SONGS & PADDDLE FAIL 2023

CARING FOR EACH OTHER, POWERFUL TOGETHER













SONGS OF THE PADDLE

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Alumnae return to help out

Cover: Anna Cook, Hadley Bangert, Margot Walsh, Avery Chamberlin and Kaya Van Meter enjoy a break during their Sanford/Turtle canoe trip. (Emmy Krill)

f I had only one word to describe the summer, it would be "thriving." The campers were thriving. Staff members were thriving. I saw courage, resilience and stamina every day. Throughout the summer, campers played, laughed and learned and the staff had just as much fun alongside them.

Staff members energized and supported each other, raising each other up, which in turn inspired the campers to follow suit. There was strong, collaborative leadership everywhere, from the youngest chickadee to the eldest member of our staff. A collaborative atmosphere encouraged everyone to "Be Brave," which meant taking chances and sometimes, asking for help without embarrassment. For older campers and staff, collaborative leadership meant engaging with campers in a genuine way, without a feeling of superiority-being silly when silly was called for, and serious when serious was called for.

Was it a perfect summer? Of course not. But struggles and shortfalls were turned into opportunities for growth and were equally as valuable.

JoAnn Tweeddale said it beautifully in her article when she wrote, "We experienced the power of having a shared goal of individual growth and happiness through relationships based on a foundation of respect and kindness."

As we look forward to celebrating our 20th season, it is clear we are growing into the name Nancy Jones gave our community over 20 years ago-a place where we raise each other up with the knowledge that we are stronger together.

Johanner

JOHANNA ERNST Director, Ogichi Daa Kwe



Right: Sally Hanley, Anna Miller, Ruby Pence, Phoebe Woods, Addie Colello, Taylor Brown and Marin Ruter in Moab, Utah. (Maggie Gavin)



THE GUIDING LIGHT OF **OUR NAME**

BY JOHANNA ERNST

Most of us know Ogichi Daa Kwe means strong spirited woman. Some have heard the story about how the name was given to the camp by Nancy Jones, the mother of Pebaam, who is a good friend and has taught our camp community about Ojibwe culture for the past decade. It would be a shame not to know more about our name and Nancy.

After camp ended last summer, a group of us went to visit Nancy in the village of Nigigoonsiminikaaning, formerly known as Red Gut Bay First Nation. Nigigoonsiminikaaning is just 13 miles east of our camp by boat. Grace Gardner, Juliann Gardner, Alex Ernst, Pebaam, his brother Don, and I talked with Nancy about the origins of the girls camp, the land it is on, and why the creation of a girls program was so important.

You'd be hard pressed to find a stronger spirit. Nancy is the mother of eight children, a respected elder, and a lifelong educator. She has a teaching degree from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, and taught Ojibwe language and culture at Mine Centre Public School and Rainy River Community College. After spending some time with her, my guess is she is equally proud of the respect she gained from other trappers, including winning several awards from the Ontario Trapping Association for her ability to quickly create beautiful beaver and marten pelts, as she is of winning a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Minnesota Indian Education Association and recognition from many other civic associations.

Nancy and Camp Kooch-i-ching's former director, Tim Heinle, were friends. Nancy took an interest in the creation of a girls camp, one to complement Camp Kooch-iching. One of Nancy's core beliefs is that there is a divine balance in the world. If there is a boys camp, the creation of a girls camp would bring balance and harmony.

Pebaam explains, "She gave the name and she also gave a small healing blanket. She had a dream, a vision,

The direct translation of ogichi daa kwe is often given as warrior woman, but maybe the better word is fighter, someone who is fighting to find the elevated being we have the potential to become, fighting to find our own strong spirit. – Pebaam

that we don't honor each other enough and she hoped As we sat on the porch, Nancy explained when the term the healing blanket would be a reminder to honor each ogichi daa kwe is used within the Ojibwe community, it is other and by doing so, we will be healing each other. To an inclusive term meant for every female. It is not used honor someone is to recognize each other's strength and to single women out or place them in a hierarchy. Being importance in the world. And, to recognize and respect a true ogichi daa kwe is about raising each other up with each other's differences is where the healing comes in." the knowledge that we are stronger together.

When asked to comment on our name, Pebaam, who The name Ogichi Daa Kwe has shaped the culture of our taught Ojibwe language, culture and history at the Univercamp and serves as a constant reminder that we are all sity of Minnesota in Minneapolis, expanded, "The direct strong spirited women who contribute in our own unique translation of ogichi daa kwe is often given as warrior ways to enrich each other's lives and the community as woman, but maybe the better word is fighter, fighting to a whole. find the elevated being we have the potential to become, fighting to find our own strong spirit."

