

The Summer That Wasn't?

That's what many label the summer 2009, but for the children at Moorelands Wilderness Camp, it's the summer that really was! They piled onto buses, left the city behind and headed north to camp. The wonder of being in such an incredible environment soon overshadowed the obstacles of "the summer that wasn't". Asked why they come to Moorelands, campers give three reasons: To have fun, make new friends and try new things. All three were evident this summer.

- They made strong connections with peers and leaders.
- Built confidence and developed competence through skill-building activities.
- Were challenged to practice good character traits as they lived in cabins, played games and walked the paths at Moorelands.

It was summer. It was camp. And it was significant in the lives of these children.
- L. T.



Luz Marina Ortiz: Political Refugee & Mother of Two

"Moorelands is the best thing."

On April 21, 1998 Luz Marina Ortiz, wife, mother and civil rights lawyer in Columbia, received a call telling her that her husband was missing. She's heard nothing from him since. An obvious target herself, Ortiz fled to Canada with her two daughters, then 14 and 5 and landed in Toronto where she claimed refugee status. "I tried to be strong and show everything was okay to my two little daughters," she recalls, "but I was scared. I felt so lost."

Eleven years have passed. Ortiz learned English and became a Canadian citizen, but even now, she acknowledges that fear is something that never goes away completely. Ortiz credits Moorelands with helping her whole family cope, especially her younger daughter Laura. "Moorelands is the best thing that happened to my daughter and to us," she says.

Four years ago Laura started attending the Wilderness Camp, then joined the Leadership Program in her school. The family received Christmas Sharing hampers.

Moorelands' programs have given Laura, now 15, concrete tools – first aid, CPR, babysitting – and more. "They make her feel more comfortable with herself at

school and with her friends," Ortiz notes. For Luz herself, life remains a challenge. Now in college training for a second career, she says, "Even though we have had these hard experiences, we can see that life has beauty."
- B. T.



A donation of \$600 makes it possible for a child to attend a Moorelands After-school program

“Take Us Out to the Ball Games”

50 youngsters from Moorelands Day Camp and Youth Leadership program dressed in red, carried flags and headed to the BMO field in July to cheer the Toronto Football Club as they challenged Argentina. The home team lost but the cheering could be heard on the bus all the way back to Valley Park School. Thanks to the North End Elite Supporters who donated the tickets. Thanks as well to the Jays Care Foundation, who invited our City Summer Day Camp to a game between the Jays and the Cleveland Indians.

- K.W.



Robert Tomas and Dagmar Schroeder, Moorelands' staff

A Mountain of Sleeping Bags

It was “a really amazing experience” when grade 11 Greenwood College School students Jalesh Melwani, Sam Hillman and Andrew Chalmers took on Moorelands Wilderness Camp as their Community Service project. It wasn't easy to put together 50+ backpacks full of insect repellent, bathing suits and sunscreen, not to mention the big things like sleeping bags and life jackets. They worked tirelessly for almost 9 months hunting for donors - contacting company owners and managers, visiting stores and holding fundraisers to buy missing items. The result? A mountain of supplies and equipment sorely needed at Camp. But as Jalesh says, “We all felt that this was a wonderful opportunity to give back to the community. Every minute put into this project was worth it, one hundred percent.”

- P.J.

A Happy Birthday Gift from Lara

When Lara Brodeur was 12 she knew she was luckier than most kids – loving family, great school, good friends and terrific summer camp. From her Dad, a Moorelands' board member, she heard about children less fortunate, and because she is a “tween” with a large heart she knew what to do – ask everyone who came to her to her 13th birthday party to make a donation to Moorelands' Send a Kid to camp campaign. She and her friends and neighbours helped raise \$420. “It made me feel proud of myself showing that I could do something to help others. Next year,” Lara says, “I'll try to raise at least \$100 more!” Isn't this something a child you know could do?

- G.S.



Lara Brodeur and her dad Drummond

Moorelands After-school Programs Make a Difference

At the end of a school day, 10 year old Fatima may act and look no different than when she left her family's apartment in the morning. There's no visible sign that on this particular afternoon an accomplishment was noted and praised by her Moorelands After-school program leader resulting in the biggest smile, or that a teaching moment occurred when Fatima was able to assist and comfort a younger child who fell during one of the program's active games. After a year, these little moments add up to measurable results – among them, increased confidence, self-esteem, leadership skills and improved performance at school. Moorelands After-school programs build resilient, caring and engaged citizens of tomorrow. Unlike a school setting, the staff-to-participant ratio at a Moorelands program is small, allowing for plenty of individual attention, and the focus is not purely academic but on mastering a wide range of social and life skills. Participants are at a stage in life where their critical thinking and empathy skills are developing and the lessons absorbed through good role modeling and peer relationships are crucial and sometimes life changing. Research confirms this and our parents, many of whom work multiple jobs to make ends meet, tell us so.

