

CAMP NAKAMUN

EST. 1946

A note from our executive director, **March 2025**

Spring Update

Spring is once again upon us and we are deep into our Retreat Center season (rentals). Our teams are working hard to serve our guests and to prepare for the coming summer camp season.

Summer Camps

Camp registrations have been open since early January and we are seeing solid interest in our summer programs. We are very excited to see the pace of registrations is well ahead of last year. As of March 6th, we have 634 registered for children's camps and another 237 registered for our family camps.

While it is difficult to project exactly how many campers the summer will have, we are estimating around 1400 children's campers (close to 100 more than last year), and a comparable number of people at our family camps as we had last year (approx. 650).

We can also praise God that we are fully hired for the summer! Our summer ministry team was busy doing interviews through much of February. We were blessed to have many qualified and enthusiastic applicants to consider for the 52 job positions available. The flip side of this is that we couldn't say "yes" to all the wonderful young adults that wanted to work here this summer.

New this summer is our "Parent Handbook". We are excited to have this resource available as it will greatly enhance communication with parents and provide a mechanism to better manage expectations.

Prayer Items:

- Praise for the excellent response we've had so far, and progress made in preparing for the summer.
- Lift up the incoming staff, and those applicants that we had to turn down
- Campers and parents that are excited to come or considering if Nakamun is the right fit for them.

Retreat Center

We remain busy and look to become increasingly so between now and June. To date, our rental traffic is trending right in line with our budgetary estimates.

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The strike of school support workers has contributed to a greater number of cancellations than we are used to seeing, and it has had a noticeable impact on our schools being able to pay our invoices in a timely manner. For the moment, this impact has been manageable, but we remain watchful of the situation. If it continues and/or spreads to more jurisdictions, it is likely more schools will have to cancel their camps, which would be disappointing for us and the many students that look forward to these events.

Prayer Items:

- That the parties involved in the labour dispute can find common ground and resolution.

Foundations for the Future

Our new maintenance shop and site electrical upgrades are both essentially complete. While there are a couple formalities to wrap up (inspections and final occupancy paperwork), we expect that by the end of March, the new power grid will be online and our site and facilities team will have begun to move into the new shop. Once this is complete we will be able to begin converting the old shop into a new program space.

Unfortunately, the purchase and installation of our mechanical evaporator continues to be delayed by the approvals process. When we began this work, we were told it would be a simple process that might take a couple months. We are now 30 months in and are still awaiting a final decision from Alberta Environment. The implication of this delay is that we have not seen any of the operational savings that were anticipated based on our original understanding of the approvals timeline.

Prayer items:

- Praise for the completion of the shop and site electrical upgrades. Both will provide significant benefit in both the short and long-term.
- A quick and positive outcome from Alberta Environments review of our latest proposal

Financial Update

The good news is our operating financial indicators are strong:

- Rental center traffic is consistent or slightly better than our budgeted estimates
- Interest in our summer camp programs looks like it will exceed budget expectations
- Our team continues to work hard to keep costs within the budget
- Donations have been strong (nearly 20% above budget)

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Overall, we are trending towards a meaningful year end “surplus”.

The bad news is our cash-on-hand is the lowest we have seen since the COVID pandemic, which results from the combination of:

- Much higher-than-expected expenses to operate our wastewater system over the past two years because of changes in the counties disposal fees and regulations, and the delay in getting our evaporators approved.
- Modest cost increases to complete the new Maintenance shop and unanticipated costs to work through the wastewater approvals process (i.e. costs beyond the projects budget contingency)
- A small number of unexpected, necessary, and large operating expenses over the last two years
- The support workers strike (and its impact on our accounts receivables)
- Completion of and final payments made for two key pieces our capital work

We are no longer confident we can complete the capital project (i.e. lagoon evaporators) without a significant cash influx. Given the strong business case for implementing this technology (i.e. payback of about 2 years), we do not feel it is in our best interest to delay this work. For this reason, we have begun considering other options to complete this project.

Please pray for:

- Acceptance of our Canada Summer jobs Grant – We can operate the summer without this grant, but not receiving it would add significant additional strain to our cash position.
- Continued generosity within the hearts of our Supporters.
- Wisdom to determine the optimal path to manage our cash through this time of leanness and uncertainty.

Closure

I would like to thank you for your interest in Camp Nakamun. My hope is that this update has given you a meaningful ‘snapshot’ of where the camp is at right now – joys and blessing, challenges and trials.

If Nakamun has been a place that has impacted you or your family over the years, then I encourage you to get involved. Your prayers are felt and each donation (large or small) impactful. If you want to get to know us better, feel free to reach out to me, I’d love to sit down with you over coffee and talk further about who we are and why camp is so important to us.

Mark Chartier, Executive Director