MY FLINDT RIVER POEM

BY SIENNA SUDERMAN

The air is crisp My body is fresh The water is glass My bug net is mesh

The only things I know Are my paddle and my canoe There are bugs in my hair Water in my shoe

Boat cuts through the water Paddling and breathing are my duty I look upon the smoke-filled forest God's devastating beauty

I never want it to end But that's the glory of it all I know I'm at my home When I hear the loon's call

Above: Johanna Ernst, Pebaam and Nancy Jones show a quilt Nancy recently made. (Alex Ernst)





FINDING SUPPORT AND JOY

BY JOANN TWEEDDALE

My family has always hiked, backpacked, and played in rivers, lakes and the ocean as a way to reconnect, often inspired by my husband's experiences at Camp Kooch-iching. We've always wanted to send our daughter Olivia to Ogichi Daa Kwe, but finances and the fear of separation held us back. With Olivia heading to high school, I knew she would need the extra confidence that camp would provide. To help cover the cost, we applied for a scholarship, and I applied for a job in the Ogichi kitchen.

Six months later, we headed from West Virginia to Minnesota on an 18-hour adventure. My daughter was hesitant to leave her friends, volleyball conditioning, and her phone. I was unsure I could handle the physical aspects of working in a kitchen that feeds so many people at once.

Before the first day was over, I knew this kitchen staff would make it through anything if we did it together. Any question or challenge was addressed as a team, with hard work, respect, humor and always with the goal of creating a delightful, healthy, tasty experience for the campers and staff who we knew were working hard to learn, teach and grow.

I could also see Olivia was having the same experience as a camper: getting through challenges with laughter and fun while creating positive relationships with campers and staff.

At the end of camp, I realized this challenge taught me you can do anything with help and support. I also realized why it is important in life to have joy: the joy of working hard with supportive people and common goals, of watching others try something new every day, and the joy of laughter, music and silliness. At our final gathering, I realized joy was something that I forgot to create in my daily life.

The Ogichi Daa Kwe campers and staff helped me understand joy in a whole new way. True joy can be found in everything, even completing chores and overcoming challenges. And joy happened because we did it together, in a safe place with healthy, nurturing, effective and knowledgeable leadership.

Since being home, Olivia and I use the Law of the Woods. We sing the song with the lyrics "strong spirited" to encourage one another when we both are afraid to try new things. And we laugh more as we support one another. We are both in touch with the friends we made at camp.

Olivia is no longer afraid to give 100% of herself. She is more comfortable in her skin and that she can put herself out there more and not worry about what other people think. Olivia says that she is "more willing to take risks," because of the challenges she faced and overcame at Ogichi.

There are many things my daughter and I gained from the Ogichi experience, some of which we have not yet discovered. What I do know is that at Ogichi we experienced the power of having a shared goal of individual growth and happiness through relationships based on a foundation of respect and kindness. This has changed my daughter and me forever.





Above: JoAnn poses with the rest of a fantastic kitchen crew: Juliann Gardner, Charlie McCale, Peggy Vollmer, and Moesha Halstead. Following page, top: JoAnn and Olivia outside the Great Lodge. Bottom: Olivia helps hold the line in a fierce tug of war. (Helen Adams)



MY CAMP GIRL ERA

BY KADIEDRA SALMON

Editor's note: Kadiedra Salmon, a first-time cabin counselor from the Ocho Rios area of Jamaica, was featured in the spring edition of Songs of the Paddle. Before her arrival, she was "looking forward to a social media detox, making new friends, learning new skills, and culture shocks!" We checked back in with her for the fall edition of Songs of the Paddle to see how her summer up north really went. Here is what she had to say:

When faced with new opportunities, I am always someone to jump headfirst because I strongly believe in making memories and long-lasting companionships. Ogichi Daa Kwe exceeded my expectations of anything I imagined being a camp counselor would be. I traveled, despite my many challenges and setbacks, from Jamaica to experience a whole new world of outdoor adventure and working with kids. I can confidently say, despite it being my first year, being a camp counselor was something that I possessed naturally. I enjoyed the time I got to spend with my cabin, trip campers and staff. I loved watching

the growth that everyone experienced by the end of the summer. Despite it being a demanding position both physically and mentally, the happiness and closeness both campers and staff experience is well worth it. Ogichi is a great place to find the joy you've been seeking!



