

# The Bell



Issue 61, August 1, 2024



# Great Summer



# What a great summer!

Camp Sertoma 2024 was GREAT! Children from around our beautiful state entered our gates, heard our bell ring out its enthusiastic welcome, heard our chant (“WELCOME TO CAMP WE’RE GLAD YOU’RE HERE! WELCOME TO CAMP WE’RE GLAD YOU’RE HERE....”), were greeted by smiles, hugs, fist bumps from their counselors. Rosie is given a wooden nametag with her name on it, color-coded to match the other campers in her cabin. The nametag has 1-3 beads on it, colored to indicate to our staff that Rosie has a history of food allergies. Another camper has a purple bead that indicates a history of seizures. The campers already feel something special. They feel known (because their counselors have been reading about them even before their arrival. They read information from parents from the online registration. If the camper has been to camp before, they read the evaluations from previous years...so that they know what his favorite activity is, the award she received, his strengths and weaknesses and even the names of her previous counselors). Campers feel wanted. They feel welcome. They feel caught up in a current of enthusiasm and energy. They encounter a team of Sertomans who are there for 3, 4, or even 5 hours every Sunday all summer long...checking the campers in, giving out cold drinks and camp t-shirts to our weary travelers, and even carrying luggage to our nearby laundry facility to treat the clothing of any campers found to have head lice so that when the child arrives to their cabin, their clothes are clean and neatly folded on their bed just like the other kids.

Dale Treash, Chairman, Camp Sertoma of South Carolina







We have had an absolute groundswell of Sertomans AND their families, new Serteen clubs, camp alumni and THEIR families and even partners



who have been involved for 3,4, and even FIVE decades show up and show OUT at camp this summer!!!



# Great Team



# Just Like Other Kids

Too many of our kids have never camped out. Too many of our kids have never been on the lake or paddled a canoe. Too many of our kids don't know how to swim...or stay afloat in a crowd of people. Too many have never gone a day, let alone a week, without touching a cell phone. Too many of our kids have never gone a week without being made fun of. Perhaps it's because of their hearing aid. Perhaps it's because they speak differently or their family isn't wealthy. Regardless of the reason, too many of our kids feel badly about themselves because they're not like the other kids.

Too few of our kids have shot a bow and arrow. Too few of our kids have had a dining room full of people cheer for them or sing them happy birthday. Too few of our kids have had someone look them in the eyes while they told their story. Too few of our kids have sung silly songs alongside a cabin full of friends or made up skits. Too few of our kids remember that it's okay to be silly, to try new things.

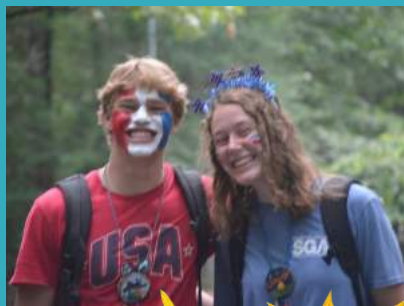
Too many have never eaten a family-style meal with a group...a group of people they now feel a part of, feel known and loved by. Too many of our kids miss out on feeling celebrated and proud of themselves...because they're NOT like other kids.

And too few of our kids know that the other kids...aren't like other kids either. And that's awesome.





Thanks to a lot of work from Leslie, LOTS of camp superstars returning for another summer and Sertomans helping a bit recruiting applicants, our camp summer staff were the best, most enthusiastic, resilient, creative, steady group! What a privilege to watch them love our campers!



# Great counselors



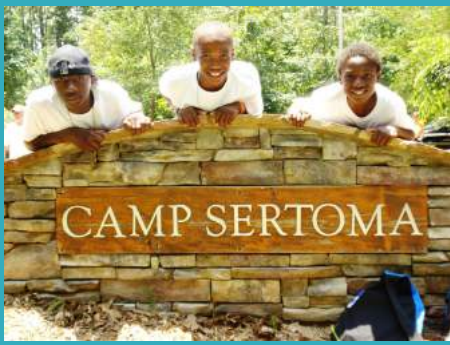


Leslie Conrad, Director of the Clemson University Outdoor Lab and Camp Sertoma, has been THE ROCK of our camp for two decades. Her leadership has kept camp great and she has captained our ship through many storms...with our camp emerging better than ever with a great Hope for our tomorrows!



