

From the Director...

July 8, 2010

Another camp summer is underway and despite the heat isn't it great to see the sun (remember last summer's first session, 8 days of rain!)! Each session I try to write one or two editions of "From the Director..." my take on kids, camp and other topics that I think might be of interest. Here is the first edition for 2010!

A good friend of mine passed away this last spring. He and I taught together for a number of years at Rivers. We were an interesting pair. I had many more years of teaching experience under my belt when we crossed paths our first year at Rivers. He came to teaching as a second career after he retired from a successful research position. Ron had quite a stellar academic life. Few of his students knew it, but he left high school after his junior year and enrolled at Harvard as chemistry major. He eventually earned his Ph.D. in physics from M.I.T. then went on to do significant research for the Air Force after which he began his teaching/writing career!

Following his 2nd retirement (from Rivers), he and I would make it a point to meet for lunch every couple of months. At our last lunch together, he mentioned that he regretted not returning for his senior year in high school! Almost 70 years had passed and here he was telling me that he thought he would have been better off had he returned for that final year. It wasn't that he regretted any part of the work he'd done, the papers he'd written, the classes he'd taught or the family he was so proud of. Only that he felt he would have enjoyed that time in his life a little more had he spent his final year of high school with his friends and classmates.

When I think about Ron's story, it reminds me of how important it is for children to pass through thru each stage of their lives. I've often written that in our culture we tend to push our children into adolescence and our adolescents into adulthood much sooner than they are developmentally ready. They are exposed to ideas, images, and concepts that for many adults are complex and difficult to work through, but are often thrust upon them with the theory that it will make them grow up faster. What's the hurry? Childhood should be a time when play is fun. When learning is an exciting, innate process not reduced to a series of chores resulting in the passing of standardized tests. When trying new things is an adventure and not something that illicit fear or embarrassment.

At Nonesuch, we hope that the activities we offer give the children in our care the opportunity to learn and grow. By allowing them to choose their activities it helps them develop responsibility. By providing the wide range of choices we hope that they might every once in a while take a chance and try something new with a counselor they know and look up to - a safe chance!

I hope that the lesson I learned from my friend Ron, that growing up too fast isn't all it's cracked up to be, can be our guide in helping children to learn, be happy, be safe and in 70 years be able to look back at these summer days and say, "Wow, they were really fun, I'm glad I didn't miss them!"

Third and Fourth Sessions Openings

We still have openings in our third and fourth sessions, July 26th - August 6th and August 9th - August 20th. If you are interested in extending your son's or daughter's enrollment into either or both of these sessions, please call or email me at p.karasch@rivers.org and I'll take care of the details!