



SOUP STRAINER

SERVING UP THE LATEST DISH SURROUNDING YMCA CAMP KITCHEKWANA, DONORS, STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, CAMPERS AND ALUMNI



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**YMCA CAMP
KITCHIKEWANA
CAMPAIGN TEAM**

The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka would like to thank the following individuals for volunteering their time and energy in order to achieve and exceed our goals.

- Steve Nicholson, Chair
- Sue Auld
- Garry Bard
- Ed Bridge
- Karen Dutton
- Paul Gifford
- Jamie Howchin
- Matt Ladner
- Marg McGuffin
- Greg MacQuarrie
- Cam Norman, Staff
- Brian Shelley, Staff

To make your tax deductible gift to the YMCA Camp Kitchikewana Capital Campaign, please contact Jessica Rawn at 726-9622 ext 445 or email jessica_rawn@ymca.ca

Campaigning for Kitchi

As former YMCA Camp Kitchikewana campers and staff we all know the value of a "Kitchi" experience. It has shaped who we are today and along the way we have all made some incredible friendships. Though the buildings and staff change over the years, the "spirit" of Kitchi remains the same.

The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka began implementing its seven-year strategic plan in 2005. This involves the undertaking of \$40 million of capital development. Following detailed planning, the YMCA determined it needs to raise \$16 million and secure \$24 million from annual operating funds.

Over the life of the current strategic plan and beyond, the Y will invest \$1 million in YMCA Camp Kitchikewana. This investment will enhance the camp's sailing and waterfront programs and the camp's main service buildings (dining hall, kitchen, maintenance areas, and washrooms). The importance of the support from YMCA Camp Kitchikewana Alumni cannot be underestimated.

The implementation of the Campaign has begun. Over the last four years, we have raised over \$100,000 that has gone towards dock improvements, the purchase of seven sailboats and the retrofitting of the camp sailing shed. Steve Nicholson has agreed to take on the role of Campaign Chair and we will be looking to raise \$350,000, pledged over the next three to five years, by next summer. We look forward to your support.

[DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE]



Daydreaming about "Kitchi" is a regular occupational hazard here at our winter office at YMCA Geneva Park. I frequently catch myself reflecting on all the fantastic summers spent there. The Summer of 2009 was another successful season, with dedicated staff and volunteers providing campers with great new memories. Once again we were at full capacity with over 750 campers registered. We also had very successful Spring and Fall programs with more than 1,000 students and adults visiting our site.

Through donations to YMCA Camp Kitchikewana's Strong Kids Fund, we were able to provide financial assistance to 56 children whose families could not afford the full camp fee. Thank you to all of our donors who provided financial assistance to these families. I urge you to please consider making a gift to our annual Strong Kid's Campaign Fund for the 2010 summer. Donations can be sent to the winter camp office (address found on the last page) or online at www.ymcastrongkids.ca. If you choose to donate online through the Strong Kids website; click on "Find a Storyteller", select "Barrie" as the community, then search "Cam Norman". Please contact the camp office if you require more information.

I would like to thank Dave Hamilton, our Assistant Director from 2007 to 2009 for his dedication to Kitchi over the years. In June of last year, Dave moved on to the Youth Services Department of the YMCA

of Simcoe/Muskoka. His shoes may have been hard to fill, but Robyn Penfold was up to the task, taking on the role of Assistant Director to the end of the season. Robyn has moved to British Columbia and is now pursuing a career in education. We wish her all the best.

Registration for Summer 2010 opened at the beginning of November and we are already 90% full. If you are thinking about sending your child (or grandchild!) please send in your applications as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Application forms are available at our website: www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/kitchi/about.htm

As many of you know, this fall Mike Elrick passed away after a hard fought battle with cancer. I attended Mike's memorial service and the most touching moment for me was when Mike's parents read a letter Mike had written them from camp in 1977 (included in this edition of the Soup Strainer). It was amazing to see the power of "Kitchi" and an honour to share in the celebration of Mike's life.

I am proud to continue as the Director of YMCA Camp Kitchikewana. It's hard to believe that a decade has passed since my first year as a counselor. With a shared vision for the camp we all love, I am excited to be moving forward into a new decade.

Summer 2010, here we come!

Cam Norman, Director
cam_norman@ymca.ca

COVER PHOTO: Seen here is a picture of the Session 4 musical production of the Wizard of Oz; one of my favourite memories from the 2009 summer.

