

## There Ought To Be a Place Like This . . .

This summer marked the third year Jim's family participated in our *Family Retreats* at Spruce Lake, but this was the first year he was able to join his wife and two daughters there. At the end of the first night he said, "There ought to be a place like this in every community!"



Have you ever wondered why you hear so much about *Family Retreat* from us? It's because it is a great overview of our ministry year round! Jim was correct—there should be a place like *Family Retreat* in every community,

and it's called the church! *Family Retreat* is, in part, about people affected by disability feeling they are a part of the Body of Christ; and the Body of Christ, in the form of Short Term Missionaries (STMs), learning how to serve and minister to people affected by disability.

Consider the words of another dad, Andrew, who himself is a pastor and worship leader at a church. All week long he declined encouragement to sing and share with the group. Toward the end of the week he told us why: "I come to *Family Retreat* to relearn what it means to worship." He went on to share how he tells his worship teams that the purest form of worship he encounters, and what sets him back on track for the next year, is found at *Family Retreat*. For example, watching a person with Down syndrome singing wholeheartedly to their Lord, not caring whether they are on key or not. The talent show, which included performances by the campers, was a highlight of camp for many people. It was a way for campers to show the gifts God had given them and be free to express themselves without holding back.

No wonder first-time STM Ashley Henning said, "It was a little taste of heaven, seeing Christ in everyone, unlike other church camps I've been to." Returning mother Lisa Rhodes said, "It is always good to have fellowship with other campers and parents, and the combination of STMs with the families made this year the best ever."

Family Retreat isn't just about one, two or three weeks each summer. It's about laying the groundwork for people to take home to their church so that there truly can "Be a place like this in every community."

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **October 2008**  
1st Wednesday – Moms Club  
12th Sunday – Wives Club  
26th Sunday – Dinner with a Purpose at Franconia Heritage Restaurant
- **November 2008**  
1st Saturday – Caregiver Pampering Day  
5th Wednesday – Moms Club  
9th Sunday – Wives Club  
18th Tuesday – Dads Group
- **December 2008**  
3rd Wednesday – Moms Club

For more information, please see our website [www.philadelphia.jonandfriends.org](http://www.philadelphia.jonandfriends.org) or call our office at (215)799-2304.

## Just In Time

It has been said, "God is rarely early, but He is never late!" This summer we saw that in a big way at one week of *Family Retreat*. One of our families knew they would arrive a day late, so we temporarily assigned their Short Term Missionary to provide extra support to another family. As the first day went along, it became apparent that this family was going to need this "extra support" all week long. How then would we meet the need of the original family when they arrived the next day?



"Let's see what God does;" was the staff's reply!

The next afternoon when the delayed family arrived, "Where's my STM?" was the first question out of the excited

teenage son's mouth. "We'll go get him," was the reply, as the Retreat directors walked around camp asking God for wisdom as to whom to move. Just fifteen minutes earlier a young man who has served as a STM many other times arrived at camp for a visit. When asked how long he could stay, he replied, "All week if you need me!" We quickly introduced the young teenager to his STM, who jumped in without missing a beat. With wholehearted agreement the Spruce Lake *Family Retreat* team gave thanks to our God, who is rarely early, but definitely was not late!

# Baseball and Pampering

Now there are two words you don't often hear together unless in reference to opportunities to provide support and encouragement to parents and spouses of people with disabilities. In August, through generous gifts from donors, 24 men, mostly dads of kids with disabilities, spent an evening at the Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs game. They were treated to a night in the owner's box, with a "manly buffet" (more meat than vegetables!), free parking, a gas card, and a gift certificate to spend on their family! The men who attended said they not only enjoyed the night and all that went with it, but also were glad to head home "as a hero" when they arrived with souvenirs. Joni and Friends Greater Philadelphia also had the opportunity to throw out one of the first balls of the game. One dad commented, "I don't believe I ever had a 'dad's night out' and normally don't get to talk with anyone about having a special needs child. But [we] had some great talks driving up and back. Thanks for making that opportunity for us."



Next is the ladies' turn, and the part about pampering. One hundred ladies are expected to join together at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Caregiver Day of Pampering on Saturday, November 1. Co-hosted by Joni and Friends Greater Philadelphia and Calvary Church, moms and wives of people affected by disabilities will take a break from their responsibilities as a caregiver and receive a day of rest, refreshment, and renewal that includes music, an inspirational message, a warm meal, and free massages, haircuts, hand waxing, nail care, makeup and more! One new mom, while sending in her RSVP, asked, "Can we make it a full weekend?"

If you'd like to have a part in this great day, there's still time. We do need more "skilled pamperers," such as massage therapists, cosmetologists, nail technicians, makeup artists, etc. There are also needs for those with a heart to serve to prepare food, serve food, help with setup and cleanup, and be available as needed throughout the day. Call our office at 215-799-2304 and talk about how you can get involved.

Joni and Friends is pleased to announce that we have joined the National Combined Federal Campaign. All federal employees participating in the campaign will have the opportunity to support Joni and Friends. The campaign will run from Sept. 1 to Dec. 15, 2008. Please look for our giving number **69988**.

## *DID YOU KNOW . . .*

*You can purchase all Joni and Friends products directly from our office? By doing so you'll continue to support the Greater Philadelphia office and save on shipping.*

*GET A JUMP ON SHOPPING AND SAVE!*

*During the month of November get a head start on your Christmas shopping. Stop by our office or call (215) 799-2304 or email [greaterphilly@joniandfriends.org](mailto:greaterphilly@joniandfriends.org) with your order!*

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