

Executive Director Report Spring 2024 Membership Meeting

Eddie DeGraw

Admin, Staff and Board work

We have had a lot of updates and changes to staffing at CPC this year. There was a host position that has been changed to the Program and Event Coordinator and is filled by Noah Silver-Matews. Changes in Admin include the Program and Event Coordinator position which fills most Admin Assistant duties but focuses on our programming and event needs during the events.

Communication improvements have been made. The phone is now forwarded to the Program and Event Coordinator for daily review and responses. We hope you have been experiencing a faster response rate! That was one of our strategic goals that we are making sure to focus on this year.

In other staffing news, we hired Benny and Trent for our Summer Camp Director(s) and have been meeting weekly with Caleb Carpenter and the Admin team for onboarding. They are doing a great job with recruitment and hiring as they learn the ropes. Summer Camp staff interviews are continuing and we are still looking for some last minute counselors. Please spread the word.

All staff have been taking a Dismantling Racism in Institutions with OnePlace at the Kalamazoo Public Library. It has been informative and helpful as we shape our programming with an equitable lens. It is also informing how we can advise the board on matters such as keeping anti-racism at the core of any changes to our policy work. We are making sure to lift up the continuation of doing anti-racism training and professional development as staff.

I have been treating our staff team like a worker's cooperative and have used consensus decision making in our meetings. I have also introduced Open Book Management to the staff and have started to analyze the budget and actuals for staff buy in and input. This has led to very creative ideas and more comradery when we are in our meetings and working on the future goals for the center. To continue this horizontal structure theme, we also all rotate chores and tasks. I have cleaned toilets and done laundry. No one is above a job or task when we are practicing cooperative values.

For Board of Director relations, I have spent the year meeting with numerous committee chairs and am proud of the work they are doing. You will hear from the committees directly but I wanted to lift up the dedication and time they are devoting to helping improve CPC.

Events

We have had a great start to 2024. New Year's weekend was well attended and filled with fun activities and great company. This was followed by Winter Camp, which was also exciting. We challenged the teens by taking away their technology and teaching them consensus and how to organize for your rights. They advocated for their phones back but not until they created their own policy. Leadership skills were taught as well and cooperation and direct democracy. They also had fun silk screening, doing a jam session, watching movies and other camp activities.

Songwriters retreat had more attendees than last year by almost double. We can't wait until next year

where we hope this event can continue to grow. Some workshops produced some lovely music and all attendees enjoyed their time.

Maple Syrup Weekend was a fun event though we decided to tap a much smaller amount of trees this year. The network connections we have been making to area Native Tribes has been extremely successful and valuable in our efforts to be good stewards to the land at the maple trees. We took the advice from the Native elders and did a limited amount of tapping based on what they were seeing in the weather. We were able to use this as a teaching point about global warming and climate change during Maple Syrup Weekend. We might not have a lot of syrup this year but we are excited to have bees returning. We will have bee workshops and work...bees this spring.

We moved out of the winter and right into Workbee Weekends. There were three weekends back to back .We focused on Cabin work, landscaping, painting ceiling panels, gardening and compost work as well as picnic tables and a sawmill training. We also threw in a Pop up Arbor Day event on April 26th after 100 fruit and nut native trees were gifted from the Lansing Free Tree Project.

Upcoming/Current Events

SPRING SPANISH CAMP WEEKEND: MAY 31 - JUN. 2
BJAM WORKBEE WEEKEND: MAY 31 - JUN. 2 & JUN. 7 - JUN. 9
BUTTERMILK JAMBOREE: JUN. 14 - JUN. 16
SUMMER CAMP SESSION 1: JUN. 30 - JUL. 13
SUMMER CAMP SESSION 2: JUL. 14 - JUL. 20
SUMMER CAMP SESSION 3: JUL. 21 - AUG. 3
FORAGING FESTIVAL: AUG. 30 - SEP. 2

Summer Camp

Acorns campers are still needed for the first session.If you know any potential campers ages 7-10, please direct the family to our website or touch base with us in person! Summer Camp is almost full and already has a long waitlist for session 3.

Scholarship fundraising needs to happen to increase our diversity at camp. We invite you to donate today so we can fulfill our mission and provide a diverse population the joys of summer camp at CPC. You may have seen the list from our Art Director but Supplies are still being sorted, cleaned and slowly organized. We are looking forward to great programming this year. With a large number of new staff we are very focused on our orientation training and are grateful for Caleb Carpenter's willingness to assist us train the new directors.

As far as the food goes for the season, we have a new contract with Valley Hub out of Kalamazoo. They are a network of local farmers and producers but are the middle man to reach our ordering needs. We are also excited to focus on growing more food this year with Russ Ruth as our garden manager. We received free vegetable plant starts at the Common Ground community garden free plant giveaway. I have been making sure we are connected to these types of organizations to not only receive hundreds of dollars of vegetable plants, but to strengthen our connections to community organizations regionally.