[NEWSBITES]

Kitchi Alumni Pub Night

On Monday November 9, 2009 we had our first official YMCA Camp Kitchikewana Alumni Pub Night. Over 50 former Kitchi campers, staff and family campers came to the Watermark Irish Pub in Toronto to join us. The event was such a huge success that we plan on having more in the future, possibly at different locations throughout Southern Ontario. It was a great way to relax and reconnect with Kitchi friends. Thanks to former Kitchi camper Lisa Henderson for helping coordinating the event.

[SURVEYSAYS]

Survey results

At the end of every camp season, we ask our Kitchi campers and parents to fill out our summer survey.

| | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Overall Satisfaction | 9.0 | 8.8 | 9.3 | 9.1 | 8.8 |
| Customer Service | 8.9 | 9.2 | 9.0 | 8.7 | 8.3 |
| Overall Value of Camp Given Fees | 9.0 | 8.9 | 8.9 | 8.8 | 8.7 |
| Contact from Camp | 8.0 | 7.4 | 7.5 | 7.1 | 7.5 |
| Transportation | 9.0 | 9.4 | 9.1 | 8.8 | 9.2 |
| Food Service | 8.3 | 7.6 | 8.2 | 8.5 | 8.7 |
| Facilities | 8.2 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 8.7 | 8.3 |

[VOLUNTEERAWARDS]

Kate Greenaway



Once again, one of YMCA Camp Kitchikewana's Alumni has been recognized as one of the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka's Volunteers of the Year. Dr. Kate Greenaway, one of our volunteer medical staff, was awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award on October 28th at the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka's Annual General Meeting.

Kate has been instrumental in raising the bar for health standards at the Kitchi Wellness Centre. Each summer, she guides staff with recommendations for superior healthcare at the camp, providing the highest level of care in terms of medications and treatments available. At the beginning of every camp season, Kate checks the inventory of the Wellness Centre to ensure Kitchi is fully prepared for any emergency or medical issue.

As a former camper, Kate understands how to treat the mind, body and spirit of young campers, even going so far as to treat homesickness with a fun and caring attitude.

Kate is proud of Kitchi and strives to make every camper's experience a fun and healthy one. Please join us congratulating Kate and thanking her for her hard work and dedication to YMCA Camp Kitchikewana.

We are happy to report that in February, a future Kitchi camper joined the Greenaway Family; Kate gave birth to a 9 pound, healthy boy.

PHOTO: Kate Greenaway receives her Volunteer of the Year Award from Mike Rowe, Chair of the YMCA Simcoe/Muskoka Board of Directors



[VISITKITCHI]

Upcoming Alumni Opportunities to Visit Kitchi:

Alumni Work Weekend May 14-16, 2010

Join us for a weekend to roll up your sleeves and give back to the camp. Whether you come to paint, swing a hammer or rig sailboats, all Friends of Kitchi are welcome. Please contact the camp office at (705) 325-2253 or email lesley_koski@ymca.ca if you are interested in attending this event.

Spring Family Weekend May 21-24, 2010

Here's a chance for the whole family to experience Kitchi together. As a family you will share a cabin, participate in programming and enjoy the fellowship of this growing camp tradition.

Senior Women on the Move (55+) Sept 7-10, 2010

Like minded women gather on the island during this special week to experience crafts, traditional camp programs, fitness activities and good company.

Women's Wellness Weekend Sept 17-19, 2010

Join us for a weekend of camp programs, fitness options, personal wellness seminars and our ever popular spa options.

Alumni Getaway Weekend Sept 24-26, 2010

Kitchikewana staff offer recreational activities throughout this special weekend. Traditional camp activities and plenty of leisure time will allow alumni and their friends to re-connect with Kitchi.

Registration forms for the Spring Family Weekend, Senior Women on the Move, Women's Wellness Weekend and the Alumni Getaway weekend are available on our website: www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/kitchi/fall.htm or contact the camp office at (705) 325-2253 if you would like one mailed to you.

A Stellar Celebration

Over 350 former Kitchi campers and staff attended our very successful 90th Reunion on Beausoleil Island on June 6th, 2009. The event was a great chance for Kitchi Friends to reconnect with each other and the camp site itself.

Highlights of the weekend included:

- Morning Chapel service lead by Eda Kirk
- Official Greetings from Robert Reid on behalf of YMCA Canada Board of Directors
- Presentation of Special Recognition Award to Steve Nicholson from Tom Coon, CEO YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka
- Alumni acoustic sets in Chapel throughout the afternoon
- Alumni sailing race
- Children's programs led by 2009 Kitchi staff
- Campers of the 80's vs. 90's "Dustbowl"
- "Festival of Friends" concert lead by Gary Bard and the Kitchi Alumni band
- Many, many years of memories and stories shared around the campfire

Thank you to all of the volunteers who made this event such a success. A big thank you to Garry Bard, Steve Nicholson, Sue Diefenbaker, Tina Middlebrook, Nina Robitaille, Fiona Cascagnette, Jamie Howchin, John McConnell, Brenda French and Lianne Carter who dedicated countless hours of their time in order to make the event a huge success. Included are some pictures of the fantastic event.

