



Camp Oty'Okwa Smoke Signals Winter 2016

A Note from the Director

By: David Schirner

I don't know if anyone noticed, but this is the first issue of Smoke Signals you have received since last Winter! Normally, we attempt to send one or two updates throughout the year. Unfortunately (or fortunately), all the positive developments that have been occurring with the camp kept all of us pretty busy and Smoke Signals was the unintended casualty. We'll do our best to get you updated in this issue.

There are a lot of facility improvements and partnerships to talk about in this issue. However, I want to begin by revisiting why we operate Camp Oty'Okwa and why it is important. More children are at risk today than ever before. The percentage of children living in poverty has increased and the number of children living in single parent homes continues to grow. Educating many of our children is a struggle facing our community and the daily threat of violence that our children live with creates unimaginable stress for children and families alike. New threats to our children seem to arise all the time. Richard Louv, in his book [Nature Deficit Disorder](#), describes how our children are disconnecting with the out-of-doors and the negative consequences this is having on them, their families and our communities. A recent study on the amount of time children are connected to social media and electronic devices reports a staggering nine hours per day that children are not engaged with anyone in a true social context!

Fortunately, camp can have a positive impact on all that I describe above. To begin, Camp Oty'Okwa is a safe place for children. There is no daily threat of violence as structure and supervision ensure bullying and being picked on is a rare happening. The impact of poverty is temporarily mitigated as children have plenty to eat while also participating in healthy activities that promote both good physical and mental health. Children attending camp live with two young adult, caring counselors who serve as positive role models for them. The other children in their cabin group are real playmates who they interact with throughout their stay and as a result develop social skills that are needed for everyday living. More and more we are integrating academic skills into the camp's programs. There is no better place to teach natural science than the out-of-doors and the number of teachable moments that present themselves every day is surprising; planning dinner for eight and figuring out how many nine years olds fit under a 10 X 10 tarp tent requires math skills. Keeping your journal up-to-date requires you to read and write. One fortunate consequence of Camp Oty'Okwa's location is limited access to Wi-Fi and cellular services. Guess what! Connecting to social media and the internet is pretty impossible at camp.

Camp has an important role to play in helping **all** children grow and develop. Providing camp to children who are **at risk** is even more critical and Camp Oty'Okwa has a long history of doing this. Through partnerships with a number of social service agencies we are reaching many of our most vulnerable children and providing them the connection they need to grow into healthy young adults. Outcome data tells us that children who attend camp leave feeling more competent, more responsible, are better able to work as a team, feel more connected to others and have a greater affinity for nature. All of these ingredients are exactly what children need in order to be prepared to live in the world we are handing to them. We need to ensure we are preparing our children to survive and thrive in the years ahead.

So how can you help? If you are receiving this issue of Smoke Signals you are already involved. Pass this copy along to a friend who is not familiar with Camp Oty'Okwa. Volunteer some of your time to visit the camp and get involved in any number of projects that are happening. Make a financial contribution to support sending children to camp. Talk about Camp Oty'Okwa every chance you get. Thanks to your support, thousands of children and adults have the opportunity to experience Camp Oty'Okwa every year. Our challenge is to make camp available to every child who needs this valuable experience. Now, keep reading to learn more about all the good things happening at Camp Oty'Okwa!



Facilities Update

Discovery Center Dedication

After a two year effort led by Cathy Knoop, Camp Business Coordinator, our new Discovery Center was officially dedicated on Friday, June 12th, 2015. This celebration was attended by many of the designers and donors who made the Discovery Center possible for Camp Oty'Okwa as well as others who will be using the center in the future. The Discovery Center will serve as the hub for science education that will take place for everyone who visits the camp. Located within our dining facility, the displays will create environmental awareness and promote increased environmental practices that can easily translate back home with the children and adults attending camp. Please plan a trip to camp to visit the new center.

Ivy Shower House

It took more than three years of planning and fundraising to make the Ivy Unit Shower House a reality. However, the camp's first new shower house since 1973 was started on July 7th, 2015. The shower house will replace the shower facility in the Ivy Unit and is double sided to serve both boys and girls. As this new structure will be winterized and available for use on a year-round basis, Camp Oty'Okwa will be able to work with larger groups throughout the year beginning in 2016. Many thanks to Stew McHarg for leading this building effort for the camp.



Coultrap Lodge

Named in honor of Don C. Coultrap, this pole type building was constructed in 1968 and was the first activity building the camp had. Through contributions from The Columbus Foundation, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and other businesses we were able to renovate both the interior and exterior of this building ensuring that it will be available for use for many years to come. Currently, many of our school groups and other visitors use the facility as a meeting and lodging space.



