

### Gunderson Team Made Major Difference in Skyline's Middle Years

Scores of persons have given their time, talents and treasure to sustain and nurture Skyline. No volunteers have had a greater impact on Skyline's survival, growth and success than Chuck and Elaine Gunderson, now residing in Sedona, AZ.

Chuck first served as moderator of the old Skyline Council of First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham in 1971. Dreams of a Focus Youth Center at Skyline first surfaced during Chuck's 1971 term as Skyline leader. Today's Focus Hall is that first building's successor.

Fast forward to 1995, when Chuck again chaired the Skyline Council, the first of four straight years in that capacity (shared in 1996 with Patrick White). It was during that era that Skyline struggled against rising costs to expand its programming, grow its summer camp attendance and innovate. Camper numbers in 1995 exceeded 1994 by 73%.

Also in 1995, Skyline was accredited for the first time by the American Camp Association, helped by Director Jim Bates. Other memorable events and actions from the Gunderson tenure include dedication of the gazebo just west of the K&D, many hours refurbishing, reroofing and painting the cabins and bath house and donation of a new kitchen range and electric organ in memory of Chuck's parents.

Throughout these and many other innovations, Elaine Gunderson was at her husband's side, often taking the lead in inspiring new programs and property improvements. The first Elderhostel, the popular educational program for seniors, was held at Skyline in 1995, followed by a dozen more in the succeeding four years. The Gundersons organized the first of several fundraising golf marathons in 1996.

The Skyline Endowment Fund, initiated in 1993, received a generous opening gift from the Gundersons and endures today.

The Gundersons had a hand in many other Skyline innovations – the challenge courses for personal confidence- and team-building, the annual Skyline dinners, early planning for major improvements to Skyline's dining hall and refurbishment of the Hough Road farm house, home to the Skyline executive director's family.

For their hard work and deep commitment to Skyline Camp and Retreat Center, Chuck and Elaine Gunderson were among the first to be honored in 2006 with the prestigious McComber Award, named for the original Skyline benefactor.

Skyline is fortunate indeed to have had this honored team at the helm during its middle years.



Chuck and Elaine Gunderson

### Youthful Energy from the Skyline Young Adult Advisory Committee

Avid readers of *Skylines* will have noted our habit of celebrating both past and present in Skyline's history. We recognize that we are wonderfully poised between those pioneers and ertswile sustainers of this mission, and the burgeoning enthusiasm coming from new generations of families and individuals who love this place.

Alongside the gratitude we have for Chuck and Elaine Gunderson (above), we are buoyed by the presence and creativity of the Skyline Young Adult Advisory Committee (SYAAC).

Over this past year, Phil Vallelunga, Morgan Parr, Erin Furze, Katie Thacker, Dave Hiben, Becky Wiederhold, and Brad Grobbel have given their time to bring insights to program and fundraising, along with countless volunteer hours. Erin Furze (a four-summer staff leader), also joined the Board of Directors.

As both a sounding-board and an ideas factory, SYAAC has helped the directors at Skyline to develop and modify summer staff accommodations, camper behavior management policies and clearer roles for summer staff members.

SYAAC has been instrumental as a source of reliable and skilled volunteers for our off-season events: our first Snowcathlon on Winter Fun Day, The Easter Egg Hunt in Almont, Open House in May, and Fall Color Day in October. They show Skyline hospitality as well as a deep connection to our summer program, which speaks to many families. They are building confidence in families that Skyline is a great place to send their children to summer camp. In addition to their labor, they offer an educated & honest perspective on which activities are the most popular at these events, and give ideas for new activities.

We plan on inviting a few younger summer staff members from 2012 summer to join us for 2013, and to keep the creative energy flowing.



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Dear Friends,

Once again I've chosen to include this appeal for support within our newsletter. This allows us to share with you both upcoming events, and recent past events at Skyline as well. It also saves on postage and printing costs, as we strive to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to us.

The front page highlights those who have supported us throughout the years, alongside those whose energy and commitments are newer to Skyline. It brings to mind the decades both past and future of Skyline's mission, and reminds us that it is through the creativity and kindness of so many that the mission continues to grow.

