

# Camp Barnes, jewel of Sussex County, gets shined up



Hannah Carroll, DelmarvaNow 7 a.m. EDT July 6, 2015

## Club provides new bathrooms for popular camp.



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(Photo: Staff photo by Hannah Carroll)

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Camp Barnes, established in Frankford in 1947, has evolved and matured during its 68-year history.

Originally created to curb juvenile delinquency, it's now a summer camp that welcomes children of all backgrounds into a structured but nurturing environment.

The camp hosted a dedication ceremony in June to honor nearly 15 individuals and groups who have made various contributions to its 13-acre facility.

Operated by the Delaware State Police, Camp Barnes is a nonprofit organization that receives money from civic organizations, event fundraisers and grants so children can attend at no cost. Among those recognized was the Fenwick Lions Club.

Last summer, the club inquired about the camp's most pressing needs and Cpl. Shawn Hatfield, camp director, without hesitation replied: "The restrooms and bathhouse facilities."



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Cpl. Shawn Hatfield and Bruce Schoonover smile with campers at Camp Barnes' dedication ceremony for the recently upgraded bathhouse facility. (Photo: Staff photo by Hannah Carroll)

The camp was still using its original bathrooms, some 50 to 60 years old. Hatfield informed the club that "Band-Aids had been applied over the years, just enough to keep things running." And the Fenwick Island Lions Club agreed that wasn't good enough.

With Camp Barnes' blessing, the Lions undertook the entire renovation of the bathhouse, including contract management and oversight. The structure was brought up to today's standards and is now in compliance with the American Disabilities Act requirements. The intensive project was completed just in time for the summer 2015 camp season.

Bruce Schoonover, president of the Fenwick Lions Club, took a personal interest in Camp Barnes when he discovered the "jewel of Sussex County" several years ago.

"It reminded me of my youth," he said. "The more I learned about the camp, the more I felt compelled to help."



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Bruce Schoonover and his wife, Sharon, accept a plaque for recent contributions made to Camp Barnes. (Photo: Staff photo by Hannah Carroll)

For six weeks during the summer, alternating between boys and girls, about 60 campers descend on Camp Barnes each week for traditional camp activities like swimming, kayaking, archery, fishing, crabbing, crafting and playing team sports. Campers are encouraged to learn more about themselves and reconnect with the outdoors. Electronics are prohibited.

At other times of the year, organizations also use the facility, including 4-H clubs, Delaware Special Olympics, Wilmington Parks and Recreation, the Delaware Burn Camp, Boy Scouts of America and the Stockley Center.

Although the camp is operated by the Delaware State Police, it is not to be mistaken for a boot camp.

"Even today, parents still ask us to 'straighten up' kids who have been acting out," Hatfield said. "First of all, a week isn't enough time for that. And second, straightening kids out is not our mission.

"The goal is for them to have fun and to hopefully always remember their week at Camp Barnes."

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