"We'll meet again at the Festival of Friends"



PHOTO: Robert Reid, Kitchi alumnus brings greetings from YMCA Canada.



PHOTO: Ormonde Benson, Jim Wilgar, Graeme Eastmure, Christine Campbell in the Alumni sailing race.



PHOTO: Steve Nicholson, Brian Shelley, Garry Bard, John "Tank" McConnell, John Switzer performed a fantastic "Festival of Friends" show on Saturday Evening.



PHOTO: A very special "90th" chapel service.

[REUNIONREFLECTIONS]

“Kitchi’s Timeless Traditions”

Is it the BBQ lunch fare of hot dogs and hamburgers with grains of Kitchi sand stuck in the ketchup? The familiarity of the bumpy way one falls asleep when five or six snoring bodies surround you? Is it the soundtrack of Janis Joplin, James Taylor, and Pearl Jam played live to the din of the crackling campfire by 44 voices in concert? Is it these things that lure us back years, decades later?

A day on an island that happens to be a National Park is hard to come by for most of us. It’s hard to find patches of poison ivy to avoid in our regular lives or frigid water to complain about having to swim in. There’s no other place but the Kitchi dining hall where the smell of generations of pancakes and maple syrup hangs in the air. The possibility of a raccoon crossing your path on the way back from brushing one’s teeth is rivetingly real on Beausoleil, but not so as we trudge down hallways to our respective bedrooms at home.

If life is like a drive through the PEI fog, what’s visible is only the 10 metres or so in front of the car. The road further ahead is invisible. The road behind, which we could see minutes before, is now lost. More and more is consumed by the fog as the car trundles forward.

For most of us, our lives are made up of the stuff contained in that 10 metres. Getting to work, making sure kids are dressed and fed, rearranging the contents of a weekend, and occasionally, planning for

a holiday six months away. That’s how it should be: the current one is by far the most exciting of all moments. It’s the only one that’s real.

Coming back to Kitchi gives us a way to navigate the fog behind the car and remember some of the lost moments along the road as they looked 5, 10 or 20 years back when we were twelve years old. A lie-down in our old bunk might help us reconnect with the past.

Because it can be hard to sit still at the kitchen table and conjure up the words to the Tarzan Song, or the smell of layers of bug spray mixed with sweat, or an image of that little incline on route to the rock that seems huge when you’re 10 or 14, the fact is; memory is sloppy.

The great thing is that Kitchi stays mostly the same and on weekends like the 90th reunion, we get to mingle with that sameness. For how many things is that true?

Sure, Beausoleil’s trees might be a little older, the cabins sturdier and more attractive. The sailboats are newer and the rocks along pathways have been given a fresh coat of white paint. Mostly though, Kitchi is as it was. And for that, along with the hot dogs, sing-a-longs and beach volleyball games, all of us are deeply grateful.

– Mary Albino 1991-1997

“Waves of emotion buoy me when I reminisce about Kitchi”

The word Kitchi brings tears to my eyes, a lump in my throat and joy to my heart. Waves of emotion buoy me when I reminisce about Kitchi. I remember savoring ice cream, sailing lessons, cabin inspection, letters from home, wearing whites for Sunday chapel, most of the words to “O’ Beausoleil”, poison ivy, the honor of raising the flag before breakfast, talent shows, and awards night, passing my sternsman level, round-the island sailing and losing the “Sloop’s” rudder to the sand bar at the island’s southern tip, tearful goodbyes returning to the government wharf at Honey Harbour, crying when sending my boys off to Kitchi for their first summer – I wanted to go with them – and giving back to the camp when we built the Wellness Centre at Kitchi.

– Wendy Mansell Kimmel (1963-1967)

Kitchi memories are always so clear

Whenever I revisit Kitchi, I stop at the plaque on the wall of the dining hall and remember the day in 1948, at age seven, when I stood in line with all the other campers and we listened to a dedication speech. That was the beginning of 11 great years of summer camping and counseling in my life. It is always wonderful to return to Camp Kitchikewana.

