



# Compass



SETTING DIRECTIONS IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Spring/Summer 2010

## New Developments at El Tesoro Await 2010 Campers



Construction is currently underway on the new Challenge Course at El Tesoro. 2010 resident campers will be the first to experience the new course, which has high and low elements including a climbing wall and zip line. The course, which is being constructed by Team Synergy, Inc., was specially designed for El Tesoro and meets the standards of the Association for Challenge Course Technology. "Besides being a lot of fun, challenge courses are a great tool to build confidence and trust, while working as a team," said Diane Phillips, Challenge Course Director. In addition to campers, the course will be available to outside groups such as corporations, churches

and non-profit organizations.

The \$10.3 million capital campaign to renovate El Tesoro continues to move forward. Dan Hansen, chair of the Building Committee, announced that, in addition to the challenge course, work will begin in August on the low-water crossing into camp, a critical step which will allow access for the planned renovation and construction. The firm of Good, Fulton & Ferrell has been selected to do initial design and schematic work.

**CAMP  
EL TESORO**

## Camp Fire's Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Shows Success

Preliminary results from Camp Fire's five-year Kindergarten Readiness pilot show participating children, on average, are performing significantly better in many categories than their peers. Kindergarten Readiness is a project developed and provided by Camp Fire USA First Texas Council. Its purpose is to improve the learning environment of children birth to age five in child care centers and family child care homes to enable the children to acquire the skills necessary for success in school. The collaborative program works with child care centers and family day homes in low-income communities to prepare young children for school.

The 2009/2010 Preliminary Findings from the Kindergarten Readiness Early Skills Inventory Scores show that Camp Fire Pre-K children performed better than the district and target school groups in five of six skill categories, and kindergarten children performed better than the district and target school groups in four of six



skill categories. The six areas assessed were Physical, Social Emotional, Technology, General Knowledge, Math and Language.

Currently, over 250 children enrolled in 20 child care facilities representing 35 classrooms are part of the Kindergarten Readiness program.



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Zem Neill

## A Note from Zem

Spring is here, and school will be out before you know it. With June just around the corner, Camp Fire is preparing for summer programs at El Tesoro, Campativity at LMRA and Lyle Lodge, Diamond Hill Station and Aledo. I hope you enjoy reading about the exciting new developments at the First Texas Council in this issue of the Compass.



Be sure and mark your calendar for Camp Fire's second annual "Absolutely Incredible Kid" luncheon on May 11, where you will have the opportunity to hear directly from children and adults who have benefitted from our programs. I look forward to seeing you there!

## Board Highlight

### *Drenda Williams Witt* Board of Directors

Drenda is serving her first term on Camp Fire USA's board of directors. A public relations professional with more than 30 years experience, Drenda helped form Camp Fire's Marketing Task Force and is in her third year as its chair. No stranger to Camp Fire, Drenda was a Bluebird and Camp Fire girl. She has fond memories of her summers at Camp El Tesoro and crossing the famous swinging bridge. "Somewhere stored away at my mother's house, I still even have my vest, with all the emblems and beads I earned," she noted.



Drenda has been with the JPS Health Network since 1983 and currently serves as the Director of Collaborative Network Marketing. She is responsible for oversight and implementation of system-wide public relations and communications initiatives. Drenda previously served as the official spokesperson for the health network and worked extensively with local, regional and national media in both routine and crisis situations. Among numerous other awards, in 2007, she received the Frank J. Weaver Lifetime Achievement Award from the Health Academy of the Public Relations Society of America.

A native Texan, Drenda has lived in the Fort Worth area since the age of two. She is married to John, her husband of 38 years.

## Volunteer/Staff Partnership

### *Chuck Mooney* Chair, Group Services Task Force

### *Kim Cook* Vice President, Group Services Division

Chuck and Kim have partnered together on the Group Services Task Force to analyze programming needs and look at ways to better incorporate service-learning, nutrition and environmental education in to Camp Fire's after school programs. "With three children of my own, I realize the importance of good after-school care," said Chuck. "The role that Camp Fire plays in the lives of children is critical and we want to ensure that we are delivering the highest quality programming possible."



Chuck Mooney is Vice Chair-Administration of the Board of Directors and also serves as the chair of the Group Services Task Force. He rejoined the board in 2008, having served previously, and has been on the council's Finance Committee for three years. He and his wife, Kelly, own the Kelly Charles Group, which represents First American Payments Systems.



Kim Cook has been on staff at Camp Fire since October 2007. As Vice President of the Group Services Division, she is responsible for all after-school programs, truancy prevention, and the council's Child Care and Development Center. Kim has a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Dallas. She completed her undergraduate degree in Psychology at Fordham University in New York.



## Camp Fire USA First Texas Council Partners with the National Inclusion Project



Camp Fire USA First Texas Council has been selected to receive \$12,500 in funding from the National Inclusion Project, a foundation founded by recording artist Clay Aiken. The funds will be used to implement “Let’s ALL Play – Inclusion in Recreational Programs,” which allows children with developmental disabilities to enjoy a successful summer camp experience in an inclusive setting.

