Hi! This is just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Christian Record Services, Inc. Remember to add enews@christianrecord.org to your address book so each edition of our ENews lands in your inbox!

You may unsubscribe if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

Dear Center for,

Welcome to the new look of Christian Record Today!

For many parts of the country, school is starting soon. We ask for God's richest blessings for our young people as they start a new school year -- for successful and meaningful learning opportunities, for courage to stand up to bullying (see our article about the Seven Campaign), and for a closer connection to Jesus.

Thank you for your ongoing friendship with Christian Record. We hope you enjoy this new newsletter layout and ask that you share this edition with your family and friends.

Jeri Lyn Rogge
ENews Editor
ETNews Exclusive: New CRSB Website Preview

Aaron Rogge, Christian Record's Information Services Director, recently revealed a preview of the updated CRSB website. "A major goal of the update is to make the site cleaner and easier to read," Rogge commented.

"In addition to a new look there are a number of updates and tweaks to the site. Online giving is receiving special attention with the inclusion of the current campaign, which had been previously restricted to those receiving our monthly letters in the mail," said Rogge.

The new look also includes an updated giving interface and more search options for the online library. This is the first major update to the website since 2007.

The update is on schedule to go live by the end of the month.

Connected Article: Denali National Park Audio Tour

Christian Record Editor Bert Williams recently traveled to Alaska and spent part of his time in Denali National Park.

Over the course of two days, he spent more than twelve hours hiking across tundra and then up a creek and over glacial moraines to a spectacular mountain pass. The two hikes have been condensed into an hour of highlights. Click here for the audio tour.

A Personal Journey to Remember

This was my first direct encounter with a camp for the blind. And what an experience it has become!
I braced myself with expectations that it might rain, that there would be plenty of walking and a variety of sport activities, and that being in a Christian environment, I would find new friends and encouragement for the battles of life. My new experience came with meeting 53 people, with a spread from teens to individuals in their 50s, all totally or legally blind. Most of the campers came from Tennessee and near-by states, with a few traveling from as far as California.

More . . .

What is Christian Record?

Christian Record Services for the Blind (CRSB) is the 113-year-old ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to people who are blind or visually impaired. Free services, such as Christian reading services in braille, large print, and audio are available to all who qualify. National Camps for Blind Children (NCBC), a program of Christian Record, offers a free* week of summer or winter camp at locations in the US and Canada.

To learn more about Christian Record and to request information about enrolling in services, click here.

All services and programs offered by Christian Record Services for the Blind are funded by generous financial gifts. Would you consider giving a gift today to help a person who is blind see Jesus?

*After a $35 application fee.
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A Personal Journey to Remember

Lessons From First Encounter with Blind Campers at Tennessee’s Indian Creek Camp

Article and Photos by Rajmund Dabrowski*

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This year’s season of summer camps for the blind kicked off at the venue with the longest continuous run in the 45 years of camps organized by Christian Record. National Camps for the Blind® and National Camps for Blind Children® are perhaps the most widely known program of Christian Record Services. The initiative began in 1967 with a single camp at Kulaqua in High Springs, Florida. As a star attraction, this year 14 summer and winter camps span the United States and Canada. Over 50,000 blind campers have attended these specialized camps.

The Indian Creek camp location, near Nashville, was once a home base for the Cherokee Indians. It’s at the edge of Center Hill Lake, with its 700 miles of shoreline.

I was glad to meet someone for whom the camp for the blind was also his first, though he has had considerable experience working with youth. Ken Wetmore, the newly appointed camp director, is the youth director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in much of Kentucky and Tennessee.

“This is going to be exciting,” he told me the day the camp started.

“How challenging is this going to be for you?” I asked.

“Actually, the blind campers are not that different from other campers. If there are special needs that surface, we have counselors or counselors-in-training to assist. My staff is well trained and focused,” he added.
This year’s camp had a list of those who wanted to come and volunteer, Wetmore explained. Those who were chosen to be counselors and assist in a variety of camp activities were first shortlisted. Running consecutively with the blind camp was a camp for 51 children ages 7-9. The combined groups had 58 staffers, joined by a group of 20 counselors in training (CITs).

The Indian Creek camp offered many options for the older blind campers but also it was attractive for kids, with their differing attention spans and interests. About half of the 53 blind campers, totally or legally blind, were below the age of 30.

An important feature of the experience was to observe and participate in the camp’s inspirational moments. Matt Evens, the camp pastor, told campers at the first evening’s campfire event that his role was to help the campers find God. His words were greeted with applause and amens.

For Linda, who lives in Lexington, Kentucky, the camp was “almost new” as she returned many years after attending one when she was 12. She came back to see what has changed over the years – and what hadn’t. Now in her 30s and a professional in her own right, the attractiveness of the camp continues to be its Christian atmosphere.

“Sure, there is a difference between then and now,” she commented. “We have changed, and those who run the camp changed, too.” She obviously enjoyed herself, displaying a smile as she was kayaking with gusto.

The positive, caring atmosphere of the camps run by NCBC is appreciated by the blind campers. “We are treated with respect and care,” was repeated again and again. Good planning and careful attention to detail was the work of Tim Arner, Southern Region field director of CRSB, and Bob Clayton, a Christian Record representative for the region and camp coordinator. They told me how inspired they are by the campers’ participation, and also by the Ken Wetmore team of engaged and dedicated staffers. “They all make us proud,” they concluded.

Having fun and being involved with an assortment of activities that led the blind campers to exercise and strive for new heights offered a rich menu for an observer like me. Much of what was going on was aimed at helping the campers grow in self-confidence, and to develop an appreciation for God’s love and care.

It wasn’t difficult to encounter Michael, who was back at the camp again, as his independence and physical vigor stood out. Though totally blind, he was eager to ride a BMX bike, an activity at which he excelled before an accident left him blind. He got his wish realized. Laying out a safe route for him, counselors equipped his helmet with a camera. A film of his experience received a standing ovation by all campers and staff – blind and sighted alike -- at the concluding campfire on Saturday night.

It was Michael who cheered others in a kickball game to keep on going. For him, it seemed, his blindness did not destroy his determination to help himself by helping others. Almost immediately, as the Indian Creek Camp ended on June 17, Michael planned to take part in another camp, the NCBC Blind Biker’s camp which will take the group of tandem bike riders over the course of three days between Nashville, Tennessee, and Tuscumbia, Alabama, on June 20-24. The ride will culminate at Ivy Green, the famed Helen Keller’s childhood home-museum.
Observing archery coach Narlon de Oliveira’s would-be-archers made me realize that so often I may be oblivious of the gifts I have and leave them unused. In Narlon’s words, who encourages the blind archers to keep on trying, and teaches them to angle where they would shoot an arrow, “We often complain about things. They could too. But they cheer each other on. If one of their friends hits a balloon, they rejoice.”

I came to the camp to observe, and learn about a world of blindness. But it was what Narlon said about his experience with blind young people that made me think. Simply, the campers taught me much about myself.

*Ray is coordinating marketing for Christian Record