Summit Cabins

With support from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, work has begun on renovating the 5 cabins located in the Summit Unit. These cabins were built between 1942 and 1945 and have been repaired many times since then. The cabins will undergo a similar renovation that our Ivy Unit cabins underwent a year ago which means new siding, doors and roofs will be installed. We expect that the cabins will be ready for use in the Spring of 2016.

Nature Center Improvements

With the help of a donation from William Goodburn in honor of his former Big Brother Harold Howe, the Nature Center is getting a lot more exciting! Bill Goodburn contacted Big Brothers Big Sisters last May and indicated that he wanted to do "something to honor his Big Brother of more than 50 years". After discussing the needs at camp, Bill decided a contribution to enhance the current Nature Center was what interested him the most. Since then, work has been ongoing and fish tanks, animal hides, skulls, books and other displays have been added to the center. Additional interactive displays are planned including a section of a sassafras tree that has been riddled with holes from Pileated Woodpeckers (very cool to see!).



Venard Log Cabin

Thanks to ABLE Roofing we were able to install a new roof on the Venard Log Cabin. Able Roofing donated the shingles necessary for this project, which was completed in November 2015.

Additional Projects on the Drawing Board

Sewage Plant

Perhaps one of the least exciting, but most important projects at camp in 2016 will be the renovation of our current sewage system. The system in place was installed at camp in 1981 and while it is still operating efficiently, time is taking a toll on some of the electrical and plumbing components. Through a variety of funding resources we will rebuild the plant to ensure that water discharged into nearby creeks does not pose a threat to any living creature or plant at the camp and in the community.

Sebring Lodge baths

A project started in 2013 will come to conclusion early in 2016 as all bath facilities in Sebring Lodge will be renovated. While some work has been ongoing with the bath facilities, a grant from The Columbus Foundation will provide the resources to finally finish this project in time for 2016 Environmental Education programs which begin in March.

In the News



Ed Cohn, our CEO since 2004, has announced he is leaving this position and will return to banking which was his career prior to coming to Big Brothers Big Sisters. While Ed will no longer serve as CEO, he will continue to serve on the Board of Directors and assist the agency in many ways. Under Ed's leadership the agency and camp have prospered. Project Mentor, a mentoring program within the Columbus City Schools, has flourished and new programs aimed at serving some of the most at risk children in our community have been started.

At Camp Oty'Okwa, Ed is responsible for establishing a threefold vision:

1. Protect the Natural Resources
2. Improve the facilities
3. Create an endowment to ensure all children have access to camp

During the past 12 years we have successfully protected 687 of the camp's total acreage of 737 acres through conservation easements with three different organizations. As we finish our new shower house, we will have built new or remodeled all of our facilities that were in need of repair or replacement. This leaves goal number three; likely to be the most ambitious goal of this vision and one that we have not given up on. We expect that in his role as a board member Ed will continue to pursue this goal and with support from all of us, fulfill the vision for Camp Oty'Okwa that was established in 2004.

Many thanks to Ed for all his work on behalf of our agency and camp. We are grateful for his contributions and look forward to much more to come with the guidance of our new CEO Elizabeth Martinez.



Donor Spotlight

Carrie Madison has been a huge supporter of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio and Camp Oty'Okwa over the years. She is going on 5 years as a "Big Sister," since being matched with Bianca in 2011 through the school-based program Project Mentor. And wanting to do more, Carrie happened on to one of the many ways to help camp several years ago while sorting through her house. As most of us do, we collect things that we no longer have a use for. Items that the kids no longer use or outgrow, books and puzzles that have been read or done and garage items that have been forgotten. Motivated to get these items to someone who could use them, Carrie called camp and inquired about our needs. To her surprise and joy, she discovered that the camp has a "Wish List" and a number of her items were on our list. She very quickly bundled up her items and arranged for us to pick these things up. But that's not the end of the story!

Now that Carrie was aware of the camp "Wish List" she decided to initiate an organized campaign to fulfill it. Carrie reached out to her friends and shared the list with them. Her home was designated as a "drop off center" and she began collecting mostly used items that would be better used by the children at camp. This included shoes, clothing, blankets, camping equipment and a variety of other items. Carrie's first effort at fulfilling the Wish List was very successful and the children at camp benefitted a great deal from her work.

Carrie has continued her campaign and over the years it has grown and become more sophisticated. The items now include very specific things that the camp buys each year: underwear and socks in small sizes, art supplies, sleeping bags and more. Many of these items are purchased new and donated so that the camp is assured that it will have just the right size or the right quantity needed for the summer. Carrie's list of friends has also grown. It now includes friends of friends so that there are many more folks actively engaged in this effort. Carrie's home is still the collection point for these donations and what started as a van load of supplies has grown to become a garage full of supplies.

Camp Oty'Okwa is very appreciative of the work and effort that Carrie and her friends go to each spring to help us be prepared for the summer. While the items being donated may seem to be small, when added together the campaign saves the camp thousands of dollars each year. Many thanks to Carrie and her family for all the support they provide to Camp Oty'Okwa. In addition to this campaign, she and her husband Andy are also annual contributors to our **Send a Kid to Camp** appeal. Thanks Carrie!



