

Official Magazine of the
Incarnation Camp Alumni Association

ALUM.

**Find out
what's cookin'
with your
tentmates**



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Letter from the **Executive Director**

WELCOME

As we celebrate our 125th summer, I reflect on our amazing achievements through the years and think about doing everything we can to make our camp a more extraordinary place. So it is with great enthusiasm and excitement that I share our new venture with you — Incarnation Camp's Alumni Association. This issue of Alum., our official alumni publication, launches the Association. I invite you to learn more about the Association and to join us in making the camp an amazing experience for all campers, and for enriching the lives of alumni, like you.



BACK



celebrating 125 years

How did we get to this point? After a number of inactive years, the alumni reemerged strong to celebrate the tenure of long time director, Andrew Katsanis. It was at this event that it became evident that the ties that were formed so many years ago were indeed ties that bind. Incarnation was alive in all of us.

In recent years, alumni attendance at camp-sponsored events has grown. The support of this group

has helped significantly with both program and capital improvements at the camp. Now, second, third and even fourth generation campers are swimming in Bushy Hill Lake, eating at Gibney, and building fires at PV.

The Alumni Association is dedicated both to helping a new generation of kids enjoy the Incarnation camping experience and to establishing and maintaining a network of com-

munication among Incarnation friends, alumni and staff.

As the oldest coed camp in the United States, we have a rich history to preserve. The Alumni Association will be critical in building our collective memory of the camp, by collecting, archiving and sharing historical information related to the camp. By building this trove of resources, we will be able to preserve the camp experience for future campers,

stimulate our recruitment efforts, and help alumni rekindle the magic of Incarnation Camp.

There are a multitude of ways that you can play a role in helping to spread the word about the uniqueness of our camp and the values, friendship and creativity it fosters. Your involvement and commitment to the Alumni Association will not only be gratifying, but a great deal of fun. So we hope you will join us, share your stories, and sign up for

the email newsletter to stay on top of all the exciting developments.

Nancy Nygard Pilon
Executive Director
1978:8:12*

*First year at camp: Number of years spent as a camper: Number of years spent on staff

Nancy attended camp beginning in 1978. She worked as junior staff and as a counselor in Highlands during college. Nancy returned in 2003 as the director of the summer camp. In 2010, she accepted the Executive Director position at Incarnation Center. She lives at camp with her husband Denis and children Cameron and Rowan.

Introducing



The Incarnation Camp

Alumni Association

Moving forward for the next 125 years!

This is your camp — make the most of it! Join the Incarnation Camp Alumni Association encompassing Pequot, Sherwood, and Pioneer Village. Remember the good times you had and help other kids enjoy a fun and fulfilling camp experience. Support the camp and connect with your camp-mates. Your involvement and commitment to the Alumni Association will not only be gratifying, but enjoyable, fulfilling and a great deal of fun, so get involved!

The goals of the Alumni Association are to:

- **Connect** you with your tentmates
- **Promote** the camp to prospective campers
- **Support** the camp through donations and volunteering
- **Document** the camp's history and experiences

Alumni Association Membership Levels

Members at all levels will receive Alum. magazine and invitations to events for members only.

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL	ADDITIONAL BENEFITS	DUES
The "Look Out Point" Society	2 Sweatshirts, polo, golf umbrella Name displayed on plaque at the camp Look Out Point Society members event	(Lifetime membership) \$2,500
Killer Whale	Sweatshirt, hat and polo	\$1,000
Whale	Sweatshirt, hat and polo	\$750
Baby Whale	Sweatshirt and hat	\$500
Shark	T-shirt, hat, polo	\$250
Dolphin	T-shirt and hat	\$100
Advanced Turtle	Hat	\$50
Turtle (graduated in past 5 years)	Sticker	\$25



Join Online
incarnationcamp.org/alumni
Questions? Suggestions?
aseber@incarnationcenter.org

There are many ways to get involved!

WHO YOU HANGING WITH THESE DAYS?



Connect with your campmates with Facebook groups for every era

NOW I ROCK EVERY DAY



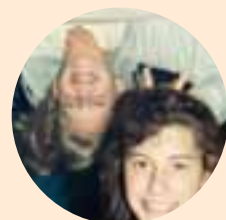
Start an Affinity Group with alumni who share your passions

COOL. YOU CAN STILL DANCE!



