

# **Shrine Mont Camps Annual Report 2022**

## **General summary**

Shrine Mont Camps (SMC henceforth) ran a successful year of summer camp programming in 2022. Camp served 401 campers across a 6 week period with a total of 13 sessions of camp. Camper registration rose from the previous year by 72 campers in 2022. This summer was also the last summer in which Paris Ball was director of Shrine Mont Camps, leaving the position after a 16 year tenure of excellent ministry with the Diocese. Paris Ball was both the Director of Shrine Mont Camps as well as the Minister for Christian Formation in the Diocese, wherein camp fell under the Christian Formation Office as the largest christian formation program ran directly by the diocese. As of now, there is no position that oversees formation in the diocese, and the Director of SMC reports directly to the Bishop and their Chief of Staff.

Camp employed 79 individuals to work this summer, with camper-to-counselor ratios running from 2-5 campers per counselor. SMC ran the following programs in the summer of 2022:

- (1) Four sessions of camp for youth 8-14 in the St. George's and Woodward sites.
- (2) Two sessions of camp for youth 15-17 in the Bear Wallow site.
- (3) One session of The Great, a camp for youth 15-17 to explore the outdoors, hosted in St. George's site
- (4) One session of St. Andrews Camp for ages 8-13 youth who benefit from smaller counselor ratios.
- (5) Two Sessions of St. Elizabeth's for ages 14-24 individuals with autism, those that have down-syndrome, and those with other intellectual disabilities and neuro divergences.
- (6) One weekend session of Family Camp for entire families at camp.

SMC's program structure ran similar to that of the 2021 camp season. This structure was implemented to help the camp navigate the COVID-19 Pandemic, as it allows for movement of staffing, mobility to accommodate lower or higher camper registration numbers, and a streamlining of logistical processes associated with camp. This model is currently being revisited, though it saw major success in 2022 (more mentioned below).

## **Highlights**

Camp, like many organizations, lost a considerable number of participants in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. The strong performance of camps seen in our parent survey and the increase in campers in 2022 is a hopeful indicator that camp will re-establish itself firmly in 2023.

Camp has also, due both to the pandemic and continual structural challenges, undertaken a altered programming model than was offered in 2019. The previous camp model ran 9 separate camps throughout the summer within Shrine Mont Camps; this model was successful and presented impactful programming. However, this model also presented challenges in areas surrounding accessibility to families, difficulty in maintaining adequate personnel, some difficulty in curating an inclusive camp culture, challenges in logistics, and registration dips. Starting in 2021 due fully to the pandemic, an altered model of camp was implemented to accommodate

the need for COVID cohorts and for the anticipated lower number of campers. Programming was overall successful in 2021, and so the previous year's model was used in 2022, again with positive results. Currently, SMC is in the process of considering the strengths and weaknesses associated with both camp models as well as models from across the camping industry, and is creating a camp structure that facilitates the church's mission of christian formation.

By way of a 2021 resolution proposed at Annual Convention and the subsequent action by Bishop Susan Goff, a Shrine Mont Camps Committee was convened for a one year period for the purpose of creating recommendations surrounding the camp's future. This group is composed of various stakeholders associated with the ministry of camp, and SMC has been working with these concerned groups throughout 2022. For further information surrounding this committee, see the resolution of the past convention.

### Camp Surveys

SMC commissioned two surveys of our program to better understand the ministry we provide, both of which were facilitated by Sacred Playgrounds, a trusted research and best-practice organization dedicated to supporting christian camp ministry. The first survey is the "[Summer 2022 Parent Survey: Data Report](#)", a uniform survey given to a cohort of 27 different christian camps throughout the United States. This survey was answered by 73 Shrine Mont parents representing 91 campers, or roughly 23% of campers that attended camp in 2022. Highlights from this survey include:

- Camp was overwhelmingly successful according to those who responded to the survey. On a 1-10 scale of rating camp's overall experience, our program scored an average of 9.1, higher than the average associated with the survey cohort of christian camps (8.89). 89% of all SMC individuals surveyed gave camp a 8 or above.
- This positive news included 100% of respondents stating they would send their children to camp in 2023! Parents continually cited an emotionally impactful and spiritually developing experience. In addition, parents mentioned that in 2022, their campers had a better time than in previous years.
- This survey identified some growth areas indicated in our broader survey, specifically surrounding communication and engagement with parishes in the Diocese.
- Parents identified that their overarching goals for their children surrounded developing social skills, having fun, strengthening character traits, and having new experiences. SMC families did place a lower emphasis on spiritual development than other camp families across the survey cohort.

The second survey is titled “Shrine Mont Camps 2022 Guest and Donor Survey: Data Report”, and it highlighted many praises and concerns for camp programming. The survey was conducted prior to the camp summer of 2022 from May 18th to June 28th, received 903 unique responses, and included constituents from families, guests, summer camp staff past and present, campers past and present, church leaders, and donors. Some of the points mentioned in the survey summary include:

- The survey saw heavy engagement, which indicates a deep love for camp stretching across both years and constituents. General consensus is that camp provides fun, empowering, loving, spiritual and engaging programming, though many growth areas were highlighted. Our constituents have deeply personal connections to the Shrine Mont Camps program.
- The main areas of growth indicated in the survey surrounded communication with parents and others about camp, a want for deeper and more sustained relationship with church congregations, and desired program structure, specifically a number of individuals marked in the survey a wish to return to the 9 camp model. Other areas included commentary on diversity at camp, and a stated intention to engage more with the outdoors.
- The survey underscored fractures within the SMC community surrounding issues like programming, continued practices of diversity and inclusion, identifying with a particular camp program without identifying with SMC as a whole, and a generational divide. All of this indicates areas SMC can continue to bridge gaps and form relationships.

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Shrine Mont Camps had a successful year in 2022 with an increase in camper registration and a reported excellent standard of programming. All of the lessons learned will be applied in 2023, with specific regards to the feedback gained in both constituent surveys and from the appointed camp committee. SMC will also deeply miss Paris Ball as director, and is thankful for the service she performed.