Education at Camp Oty'Okwa

As we begin 2016, there is no doubt that learning and education are increasingly more important for all of us. For children just starting school and for adults who are working, the key to a better future depends on our ability to learn and understand all the advances and challenges coming our way. Since 1942, Camp Oty'Okwa has been teaching social and emotional lessons to the children who attend. However, we are now taking advantage of the camp's natural resources and the many teachable moments that occur to teach reading, social studies and science to everyone who comes to camp.

While the camp has been in the environmental education business for many years, in 2010 we began to also focus our attention on science and literacy. The newly completed Discovery Center is a critical component to our science education and gives children and adults the opportunity to begin a learning journey the moment they enter into camp. Additional focused classes teach inquiry-based lessons on the water cycle, forest ecology, recycling and much more. In 2015, more than 2000 children and adults visited the camp and participated in a variety of science education opportunities; this included students and teachers from 22 different schools from around Ohio.

Of course, reading is fundamental to all learning and we would be negligent if we did not address this at camp. During one recent summer all the children received a copy of the book, Hatchet, a story about a young boy who finds himself alone in the forest and must learn to survive while awaiting rescue. During the quiet evening hours, the children read the books with their counselors. During the bright, sunny, daytime hours, the children acted out the story as they all raced into the woods and turned the story into their own survival experience. What a great opportunity the camp has to pair reading with adventure, song writing with stardom at the final campfire, writing a rap to entertain during an all-camp activity.

During 2015, the camp expanded its reach and hosted a variety of educational events outside of our ongoing education opportunities.

Let's Go Science, an education organization out of Twinsburg, Ohio, utilized the camp and our education staff to enhance their after-school program.

Educator's Week, an annual week-long adult education training for teachers, naturalists and others had forty participants who will take their learning back to more than 30,000 individuals through their work settings.

The **Dempsey Middle School Ecology Club** made two trips to camp over the summer and used our facility and education staff to enhance their learning of the out-of-doors.

Camp hosted our 3rd annual **Science Camp**, a week-long summer camp. Campers built rockets, tested stream quality, and participated in bird banding!

Career Eagles Aviation is working with us to teach the science of flight to children. As a part of this program the children get to visit the airport and experience the cockpit of an airplane. Additionally, we began **taking our camp based educational programs to other locations** and collaborating with more partners in order to reach additional children.

Education has become a key component for every child and adult who comes to camp. Look for us to continue finding ways to infuse education into the camping experience. The result will be better children and a better world for us to live in, which is the exact goal that Camp Oty'Okwa had in 1942.



Camp Oty'Okwa and Rural Action host 2nd Annual Inquiry-Based Learning Conference

Camp Oty'Okwa uses inquiry-based learning in all of our programs and classes and has been a strong advocate for children having access to the out-of-doors. Through our adult education classes and collaboration with other like-minded organizations we have worked to expand inquiry-based learning to others who will benefit from this approach to learning.



On November 12 – 13, Camp Oty'Okwa and Rural Action sponsored the 2nd annual Inquiry-Based Conference at Burr Oak Lodge and Conference Center. This two day conference in SE Ohio, provided hands-on experiences, resources, displays and keynote presentations to 113 participants from 27 schools and 35 organizations. Sponsorships made this conference affordable for teachers and non-formal educators.

The opening keynote stressed the importance of getting kids outside and shared the Ohio Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights. Participants were then immersed in inquiry learning with activities that related to Ohio's academic state standards and exposed to environmental programs from around southeastern Ohio.

If you have an interest in inquiry based learning or want to connect with others who share a passion for getting children outdoors you can look forward to the 3rd annual Inquiry Conference in November 2016.



Adult Education

Offering professional development hours and semester credit from Ashland University, Camp Oty'Okwa trained **187** formal and informal educators in 2015!

School Partners in 2015

2472 campers benefitted from Camp Oty'Okwa's environmental education programs for various schools around Ohio:

Bishop Flaget Middle School
Canaan Middle School
Clinton Elementary
Circleville Middle School
Crooksville Intermediate
Dempsey Middle School
Edison Intermediate
Hastings Middle School
Hathaway Brown
Immaculate Conception
Jones Middle School
Licking Heights North Elementary
Morrison-Gordon Elementary
New Hope Christian Academy
Oakstone Academy
Salt Creek Intermediate
Saint Agatha School
Teays Valley Walnut Elementary
West Elementary
West Broad Elementary

AmeriCorps partnership

In September of 2015, one of our partner agencies, Rural Action, informed us of an opportunity to place an AmeriCorps member at Camp Otý'Okwa to help build capacity for our year-round efforts in education. Rural Action places several AmeriCorps members throughout southeastern Ohio with various nonprofits. And to serve as our first AmeriCorps member, we are so fortunate to have Emily Federici at Camp Otý'Okwa.

