

Camp Onomia Offers Military Families Weekend Retreat

Camp Onomia is showing support for military families who have a loved one in harm's way by inviting them to the camp for a long Independence Day weekend, July 4 – 8. This retreat will offer a wide variety of opportunities for rest and renewal. Children's programs will be lead by the camp's summer counselors. Children will have the opportunity to play and learn along with others from military families who share their experience of having a parent in the service. A wide variety of program will also be available for adults.

To register, families may phone 1.800.822.0152 or email office@camponomia.org. This weekend retreat is provided free of charge through the generous support of countless donors. Anyone wishing to be a donor may contact Camp Onomia.

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kids participate in a day of creative spring break activities including devotions, creative drama, canvas painting, dance revolution, and an 18-foot water slide with rock wall. They made their own pizzas for lunch. It was a great success.

Currently, we are looking for funds to help purchase a Ford Excursion van. We have raised \$11,500.00 of the \$31,000.00 needed for this vehicle. Presently, we have a 1995 Suburban that came from someone in Minnesota in October after Katrina. It is not in the best shape, as it needs a new transmission and ABS brake system, plus it leaks oil. The air conditioner does not work adequately even though we had it worked on last summer, so we fry down here beginning in May through September. We use this vehicle every day for hauling tools, our open trailer, groceries, work crews, and people. We need a stronger motor vehicle so it can hitch up and pull the two loaded tool trailers, and that cannot happen presently. We also use this vehicle to move our permanent travel trailer and others to reposition them in our RV parking area.

We are finishing up the commercial kitchen in our new mission building. We were blessed to get some funding through Rotary and Lutheran Disaster Relief to supplement our own funding for this enterprise.

All in all, God is a maker and a shaker down here, as I am sure God is in Minnesota.

Thank you for your continued support!

NEEDED!
A heavy-duty vehicle for disaster relief work! If you have one to donate or want to contribute funds, contact Danette Griffith at the synod office.



Gulf War Illness a Concern Among Troops

by Amy Blumenshine

Among the concerns facing troops who have deployed in Iraq is the specter of Gulf War illness (GWI). Some soldiers from the current Iraq war are already showing symptoms and illnesses now recognized as GWI.

The process of recognizing sometimes subtle and inconsistent symptoms can be problematic. The church has a role in standing with veterans and their families as they determine how to deal with their health issues. Even those injuries which prove irreversible for the individual can become more tolerable with the help of a caring community.

The Gulf War Illness or Gulf War Syndrome was finally recognized for medical treatment and other military benefits after a decade of grassroots advocacy. With the passage of time, thousands of veterans developed a wide spectrum of immune system disorders and had reproductive issues related to their service in the 1991 Gulf War.

Among the symptoms are persistent pain, chronic fatigue, loss of muscle control, headaches, dizziness and loss of balance, memory and concentration problems, muscle and joint pain, indigestion, skin problems, sleep disturbances, and shortness of breath. The Defense and Veterans Affairs Departments now recognize fibromyalgia, brain cancer, and Lou Gehrig's Disease as potentially connected to service during the Gulf War. There are no effective therapies for GWI, but its symptoms can be treated with varying impact. No official cause of GWI has been announced, although many veteran's groups and internet sources suspect that exposure to depleted uranium may be related.

A high percentage (28.9 percent) of combat veterans from the first Gulf War had significantly diminished functioning and well-being as of April 2006 due to chronic multi-symptom illnesses. Of the 620,000 Americans who served during the three months of that war, over 240,000 are on permanent disability lists. Estimates on the number now dead range from 10,000 to over 100,000.

Many U.S. veterans of the current Iraq War have reported a range of serious health issues similar to GWI, including tumors, daily blood in urine and stool, sexual dysfunction, migraines, and frequent muscle spasms.

