

JHYM Retreat Staff Notes

Bumps in the Road

Feb. 29 - March 2, 2007 * Wellesley Meeting

WE ARE: Kara Price Bachand, Jerry Carson, Rebecca Edwards, Richard Lindo, Dimity Peters, Wendyl Ross, Scott Sprague & me from beginning to end!

* Robyn Churchill all but 8:30-12:30 Saturday morning.

* Buddy Baker-Smith all of Saturday.

* Chris Wolff Saturday afternoon.

* And Eric Edwards perhaps, for brief periods of time Friday and/or Saturday evening and Sunday morning – or not! – as a visitor.

WE ARE BOTH FLEXIBLE AND VERY BLESSED! Thank you so much for your generous hearts and spirits and rock solid youth ministry work.

JOINING US are about 32 JH'ers, only three of whom are first timers to JHYM, and all three attended at least one JYM Retreat previously. We will have the opportunity to nurture and deepen this community rather than working primarily towards getting it. I am really looking forward to feeling where the weekend takes us.

The JHYM Retreat program's goal is to provide a safe and trusting community in which we seek to find that of God in ourselves and in each other. Our charge, as ministers of the Spirit, is to help our young people create a sanctuary. What I appreciate more as the years go on, is just how rare and astounding a "safe and trusting spiritual community" truly is for young teens. What we "do", with the Grace of God, is provide them with an experience in building a spiritually grounded community that they then take with them, and hopefully build on, for years and decades and a lifetime to come.

The Theme

I came across one of those "Bump Ahead" construction signs on Route 140 North one day last summer – the kind that is about 6 inches from the bump, so you've hardly finished reading it before you crash over the bump, feeling like your teeth are going to come out of your head and wondering if your tires are still attached to the axels. I was instantly reminded of a story Bill Cosby told about this, and I thought "Ahhh! What a great JHYM theme!

What if God dutifully put up "Bump Ahead" road signs, reassuring us that what was coming up was just a construction site and not a cliff? Would we feel better? Honestly, would it be better to have more warning about these bumps sometimes, or not? How do we deal with life's challenges and worries (big and small), and how do hope, prayer, and Friendship help us get through? What can we share with each other, and what might we pack into an Emergency Road Kit for future unexpected complications? And, too, how can we help ourselves be at ease during challenging times so that we are

not lying awake every night trying to plot and plan and worry away all of the possible problems of the morning?

And then there is this question from staffer Robyn Churchill: Are all bumps bad? What about those rumble strips on the highways that pop you out of your stupor and actually PREVENT you from hitting a more serious bump?

In our large and small groups, and in all of our time together we will explore and share our survival skills for real life challenges, our experiences of God's Presence during these times, who and what helps us get through, and what we learn and see along the way that ultimately make us kinder, more compassionate (though perhaps more tender and weary) Children of the Light.

Timelines

Arrival: I will be arriving with one JH'er around 4pm. Registration is at 7pm. I really need as many staffers there by 6:30 as possible. Let me know if this is a problem. I want to try to ground myself and the retreat with 20-ish minutes of Worship beginning around 6:10pm Friday evening – please do come and join me if you wish! Any JH'ers who are with us then will be joining us, too.

Wrap-up: Sunday Morning Worship is at 10:00, followed by announcements and lunch. I anticipate we'll be out by 1pm. We need all staffers to stay until cleanup is done, if at all possible – this way we will all get on the road sooner. Thank you!

DIRECTIONS TO WELLESLEY ARE ON OUR WEBSITE.

Program Details

Small Groups will meet 3 times over the course of the weekend: Friday evening, Saturday morning, and Saturday early evening. We will be divided into 4 small groups – with 8 or 9 JH'ers and 2 staffers for each group. You'll be in the same small group for the weekend.

Friday Evening's small group will include a radio call-in show to a panel of experts (your small group) with questions like "How can I go back to sleep when I am so worried in the middle of the night?" "What's so scary about the unknown anyway?" and a list of unhelpful responses people should avoid saying when someone shares they are having a hard time.

