

Founded in 1949, the Luethi-Peterson Camps are nonprofit co-ed summer camps in different countries whose aim is to foster international understanding by bringing together children from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

November 2015

LUETHI-PETERSON CAMPS, INC.

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Estonian Summer

REPORTS FROM THE CAMPS

Kiidi, Estonia

Our time together in Estonia was filled with many special activities and projects. We were lucky to have beautiful weather throughout the summer, allowing our group to take full advantage of the spacious site and green surroundings. We were able to explore and get to know the area during various hikes, including the special sandstone walls of Hinni Canyon in Haanja National Park.

As a group we shared 13+ languages and were able to share and teach language and culture through language courses and other weekly activities. We learned many new songs from different members in our community during our daily singing, we folk-danced many times each week, and learned about Estonian traditions and history. Estonia celebrated its Independence Day during our camp; as a camp we learned an Estonian folkdance and watched a documentary on the country's Singing Revolution and the path to independence.

We worked on a creative "Mayhem" project throughout camp that was based on initial themes of identity, sustainability, transformation, and up-cycling. The project was a coordinated effort of three groups, coming together for a performance of dance, music, and theater, telling a story of seeking forms of wisdom, wealth, and love. We were able to share this performance, as well as, folkdance and sing with visitors during our Open Day.

In the last days of camp we all shared a special sheep meal with the Piho's, our landlords. It was the result of a special set course that followed the process of slaughtering a sheep, preparing the meat in a traditional Estonian way, and then celebrating our summer together with a special meal.

Julia Helen Fibieg, *counselor from Germany/USA*



Heggnes, Norway

If we didn't come to LPC we wouldn't have to cry.
No *au revoir*, no *adios*, no *tschuss*, no goodbye
We'd never have to make the final journey by plane.
Across the sea, away from them,
so can you please explain
Why we come to LPC and cause ourselves such pain.
Well, come on,
you tell me there must be a reason for it.
The only explanation is that we freaking adore it
If we didn't come to LPC there'd be no Filip cheating
There'd be none of Jasper, Jelle and V's excessive eating
No *kliekjes*, no *majones*, none of Guy's guitar.
No sitting around the fire pit and staring at the stars
If we didn't come to LPC there would be no welly chat
No tree house, no goodnight circle,
no wearing Nicky's hat
There'd also be no skin peeling in the sauna.

No chatting on the bus here with
Saskia and Aurora
There'd be no walk with
ferrets through an ice cave
No *fabeldag*, no fjording,
no head for Steve to shave
No *putz*, no doo, no dancing in the kitchen.
No pranks, no tissue, no Mike, no Griffin
So I think it's pretty fair to say,
that the tears we cry when going away
Just show even more, how much LPC we adore
We come for adventures, for singing, for hugs,
for cultures and learning, but mostly for love
From the biggest family I've ever known,
I'm proud to call Heggnes our home
We come for the love we give and the love we get,
August 2015 is a month I'll never forget

Joe Hesmondhalgh, *camper from Great Britain*



<http://luethipetersoncamps.org>

YOU CAN HELP.....

- **By contributing** to repairing the Freedom house, which will soon need a new roof! We are also working on a window renovation and reconstruction project to preserve the historic windows in the house.
 - **By donating supplies:** Over several years and many work weekends, we have worked on a beautiful bike shed to hold donated bicycles, fixed/reassembled by knowledgeable campers and counselors.
- **By making a bequest** to LPC in your will and help LPC last forever. The larger our endowment, the more scholarships we can offer every year to deserving kids.
 - **By coming to the Freedom Work Weekend** in spring or fall to help clean up the Freedom house. It's hard work but great fun!!



Klino, Czech Republic

Klino '15 departure day was one of the saddest days I've ever had after the best three weeks I've ever had. After living so close together for three weeks, saying goodbye is almost impossible. My goodbye book is still a bit wet from reading it in the plane. It wasn't easy to read it all, but it's the most treasured piece of literature I now own.

This morning my mum asked me how I was feeling and the only word that I could think of was "lonely". But I find warmth in the fact that the tears I cried, memories I gathered and feelings I felt were not feelings, memories and tears of sadness but of happiness. I will keep those memories for the rest of my life. The friendships I made were invaluable, and I feel like I've made a new home. My new home is with LPC; wherever we will be together will be the place I call home. Home is not a building, it's a family and we're all part of it.

I won't ever be able to explain to anyone what it was like. I've done things I had never done before, and also things I will never do again voluntarily. I mean, come on guys, why take cold showers when warm showers exist? I've met the most intelligent, creative, kind people in LPC, and that's something no one could ever take away. I owe LPC so much. Thank you.

Dean Gray, *camper from the Netherlands*

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Can Pierrac, Spain

Manel, our beloved caretaker, had popped into our Good Night Circle the night before, to warmly invite us to join the “*Fiesta Patronal*” (a typical Spanish celebration). We were all in a good mood and sang our way to the village, taking a moment to look back to the house and notice the touching beauty of the place we lived in for one month: a big rural house, surrounded by fields and woods, and with tractors passing by every now and then. The bright colors of the cleaning rags on our laundry line made us smile.

When we reached Queixas the village was deserted; everybody was participating in the church mass. Ten minutes later everyone came out of the church and a band of young musicians started playing. The fiesta began. We learned they played a typical Catalan folkdance called “Sardana”, and the band was a perfect example of “Cobla”, the Sardana orchestra composed of 10 musicians and certain traditional instruments. We all enjoyed watching the small circle of old people dancing the Sardana. This circle slowly grew bigger and eventually, after receiving a crash course from a nice lady, some campers and counselors also joined the circle. This process of melding LPC people and villagers culminated in an invitation to the buffet, a long table in the shade of some trees with olives (olivas), ham (jamón serrano), cheese (queso), and other typical finger foods. In return, we improvised a choir and sang “Dona Nobis Pacem” and “Tam Tam Scatunga Là”.