Above, left to right: Lucy Unrein, Anna Esselman, London Jennings, Ellie Downey, Averie French and Loralei Swanson, with staff members Kadiedra and Isabella Hernandez, are about to leave for Channel View in Voyageurs National Park. Bottom right: Kadiedra takes a selfie with Molly Roberts. Following page: Monty Williams and Sydney Simmons sing after the "Thankgiving Dinner." (Helen Adams)

LESSONS FROM PAINTED TURTLE

BY SYDNEY SIMMONS

Growing up at camp and being able to call Ogichi my Number two: Everything can be a game. As I've gotten home since 2017 has changed everything about me. In older, everything has taken on a more serious energy. the everyday world, we are never given the privilege to I thought that being a leader meant you just get things take a moment and absorb knowledge. Lessons I have done. I forgot that the task at hand can be fun in itself. come to learn in the real world meant nothing once I These girls showed me how to make even the most muncame here. The so-called lessons we experience daily are dane tasks enjoyable. They showed me all the fun that I only the base layer of our understanding. One amazing had been missing out on. Whether screaming to Taylor thing about Ogichi is that you never stop learning. Swift while doing dishes or playing three-word skits, my joy slowly came back through their self-made fun.

Coming into this year, I thought my knowledge of life would be good enough to get me through the summer. Number three: Motivation is the strongest when you Little did I know that my summer would be the most challean on others. I was extremely discouraged when my lenging yet. It's a long story, but in short, I was unable to trip came to an early close. I had no motivation to cheer complete my trip, so, as a 15-year-old camper, I moved myself up, but then there came the girls. They made me into the Painted Turtle cabin with 8- to 10-year-olds. I feel like I was a good leader, and an even better friend. didn't know what to do and all of a sudden I had become I became motivated to do better for them. They made a role model for these young girls. I decided to just go for me feel loved, and I couldn't have gotten my flow back it and that was one of the best decisions of my life. The without them. girls in Painted Turtle taught me so much this summer. Here are the three most important lessons. My experience in Painted Turtle taught me so much and I

Number one: There is strength in vulnerability. We are always told to act right, and are taught how to dim down our personalities to please others. Thankfully, these girls always kept everything real, laughing over silly stories and crying on each other's shoulders. I realized that being vulnerable and being yourself is the only way strength can be invited in.



am so glad I get to call these girls my friends. I know that they will continue to teach me and I hope that one day I can return the favor.



FOCUS ON THE GOOD THINGS

BY SOPHIE TZONEV

When I first came to camp two summers ago, I was dreading it. I was scared to be away from home and worried that I wouldn't make friends. I focused so much on the things I didn't like, such as a meal, a person who wasn't very nice, having to do something hard, or being out of my comfort zone, that I forgot to look out for the good things. After that first year I told my parents that I didn't want to go back to camp. They said okay, but a few months later they signed me up again. At first I was mad, but as summer rolled around, I found myself getting a little excited to try again.

My second year at camp was so much better than my first. I made new friends, I tried things I never would have done before, and I was having so much fun. It was one of the best summers ever. The trip was still hard and some of the meals weren't my favorite, but instead of concentrating on the things that were tough for me, I focused on the good things, like the people that were so nice to me, the meals I thought were delicious, and all of the new things I was learning. By the time the last night of camp rolled around, I found myself crying and hugging

my friends and dreading the next morning when I'd have to leave. But, I knew I would definitely be back again next summer.

Camp is such an amazing place. It really is my home away from home. I consider the friends I made my family and I can't wait to come back. It's a place where I can forget about any problems or drama back home and focus on being my best self, while trying things I never have before. When I come home from camp I feel fresh and ready for any challenge. Camp isn't only special because of the people there, but also because of the things you do. It helps me get mentally stronger. I find myself thinking, "you can do this" so much more than I used to because of what I've overcome and accomplished on my trips and even just at camp.

I hope that Ogichi continues to grow, and I hope that it will bring other people the same joy it brings me to be back with the friendships that will last a lifetime and the opportunities to grow and learn things that you'd never get back home.

MY HAPPY PLACE

BY ZOE FERNANDEZ

Ogichi is a place to make memories. A place where everyone has each other's backs. After hearing about camp for a year from my friends, I came knowing that it would be the best month of my life. Throughout the campers and the staff, there is not one bad apple to ruin the bunch.

There is a whole range of classes and activities to match everyone's definition of fun. Within the first day, I felt like I understood the score, knew the ropes. The trip was even a better experience than any other camping trip that I had ever been on. Every day there was a new adventure and I made new stories. And then there is the food. It's amazing every time, and as a pescatarian, I must say, there are options for every bite.

I will never forget the friends and memories that I made at Ogichi. Look out Disney. The world's new happiest place is right here!

ALL SET TO CELEBRATE!