“This funding will allow us to further expand the inclusion program we’ve had for the past 20 years at Camp El Tesoro,” said Lisa Cook, Vice President, Outdoor Programs for Camp Fire USA First Texas Council. During each camp week, a limited number of campers with mild physical and cognitive disabilities are mainstreamed into cabin groups and camp activities. Each camper in the inclusion program is assigned a specially-trained cabin buddy who is with the camper at all times, to help when needed.

The National Inclusion Project has been actively developing its “Let’s ALL Play” program since 2004. “We feel that working with Camp Fire USA First Texas Council will help us further our mission to open doors in communities nationwide for children with disabilities to experience everything life has to offer,” said Jerry Aiken, Executive Director.



## Conference for Early Childhood Educators Has Record Attendance

A total of 215 participants attended the sold-out 2010 Spring Conference for Early Childhood Educators held at Camp Fire’s Resource Center on March 27. Fourteen trainers from Camp Fire and across the Dallas/Fort Worth area presented 20 breakout sessions on a variety of early childhood topics. The conference is designed for all early care and education professionals, including child care teachers, family home providers, directors and assistant directors.



## Support Camp Fire with a Charitable Gift Annuity

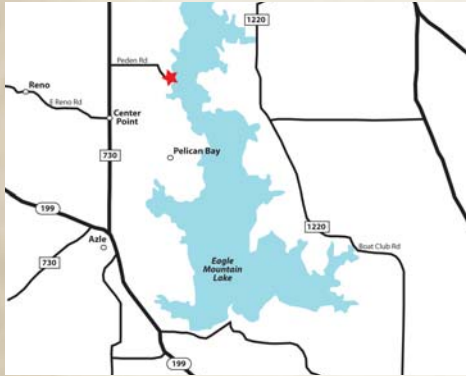
In planning your charitable giving, consider the advantages of a gift annuity. “A charitable gift annuity is a simple contract between the donor and Camp Fire USA First Texas Council Foundation,” explained Ann Sheets, Sr. Vice President-Administration and Finance. “It provides the donor with an immediate charitable tax deduction, then ongoing payments back to the donor, a portion of which is also tax-free, based on the age of the donor.”

Camp Fire is pleased to announce that Herbert and Nell Johnson, neighbors at El Tesoro for many years, have made a generous donation to the CFUSA First Texas Council Foundation in the form of a gift annuity. “I always tell people that I learned almost everything I know from Camp Fire,” said Mrs. Johnson. “My husband and I are pleased to be able to support its many programs, especially those at Camp El Tesoro,” she added.

For more information on charitable gift annuities, contact Ann Sheets at 817-831-2111, ext. 104.

# Camptivity Day Camp Adds Second Location

Since 1998, hundreds of area boys and girls have enjoyed Camp Fire's Camptivity Day Camp at Lockheed Martin Recreation Area. This summer, Camptivity will introduce a second site, Camptivity Lyle Lodge. The new location will offer swimming, games, sports, fishing and more, on the shores of Eagle Mountain Lake at 7179 Peden Road in Azle.



Camp Fire USA has contracted with First United Methodist Church of Fort

Worth for the use of the facility. "We're excited about this partnership which allows us to expand our programs to the northwest part of the county," commented Lisa Cook, Vice President, Outdoor Programs. "This expansion will help meet the needs of area families who are seeking fun and safe summer activities for their children."



For more information and free online registration, visit [CampFireFW.org](http://CampFireFW.org) and click on Camptivity.

## Watch our new Camp Video!

Take five minutes and see the fun for yourself! [CampElTesoro.org](http://CampElTesoro.org)



## New in 2010!

**FREE Online Registration** for Summer Resident Camp. Go to [CampElTesoro.org](http://CampElTesoro.org) to learn more.

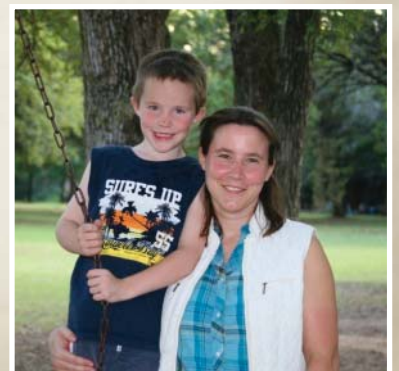
Register  
Now!

[CampElTesoro.org](http://CampElTesoro.org)



## Plan Today for Mother's Day Weekend

Tired of the same old Mother's Day plans year after year? Well this year, you can celebrate with a "Mom & Me" camping weekend at Camp El Tesoro May 8 and 9! Screened cabins and meals are provided, so all you have to do is enjoy time with mom. Choose from canoeing, archery, hiking, games and crafts, among other activities. Not just for mothers – aunts, sisters and friends are welcome to join in on the fun! Call 817-831-2111, ext. 158 to reserve your spot today.



# CAMP EL TESORO



## El Tesoro Day Camp

Now in its second year, El Tesoro Day Camp is a great option for parents and kids in the Granbury area. Campers entering first through eighth grades will enjoy swimming, games, sports and other activities, like learning how to build a fire and read a compass. Choose June 21-25 or June 28-July 2 and enjoy all the fun and adventure of an overnight camp, one day at a time.

