



# Department of Camping

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

201 Saint Ignatius Trail, Bolivar, PA 15923

Phone: 724-238-9565, Fax: 724-238-6415

<http://www.antiochian.org/camps>

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## Report to Archdiocese May 2017

The following report was presented to His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph at the Archdiocesan Department Head Meetings in April:

### **1. Change Based on Last Year's Meeting**

There was no direct change and/or impact on the department based on last year's meeting. However, we have determined that as a department we need to provide more direct and hands on oversight of all the camping programs in the Archdiocese. This includes working more directly (with regular visits) with each camping program to ensure they are following the guidelines and the direction established and blessed by the Metropolitan. In short, we need to be proactive and more hands on with each of our programs.

### **2. Mission**

The mission of the Department of Camping is to provide oversight of all camps and camping programs (as defined in the Department of Camping Manual) of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese to ensure that each camping program meets industry standards regarding safety and programming while maintaining the teachings and practices of the Orthodox Christian Church.

Note: For purposes of this report, the term camp will be used not to describe the facility but the program. It is to be noted that the Antiochian Village is the only camp owned and operated by the Antiochian Archdiocese. There are seven additional camping programs that are officially recognized as camps of the Archdiocese and they lease facilities to run their programs each summer. The eight camps of the Antiochian Archdiocese are:

- Antiochian Village – Pennsylvania – (4) two-week summer sessions, Family Camp, Winter Camp
- Camp St George – Iowa – (1) one-week summer session
- Camp St Innocent – Alberta – (1) one-week summer session
- Camp St Mary of Egypt – Idaho – (1) one-week summer session
- Camp St Nicholas – Southern California – (3) one-week summer sessions, Winter Camp
- Camp St Raphael – Oklahoma – (3) one-week summer sessions
- Camp St Thekla – South Carolina – (2) one-week summer sessions
- Camp Transfiguration – Ontario – (2) one week summer sessions

### 3. Execution of the Mission

Each camp is required (as mandated by the Metropolitan of the Archdiocese) to be accredited with the appropriate camp accrediting association (American Camp Association, Alberta Camp Association, Ontario Camp Association). These associations require camps to maintain the highest industry standards in camping (especially as it relates to safety and programming) and periodic visits (every three to five years) of the camps are made to verify accreditation standards are being maintained. It is a very demanding rigor for camps to go through the accreditation process and for the majority of our camps it puts a great burden on their staff. The Department of Camping staff (Fr Anthony Yazge and Chris Shadid) are able to assist and provide resources as do all of our camp directors for one another.

We have a system of reporting that each camp is required to provide to the department at the end of the camping season. In addition to this oversight, the department coordinates the distribution of the Order of St Ignatius scholarship funds to each camp; plans and funds training for camp directors and staff; and funding of background checks for staff and volunteers.

#### Camp Scholarships

The Order of St Ignatius currently provides \$190,000 in camper scholarships that may be used at any of our eight camps providing those camps maintain their accreditation. In January, the department emails information regarding the scholarship to each pastor. The pastor may assign up to \$700 to campers from his parish to be used at any of the eight camps. The assignment of scholarships is done by completing an online form that is then recorded in our database. Each Camp Director is periodically updated with a list of scholarships for their respective camp. A significant portion of the \$190,000 is assigned in this manner. The balance is then made available to need-based requests from each camp director. Camper families may make a need-based scholarship request to their camp directors. The camp directors then submit the requests they approve to the department and those funds, if available, are locked in for the camp. The department requests the \$190,000 from the Order of St Ignatius and then distributes the funds to the camps based on the amounts assigned by the parish priests and the need-based requests. In addition, every camp is encouraged to do their own fundraising for scholarships and operational support and not to solely rely on the goodwill and generosity of the Order of St Ignatius.

