

May 6, 2026

### **Annual report 2025 West Haven Camp Board**

The running of West Haven camp is ongoing throughout the year with at least 4 board meetings.

The board consists of 7 members who are also the committee. Whom continues to work hard to keep West Haven a viable camp.

Most of us wear 2 hats. It is very difficult to recruit new members.

This last summer camp was a success, only because of our committed volunteers.

We struggled with hiring, but managed to complete staffing to move forward with the camps.

We continue to meet and carry on the work of West Haven. Constantly looking for more volunteers!

You will find more information in the Program Committee and Grant Chair reports.

As this camping year is upon us, at the moment we are undetermined how we are moving forward.

I am stepping down as Board Chair after our AGM, but will continue on as Health Care Coordinator.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved for making 2025 camp season a success.

Respectfully submitted

Mimajoan Saunders

W.H.Board Chair

## West Haven Program Report for 2025

We had 4 camps during the summer of 2025.

Summary of Camp numbers:

Intermediate Camp 1, July 20-25, 2025: 18 total, 12 Girls, 6 Boys, 4 student staff, 2 CITs, 2 adult leaders, ½ week each. 8 Full Subsidy, 2 Half Subsidy=10

Junior 2, July 27-Aug. 1, 14 total, 10 Girls, 4 Boys, 3 staff, 2 CITs, 1 Adult leader, 1 helper. 4 Full Subsidy

Intermediate 2, Aug. 3-8, 28 total, 17 Girls, 11 Boys, 4 staff, 3 CITs, 1 adult volunteer (in kitchen). 6 Full Subsidy, 1 Half = 7

Teen, Aug. 10-15, 14 Total, 4 Boys, 10 Girls, 4 staff, 3 adult leaders (overlapping). 4 Full Subsidy, 2 Half Subsidy = 6

Total Campers: 74 Campers (down from 82 in '24)

36% access subsidy. Invoices for \$10,837.50 submitted to March Fund.

Where campers live: Corner Brook area (from George's Lake, Massey Dr, Mt. Moriah, N. Shore) 38; Deer Lake/Reidville 14; Pasadena, 6; Springdale, 5; 1 each from Codroy, Trout River, Parson's Pond, Burgeo.

Info gathered from Registrar, plus checking through registration forms at camp.

Submitted by Judy May, August 18, 2025

Despite having to overcome many challenges, there were several **Positive Aspects** of summer 2025 from a program perspective.

### **Nature Program:**

- Our trail system was cleared and widened by the Forestry Department in Pasadena.
- New signs for all trails were donated by the Centre for Innovation and Research in Corner Brook. (These signs have not yet been installed as they need to have a sealant applied and we need a ladder.)
- We were very fortunate to have Mr. Kevin Barnes do a Nature Walk with each camp. Kevin is a member of the Qalipu First Nation, former nature interpretive guide with Gros Morne National Park, and did extensive work with Kildevil Anglican Church Camp during its operation. His knowledge of all aspects of the natural world and his ability to relate to the campers made his walks enjoyable and informative. He expressed an interest in returning to future camps.

## **Mental Health Initiatives:**

We enhanced the mental health aspect of our program which was started in the summer of 2024 and this year were able to avail of 3 workers from the Community Mental Health Initiative. David Jones worked on developing positive mental health attitudes by incorporating nature activities and games. Peter Parsons and a student assistant, Kelsey Green, did sessions on mental health vs mental illness, addictions, where to get help, discovering personal strengths & weaknesses, online safety, and mindfulness. Peter is also eager to continue with these sessions at future camps.

## **Camp Cook:**

While not directly related to Programs, it was a relief after 2 years of doing without one, to have had a wonderful cook, Ms. Karen Butt, who not only kept campers very happy with nutritious meal selections, but she was also a wonderful support for staff and volunteers as they faced day to day challenges.

## **Challenges:**

1. Insufficient number of staff, and particularly not enough male staff. We started the summer with 5 paid staff (not counting the cook); 4 female and one male. We had to hire a 2<sup>nd</sup> male (adult) to help with supervision in the boys' bunkhouse at night as our by-laws state that no staff are to be alone with campers. A low number of staff also meant that each staff member had to fill many roles.
2. Staff who were not suitable or not able to cope with their roles. Our Camp Director and a female councillor quit after the first camp. Even though roles, job descriptions and times were clearly identified during the interview and in orientation sessions, staff were not happy that they were not being paid for 24 hours/ 5 days a week.
3. A lack of adult volunteers, not only as camp volunteers, but also for our Camp Board of Directors, Program Committee, and especially for our Maintenance Committee. The Camp is 60 plus years old with an aging infrastructure and it is unfair to expect 2 or 3 existing Board members to also be responsible for repairs and upkeep.

## **What We Learned:** (in no particular order of importance)

1. The interview process for staff needs to have more than 2 people conducting the interview.
2. Letters of referral should be verified with a phone call and should NOT be the only reference sought. Contact should be made with the applicant's school or previous employer. Often letters provided are done by someone who would not share inappropriate traits or performance.
3. **We need to have a website that is current and running with someone responsible for keeping it current.**
4. Banning cell phone/device usage for our junior camp was an excellent idea and needs to be expanded to our intermediate and teen camps. This past year, we had restricted usage for the 2 latter camps.
5. The schedule for both campers and staff needs to have free time allotted, not just the afternoon FOYB (Flat on your Bunk) for campers.
6. Adult volunteers need to be informed of their duties in advance of camp and need to be competent as an adult figure. Age is not an indication of maturity.
7. Trails need to be cleared before the first camp, ideally before staff orientation.
8. Mental health activities need to be continued and enhanced.
9. There is an urgent need to upgrade our sporting equipment and facilities.
10. We need an assistant cook. Food services is too much responsibility for a single cook.

- 11.** Nature activities could be enhanced. (Outsiders have already indicated a willingness to come on board as indicated above.) More thought needs to be given to all activities; alternative activities need to be designed for rainy days, fire ban days, or extreme heat.
- 12.** More role playing should be incorporated into daily activities. Young people are accustomed to using their cell phones as a primary mode of communication with others, and, I feel, have lost much of their ability to express emotions and feelings in a real-life setting. For many, this is often a source of anxiety and fear of how others view them.
- 13.** We should not be disclosing any mental health concerns of staff (ie. autism) to other staff members, unless they pose a safety concern. Such information can often manifest pre-disposed stereotypes, negative expectations and behaviour towards the person with the issue.
- 14.** Where possible, previous campers &/or Board/Committee members should visit schools in the spring to encourage others to come to camp either as a camper, a CIT, or a staff member.
- 15.** The apartment needs to be made usable to help attract a Cook or Camp Director.
- 16.** With the help of First Dawn, we need to have more UC parishes involved in the operation of Camp. More than just neighbouring churches need to have a sense of ownership in WH. Maybe have a rep from each parish on the Board?

Respectfully submitted,  
Maureen Wells  
Chair, West Haven Program Committee