

Fenwick Lions renovate Camp Barnes bathhouses

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The Fenwick Island Lions Club worked with the Delaware State Police to renovate the new bathhouses and restrooms at Camp Barnes. This is one of the new ADA compliant showers. Those who visit Camp Barnes these days may notice a few changes to its facilities. This past spring, the Fenwick Island Lions Club was able to fund a complete renovation of the camp's two bathhouses.

"Our club just feels this is such a huge asset to the entire state. Our club feels it deserves our full support," said Bruce Schoonover, president of the club. "We feel very blessed to have this facility in our back yard."

Over the years the club has helped the Delaware State Police camp financially, and this past year was no different.

"Last summer, I was chatting with [Cpl.] Shawn Hatfield, who manages Camp Barnes for the state police, and asking him in terms of what were his priorities.

"Without any hesitation, he indicated the bathhouses and restrooms needed major renovations."

Schoonover said the Fenwick Island Lions decided they would take on the renovations as a project and went full-speed ahead.

"We hired an architect and a mechanical engineer to translate the ideas the state police had about the deficiencies," he said. "That was put into a set of plans and specifications that were sent out to bid last November."

In December, the club chose a builder, and on Feb. 2, demolition was begun on the existing facilities.

"Over the course of the last three months they've put it all back together. It has turned out absolutely beautifully. The state police are really excited about having this upgraded facility for their use."

The upgrades include ceramic tiles throughout the facilities, as well as new flooring, ceiling, lighting and plumbing.

"The bathhouse now complies with the Americans With Disabilities Act," added Schoonover, noting that of the six bathroom stalls and six shower stalls in each of the men's and women's bathhouses, one shower and one bathroom stall are now ADA-compliant.

According to its website, the mission of Camp Barnes is "to provide a free camp for the youth of Delaware, which allows campers to develop initiative and leadership skills necessary to accomplish tasks. The camp also enables campers to increase their self-confidence and feelings of accomplishment from their efforts and achievements."

“You can fully appreciate what has been done when you see it. It’s a remarkable transformation to this restroom that probably dates back to the ’50s or ’60s. It was clearly in need of an upgrade,” said Schoonover. “Aside from the six weekly camps that the state police run, the state police turn this camp over to Special Olympics of Delaware for two weeks and Delaware Burn Camp for severely injured children for another week.”

Schoonover said the club has applied for a \$4,000 grant from the Delaware Lions Foundation to help offset the cost of the renovations.

“They will provide funds for projects that Lions Clubs want to tackle but that are larger than they can handle on their own,” he explained.

In order for the club to pay for service projects such as the Camp Barnes bathhouse remodel, they hold various fundraisers, such as their pancake breakfasts and spaghetti dinners.

The Fenwick Island Lions Club will host their next pancake breakfast on Saturday, June 6, at Harpoon Hanna’s near Fenwick Island, from 7 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The cost is \$8 for adults and \$3 for children ages 3 to 12. The all-you-can-eat breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, bacon and eggs.

Schoonover said the breakfast is especially fun because the Indian River High School Leo Club will be helping.

“We feel it’s our responsibility to set an example for the Leos and guide them as much as we can,” said Schoonover. “It’s really interesting, the interaction between the Leos and the Lions. I do think we make a difference. These young people, you show them what needs to be done and they just take off. They love the idea that we treat them like adults.”

The IRHS Leo Club has approximately 150 members, having been in existence just over a decade.

“When we first started, it was probably a dozen students, but it has grown in reputation,” said Schoonover.

He also complimented IR teacher Laura Quillen, who heads up the club.

“She’s just a dynamite gal, with lots of energy.”

Along with supporting the Leo Club, the Fenwick Island Lions also give out scholarships to Indian River High School seniors.

“It’s just an impressive group of young people. It’s always fun for me to interact with them and experience their innocence and excitement for life and that sort of thing.”

This year, the scholarship committee interviewed nine students, and it will be awarding six scholarships, for a total of \$9,000. The students receiving scholarships are Alexandra Long, Sarah Buchler, Alison Jennings, Sea Whelen, Amber Watson and Margaret Allison.

The club will hold a luncheon in June, to which the scholarship winners are invited.

“We invite our scholarship winners to that, so it gives them the opportunity to talk to our members about what’s important in their lives. It’s good.”

Schoonover said that the club has been awarding scholarships since 1992.

“I think, in that timeframe, we’re up to about \$150,000 we’ve awarded in scholarships,” he said. “It’s a fraction of the overall education, but I think it’s important.”

The club has a substantial list of service projects, which includes eye screenings for more than 500 young children each year. The club has also partnered with the VFW in Ocean View, as well as the American Legion in Millsboro, to do vision screening for veterans and their families.

Since 1986, the club has been participating in Meals on Wheels.

“Every day during the week, 52 weeks a year, we deliver meals to elderly homebound seniors,” said Schoonover. “Currently, we are delivering 25 meals a day. If you do the math, that’s over 6,000 meals and good cheer that we bring to seniors in our community That’s something that we’re very proud of.”

Schoonover said Larry Kovacs is responsible for setting up the schedule of food runs and is responsible for setting up the schedule and recruiting individuals to volunteer.

“It surprised me, how many things we do within the community in various, various forms.”

The Fenwick Island Lions Club currently has 68 members, but Schoonover said they are looking to grow that number.

“That’s why it’s important to us to cultivate this relationship with the Leos,” he said. “Like all Lions Clubs worldwide, we’re looking for new members all the time. Our members are getting older and are less able to do all of these things.”

Those who join will have the opportunity to give back to the community in a meaningful way, he said.

“We’re a fairly small club, but we’ve got a core group that are awfully hard-working and dedicated and of the same mind. We like doing things for others,” said Schoonover. “To me, I always feel like I’m the beneficiary of what we do. I’m very proud of the work that our club does. It’s just a wonderful group of people. A lot of it is very small gestures, but loads of small gestures tend to make a difference.”

For more information about the Fenwick Island Lions Club and how to become a member, call Muriel Mooney at (302) 436-8216.



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