

Green Lake experiences span six decades and three generations for DeWitt family



Bill and Jan DeWitt (seated) take a break during Family Life Celebration Week last summer with Jim (left) and Josh.

It's been going on since 1944--the DeWitts have been trekking to Green Lake from all over the country to work, play, pray, camp, learn, make friends and experience Green Lake!

It started when Jan worked in the bookstore as a youth in 1944 during Green Lake's first summer season and experienced "A Closer Walk with God" in many ways.

She returned in 1951 with a carload of Sunday School teachers from her church to learn new ways of teaching children about faith. In 1955 she and her husband Bill brought their first child to Green Lake and had such a good time they returned annually for vacation. Eventually all three of their children spent many happy days getting acquainted with other children at the Children's Center.

Jan began attending the American Baptist Women's Conference and in 1983 she was hired to serve on Green Lake's program staff. After she retired in 1998, her children and their families began attending Family Life Celebration Week, an intergenerational experience. "We all look forward to going there each year and being together. For me Green Lake has become 'my place of renewal,' Jan said.

For Jan's son Jim, who has been coming to Green Lake all his life, memories start with staying in the cabins by the tennis courts. "I remember the fun discovering the trails behind the cabins that would take you up to the Children's Center. I loved going on any kind of boat on the lake and swimming off the island. The boats I remember are Captain Bickel, White Cloud, row boats, canoes and paddle boats. My love for the lake started early, especially sailing," Jim said.

Now a member of Green Lake's Board of Directors, Jim says, "I can't think of any other place more special to me. The connection I feel to God at Green Lake is special. Many of my life decisions were made there. Some of my favorite places are the Boat House, Spurgeon Chapel, and the clearing off the Winnebago Indian trail overlooking Norwegian Bay. Green Lake renews me, family memories are made there. It has been an honor to serve on the board the last few years and see God at work in people's lives."

Jim's son Josh, a recent college graduate, served on the Quest

staff the last several summers. He has been experiencing Green Lake for all 22 years of his life. As a kid, he cherished arts and crafts with his family at Troster, late night games with cousins, new friendships at the Children's Center, boating on the lake while complaining about seaweed, blue raspberry slushies from the Country Store, and songs around the campfire at Family Life Celebration Week.

As a young adult, he cherishes all the same things while finding a greater appreciation for reflection on the point, long runs around the grounds, late night conversations with cousins and friends, and discovering the history behind the beautiful architecture on the grounds.

"Throughout the years, Green Lake has always been a place where I learned and refocused on my priorities. I was baptized in the lake by a dear family friend, Joel Fredrikson, and each time I return I am reminded of that outward expression of faith.

Most recently I had the privilege of serving on the Quest staff for four summers where I developed friendships with incredible Christian leaders, observed Christ awaken the hearts of youth, and became inspired by the passion that He has put in the hearts of this generation of youth."

Green Lake is enriched by families like the DeWitts who gather to play, learn and serve here!
