



# CAMPS Founding Funders Newsletter

Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

November 2008

## Meet our new Director of Camps and Conference Rob Watson



### Save the Date!!!

Our Founding Funders Dinner will be on Friday, Feb. 6th in the Mission Room at the Bishop Jones Center. We hope you will all join us for food and fun! More details will follow.



Rob Watson, Director of Camps and Conferences

The vision for the diocesan camping program continues to expand with the recent calling of Rob Watson as the new Director of Camps and Conferences. "This is a new position," says Kirk Mason, diocesan Canon to the Ordinary, "one that we need because of the continued success and growth of our camping program." In fact, recognizing the current growth and the potential growth, the position is being funded initially by individuals of the Diocesan Development Committee. The diocese now has two stable and strong camping centers with two more about to come online. Camp Capers in the Texas Hill

Country, which opened in 1947, serves over a thousand youngsters every summer and is host to retreats and conferences all year long. The Mustang Island Conference Center is home to the growing Family Camps program and also is the venue for year-round retreats and conferences. In addition, the diocese has access to a site in Colorado at the base of the Rockies for summer "trip camps" and has been blessed with the gift of a 140-acre ranch property on the Blanco River near Wimberley that will likely be developed as a wilderness camp. "Rob will coordinate all of these facilities so we can make the most efficient and effective use of them," says Mason. Watson will oversee the camping facilities, budget, and staff. The program aspect of camping will

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Notes From Rob

This summer was a milestone for me as it was my twentieth year as a professional camp director. More importantly it began a new chapter of renewal and growth for my life as the Director of Camps and Conferences of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas.

One of the major responsibilities of church camp is the planting of seeds – seeds of friendship, hope, courage, responsibility, leadership and most importantly, seeds of faith. At camp, an environment of unconditional love permeates the soul of every individual, allowing seeds to take root and sprout new leaves. Throughout the years, as people return to camp, souls continue to be nurtured into loving adults and responsible leaders.

As Founding Funders of Camp Capers, you know and appreciate the importance of new growth. Your real commitment of new trees for the grounds symbolizes the renewing spirit of God as it flows from one generation to the next. Obviously, your experiences of growth and renewal at Camp Capers are extremely important to you, and your commitment to preserving those experiences for future generations is an inspiring, loving gesture. Your generosity serves as an amazing testimony to the power and longevity of this ministry. Thank you.

My commitment to you is to take care of your gifted trees. We have established a scheduled maintenance routine and are having professional arborists conduct regular check ups. Our goal is ensure that the facility recaptures some of the physical beauty it had during previous generations like yours.

I look forward to getting to know you and hearing about your time at Camp Capers! If you have any questions about the site or want to get involved in other ways, please don't hesitate to call or write me at [rob.watson@dwtx.org](mailto:rob.watson@dwtx.org) or 210-824-5387.



continue to be guided by Youth and Young Adult Ministries Officer Stacy Dowdy and various diocesan committees. "Not only will this enable us to make the best possible use of our facilities," says Mason, "it will also allow Stacy to spend more time developing college and young

adult ministry." Watson, 45, most recently has been the executive director of the C5 Youth Foundation of Texas (formerly known as Camp Coca Cola ) and headed the camping program for the Greater San Antonio YMCA. He has served as president of the board of the American Camp

Association as well as president of the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association. He lives with his wife and five children in Wimberley where he is active in his church, serving as an adult Sunday school teacher and youth group volunteer. Watson began duties with the diocese in mid-July.

## The Year at Capers by Stacy Dowdy



Stacy Dowdy, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Officer

Over this last year, I have learned more about oak wilt, native trees, shrubs, and their care and maintenance than I ever dreamed possible! Because of your generosity in giving as Founding Funders, we were able to make a wonderful start at the re-forestation of Camp Capers. Mollie Zachry and I walked the grounds of Capers with landscaper Billy Long, owner of Billy Long Enterprises, Inc. and mapped out a plan for the first planting of new trees. We spent much time determining the best places to start – beautifying the entrance to the property and focusing on the places which would offer the most shade and heat relief for campers in the summers. This spring we



planted 80 trees, including over a dozen different native varieties. If you visited Camp Capers this summer or fall, you were able to see the dramatic difference right at the entrance. We also focused on the areas near the softball field, the crafts cabin, and the circle drive. Although the trees do not offer much



If you became a Founding Funder in 2007 and would like to contribute again this year, time is running out! You may send a check to the

Bishop Jones Center (PO Box 6885, San Antonio, TX 78209) or go to [www.dwtx.org](http://www.dwtx.org) and follow the links to Camps and Conferences. It is easy to pay online with your credit card.

shade yet, it was great to see the campers playing around them and imagining the difference that will take place in the next ten to fifteen years.

This fall, we revisited the trees to assess their progress. The Gator Bags were able to help the trees survive a severely hot and dry summer. A few trees were casualties, and Long will be replacing them as the weather cools. We are determining the next areas to focus on, and we will begin the second planting phase at that time. Rob Watson, our new director, has also taken charge in caring for the trees and is working on maintenance and care plans.

As an old camper who enjoyed the beauty and cool shade of the majestic old oaks that once covered the property, it is very satisfying to think that we are helping to restore some of that beauty for future campers.