	2015			2016			Difference between 2015 and 2016
	Parish Scholarships 2015	Grant Scholarships 2015	Total Scholarships 2015	Parish Scholarships 2016	Grant Scholarships 2016	Total Scholarships 2016	
Antiochian Village	\$56,043	\$33,501	\$89,544	\$57,400	\$34,590	\$91,990	\$2,446
Camp St. George	\$5,900	\$855	\$6,755	\$4,519	\$350	\$4,869	(\$1,886)
Camp St. Innocent	\$2,800	\$1,610	\$4,410	\$3,325	\$4,381	\$7,706	\$3,296
Camp St. Mary of Egypt	\$8,326	\$2,481	\$10,807	\$9,590	\$1,350	\$10,940	\$133
Camp St. Nicholas	\$15,896	\$10,165	\$26,061	\$17,419	\$9,020	\$26,439	\$378
Camp St. Raphael	\$18,953	\$5,385	\$24,338	\$18,806	\$3,625	\$22,431	(\$1,907)
Camp St. Thekla	\$10,455	\$8,230	\$18,685	\$8,375	\$8,200	\$16,575	(\$2,110)
Camp Transfiguration	\$7,700	\$1,700	\$9,400	\$5,600	\$3,450	\$9,050	(\$350)
<b>Total Amount</b>	\$126,073	\$63,927	\$190,000	\$125,034	\$64,966	\$190,000	

## Trainings

Each year, the department makes available two opportunities for camp directors to further their education and training as camp and youth development professionals. Each January there is the Orthodox Camp and Youth Worker Conference that rotates hosting by the various Orthodox Churches in the U.S. The department covers the cost (travel, registration, room and board) for the camp director or one person from each camp to attend. The second training is the American Camp Association TriState Camp Conference in March in Atlantic City. This is the largest camping conference in the world and has hundreds of workshops and speakers. The department covers the cost of registration, room and board for each Camp Director to attend and each camp is responsible for their travel expenses.

## 4. Performance and Results for the 2016 Camp Season

Below is the statistical data from the 2016 camping season:

<b>Camp Name</b>	<b>Total campers summer 2015</b>	<b>Total campers summer 2016</b>	<b># of Campers receiving scholarship</b>	<b>Scholarship \$ distributed NOT from the Order of St. Ignatius</b>	<b># of Camper Weeks</b>	<b>Camper ages</b>	<b>Camp Tuition 2016 (Early Bird Rate)</b>
Antiochian Village	1,064	1,069	359	\$34,141 + \$53,666 from parishes	8	9-17	1 Week - \$425 (\$400) 2 Weeks - \$750 (\$700)
Camp St. George	102	89	40	\$240	1	9-17	\$330
Camp St. Innocent	38	46	39	\$3,850	1	7-17	\$385 (\$375)
Camp St. Mary of Egypt	127	123	63	0	1	9-17	\$375
Camp St. Nicholas	299	307	116	\$8,815	3	6-18	\$485 (\$435)
Camp St. Raphael	318	420	176	\$4,100	2	9-17	\$325
Camp St. Thekla	236	256	85*	\$2,275	2	9-17	\$440
Camp Transfiguration	195	152	76	\$17,040	2	9-17	1 Week - \$465 (\$440) 2 Weeks - \$850 (\$825)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,379</b>	<b>2,462</b>		<b>\$124,127</b>			

Most of our camps are near capacity or are at record attendance levels for the facilities that they are renting (Antiochian Village, Camp St George, Camp St Mary of Egypt, Camp St Raphael, Camp St Thekla). Camp St Innocent is our newest camp - only three years in to its existence but with steady growth each year. If attendance is any indication, we are successful in our ministry.

Anecdotally, we survey our campers and parents at the Antiochian Village and have rave reviews from both about the impact we are having on the spiritual lives of our young people. Perhaps the greatest indicator of our camping program is when we look at the life of the Archdiocese and see bishops, priests, priest wives, board of trustee members, archdiocesan organizational officers, parish council members, etc that were at one time either campers and/or camp staff. That has to be the clearest statistical result that people engaged in camping in any of our eight archdiocesan camps are stepping in to roles of leadership.

## Hierarchical Participation

We are blessed that our hierarchs are regular participants or visitors to our camps. In particular, our experience at the Village with the constant presence of Bishop Thomas and the regular visits of Bishop Nicholas is that our campers and staff are engaged with them in a variety of ways. They will approach them for confession, for questions about the Faith, for advice and for fellowship. Several years back when the youth department surveyed our campers they indicated that the first person they would approach when they had a problem would be a bishop. That is clearly a result of the relations that are being established by our beloved hierarchs with our youth. I cannot stress enough the importance of

our hierarchs to visit their diocesan camps each summer. The benefits of these visits are self-evident. Typically, I communicate with Bishop Thomas, our Hierarchical Overseer, weekly. It is not a formal communication but as needs arise we discuss the camping ministry and I seek his advice regularly as it is needed. With regard to the Antiochian Village, Bishop Thomas is probably very much in the loop of our triumphs and struggles. As for our other camping programs, it is more limited to the reports we provide simultaneously to the Board of Trustees unless a particular issue warrants a discussion with him.