– Ian Watson (1948-1959)

Share your Alumni Story

Email: camp_kitchikewana@ymca.ca

Mike Elrick

Mike Elrick was the Camp Director of Kitchi from 89-90. Diagnosed in August 2009, Michael's journey with cancer ended when he died of complications from his illness on November 23, 2009. Mike's children Nicholas and Meghan are current Kitchi campers. Following his years at Kitchi, Mike went on to start an outdoor education program at the Upper Grand District School Board. He developed CELP (Community Environmental Leadership Program) and Headwaters where he created the outdoors classroom and provided life changing experiences for his students. Mike shared his journey with cancer in a blog he began in September (michaelsblog.ca). The following are some memories of Mike from those who worked with him at "Kitchi":

"The first time I met Mike was in the winter of 1989 at my job interview for a senior staff position at Camp Kitchi. As I sat in the Midland YMCA, Mike came bursting out of his office and gave me one of his huge trademark handshakes. It struck me that he had a lot more energy than I did. Indeed, with the big grin and eager look on his face, I thought he had more energy than most people I had met in my brief eighteen years of experience."

Mike spoke a bit about his journey toward becoming the director of Kitchi. I learned he was a kayaker and avid camper and had recently completed the Queen's Outdoor and Experiential Education program. Hmm, I thought, we had just read Henry David Thoreau in my high school's Modern Western Civilization class; maybe I ought to try that angle. "Have you read Thoreau," I said. "You know," I continued "the guy who goes out in the woods to live in a cabin and grow beans." Mike answered, "Henry David Thoreau has been a huge influence on outdoor and experiential educators."

Bingo!! We spent the rest of the interview talking about Walden. He saw that I was excited about something, and to him the essence of a person was more important than the details. He always had a way of bringing out the best in people in word and deed.

Mike carried his own passion for outdoor education into his work at Kitchi. The camp had always had a focus on outdoor recreation, with strong boating and swimming programs. Mike showed his staff that we could do more, using the Kitchi site as a staging ground for children to encounter the natural world in profound and meaningful ways. Many of the staff had likely never heard of outdoor or environmental education, but Mike showed us that a canoe trip, a campfire, or a hike were more than mere fun, but could connect campers to nature in powerful and sometimes indescribable ways. Through his leadership and inspiration, Mike laid the groundwork for the environmental education focus which continues as a critical part of the Kitchi program to this day." – John Sandlos



"Mike was a runner. As his brother James shared at the memorial, Mike ran the Ottawa half marathon in May of this year with Heather and James in 1 hour 41 minutes! I too run - and it is still memories of those peaceful early morning runs at Kitchi that keep me going on the cold winter morning runs as the winter months approach! I remember one morning meeting Mike on the path - he was on his return from a much earlier start than me. As he passed me we shared a runners' "isn't this the best medicine ever" moment and I noticed he was not wearing any shoes. "Hey, Mike", I said, "you forgot your shoes!". I was half joking and half wondering if he maybe did just forget. Turning around and running backwards, he replied, "It is the only way, Britta, to really run - feel the earth beneath your feet - you can appreciate each step that way". Mike was so deeply connected to the land, to the island and to Kitchi, he needed and desired to feel it and be a part of it-always. He inspired that depth of respect and connection in all of us. Mike helped us each reach a better sense of ourselves by guiding us to find our own path to be more connected with a sense of place.

My shoes are in hand as the boat approaches the dock upon arriving back at Kitchi each visit. I am desperate to feel the sand beneath my feet and between my toes: a need to feel and appreciate that connection- sense of belonging and connection with the land-with our place- with Mike's place." - Britta Martin (nee Little)

"I remember the great storm: It was changeover day between two camps. There was an ominous cloud front on the horizon over Honey Harbor. The camp boat and two water taxis were ready to take campers. Mike told them to wait. The clouds darkened and began to move in fast. Mike got the staff in high gear getting the kids into the dining hall—the strongest, safest refuge. Within minutes of the kids getting inside, the storm hit. I'd seen storms at Kitchi, but this blew them all away. Every canoe on the racks blew off. All the floating docks broke. Trees snapped, the air was full of wet sand. I was down on the Deech beach. I couldn't see and I could barely breathe because of the sand. But, because of Mike's timely decision, there wasn't a scratch on anyone.