BY ROSIE PAULIK

This event is for those who are 21 years of age and older. Did you know that in 2024 Camp Kooch-i-ching celebrates We have reserved a room block at the Denver Marriott its 100th anniversary and Ogichi Daa Kwe celebrates its West for \$139 a night. There will be a complimentary van 20th? Joined together under the Camping & Education shuttle service available from the Denver Marriott West to Foundation, we're calling it 120 Years of Wilderness the Evergreen Lake House and back, and a public shuttle Camping, and we want you to join us in our commemoraservice is available from the Denver airport to the hotel, tions this upcoming spring, summer and fall. making this fun event a no-brainer.

We're kicking off this celebratory year on April 20, 2024, in Bring your significant other so they can start to under-Evergreen, Colorado at the Evergreen Lake House. From stand why our organization has had such an impact on 5-11pm, we will be eating, drinking and dancing among who you are (and why you continuously endured a sumour closest camp friends-alumni, current staff, and mer of mosquito bites). parents-celebrating more than a centennial of seeking the joy.



Top right: Zoe Fernandez gets a lift from Dylan Manning on the first day of second session. (Helen Adams)

Above: Phoebe Helland and Sophie Tzonev in Quetico Provincial Park (Abby Auran)





To learn more about our 120 Years of Wilderness **Camping** events happening around the country, including International Falls, Minnesota this summer, visit CAMPINGEDU.ORG/120YEARS or scan the QR code:



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First session campers and staff not in cabin phot Moesha Halstead, Maddie Sanford, and Tierney Stautberg

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BACK ROW	Juliann Gardner. Ann Simmons. Phil Winger. Emma Saxton. Julia Sweet. Kav Glaccum. Alice Peacock-Haller. Charlotte Rose. Meg Charle:

Geneva Webster, Madlen Anderson, Maddy Hanley, Frances Carroll, Bart Vollmer, Peggy Vollmer NOT PICTURED

Lilli Black, Caroline Gavin, Maddy Heinle, Jana Henderson, Gil Hornberger, Shelby Hudson, Kristie LaVigne, Audrey Plass, Mikayla Porter, Maddie Sanford, Adrienne Sayad, Dee Dee Thompson, Sally Walsh, Claire Yehle



NO SUCH THING AS A "LAST SUMMER"

BY GRACE GARDNER

As I sat at the final Grateful Circle of 2016, having just deep cleaning the Activity Center, afternoons gatoring completed my fifth season as a counselor at Ogichi, I luggage to and from camper cabins, and nights joining in already knew I couldn't come back to camp the next sumthe final few evening activities of the first session, it was mer. With graduate school starting in 2017, 2016 was, an awesome reunion of old friends. I mean, who wouldn't by all logic, going to be my last summer. But, even then, take the chance to compete in one more Little Council or listening to an entire summer's worth of gratitude, I knew go for one more paddle around the bay? Their positive that wasn't actually true. When my turn finally came, I attitudes, infectious energy, and love of Ogichi were esshared that I was grateful to know that there was no such pecially appreciated by the staff, grateful to have familiar thing as a "last summer" at Ogichi. I had seen alumnae faces providing a much-needed break over intersession, come back as volunteers, helping during preseason, preparing cabins, and getting campus ready for second leading a trip here and there, and visiting while dropping session camper arrival. off younger family members who were starting their own journeys as campers. If memories of your "last summer" have you longing for

a sunrise over Franks Bay, meals in the Great Lodge, or a This past summer, Ogichi was lucky enough to welcome dip in the lake with the Polar Bears, I invite you to take a back quite a few alumnae volunteers, both in preseason trip up north next summer. Our door is always open; we'll and throughout the summer. Emberly Johnston, Abby Lee welcome you back with a cozy bunk, a seat at the table, and Natalie Schiller, who were campers in the 2010s and and, of course, a project or two. staff together in 2019, made the trek up to International Falls to close out the first session with us. Instead of using Are you an alumna interested in visiting, volunteering, or their PTO for a more typical 20-somethings vacation, they working at Ogichi for summer 2024? Email grace@ogichi. opted for a long weekend at camp. With mornings spent ora!

Above: Abby, Natalie, Grace and Emberly take a short rest in front of the welcome center. (Helen Adams)



Camping & Education Foundation 3515 Michigan Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45208

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2024 DATES

FIRST SESSION • June 15 – July 13
SECOND SESSION • July 15 – August 11
EIGHT-WEEK SESSION • June 15 – August 11
FIRST CHICKADEE SESSION • June 15 – June 25
SECOND CHICKADEE SESSION • July 15 – July 25

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