## **5. Assessment of Goal Achievement for 2016/2017**

1. Full enrollment at each of our camps.
  - a. Most of our camps were near capacity and several of them even had waiting lists.
2. Hiring of staff that are or will be well-trained and committed to providing an Orthodox camping experience for the young people in their care.
  - a. We had a number of our camps represented at the Camp and Youth Worker Conference this past January in Austin, TX.
  - b. Experienced and trained staff worked at other Archdiocese camps this year (i.e. former staff of Camp St Raphael, Camp St Thekla and Camp St Nicholas worked at the Antiochian Village this past summer).
  - c. Fr Alex Mackoul, the new Camp Director for Camp St Thekla, went to several conferences and additional training for new camp directors.
  - d. We are also purchasing training materials for new camp directors as well.
3. Safety of our campers and staff.
  - a. Most of our camps are accredited or seeking accreditation. We are working with Camp St Mary of Egypt to get their accreditation reinstated.
  - b. We have shared with one another the ACA Annual Accreditation Report answers with other camps to assist them in completing their reports
4. Have sufficient funds to provide the necessary scholarships requested.
  - a. St Ignatius Scholarships were distributed among the camps.
  - b. As noted in the chart on the previous page, camps did raise funds for additional scholarships beyond the funds provided by the Order.
  - c. We have yet to explore grants and resources that may provide additional sources of scholarship funding.
5. Explore opportunities for new camps and expansion of camps.
  - a. Presently working with people in Northern California and Michigan about possibly starting camps in the future.

## **6. Goals for 2017/2018**

1. Full enrollment at each of our camps.
2. Hiring of staff that are or will be well-trained and committed to providing an Orthodox camping experience for the young people in their care.
3. Provide safe camping for our campers and staff.
4. Offer quality Christian Education to our campers.
5. Enable our campers to experience and participate in the liturgical life of the Church.
6. Have sufficient funds to provide the necessary scholarships requested.
7. Explore opportunities for new camps and expansion of camps.
8. Visit all of our camps this summer.
9. Prepare Camp St Mary of Egypt and Northern California Camp to seek accreditation in 2018.
10. Work on staff succession planning for each camp.

## **7. Action Plan to Achieve Goals for 2017/2018**

1. Full enrollment at each of our camps.
  - a. Promote camp availability through Archdiocese and camps websites.
  - b. Email blasts to prospective camper families and to clergy and parishes.
  - c. Have camps develop social media campaigns.
  - d. Encourage camper families on wait lists to consider attending other camps.
2. Hiring of staff that are or will be well-trained and committed to providing an Orthodox camping experience for the young people in their care.
  - a. Share training materials amongst camps.
  - b. Encourage Camp Directors to attend the Camp & Youth Worker Conference next January and the ACA TriState Camp Conference next March.
  - c. Invite other Camp Directors and camp staff to participate in the full one week summer staff training at Antiochian Village.
3. Provide safe camping for our campers and staff.
  - a. Observation of camps during visits to camp.
  - b. Verify that camps are maintaining their accreditation status.
4. Offer quality Christian Education to our campers.
  - a. Share curriculum between camps.
  - b. Recommend curriculum on orthodoxcamps.org website
  - c. Review curriculum that is being used in each camp.
5. Enable our campers to experience and participate in the liturgical life of the Church.
  - a. Ensure that camps are practicing a regular full liturgical life.
  - b. Verify campers are participating in the liturgical life (chanting, singing, reading, serving).
  - c. Encourage camps to offer other services in addition to Orthros, Vespers and Liturgy.
6. Have sufficient funds to provide the necessary scholarships requested.
  - a. Encourage camps to build donor base for scholarship funding.
  - b. Encourage parishes to raise funds to assist campers to attend camps.
  - c. Explore grants and resources that may provide additional sources of scholarship funding
7. Explore opportunities for new camps and expansion of camps.
  - a. Work with Northern California Camp to comply with Department of Camping policies and procedures.
  - b. Work with Basilica of St Mary (Livonia, MI) to explore the possibility of a camp in Michigan.
  - c. Survey existing camps about possibilities of expanding current offering.
8. Visit all of our camps this summer.
  - a. Arrange for visitation of all camps with follow up reports.
  - b. Meet with west coast camp staff and overseeing committees (Camp St Mary of Egypt, Camp St Nicholas and Northern California Camp).
9. Prepare Camp St Mary of Egypt and Northern California Camp to seek accreditation in 2018.
  - a. See 8b above.
  - b. Share resources related to accreditation with the camps.
  - c. Schedule visits to assist these camps in preparing accreditation material, if necessary.
10. Work on staff succession planning for each camp.
  - a. Discuss with Camp Directors potential successors.
  - b. Develop strategy to cultivate new leadership and leadership succession.