Saturday Morning's small group will focus on survival skills for real life challenges.

Saturday Evening's small group and then special program will focus on what helps us get through, what we most need, and how can we take good care of ourselves and each other during these times.

Details and suggestions will be emailed asap and in your staff notebooks!

Saturday Afternoon Workshops: *Restoring our Reserves*

This is a time for us to all really relax and/or play. Workshops will run an hour and a half or so. JH'ers will make first and second choices Saturday morning, and we'll do our best to fulfill everyone's requests!

WORKSHOPS

Buddy, Richard & Chris: Feast of the Senses: Field Trip to the Botanical Greenhouses
Robyn, Jerry and Scott: Fresh Air for the Soul: Walk/Romp/Run to Wellesley Center
Rebecca & Kara: Creativity for the Heart: Mixed Medium Art
Gretchen & Dimity: Taking Care of our Walking Feet: Foot massages and nail painting

The two off-site workshops will be stopping at ice-cream shops or bakeries on the way home for sweet treats. The other two groups will have “high tea” with Wendyl.
(WENDYL! DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A 5TH WORKSHOP BE A SMALL CREW THAT WOULD WORK WITH YOU IN THE KITCHEN AND HELP CREATE THE TEAPARTY? I BET SOME JH’ERS WOULD LOVE TO DO THAT.)

Quiet Alone Check-In or QUAC (formerly known as Quiet Hour)

Some of them love it, some of them hate it. Everyone needs it, so we do it. I am going to talk to the group about this Saturday morning and help them to see it as an opportunity for taking care of themselves rather than as punishment or an opportunity to be a nudge at adult staffers. We’ll see! ♥

Special Program Saturday Evening

We’ll be making our own *Emergency Road Kits* to take home with us for future bumps or difficult driving conditions.

The Quiet Room

For over a year now, JHYM Retreats has had a Quiet Room available throughout the retreat for JH’ers who need a break. It’s become a lovely haven – and, no, staffers, you can’t all be people of presence there all weekend ☺ but I do encourage you to stop by and help to nurture and preserve the space. I am tentatively thinking about using the nursery on the second floor for this.

“FREE TIME”

Junior Highers want free time, but most of them want it with structure so that they can be in community. This is my mantra: “free time” is not *staff free time*. All of us on staff need to initiate group games (Apples to Apples, Egyptian War, JYM Ball, Graveyard Tag), inspire craft projects, encourage the creation of new Who’s Who Book pages, and engage stragglers into the mix in any ways we feel led – or the young people themselves lead. With JH’ers, it can be especially important to gently, continually nurture *inclusivity*. Please consider your gifts and leadings – and go for it!

Organized Free Time Group Activities

JH’ers’ evaluations have consistently asked for more singing and group games. So:

Kara – can you please come prepared to facilitate a free-time singing on Saturday morning, perhaps after breakfast and before Opening Worship? I’m envisioning about a

half hour of just wandering through the Big Song Books with whomever wants to join you.

I hope to lead a similar “free choice” singing at the end of program time on Saturday evening.

Robyn – can you please launch a group game in the Meeting House around 7:15 or 7:30 Friday evening?

Buddy – can you please launch one after our QUAC Time Saturday afternoon?

Staff Assignments, Please

Registrar: Gretchen

Retreat Nurses: Scott and Kara

Staff Coordinator: Jerry, please?

Craft Table and Sign Making Elders: Richard and Rebecca

Name Tag Czar: Robyn (shhh)

Photographers: Buddy, Robyn

Supreme Kitchen Goddess: Wendyl Ross extraordinaire

Wendyl’s Check-in Person: Dimity (making sure Wendyl has enough help and getting more people as needed)

Final note

Do know, dear dear Friends, my gratitude and love for each of you. I am really looking forward to our weekend together in community and ministry. Travel safely and be well. I love you.

Gretchen Baker-Smith

JHYM Retreat leader

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