# Great leader





Our camp was built on a Rock. And THESE rocks...ROCK!



# Great History





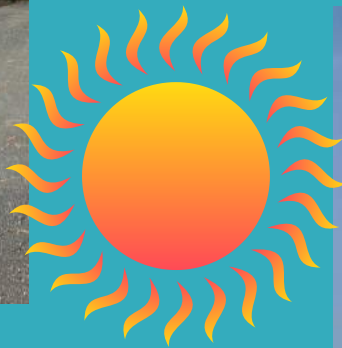
COVID closed camp.



and



gave us the...



Great comeback





Great  
friendships





Great  
FUN





*Dear Charlie,*

*Consider this a belated Thank You email for the opportunity you gave my daughter, J.O. 'Tofunmi', to be a part of this year's CAMP SERTOMA summer camp. I must share a little bit of what it has done to her.*

*We just moved into the United States about a year ago, and she is a naturally shy and reserved girl. She was also homeschooled alongside her other siblings on the other side of the globe. So I was really nervous that she might not cope well.*

*The fact that we did not get a call from the camp to come and pick her up the whole week was surprising indeed. When we came to pick her up, she was happy and said she wanted to stay back at the camp. You can imagine my shock. The ride back home was full of stories about wonderful experiences. The best part of it was the fact that my daughter, who has never entered a pool prior to going to camp sertoma, learned how to swim! Now she is teaching all of us, including her Dad and me, how to swim. This is amazing!*

*I really appreciate all that camp sertoma has done for my daughter. I would love it if she gets in next year, along with her younger brother. I am happy!*

**THANK YOU!**



**Great  
Impact**



# MEMBER'S MEETING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26TH  
10-12

ZOOM LINK WILL COME TO YOUR CLUB  
PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

WE WOULD LIKE 3 OR MORE MEMBERS  
FROM EACH CLUB TO ATTEND.

WE WILL GIVE AN UPDATE ABOUT CAMP  
SERTOMA 2024 AND PRESENT OUR  
FINANCIAL REPORT.

YOU CAN HELP US IMPROVE OUR CAMP  
FOR 2025!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LEAVE THE  
COMFORT OF YOUR HOME!





As we move into the early weeks of summer, Sertomans around the state receive many messages from parents of children who are interested in attending Camp Sertoma of S.C. It's a very rewarding thing for all of us but, it does get a little hectic from time to time. Clubs receive questions, comments or requests in a number of ways – web sites, social media pages, direct e-mail and others. At Camp Sertoma, we are always delighted when we are contacted through our web site or our facebook page (<https://campsertomasc.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/CampSertomaOfScInc>) and we especially appreciate it when someone shares their experiences at camp in previous years. Recently we have gotten quite a few messages from parents in their thirties and forties – with children who are now old enough to be eligible for camp – who attended Camp Sertoma when they, themselves, were children. Many express the feeling that their time at camp had an indelible impact on their lives and that they want their children to experience the same positive environment. While such feedback would be welcome under any circumstances, it is extraordinarily gratifying to realize that the coalition of people who make this annual miracle possible have continued the legacy for fifty-five years in an unbroken chain.

Just think about how that happens – of what it takes to re-create the sense of newness that we find here each year. Think of the bright, energetic faces that welcome children when they arrive at the Outdoor Lab, or the hundreds and hundreds of Sertomans, families, corporate supporters, Clemson University personnel, volunteers from all across the spectrum of supporters – it is, simply put, a miracle that repeats itself year after year. We are eternally grateful that there are so many club members who work tirelessly to raise funds to support camper sponsorship, clubs that undertake remarkable projects such as the Camp Sertoma of S.C. Golf Tournament or that donate crucially needed equipment, young people like the Wren High School and T. L. Hanna High School Serteens who provide their youthful strength and skill at our workday, and remarkable individuals who are willing to sacrifice their time, effort and treasures as members of our Board of Trustees. So – as we move toward the middle days of summer, take a moment or two to offer up a word of thanks that we have the opportunity to be a part of an “everyday miracle” that touches lives in wonderful ways and which will continue to do so for years to come.

**Rick Vandiver, Sr. North Lake, Wade Hampton Sertoma Clubs**