Host an event with other alumni

MAKE OTHERS LOOK GOOD



Volunteer as a photographer at our next event

OTHERS SHOULD KNOW HOW MUCH FUN THEY'RE MISSING



Tell a prospective camper about the camp

STRIKE A POSE!



Send us your photos

GET INVOLVED—SERIOUSLY!



Volunteer at the camp



Share your story and let us know what you're up to

MORE THAN JUST A CAMP



Rent the camp grounds for your business or personal event

WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN DO GREAT THINGS!



Support the camp with your donation

* These numbers used throughout the magazine identify each alum's first year at camp, number of years spent as a camper, and number of years spent on staff.



Casting a lens on

Life

“I lived more in the summer than the rest of the year,” Jenifer McShane, a documentary filmmaker, mused. “Many of my closest friends today are people I know from camp. Incarnation Camp is a place where everyone is allowed to be themselves in a very beautiful and unique setting.”

Born and raised in New York City, Jen first attended camp for one summer in Woodlands when she was eight. She returned at 13 as a camper at Pioneer Village. She then joined the staff as a counselor's assistant in Winds, and then moved back to Pioneer Village where she was a counselor and ultimately a unit director. Her younger brother, Jamie, was also a camper and staff member.

During her college years, Jen worked at camp during the summer where she met her husband, Peter. Both of their children attend the camp as well. Owen, who is 14, has been going for four years and this summer will be in Pioneer Village. Their younger son, James, is in Reservation.

Owen had wanted to go to sleep-away since he was six years-old and when he turned 10 Jen agreed to send him. “Our entire family has gone to Incarnation,” Owen told his mom and he was absolutely right. Every single one of his aunts and uncles are alumni of the camp and his grandfather, Peter Marks, Sr. was a director of the boys' camp in the 1950's. “For our family, Incarnation Camp is genuinely generational.”

Jen and Peter are gratified and delighted that their children are enjoying the same enriching experiences they both had when they were the same ages.

“Being at camp allows you to have time and space to connect with people, which is something people don't do much anymore,” Jen said. “You can be present in the moment with the people you're with.”

The camp brings together people one wouldn't get to know under usual circumstances.

“Rarely have I been to such a diverse place. Campers are together 24/7 with kids from all different backgrounds and it is totally inclusive.”



One of the most meaningful aspects of her camp experience was that everyone is free to be their natural selves. The camp brings together people one wouldn't get to know under ordinary circumstances. “Campers live together 24/7 with kids from all different backgrounds and it is totally inclusive,” Jen said. “It is a very authentic experience and you get to know people in a profound way that often contradicts what you may have thought initially when you got off the bus.”

Jen has directed two feature length documentary films. “I love to tell stories that won't be told by anyone else and to give voice to people who won't be heard otherwise. I sincerely believe that my camp experience influenced my career choices.” Her first film, *A Leap of Faith*, was about an integrated school in Belfast where both Catholic and Protestant students attended. Liam Neeson was the narrator and it premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 1996.

Her new film is *Mothers of Bedford* which is about five women who are incarcerated at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in Westchester, New York. Bedford Hills is the only maximum security prison for women in New York

State at which a nonprofit group runs an innovative parenting program. Jen was intrigued by the question of whether it is possible for a woman to fill the role of a mother while being imprisoned particularly since many of the women are serving long sentences.

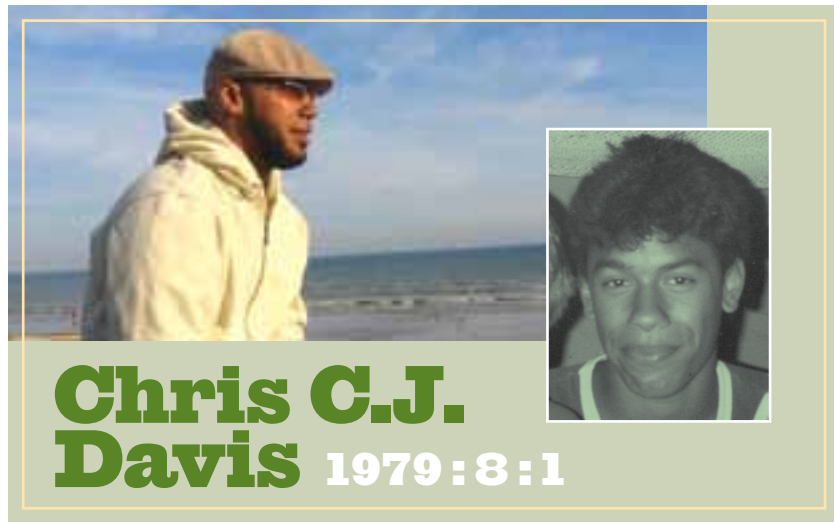
“These circumstances are certainly not the norm and the women were given the opportunity to tell their story. I found that they were able to redefine themselves as something other than a prisoner.” The women were eager to participate in the film because they aren't often given the opportunity to talk about their lives.

