

Frequently Asked Questions about the Deck Collapse at the Camp

- What happened?
 - On June 17, 2017 a group of people were at the camp to have a memorial service. Many people went out onto the deck to blow bubbles in remembrance of their loved-one. While they were on the deck, a portion of the deck collapsed.
- Were people injured? Did anyone die?
 - There was no loss of life; however we know that 54 people sought medical attention.
- How are we helping the injured people?
 - We do have insurance and our insurance company reached out to the organizer of the event to get the contact information for those who were in attendance. A letter was then sent informing people of our insurance and encouraging them to submit their claims. A few people have called the camp. Our camp staff has provided our insurance information to them so they can also submit claims.
- Why did the deck collapse?
 - At this point, we still don't know. We are hoping to have a professional report compiled by an engineer answer this questions.
- Do we have good insurance?
 - The camp's insurance is Brotherhood Mutual which sells insurance to churches and church organizations. It is too early to tell how this will move forward and what the ultimate conclusion will look like.
- Is the rest of the deck safe?
 - We don't know the answer to that yet, and have the deck blocked off to prevent further use. We are waiting on the professional report which will provide us an answer to this question.
- Is the collapsed part of the deck still there?
 - No. The collapsed part was removed on August 22 and 23.
- How is the staff coping with this?
 - Obviously it was a long and hard summer. The presbytery was able to get wonderful assistance from the people at Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). PDA sent two people to help Heather and the staff immediately following the accident. In addition the presbytery wrote a grant that allowed us to have Rev. David Gill here for 4 weeks. David is the retired director of Fern Cliff Camp. He was able to lend a hand and offer advice to Heather and the camp staff. We also received a grant from PDA that allowed the year-round camp staff to have some much needed paid time off to recover.
- Are the Camp and Spruce Lodge still open?
 - Yes. In fact we only cancelled one week of summer camp.
 - The programming in Spruce Lodge has continued. It has been full and busy. There were two weddings at the camp this summer. People are still enjoying the Christian Hospitality provided by our staff and the beautiful facility of Spruce Lodge.

- How did you keep the summer campers safe?
 - We blocked off all access to the deck and under the deck. As part of that, we put up an orange plastic construction fence to keep everyone from going on the lawn near the deck. Summer campers wrote prayers on cloth and tied them to the fencing. Word got out about the “prayer fence” and prayers started arriving from our congregations, from other camps and from people around the country.

- Is the rest of the camp safe?
 - Yes. Immediately after the accident, Heather hired a contractor to inspect all of the other facilities at the camp (except for the remaining deck on Spruce Lodge, which will be inspected by someone from the insurance company). There were two minor areas of concern which were immediately repaired. In addition the Lake County Health department does an annual inspection. They were here in September and found no facilities in need of repair.

- How are we moving forward?
 - The Cabinet formed a Long Term Recovery Team to begin looking at how we move forward. The team began meeting in September. It is expected that this team will be in place for about two years. The team was trained by personnel from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

- What can we do?
 - Pray! Pray for those who were injured. Pray for their health providers. Pray for our camp staff. Continue to come to camp for adult programming and continue to send children for summer camp. The camp is safe and well run. Consider making a donation to either the camp scholarship fund, the operations fund or to help pay off the Spruce Lodge mortgage.

- Will we be able to keep the camp?
 - We are very hopeful that the camp will continue to be a part of our ministry for years to come. We put our trust in God, knowing that God will want the best for this important ministry. We put our trust in God knowing that he deeply loves those who were injured.



Prayer Fence at the Camp