

The Bell
Issue 60, December 1, 2023

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Merry Christmas



Merry Christmas from Camp Sertoma!!

We hope YOUR days are merry and bright! Our campy elves have been VERY busy! Golf tournament. Members' meeting. Staff recruitment (yes, already!). Camp reservations. Fund-raising. Communications. State roster. Camp Rep handbook updates. Finance management. Cost containment. Process improvement. Outdoor Lab maintenance. Publicity. THE BELL. New board members. New camp reps. Anticipatory PResponsiveness to this new world we live in. SO much to do...fortunately, it doesn't have to be done by Christmas Eve! Enjoy the season...and enjoy this celebratory issue of

THE BELL!



Presence

One of the most remarkable things about Camp Sertoma is all of the presence. Our campers are present in the moment, unencumbered by digital distraction or worries of the world. Our counselors are present with our campers, similarly undistracted but also captivated by the metamorphosis they are witnessing in their campers right before their eyes.



Jingle, BELL!!!

You've recently heard the story of how and why our bell came to hang in a tower in Camp Sertoma. If you've been to a board meeting, members' meeting or regional convention, you might even have your own little replica bell (and I hope it reminds you to think of our precious camp). But like our bell welcomes and celebrates the arrival of our campers, you get to celebrate camp and invite others to join our efforts to make Camp Sertoma happen. So ring loud, ring proud, ring often! Your club, your community...and your own heart will all be better for it! Don't grow weary in doing good! Use the tools available to you on our website and with your board to brag about our camp!



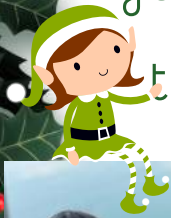
I'll Be Home For Camp

Who you call 'family' and where you call 'home' are very, very important things. Your campers call Camp Sertoma 'HOME.' They call that because it is the place they find themselves. It is the place they feel safe, loved, heard and believed in. Please don't glance over this monument at camp...and don't miss out on understanding and relishing the MONUMENTAL impact you have on your campers!



All I Want For Christmas Is Camp!

It is super cool to hear kids start to talk about Camp Sertoma "next year" even before they've left camp THIS year. I have seen hundreds of campers in my office in the fall. Every one of them asks if they can go back to camp next year. Every. One. That should make you wonder what the heck goes on there to make them feel that way!





Hark! The Crazy Counselors Sing!



Did you know the silly camp songs aren't just silly? Our campers look up to their counselors as VERY cool adults. And when very cool adults show by their example that it's okay to be silly...well...then our campers feel free and safe to be silly themselves. And in a world where kids often have to grow up too fast...we could all use a little bit of silly.



IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CAMP!



Did you know that your campers get itchy? I'm not talking about head lice. They're already wondering when you're going to call/email their mom...are they going to get to go to camp again...when will they tell us which week I get...when will I find out what cabin I'm in...who are my counselors going to be?...will my friend be there again? ...are you SURE I'm going to get to go....

It's sweet and fun...so enjoy the moment and help build the anticipation of arrival!



My Son Made Santa Cry

When Will was 3 years old, I took him to see the mall Santa. I'm not sure why. We don't really do Santa. But there we were in the mall. Here's how their conversation went:

Santa: Have you been a good little boy this year?

Will: I mean, sometimes yeah but sometimes no.

Santa: Well, Santa LOVES good little boys!

Will: Well...Jesus loves me no matter what.

Santa: (tears trickling down his rosy cheeks) Son, you just made Santa's day.



**William Treash, 3 years old,
telling Santa about Jesus**

**Merry
Christmas
to ALL!!!**



HOW DOES CAMP MAKE YOU MERRY?

The Richland Sertoma Club is excited every summer to send 10 campers for this life-changing experience. As an indication of our continuing support for the camp, we have applied for and received \$2,000 grants for the last 2 years from Sertoma national in support of the camp. -

Steve Etheredge, Richland Sertoma

Anderson Sertoma has decided to sponsor an entire WEEK of campers! FORTY CAMPERS!!

Our group of merry men and women are working the Anderson Lights of Hope, putting up lights at the local Chic Fil A, and working on businesses to sponsor a child to camp for 5 years in addition to our fall Marshall Willingham Memorial Golf Tournament. Talking about Camp

Sertoma makes it easy to get donors, sponsors....AND NEW MEMBERS! --Dale Treash, Anderson Sertoma

2023 was an interesting year for Midlands Sertoma clubs. Not only were we regaining our balance after enduring the "Covid years," we were trying out a brand-new transportation partnership. Through the efforts of one of their members, the Cayce-West Columbia club had arranged for use of a bus owned by the Boys and Girls Club. North Lake, Wade Hampton, Richland, Columbia and Lexington Sertoma clubs joined Cayce-West Columbia in this first-ever effort and it was a big success. In addition to being a great way to transport campers, it gave us a chance to get to know our brother and sister Sertomans better. Despite the challenges of recent years we feel Camp Sertoma is back on track for another fifty years of fun.--Richard and Linda Vandiver, North Lake and Wade Hampton Sertoma Clubs

Sertoma is part of the raison d'être for the Columbia Sertoma club. Sponsoring children for camp is one of the highlights of the year. Learning of the impact it has on young lives makes it all the more gratifying. I can't imagine being in Sertoma in South Carolina without there being a Camp Sertoma.-Joby Castine, Columbia Sertoma



Hilton Head president, Nic, and his wife, Michelle, helped pick up campers and got to see camp in person for the first time! The club also sent items for the raffle at the convention and sponsored a hole at the golf tournament! The club has had new members join, and took part in the Island Chili Cookoff where they were able to network and make more community connections!

