

Report of the Chairs of the 2019 All Star I Conference

The 2019 All Star I conference broke all prior attendance records! Fortunately, after a couple dramatic storms blew through, the weather was beautiful and we were able to spread out and utilize both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Our thanks go out to the many volunteers who stepped up to make it a great week. We were successful due to all the assistance and we cannot underscore this enough. Deb Walton (Housing Coordinator) housed our enormous conference with care and composure. Ali Walton (Registrar) graciously volunteered to step into the role again and was skillful at keeping track of our numbers and everyone's comings and goings. We owe our spiritual care and keeping to Nancy Wood who again agreed to be our Minister of the week.

Our speaker of the week was storyteller Donna Washington. She was dynamic and engaging, and kept people coming back to the lectures all week long. In addition to our lectures, she made a point to visit each of the children's classrooms to tell stories. At the end of the week, people were given an opportunity to practice what they learned by telling their own stories during the final lecture as well as during the Friday afternoon Open Mic.

Highlights:

- Late night music with a Woodstock anniversary theme had people partying until the wee hours.
- The new Friday afternoon Open Mic was well received with requests to make it an annual event.
- There were also requests to make the movie on the lawn another annual event.
- We moved Evening Chapel to immediately follow the evening activities, which resulted in earlier start times.
- The Clambake and Chokefest are always a welcome addition to the week.
- The Masked Ball included an imbedded game with snack bar prizes that was great fun and kept the children very engaged.
- The Grand March was held on the porch and inside the main buildings in order to be more inclusive and to avoid injuries on the uneven lawn.

Other things of note:

- The overall attendance numbers are a continuing conversation. Due to the addition of the Brookfield dedication, we were pressed to increase our numbers beyond what we had initially intended to accept. Ultimately, everyone who had applied by the March 10th deadline was accepted, however we were unable accommodate everyone for the full week.

- While overall the volunteers were excellent and reliable, there were some issues with volunteers not showing up. Others stepped up to help, but it seems an unfair division of labor. We are unsure if this was an anomaly, the result of poor volunteer/job matches, or if it is a usual occurrence that we only became aware of this year.
- The 4th of July picnic lunch was very poorly organized by the staff and resulted in long lines, cold food, and grumpy, hungry people. Joe Watts attempted to intervene, but to no avail. He indicated that he would make a note for future years. The suggestion of most everyone in line was to do away with the picnic lunch.

It was a great week and most everyone seemed well engaged and happy. We would like to thank the community for your support and confidence. It was an honor to be chairs for the 2019 conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan O'Loughlin and Joy Close

Chairs, 2019 All Star I