

# Camps for Good

October 2011

Lakeshore Christian Camping [www.prescamps4ever.org](http://www.prescamps4ever.org)

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## The Beginning



They say history repeats itself. We certainly hope so. We hope the circle will remain unbroken for the camps in Saugatuck.

It all began in the streets of Chicago. It was a time in history where the working class was forgotten. Living conditions were horrible and help was sparse.

A hundred years ago a group of radical, forward thinking social reformers put together an not-for-profit known as **The Forward Movement of Chicago**. They held up a vision to be a Ministry of Helpfulness and the Betterment of Society. One of the founders of this movement, Rev. George Gray wanted something more

for these poverty stricken people. This idea brought him to Saugatuck, MI where he purchased 100 acres of spectacular beachfront and wooded dunes to provide respite. Gray felt strongly that a closer relationship with nature was the key to nourishment of the soul and the body. In the 1908 camp brochure, the group stated that... ***In providing an outing for working people we have sought to minister to the whole man -- the physical, social, intellectual and moral nature.***

In 1921, the camp was bought by the Church Extension Board of the Presbytery of Chicago and young people's retreats began. In 1934, the central part of the camp was renamed Westminster Lodge and the north end retained the name Camp Gray. Inner city children and church youngsters came to the north end, while the Lodge was mainly for youth and adult retreats and individual rentals.

It is now 2011. The camp remains a place of respite for the soul. The words of Rev. George Gray carry just as much truth today as they did 100 years ago. The camp is an outreach ministry serving all ages to come and rest on the shores of Lake Michigan. A camper from the 19<sup>th</sup> century would be pleasantly surprised to find the beauty and grandeur of the dunes, shoreline and the serene wooded paths to have withstood the test of time. It is part of Lakeshore Christian Camping's mission to continue the ministry that Rev. Gray worked so hard to establish.

## Rev. George Gray's Dream Revived

More than 40 youngsters from the Jones Memorial Community Center in Chicago Heights enjoyed a wonderful week at the Presbyterian Camps in Saugatuck.

The Jones Center serves African American and Hispanic families on the east side of Chicago Heights, most of whom cannot spare the money to send their children to camp. The Churches and friends who support the Center pitched in to provide an experience for the youngsters that will be remembered for the rest of their lives. They experienced a week of swimming, archery, kayaking, canoeing and just plain fun in the sun, surrounded by a wonderful natural setting that is just not available on the east side of Chicago Heights.

The local churches have tried for years to provide scholarships to camp for a few youth but, for various reasons, with little success. Last year, Cheryl Roop, the Executive Director, wondered if there would be better success if a whole group from the Center went to camp with the Jones Center Staff. They would be with their friends and

with familiar staff members and would be less apprehensive about going to an unfamiliar camp. There was no money budgeted for camp but we just knew that friends of the Jones Center would respond. Cheryl was not disappointed. The churches and regular donors to the Center responded more generously than could be hoped for and the money just poured in so that there was enough to send 43 youth the first year with enough left over to make it possible to send another group to camp this year with only a small amount of additional donations needed.

We can't help but feel that this is just the sort of ministry that was envisioned by Rev. George Gray when he founded this camp in 1899. We think that he would be very pleased to know that his vision continues even today.



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## Info Corner: Preserving a camps for Historical, Environmental and Spiritual value



### **.E-newsletter coming your way!**

Lakeshore Christian Camping has created a monthly e-newsletter!

Or call it going green! We are

pretty confident that we have your e-mail addresses. If you are in our data base you will automatically receive it. If not, every member of your household and friends can go to our website [www.prescamps4ever.org](http://www.prescamps4ever.org) & subscribe. It is our goal to continue to keep you informed of our efforts to save the camps as a camp for good!



For our Facebook fans, **Lakeshore Christian Camping** Page will always post current events, the newsletter and photo's that will draw you back to the beach. Find us and Like us!



### **It's about the Mission of this Ministry**



Lakeshore is so committed to this important mission, we want to share it with more than just you! Starting this fall, Churches

will be receiving info for their newsletters and bulletins too. Sharing interesting news, history and tid bits about camp that make saving this camp worth all our efforts. If you are interested in being an advocate in your church for Lakeshore and the preservation of the Presbyterian Camps please e-mail us at [info@prescamps4ever.org](mailto:info@prescamps4ever.org) or call Don Gilliard @ 630-620-4327

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