This past year has been one in which Skyline's Board of Directors has been able to celebrate improving numbers, as well as improving clarity in our practices and management. Where we have identified ways to appropriately reduce operating expenses, we have done so, including some difficult decisions that we are confident will situate us for sustainability.

Our steadily improving numbers have been in camper enrollments as well as guest group bookings. Mid-week reservations have grown, and there is momentum and opportunity for this to continue.

For those who visit for the first time, the common refrain is "what a beautiful place, I never knew this was here..." And from those who are frequent guests, we consistently hear how good Skyline is looking; this is a credit to our very dedicated staff, and to countless volunteers.

Our greatest financial support continues to be from individual donors. This is part of Skyline's character, and something for which I am truly grateful.

As you contemplate your charitable giving decisions at this time of year, please give Skyline your consideration. We want you to know that the children, adults and families served at this place, by our people and in our programs, are truly the beneficiaries of your generosity.

We will continue to grow Skyline's quality and quantity of programs, aware that we are supported by and are representing a wonderful community, the Skyline family of which you are part.

Thank you for your support, for your prayers, for your kindness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Henry".

Matt Henry,  
Executive Director



## Community

## Work Days

1st Saturdays of  
April - June  
September - November

Come along and  
help keep  
Skyline beautiful...



Don't forget your gloves!

Hi Matt,  
My family and I attended your Fall Color day on Sunday and had a BLAST! Just wanted to truly thank you, your wife, and the staff of the camp for making it an awesome family centered event. I will definitely be sending my two school age children to your summer camp next year. I especially liked seeing the genuine interactions between the staff/volunteers and my children. They really took the time to not just play the game or do the event they were in charge of but really tried to get to know them as well. The patience your two staff had in the archery area was PHENOMENAL! My son had an experience at a summer camp this past year and because of that, said he hated archery. After Sunday, he was beaming from ear to ear and was excited to try again at a sport he had thrown the towel in on.

Thanks again for a wonderfully planned event as well as a caring staff...very hard to find.

- Teresa B

In  
This  
Place...

We  
Welcome  
All...

Who Seek  
Some  
Peace...

Among  
These  
Trees.

Skyline was established in 1964 as a summer camp providing Christian Education for children and youth, and is now both a summer camp and a year-around retreat center. For many years Skyline has welcomed both adults and children to its unique environment.

Situated in a rural area in southern Lapeer County, Skyline's 156 acres of rolling hills and forests are a haven from the routine and stresses of the work day – the perfect four-season venue for retreats, off-site meetings and seminars. Whether your need is for a few hours, one day, overnight or week-long, let Skyline supply the natural beauty as well as all the facilities and tools. Skyline can accommodate 100 in winter and 200 in summer.

Skyline is accredited by the American Camp Association, which is your assurance that it meets the highest standards of quality and safety. Every aspect of the Skyline experience is focused on providing our guests with a foundation for improving their lives.

Skyline welcomes and serves all, especially those in need, by creating sanctuary for experiencing God's creation, spirit, and unconditional love in a way that nurtures and transforms lives.



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Skyline is a 501 (c)(3) Non-profit Corporation.



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Our end-of-year appeal letter and contribution envelope are enclosed, saving a separate mailing.

## Summer 2013 Dates

- May 5 Open House
- May 24-26 Memorial Weekend: Family Camp
- June 9-13 Camp Joy (ages 40+, special needs)
- June 16-21 Camp FAR Away (ages 13-19, special needs)
- June 23-27 Camp For Me (ages 20-40, special needs)
- Jun 28 – Jul 1 Camp For Us (Fri-Sun)  
(Families, incl. special needs)
- July 7-12 Natural Explorers (ages 7-11)  
Dance & Music Camp (ages 7-11)  
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Day Camp (ages 5-10)  
Teen Service Corps (ages 15-18)
- July 14-19 Traditional Camp (ages 7-11)  
Mini-Camp (ages 6-8)  
Traditional Camp (ages 12-15)  
Farm to Fork Camp (ages 12-15)  
Day Camp (ages 5-10)  
Teen Service Corps (ages 15-18)
- July 21-26 Survival Camp (ages 12-18)  
Step-up Camp (ages 12-18)  
Day Camp (ages 5-10)  
Teen Service Corps (ages 15-18)



*These dates subject to change.*