## **8. Staffing**

Fr Anthony Yazge - Chairman (also Antiochian Village Camp Director as well as Chairman of the Department of Young Adult Ministry)

Christopher Shadid – Vice Chairman (also Antiochian Village Assistant Camp Director)

Fr Anthony and Chris run the department and are not compensated per se by the department but are full-time paid employees of the Antiochian Village Camp. In addition, each camp director (as well as a few other key camp staff) is part of the department by virtue of their position. They are not compensated by the department and most of them are part-time volunteers at their own camps. The exception is Marek Simon who is the full-time paid Assistant Camp Director at the Antiochian Village.

All staff serve as a resource to one another, as is needed. In particular, Fr Anthony, Chris and Marek provide expertise in numerous areas as it pertains to camping as they have distributed their efforts in running the Antiochian Village Camp. For example, Fr Anthony and Chris have experience regarding camp accreditation and Marek has done a great deal of work with online registration and database management.

The following are the Camp Directors of each of our camps:

- Antiochian Village Camp – Pennsylvania
  - Fr Anthony Yazge
- Camp St George – Iowa
  - Fr Fred Shaheen
- Camp St Innocent – Alberta Canada
  - Nellie Salloum
- Camp St Mary of Egypt – Idaho
  - Fr Alban West, Camp Director
  - Kh Krista West, Executive Camp Director
- Camp St Nicholas – California
  - Katrina Bitar
- Camp St Raphael - Oklahoma
  - Fr James Shadid, Camp Director
  - Gayle Malone, Executive Camp Director
- Camp St Thekla – South Carolina
  - Fr Alex Mackoul
- Camp Transfiguration – Ontario Canada
  - Alex Younes

## **9. Items Needing the Attention of Metropolitan Joseph**

It is not my place to presume to tell the Metropolitan what we need him to do, but it is important that we are careful to work within the systems that are in place with regard to our camps. We are blessed to have the support and encouragement of His Eminence regarding the growth of existing camps and the establishment of future camps. It is important that when there is a need identified in a certain area related to camping (establishment of a new camp, use of scholarship funds, accreditation, etc) that we be brought into the discussion for consultation so that we ensure the policies and procedures put in place can be met.

With His Eminence supporting the development of the camping program, it is important that we provide proper oversight to the growth and development of camping programs. As we look to either purchase or rent new camp facilities the sites ought to be visited by either the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the department for a fresh perspective before anyone gets too far along in the process.

We recommend the funding to hire a full-time staff member for the Department of Camping. The staff member will be charged with the following areas (subject to modification, as needed):

1. Assist camps with accreditation process, including being present at camps during accreditation visit.
2. Explore funding opportunities for camps and scholarships (i.e. grant writing)
3. Develop and implement training around the Archdiocese (perhaps to coincide with diocesan gatherings and delegates meetings) of camp staff.
4. Develop new curriculum for camp use and review all other curriculum.
5. Maintain Department of Camping website.
6. Coordinate St Ignatius Scholarship funding.
7. Review camps' policies and procedures annually.
8. Coordinate annual camp reports.
9. Make annual or every other year visits to our camps.
10. Remotely develop and establish programs for our various camps and then assist in running them with the local staff.
11. Research possible camp facilities that would support growth of current programs or provide future camp locations.
12. Provide central processing of background checks.
13. Develop educational and PR to promote camping in the Archdiocese (i.e. crafting articles, develop social media presence, etc.)
14. Investigate potential camp databases and online registration systems and potential funding to enable these systems to be put in place for our camps.

Respectfully Submitted,



V. Rev. Anthony G. Yazge  
Chairman