotions. Myself and the other counselors wanted to make sure each camper knew this was THE place to be curious and ask questions. We saw the compassion the campers had as they asked, "How do I deal with the fact that some of the people I love don't believe in God or Heaven? Why do people not have food or shelter if God loves everyone? Why do people use God and Jesus to hate others?" Even some more technical questions like "How could Jesus really feed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and some fish?"

Seeing middle schoolers care for one another impacted everyone on site that week. "What most inspired me were these campers having hard conversations with one another while also communicating and listening to opinions different than their own. They rarely needed intervention or de-escalation from a counselor or adult."

**Maya Pagel**  
2023 Summer Staff  
Imago Dei Village







# Spirit of INNOVATION

New programs launched at Pine Lake Camp in 2023 responded to the need for innovation and inclusion. We listened to community needs and feedback to develop new opportunities. Generous support made each new program possible. Support included volunteers, pilot funding, grant monies, Thrivent Action Teams, and partnerships.

## Family Weekend

Family Weekend brought families together to enjoy the warmth of community. This event was a pivot away from an additional youth retreat. We did this to support the renewal of the synod youth gathering and existing youth programming at Crossways.

## Rooted

Rooted expanded on one of the most impactful tools of the church - camp staff training! Staff Training fosters a love for ministry leadership in young adults. It may be just the experience that keeps them engaged in church communities for the rest of their lives. Now, this experience welcomes a broader audience. Adult participants attended an overnight retreat parallel to camp staff training. They learned alongside summer staff from a variety of engaging voices. Speakers came from throughout our synod to lead bible studies and theological conversations.

**“This awakened a lot within me.”**  
- Nancy Schanke, Rooted Participant

**“At my age, I’ve learned a lot of these things, but to come and be refreshed on these topics was so helpful, and I needed that.”**  
- Lois Hilger, Rooted Participant

## Onsite Day Camp

Onsite Day Camp provided camp for those with a barrier to participating in residential camp. It allowed us to partner with a local congregation as an alternative to VBS programming. We pursued a partnership with county services to introduce new families to camp. We extended an invitation to campers who find overnight programming isn't a fit.

## Mini Artisan Camp

Mini Artisan campers engaged in a variety of art expressions alongside faith-filled programming. Campers developed creativity with a combination of art intensives and art dabblers. Art intensives were longer sessions to both learn and practice a skill. Art dabblers were shortened sessions to experience, but not perfect, an artistic expression. This specialty camp served as a trial to run simultaneous programming during a week of low enrollment.

## Self-Determination Camp

Self-Determination Camp welcomed young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. They developed their interests, skills, and advocacy. They also strengthened friendships and experienced the highlights of camp! Thanks to a grant from ELCA Disability Ministries, camp's invitation expanded. We welcomed participants into full participation at camp before returning to congregations and communities with new skills.

**“This was wonderful for my daughter. She had a wonderful time. It was perfect way to meet other adult friends”**  
- Parent of 2023 Self Determination Camp Participant



**Robyn & Ben Koehler**  
Co-Camp Directors  
Pine Lake Camp





# Spirit of PARTNERSHIP

EpiscoWisco Camp is the cooperative camping ministry for the Episcopal dioceses in Wisconsin, serving campers ages four and up within & beyond the Episcopal Church!

Call to Common Mission doesn't solely apply to worship and ministry in a congregational setting. We at EpiscoWisco Camp are thrilled to partner with Waypost Camp/Crossways Camping Ministries! It is a blessing to have ministry partners who also work hard to create an inclusive, caring community within the camp setting for campers to explore faith formation, skills building, worship, and fellowship together.

Frankly, we do not currently have the means to own and operate our own site; thus, renting a facility means that we can continue to offer high-quality programming and summer camp opportunities to campers from across the state. We can offer "camperships" to students who might otherwise not be able to attend camp while also keeping costs down.

One of our most significant program elements is our worship & music. We offer multiple opportunities daily for prayer, meditation, and reflection; daily Eucharist (Holy Communion); and lots of singing! Our campers are very hands-on with our services, and our dedicated Chaplains are excellent at inviting all participants fully into the services. We encourage camper leadership, and our staff offers guidance as needed. EpiscoWisco Camp also has a deep love for music both within worship and around the campfire.

We are also very proud to have played a part in supporting the archery program at Waypost Camp! Thanks to a generous donation from a former Episcopal camper, we could join in the grant work already being done by Crossways leaders! Archery has long been a popular camp activity within Episcopal camp programs in Wisconsin, and we are thrilled to be able to work with Waypost Camp to offer such a great activity for our campers and staff!

Many EpiscoWisco campers & staff have said that Waypost Camp has a familiar feeling to it - holy ground - a sense of home away from home. We love that the physical location helps create a sense of closer community while still having plenty of space to explore; the sunsets on Mission Lake are SPECTACULAR; the low ropes course, archery range, and gaga pit are all well-loved & used. We appreciate the amazing Waypost/Crossways staffers who have worked hard to keep Waypost Camp a great place to return to each year, and we're excited to return for the 2024 summer season.

**Erin Wolf**  
Youth Networking Coordinator  
EpiscoWisco







*Support the Mission of*  
**CROSSWAYS**

**Gifts by Mail:**

Crossways Camping Ministries  
W8160 Cloverleaf Lake Rd  
Clintonville, WI 54929

**Gifts Online:**

[CrosswaysCamps.org/donate](https://CrosswaysCamps.org/donate)

**Through the ELCA Foundation**

Gifts of Stock, Real Estate, Insurance  
Charitable Gift Annuities

**Contact Us:**

[info@crosswayscamps.org](mailto:info@crosswayscamps.org)  
(920) 882-0023