Jen met with their extended families to examine how the situation has impacted everyone involved. “These women are able to nurture and love their children and, even under these unnatural conditions, it is possible to be an engaged parent.”

The film will premiere at HotDocs International Documentary Film Festival in Toronto and in New York City at the Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center on June 23rd and Mays les Cinema in Harlem June 30th.

Not only is Jen a proud alumna of Incarnation Camp, she lives 20 minutes from the camp grounds. “Since I live close by, I visit the camp periodically and try to support them in any way I can. Camp has given me an abundance of stories and experiences that helped shape my life. I would like to see today's campers have the same benefit during their formative years which will help shape their lives in a constructive and meaningful way.” 📖

Alumni Profiles



Chris C.J. Davis 1979:8:1

CJ attended camp from 1979 to 1987, two years each at Colony, Reservation, Frontier and Pioneer Village. He was a junior counselor for a year in Frontier. “The best part of camp, especially for city kids, was learning to appreciate the outdoors and forming bonds with new people. I’ve remained friends with some campers after all these years. Every kid looked forward to going to camp.”

“We had inner city kids, kids from private schools and many came from all around the country. It was a great mix of kids from different walks of life.”

There were also exchange counselors from other countries including Poland, England, and Australia who were just a few years older than him. They served as role

models in terms of learning how to treat everyone with respect. He learned what kind of behavior helped foster connections with others and, conversely, what actions prevented friendships from developing.

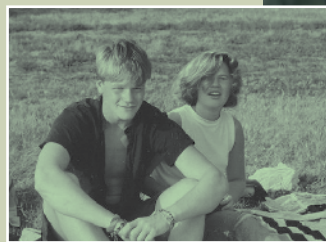
CJ’s appreciation for the environment was a result of actually experiencing nature at camp. “We built fires, cooked our food over them and even learned to shoot a bow and arrow. I carried my love for the outdoors when I moved to California and I attribute that passion to my time at camp.”

“Not a summer has gone by that I haven’t wished that I could be back at camp.”

CJ now lives in Hawaii where he is the Grants Administrator of the Kohala Center. 📄

1977:9:4

Thomas Secor



In this day and age, it’s hard to imagine a place where kids don’t have cell phones, iPads or other electronic devices as an extension of their limbs. At Incarnation Camp, people engage with one another in a safe, warm, and loving environment where they grow to love themselves and respect others. “Kids learn that they don’t need that stuff,” said Tom Secor. “They relate to the people they’re with and leave their families behind who will still love them when they return.”

Tom attended Incarnation Camp from the age of seven through fifteen – 1977-1990 – in Colony, Reservation, Frontier and Pioneer Village. He returned as a CA in Colony and a counselor in both Colony and Reservation, while in college.

Attending Incarnation is a family affair. His brother went there and now his two nieces go there. “When you’re with family, your self-worth is validated all the time. Camp was a place where adult supervision is not as constant as it is at home or in the classroom,” Tom observed. “I had a lot of freedom and got to know myself.”

Growing up in New York City, it was critical for him to get away during the summer. “Incarnation defined my childhood. I was very shy and awkward and over time became more extroverted and socially engaged.” He also underwent physical changes. “I learned to canoe and I enjoy doing that to this day. I learned to make a fire and how to set up a tent, swim and many other sports. It’s where I grew as a human being and to think more abstractly. For me, problem solving skills became more tangible and I use those skills in my professional life.”

His father is an Episcopalian minister in Harlem, and that is yet another common denominator with Incarnation. Yet, despite the fact that most of kids were from solid middle class homes, no one was defined by their economic or ethnic backgrounds. “One of the most critical things I learned was that one could have relationships with all kinds of people and you were judged only by the kind of human being you are.”

Tom has served on Incarnation’s board from 2008 until the present. He currently works at Goldman Sachs Asset Management, for Liberty Harbor, a credit-focused hedge fund. 📄



Lois Williams 1972:7:5

Lois got to Incarnation Camp by mistake. “My brother picked up a pamphlet, put it in his pocket and my mother found it when she was doing the laundry.”