In my final few weeks with Mike, in the hospital, we sat together and watched a full moon. I'd noticed it on my way into... (continued)

Thank you to Mike's parents for sharing this letter he wrote as a camper in 1977:

Mike
 Mon July 4th / 77
 CAMP KITCHIKEWANA
 Dear Mom + Dad

I'm having a real crazy time here I got stuck in Int 1. I didn't make ^{the} Seniors and that's why I'm not so happy. The guys in my cabin are a bunch of weirdos. Everyone of them My counsellors okay but all my friends are in Seniors Pierre and James are doing okay. Pierre is swimming farther every day. He's the smallest and youngest in camp but I think he's having an okay time. I'm learning to Kayak. I feel better when I'm with my friends in Seniors. Everyone steals my gum. Today this kid took about 75 bubble gums so now there all gone. I'm the only one in the intermediate section that has my first ~~mate~~ Mate and Sturman. It's a real pissoff that I'm not in Seniors.

Love, Mike

Winter Address — YMCA, MIDLAND, ONTARIO 526-7828
 Summer Address — HONEY HARBOUR, ONTARIO

CAMP KITCHIKEWANA

I was also wondering if I might stay for the 2nd two weeks. I'm not positive there is room but someone said that there is room in Seniors so that would be great.

Love, Mike

P.S. Write back fast Please.

Winter Address — YMCA, MIDLAND, ONTARIO 526-7828
 Summer Address — HONEY HARBOUR, ONTARIO

the hospital, and when I came into Mike's room, I told him about it. He said, "Can we see it out the window, Giff?" I checked; we were on the wrong side of the hospital. "Can we find another window to see it, Giff?" (Uh, Oh, I thought. What have I started) I said, "Wait here and I'll go take a look, Mike." I found a big window on the other side of the hospital, and sure enough you could see the moon. But it was a bit of a trek to get there. The nurses said that if Mike was intent on it, they'd bring in a wheel chair and I could take him there. When I arrived back in the room, Mike was sitting up with his shoes on. "I'm good to go, Giff." So, we got the wheel chair and off we went. He laughed at my poor driving, as we smacked into a door and a few other pieces of equipment. Then I wheeled him up to the window. "Can you see it, Mike?". "I see it, Giff. Can you get me a bit closer?" I did. We sat there for 20 minutes staring up at the moon, basking in it, reminiscing. And we got to talking about Kitchi.

Mike was convinced that the campers got all cranked up and weird at the full moon. I'd never noticed before, but when I started to pay attention, it really seemed true. I loved the idea of it—that we as modern humans could still be so tuned into the natural rhythms, that the moon could affect our collective mood. Mike felt strongly that we need to make kid comfortable in nature and that included at night.

This brings me back to the story about the great storm. It knocked out the power at the camp for 2 weeks. One entire session was without power. The Kitchen ran on the generator. The rest was sunlight. Mike was convinced (and we all agreed) that this was the best two weeks of camp in his two years as the Director of Kitchi. Everyone—campers and staff—were healthier. We got into the rhythms of the land, waking with the sun, going to bed soon after the sun went to bed. There was no electronic noise. When the generator was off at night, it was so silent. The land spoke more directly to us." — Paul Gifford

Midland-Penetang Builders Association



Once again, the Midland-Penetang Builders Association (headed by Austin Mathews) volunteered their time and energy towards another building project at camp. This past fall the builders tore up the old Deach ramp and replaced it with a brand new pressure treated ramp. No more tripping over rotten boards in the dark on the way back

from campfire! Since 2002, the Builders' Association has volunteered countless hours towards many building projects throughout the camp including the Ritz, Wellness Centre, sailing shed and our brand new docks. A big thank you to Austin who after so many years still contributes to the camp's ongoing success.

YMCA CAMP KITCHIKEWANA

Winter Address:

YMCA Camp Kitchikewana
6604 Rama Road

RR #6 Orillia, ON L3V 6H6

T:(705)325-2253 F:(705)325-8411

E-mail: camp_kitchikewana@ymca.ca

Summer Address:

YMCA Camp Kitchikewana
PO Box 71

Honey Harbour, ON POE 1E0

T:(705)756-4002 F:(705)325-8411



We build strong kids,
strong families,
strong communities.

Plus de vie à la vie
des jeunes, des familles
et de la communauté.

YMCA

PRIVACY STATEMENT: The YMCA strives to ensure that volunteers and staff conduct their relationships with each other, participants and all other Association contacts with integrity, good judgment and fairness. The YMCA respects the right of individuals to the protection of their personal information. The YMCA is committed to maintaining the confidentiality, privacy and accuracy of personal information it collects, uses and discloses about its participants, members, donors, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers.

mission: The YMCA is a charity that excels at strengthening our communities by providing opportunities for all to grow in spirit, mind and body.

vision: The YMCA will be the recognized leader in lifelong health and personal growth.

values: Caring, Honesty, Inclusiveness, Respect, Responsibility.