- D.S.



Tough Times = Fewer Programs

Such sad news: We are going to have to close at least two After-school programs as a result of the current economic downturn. And without a funding miracle, the much-loved City Summer Day Camp is at risk. These decisions are painful to make. They mean that more than 160 children will be turned away this school year, and over 200 may be without the fun and structured programming they have come to expect each summer. It's possible that the cuts will not end here and will affect even more children. If ever there was a time to dig deeper, this is it. - P.J.

Your Gift Will Count Twice as Much

From September 1 until October 31 one of our long-time donor families, who chooses to remain anonymous, will match all donations up to a total of \$50,000.

Here they give their reasons why:

"Like many long time supporters, we first learned about Moorelands Community Services through its wonderful Wilderness Camp on Lake Kawagama. Over the years we have also become familiar with the city programming Moorelands offers to children and youth affected by poverty in Toronto. We have seen the positive impact of these programs. We feel strongly that not only should these programs be preserved but, ideally, expanded. The need is so great! In these tough economic times, your donation is more important than ever. Please join us in ensuring that Moorelands city programs will continue to thrive. Thank you!"

We urge you to consider making a donation to Moorelands before October 31 to take advantage of this unique matching challenge and double the impact of your gift. - R.T.

A Toast to Our Hosts

In May, Diane Plese and her husband, Robert Herjavec (since 2006 a familiar face on CBC-TV's *Dragons' Den*), welcomed 51 discerning Moorelands supporters to their sumptuous Bridle Path estate to sample some of the world's finest wines, eat Jamie Kennedy's excellent food and raise much needed funds for Moorelands' programs.

The event was spearheaded by Michie Garland, Toronto lawyer, retiring Moorelands' board member and tireless advocate. All wines were generously donated, including rarities such as 1990 Chateau Latour and a remarkable 1978 Chateau D'Yquem. More were offered in a silent auction. Thanks to everyone who helped raise the amazing sum of \$52,250 to help our programs continue.

- J.O. & G.S.



Robert Herjavec, Mayor David Miller, Diane Plese and daughter Caprice

Looking Back



Century Club Members Honour the Past, Invest in the Future

The sun came out just long enough to shed a special light on 33 guests present at the symbolic tree planting ceremony on Visitors' Day at Moorelands Wilderness Camp. The event inaugurated "Century Forest," honouring long-time Moorelands supporters. Andy Barrie, host of CBC Radio's *Metro Morning*, unveiled the commemorative plaque while Century Club members Edna and Cecil Reid, Peter Gratton and volunteers Carole Legget and Diane Hopkins planted a pine sapling.

The feelings of those who later joined campers in the dining hall were summed up by Canon Peter Gratton:

"As I looked around the tables and saw those young, bright-eyed youngsters, drawn from every clime, colour, and culture under the sun, all of them from underprivileged and disadvantaged homes, all mixing together and having the time of their lives, I couldn't help thinking: 'What a worthwhile way of contributing to the future peace and harmony of our multicultural society!'" - D.S.

For a detailed account and pictures of the day, please visit our website at www.moorelands.ca

Looking Ahead



“Mylo's Mysterious Christmas Hamper
When our 5 year old son Mylo heard we were going shopping for Christmas presents, food and supplies, he shouted 'I love Christmas presents!' He hadn't realized that there would also be some mystery involved – planning a holiday basket for a family we didn't know. The only clues were the children's names and ages - the selection of toys and treats was up to us. After the experience, Mylo is more sure than ever that Christmas is his 'favourite holiday.' We look forward to making it a wonderful holiday for our next adopted family, and hope you'll do the same.” - K.C.

Last year, Moorelands provided hampers laden with food, toys and gifts to 300 grateful families. If you want to play Santa's Elf this year please Adopt-a-Family of your own or you can make a donation. It costs approximately \$360 to fill a basket to brighten the holidays for a family of four. For more information visit our website www.moorelands.ca or call Cheryle at 416.466.9987 ext. 300.

Speeding into the 21st Century

In recent years many charities have moved much of their fundraising to the Internet. We tried it last summer with our camp fundraising website sendmetocamp.ca. To build on these efforts, Moorelands is developing a web-based fundraising partnership with the leading specialist in this area, ARTEZ Interactive. Soon, giving to Moorelands will be as simple as filling out a web-form – or texting on your cell phone. Stay tuned. - R.T.

Mission Statement

At Moorelands, we recognize the inherent value of all children and youth. We work with Toronto children and youth affected by poverty, to provide them with positive and fun experiences to help strengthen their confidence, competence and character.

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