She began going to camp at age nine and then attended for seven or eight years. After that, Lois worked at camp for five summers and returns for alumni weekend and other events.

“Incarnation Camp played a role in developing me in a leadership capacity and played a major role in shaping the person I am today. People at camp are so varied and there isn’t any one ethnic or socio-economic background.”

“Eight people live in a tent and there is a sense that you’re on common ground. You learn to live together and accept people for who they are rather than for what you think they might be.”

All the people Lois met in camp are still in her life. “I would never in a million years imagine that I would have such a network of lifelong friendships.”

Lois works for an insurance company as a manager in the claims department and oversees claims in three states. 📄



Ann Cerveny 2003:3:5

After just returning from studying in England for a year, Ann graduated from the University of Michigan this past April. Initially, she was pre-med but since she loves writing and English is her niche, she majored in English language and literature.

Ann began attending camp when she was 13 and went for eight years, rising through all the ranks through Unit Director.

“Camp is a place for everyone, and I developed relationships with so many different kinds of people. There is such a strong sense of community, and I always try to make it back for the summer.”

Throughout her camp experience, Ann met people from South Africa, Australia and England. In fact, her close ties to friends from Liverpool led her to decide to study there for a year where she attended Liverpool Hope University. “I had many friends from Liverpool and my school allowed me to go there, and my parents supported me as well.”

Ann plans to return to camp this summer where she will be an intern for a new leadership program. She was offered a year-round position to help with conference groups, and friends from England will join her. Ann plans to attend graduate school in England.

Ann grew up in Chicago and resides in Michigan. 📍



Phil Hammack 1998:8:5

My summers at Incarnation were the best two months I could ever imagine spending anywhere. The idea of not being there for a summer is an awful thing to think about. I was able to grow up and learn to deal with responsibility.” Phil began attending camp from age eight and has gone back every summer. His brother went there before him.

“A lot of things that matter in the real world don’t matter in camp. Everyone is comfortable here. I was able to be on an equal plane with kids I never would have met. Boundaries aren’t apparent to the kids.”

Kids come from all walks of life and there isn’t any elitism. “The close quarters are intense and we lived in the same tents in the woods. It can be difficult, but everyone cooperates. They benefited from me and I benefited tremendously without constraints of economics and class.”

The better part of Phil’s friends are from the camp. Some of his counselors were from England and he traveled there to visit them.

“There is a sense of family and it’s easy to fit in. There are countless examples of people who ultimately married people with whom they attended camp.”

For many counselors, it is their first job, as it was for Phil. “Kids who were my campers are now working for me. I saw the continuity of watching them grow and I grew with them.”

Phil derives a great deal of satisfaction from seeing the evolution of the camp. “The camp has changed and improved a great deal since I first attended. Last year was a highlight and I have an incredible sense of ownership. I plan to give back in productive ways.” He may pursue teaching or working at camp full time.

Phil is graduating from New York University this month and majored in political science and Middle East studies. 📍



Greg Bland 1976:3:5

Greg first began his sojourn at Incarnation Camp when he was 13 and continued to attend for eight years.

“Camp was very diverse, culturally and economically, and many counselors came from overseas. It was almost like utopia and everyone got along.”

Later in life Greg had an epiphany about his camp experience. “I didn’t realize until I was an adult that God is present in that camp. We were blessed in that way. God enabled people to see how different people can get along when placed in a godly situation. It would take God to create such a beautiful environment.”

His son, Coleman went to Incarnation for 11 years from ages 8-19 and also worked there as a counselor for three years. He is now 21 and may go back this summer. His daughter, Shanice attended all the divisions of Sherwood, then Pioneer Village for two years. She is currently a second year CA.

Greg met his friend of 31 years, Bret Spencer, at camp and he sponsored Shanice at camp. Bret has also sponsored a child for the last three years.

Greg is an electrician and lives in New Jersey. 📍

You can be next!

Share your story – you could be featured in the next issue.



Grow More Memories

SUPPORT THE CAMP WITH YOUR DONATION

The camp relies on the generosity of people like you to maintain the campgrounds and support camp programs. Find out more about giving opportunities at incarnationcamp.org and help more campers create memories and friendships that will last a lifetime.



Incarnation Camp
P.O. Box 577
Ivoryton, CT 06442