***Spaces are filling quickly!***  
**Visit [CampElTesoro.org](http://CampElTesoro.org) to learn more.**



## Horse Camp at El Tesoro

Saddle up this summer with Camp Fire's new Horse Day Camp at El Tesoro set for July 26-30. Sure to please any horse lover, daily activities will focus on beginning and intermediate-level horsemanship skills, as well as how to care for horses. Campers will top off the day with an afternoon swim. This new day camp is open to campers entering fifth through tenth grade. Learn more at [CampElTesoro.org](http://CampElTesoro.org).

***Reserve your spot today!***



## Do you have great memories of summers at El Tesoro?

For only \$495, you can help a child have a week-long camp experience they will treasure forever! Call 817-831-2111, ext. 160 today to find out how you can provide a Campership.

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Pam and Reed Pigman

## 2010 Excellence in Child Care Awards Presented at Celebration of Champions

Child care professionals are some of the unsung heroes in our society, caring for nearly 12 million children under age 5 for close to 40 hours each week. On April 8, Camp Fire USA First Texas Council celebrated and honored more than 450 of these individuals with the Fifth Annual Celebration of Champions dinner and awards at the Sheraton Hotel and Spa in downtown Fort Worth.

The evening included the 2010 Excellence in Child Care awards, which were presented to Sharyn Wilding, Tarrant County Administrator of the Year; Rhonda Kelly, Tarrant County Teacher of the Year; Sandra Hern, Tarrant County Family Child Care Provider of the Year; and Joyce Anderson, recipient of the Phyllis Jack Moore Professional Development award.

Hosted in conjunction with the Fort Worth Area Association for the Education of Young Children, Celebration of Champions raises funds to provide scholarships for the continued training of child care professionals.

## El Tesoro de la Vida Dinner Raises Funds for Grief Camp



More than 200 attended the March 30 dinner and auction, raising over \$31,000 to benefit the week-long camp for children who have experienced the death of a loved one. Boys and girls who attend El Tesoro de la Vida grief camp enjoy traditional activities like horseback riding, archery, and canoeing, but also participate

in activities to help them through the natural grieving process. "This event was a big success and we still have donations coming in," noted Julia Summers, Vice President of Development for Camp Fire. "Birdies for Charity, which is offered by The Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial Country Club, is going to match up to 15% of donations made by May 17, so our donors have the opportunity to make an even greater impact," she added.

## Camp Fire Summers Offer Field Trips and Fun at Aledo and Diamond Hill Station

Summer is an exciting time for kids to take a break and recharge their batteries. Camp Fire has lined up special activities, theme weeks and field trips for its summer programs at Diamond Hill Station and in Aledo, sure to help keep kids active and engaged. Boys and girls can sign up for weeks ranging from "Safari Week" at Aledo to "Western Rodeo Week" at Diamond Hill Station. Camp Fire's summer break programs provide a safe, structured environment, without sacrificing the freedom and choice that older kids deserve. For more information and to download a registration form, visit [CampFireFW.org](http://CampFireFW.org) today. Register by May 15 and receive the Early Bird discount.



## Upcoming Events

### MAY

- 8 - 9 . . . . . Mom & Me at El Tesoro
- 11 . . . . . Absolutely Incredible Kid Luncheon
- 16 . . . . . Open House at El Tesoro
- 20 . . . . . Open House at Camptivity Lyle Lodge

### JUNE

- 7 - Aug 13 . . . Summer Break at Aledo Vandagriff Elementary
- 7 - Aug 20 . . . Camptivity at Lockheed Martin Recreation Area
- 7 - Aug 20 . . . Camptivity at Lyle Lodge
- 7 - Aug 20 . . . Summer Break at Diamond Hill Station
- 12 . . . . . Open House at El Tesoro
- 13 - July 23 . . Resident Camp at El Tesoro
- 21 - July 2 . . . El Tesoro Day Camp

### JULY

- 26 - 30 . . . . . El Tesoro Horse Day Camp





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*Mark Your Calendar and Save the Date.*

May 11, 2010

**Camp Fire's Absolutely Incredible Kid Scholarship Luncheon**

**Tuesday, May 11, 2010 at 11:00 a.m.**  
**City Club Fort Worth, 301 Commerce Street, Suite 400, Fort Worth**

Consider hosting a table with nine of your friends and family for the Second Annual Absolutely Incredible Kid Scholarship Luncheon and celebrate your kids, our kids and kids everywhere! Deborah Ferguson, NBC-5 morning anchor, will emcee the event.

RSVP by May 5, 2010 to LydiaT@CampFireFW.org, or call 817-831-2111, ext. 160 for more information. Table sponsorships are available.



November 12, 2010

**26th Annual An Artists' Christmas!**

Kelley and Eric Walsh will serve as chairs for the gala, set for Friday, November 12, 2010 at the Omni Hotel in downtown Fort Worth.

**AN ARTISTS' CHRISTMAS**