After this day we were all amazed and grateful for experiencing the culture and traditions of the area we were living in, in such a vivid way.

Paul Musso, *counselor from Italy/Germany*

<http://luethipetersoncamps.org>

Birch Point, Maine

The summer has taught us all many things: how to do dishes in pretty much complete darkness, how to herd a group of jumping sheep, how to spot potato bugs, how to lead group discussions on camp issues, and most importantly, how to have an amazing time without the luxuries of the “outside world”.

Campers got an early taste of the simple life on Day 1 when they showered with buckets, lit the fire stove with home-chopped wood and noticed the lack of running water. As the days went on though, everyone became more accustomed to these new systems, routines and “basic” ways of doing things, which were actually anything but basic.

We ended our first week with an overnight hike to the beautiful sandbar, where even the thick fog and alien-like bugs could not keep us from singing around a campfire, devouring delicious s’mores and sleeping under the bright stars.

‘Set courses’ expressed themes like simple and community living and international diversity in film, music, theater and dance. They resulted in final performances on the campers’ Independence Day and LPC’s 66th Birthday, which were held on the same day. The entire day was very enjoyable with wonderful meals, campers supporting one another and creative performances.

The last week gave us plenty of quality time to enjoy each other before the day we all dreaded arrived. Family day activities ranged from canoeing, woofer ball and marshmallow cookouts. Big Putz also started with a bang when the campers were taken for a surprise excursion to the town diner where they loaded up on maple syrup with pancakes and other American delights. When departure day finally wrung its head around the corner, all the bags were packed and the campers were anything but ready to go. A simple-lived summer with anything but simple memories.

Nadia de Jong, *counselor from the Netherlands/Indonesia*

Birch Point



Can Pierrac



Klino



Birch Point



Can Pierrac

Freedom , New Hampshire *The Rime of the Ancient Director*

Thanks to the friendship and charms of Aina Bisquerra, I said yes to co-directing the Freedom camp this summer, some 30 years after my heyday, when I did camps almost every summer from 1973-1984.

Freedom 2015 was a tremendous experience, as fun and rewarding as I had hoped and less exhausting than I had feared! I was/we were lucky on many counts: a fantastic co-director (Aina, of course!) and a cohesive, close and hard-working staff, a lively and fun-loving camper group and that beautiful old history-laden house. We were also blessed with extremely cooperative weather.

People ask me what is different. How has LPC changed since way back then? My answer is: much and nothing. Many little things are different, and some of these I missed quite a lot. Things like a truly quiet Rest Hour, being able to go swimming without having to have a lifeguard, or being able to go away from camp with a course without having a first-responder's certificate. I missed many of the songs we used to sing and the dances we danced. No one knew how to play Oh Hell or Sand (maybe that will change now! – everyone in Freedom learned this summer), and the counselors didn't know Charades Natalie-style. There were other things I didn't miss, like Self-Government Day and National Days. And there were new things I liked a lot, such as a less-packed daily

schedule, the way the planning conferences and conseil *aka* issues & tissues work now. There were also great innovations for how conferencing is organized.

On the other hand, nothing has changed. The spirit, the laughter, the ringing of music, the closeness, and the tears at departure: these are the essence of my LPC memories and I found this essence as alive and well in 2015 as they were in 1975.

A question I had for myself was, how have I changed in regard to directing camps?

It was good to see that I still have my touch with the campers and counselors. That means I can still tell a good story, still lead a lively morning sport, still listen well and motivate a person or a group. It was also interesting to see how my priorities have changed since being younger (being alone and asleep are more important than having counselor hang-out time at night, for example). What was especially meaningful for me was having the grandchildren of my dear friends Debby Drew and Lars Smith, Francine Connolly and Andy de Long, and Natalie and Armin Lüthi-Peterson in my camp!

It was so wonderful directing a camp that I will never direct again. It was a perfect last camp. Thanks to all of you who carry the essence of LPC unchanged into the future, affecting the lives of so many young people.

KC (aka Kenny) Hill, *director from USA/Switzerland*



Freedom

The Freedom Hike 2015

The Holland Gathering

It was a month after our camp in Kiidi, Estonia (2014) when I woke up to hundreds of messages on my phone. Everyone was excitedly talking about making a gathering happen somewhere in the world over Christmas break. After a few weeks, a group of campers became the leaders and organizers of the meet up. We started by assigning roles to the leaders. One person became the head of excursions while others would be responsible for the transportation or food for the week. I became the “head of finances” for our time in Holland. Much of our plans and systems for the week were inspired by the skills we had learned in camp.

As the arrival date drew closer, we created a Facebook group where the 17 people who wanted to come could get information about the Christmas gathering. We posted a PowerPoint containing the rules for the week, our travel and excursion plans, and a summary of how the week would align with Luethi-Peterson Camp principles. We also reached out to our directors from Kiidi for advice.

Similar to our system back in Kiidi, each participant was requested to arrive within a certain time period at the airport and was given a meeting point. In addition, everyone was asked to bring €80 for food and €50 for excursions. This money would be pooled together for all of our activities during the week. Whatever remained was equally divided up and returned to everyone who came. Throughout our week together we ice skated in Leiden, spent a day hiking to Noordwijk aan Zee, went on a bike tour around Amsterdam, visited the Rijksmuseum, folk danced to stay warm, sang before meals, and of course, putzed together. Everyone who came brought with them the LPC spirit and helped to make our gathering a successful one.

Katherine Roscher, *camper from USA*

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