Hannah Casey, Hilton Head Sertoma

Hopefully, by the time you read this club news, our 2023 Christmas tree sales will be over. On the first three days, over half the trees and wreaths were sold (250/75). Because our campers are fully sponsored by local individuals and organizations, much of this income will go to area non-profits in the name of Sertoma. At our meeting on November 21, the International President of Sertoma, Inc., Renee Ward, came to Clemson to personally present to member Gregg Cooley, a Presidential Lifetime Service Award, the highest award bestowed by her office. Renee was also given a tour of Camp Sertoma. Clemson Sertoma has committed to send 30 campers next summer. --Charlie White, Clemson Sertoma Club

" I love going to camp - it's my favorite part of the summer. I like that there are people like me there (he is talking about cochlear implants) and i get to swim and have campfire"--Ari, Camp Sertoma camper

My granddaughter and I had a great time chaperoning 12 of the 24 excited campers from Aiken. It was wonderful being able to be part of giving these kids this amazing opportunity.--Don Bartelmay, Aiken Sertoma

Camp Seroma affords children from backgrounds many can only imagine with opportunities to escape into a world of wonder. Children can see themselves as valued contributors and "winners" as they work together to meet goals presented them and engage in activities many would never experience were it not for camp. Last summer I was privileged to witness first-hand the delight and amazement experienced by Camp Seroma campers. I am confident that the seeds planted during their brief stay at camp will serve to encourage campers as they move forward in their lives. I look forward to seeing many of our campers again during Summer 2024!--Kaye Carraway, Clemson Sertoma

Once again, Camp Sertoma solidified why our club does what it does. President Leon Scott said "Camp is the backbone of our club and without it, I don't think we would be attracting new members and even in existence." My own experience this year is best described as seeing the Anderson Lice Center owner quietly checking and caring for our kids when she had just lost her own son. It's not just about the campers, but also the selfless volunteers that step up YEAR AFTER YEAR.--Ryan Keese, Seneca Sertoma



LOOKING BACK

Suddenly, I have become one of the “old guard”. The song by Toby Keith reminds me that to remain productive I can’t “let the old man in”. It is becoming more challenging.

My years connected to Camp Sertoma now total over 50 years with over 36 as the Director of the CU Outdoor Lab, home of Camp Sertoma. I was in the room when a small group of men voted to make Camp Sertoma the #1 state project for all of Sertoma in SC (Project 76 for 1976). I was in the room when the state Board of Trustees voted to fully fund the construction of 4 cabins, later a 5th cabin; I was present when the same group voted to fund the Sertoma pool and bathhouse. I was in Augusta when the Sertoma convention doors were guarded and no one was allowed to leave until club and individual commitments had been made to establish a half million dollar endowment to support Camp Sertoma. The Gateway to Camp Sertoma, during my last year as Director, enhanced the function and beauty of your camp. The last major project was the funding by Sertoma, and one particular Sertoman, to construct a water slide for the campers. Many other vital, but smaller scale projects, were Sertoma funded.

I give you this information, again as the elderly guy, to let you know what is coming, in my opinion. Perhaps this article should be called “Looking Ahead”, and not too many years ahead. The Board of Trustees is already feeling it. In 1990, my records show that we had nearly 90 clubs in the state. We now have under 30. For a couple of decades or more, 240 children have been funded by local clubs each summer during 6 one-week sessions. But fees per camper 20 years ago were around \$120 per week, not the \$500 for 2023, and likely higher in another couple of years.

So, what is coming? Change. Necessary change. How it will happen and how it will be resolved is both the question and the challenge. It would not be for me to make “crystal ball” guesses, but I have hunches, and the future will not be the past. The numbers don’t add up. Times are rapidly changing.

The good news is that you have a strong Camp Sertoma Board of Trustees, led by a determined, caring, trusted, and hard-working leader. I serve on that Board and I hear the Board discussions. Every time we meet, we are “looking ahead” in the best interests of Camp Sertoma and the children. Answers WILL BE FOUND to difficult issues, most notably, new ways to fund campers in a time when camp fees will continue to rise. And we should not be willing to sacrifice any weeks of camp or require empty camper beds. But it won’t be easy and don’t expect our organization to go back to 90 supportive clubs in the state again.

I wrote an article sometime in the late ‘70’s called “A Dream Becomes Reality”. We need to continue to dream aggressively, confront the changing issues, spread the good word inside and outside about Camp Sertoma, and be open to new ways of conducting business. And that, my friends, will be the gateway to a new day for Camp Sertoma of South Carolina. Perhaps a Project 2026?

Charlie White, Director Retired, CUOL



**Old
Doc...**
at camp
1992-2023



**NEW
Dock!**
at camp 2022



We wish you



MERRY
Christmas

and a **CAMPY**
New Year!