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December, 2013

Dear YAA Families,

I want to wish you a Merry Christmas. I hope that you will enjoy this season of song, music, celebration, festivities and feasts. I hope that you have time and space to surround yourself with conversation, laughter and refreshment from moments shared with your closest family and friends. In everything, my prayer is that you will enjoy each day as you encounter the living God and experience His full favor towards you.

A healthy heart has a strong and steady heartbeat or pulse. Similarly a healthy organization needs to remain vibrant and effective. I am not a doctor but as the director of YAA I want to share the results of our check up from this past year. In response, I hope you will convey in some form, your “pulse” regarding this ministry.

As I compiled my notes for 2013, I am overcome by a great sense of strength throughout YAA.

- YAA has in place its largest full-time staff and is considering additional hires.
- More people accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior than we have ever experienced in one year.
- We provided scholarship funds to every camper that requested assistance.
- We served an increasing number of people and guest groups.
- YAA experienced a wonderful surge in volunteers as well as a significant uptick in donations.
- We are preparing to launch new initiatives including a women’s conference and a leadership practicum for college-age students.
- Because of growth, we are striving to add new activities to our winter and summer programs.
- We are now using our new 6,000 square foot lodge even though a few aspects are still unfinished. This incredible building has meeting areas and sleeps up to 64 people in eight private rooms.
- More and more opportunities are opening up for us to interact with and serve a variety of guest groups. One that we are looking forward to hosting over Christmas is Montana’s Army National Guard families.

I'd like to say that everything we do is a success but you would see through that. Along with all the positive results, there were those campers who had to leave camp early because we couldn't settle their homesickness. Some guest expectations went unmet. I also remember all too well an encounter with some parents who shared a concern with me, but I responded poorly and didn't reassure them on the spot. I had to make a follow-up call the next day to apologize and restore their confidence.

Yes, we make mistakes but we're grateful for God's grace as we strive to do things right. Fortunately, most people's experiences can be heard through the voices of this appreciative parent and camper.

*"As much as I wanted to hear that one of our family trips was the highlight of her summer, my daughter says 'The best part of my summer was the week I spent at YAA.' I appreciate what the staff did to make it such a great experience for my kid." Doug & Sophie Roberts*

Now it is your turn. I would like to take your pulse to gain wisdom and direction from what makes your heart beats strongly. By directing a gift to YAA, you will let me know what is important to you and you will have the satisfaction of knowing you contributed significantly to our overall health. Also, I would value any insight you can share on our organization. As part of the camp family, hearing from you will enhance my vision and ability to lead our camp.

The next page contains a "*Hopes and Dreams*" list compiled by our staff. As a whole it is rather daunting. But this list conveys the action steps we've identified as important to stay healthy. Your gift will help strengthen and expand our ministry. Again, Merry Christmas and thank you for participating with us at this time and throughout the year.



Jim Hawthorne  
Executive Director