The AmeriCorps program was started in 1994 by the Corporation for National and Community Service to provide the opportunity for Americans to participate in an intensive service year at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. Members gain valuable experience and insight into community development and allow participating agencies, like us, to provide more impact with their programs.

Before joining AmeriCorps, Emily had been attending Ohio University taking courses in Communication & Public Advocacy, and Islamic Studies. Emily moved to Athens from her hometown in a Cleveland suburb in August of 2011. Emily also got the opportunity to spend a few months in Italy making it fun for kids to learn English, which was a rewarding experience. She was then drawn to the AmeriCorps altruistic mission that emphasizes community service. She has always had a desire to work with the natural sciences and loved education, so the AmeriCorps member placement at Camp Otý'Okwa was a perfect fit!

So how does Emily feel about her placement at Camp Otý'Okwa?

"What I like the most so far about my program is the highly knowledgeable and strong community associated with camp and Rural Action. Everyone is very welcoming and willing to help. I recently got to attend the Inquiry Based Education Conference, which put me in rooms with educators from around Ohio, other AmeriCorps members, and a slew of naturalists who work at nature preserves and protected forest areas of Appalachian Ohio. It was a wonderful experience to be face to face with these people who were doing so much to help their communities learn about nature. I also can't get over the property of camp. People go to the Hocking Hills for vacations, and I get to spend hours teaching kids on the very same land. It's wonderful in so many aspects; and I'm afforded a great level of autonomy to create my own programming ideas, which is a real treat. I'm always interested in learning about new topics and this has gone above and beyond in that respect. Needless to say, I have a lot to look forward to before my service ends next September."



SERVE OHIO
Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism

Zero Waste Initiative

As part of the development of the Discovery Center, the camp has been working to recycle, reuse or renew all the food, supplies and equipment that are used at the camp. In conjunction with the Athens County Zero Waste Initiative, the camp has started an ambitious effort to leave as small a carbon footprint as we possibly can. While we have been recycling and reusing many materials and items for a long time, this past year we began composting food not consumed in the dining hall and tracking the waste in order to cut down on the amount of food prepared and of course, the costs associated with buying it. The compost is used at a newly established vegetable garden in order to teach campers how the Zero Waste concept works (and then we get to enjoy tomatoes from the garden!).



In 2015, the Camp Kitchen Served

10,687 BREAKFASTS

11,958 LUNCHES

11,052 DINNERS

THAT'S A TOTAL OF

33,697 MEALS!

General Rental

Camp continues to be a very busy place for many different groups. Family and youth groups continue to utilize Camp Oty'Okwa on a year-round basis. But in 2015 we were able to host several festivals, affinity clubs, other not-for-profit groups, university groups and more!

2352 campers were able to enjoy the sights of Camp Oty'Okwa with their rental in 2015. All revenue generated from renting our facilities supports our summer camp scholarship program. Camp Oty'Okwa operates year-round, so consider bringing your group to enjoy our privately-owned 747 acres in the beautiful Hocking Hills! We can accommodate your group of 20-200!

Contact Matt Smith at msmith@bbbscentralohio.org or 614.302.2866 if you are interested!



Employee Spotlight

October 5, 2015 was a memorable first day of work for Dan Tritipo, the new Maintenance Coordinator at Camp Oty'Okwa. He showed up early to get a head start in orienting himself with the facilities and grounds only to find a pipe leak that needed immediate attention. Spending the morning digging in the cold mud to expose the broken pipe, Dan quickly came to understand the ever-evolving needs that Camp Oty'Okwa's many users and facilities have.

Dan grew up in southeastern Ohio and is happy to still call it home. Dan comes to camp with years of experience in manufacturing as well as building homes and log cabins. Needless to say, he is bringing the perfect skill set to camp!

Also, his favorite hobby is singing Elvis karaoke, which is yet another talent that will surely be appreciated at Camp Oty'Okwa!

The 2015 Milton Lewin Legacy Award: Haslett Heating & Cooling and Stewart McHarg



The Milton Lewin Legacy Award honors Milt's lifelong dedication and service to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio and the at-risk children of central Ohio. Milt's dedication and commitment to Big Brothers Big Sisters throughout his life included volunteering as a Big Brother, serving as a Board Member, and co-chairing the agency's first capital campaign. Each year, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio recognizes a valued partner with the Milton Lewin Legacy Award.

The history of Haslett Heating & Cooling has been intertwined with Big Brothers Big Sisters since 1950, when Art Haire, then co-owner with Harvey Haslett, became a Big Brother. What started with Art and Betty Haire's desire to help a child grew into a life-long passion for the agency's work. That passion was passed along to Stew when he bought the company from Art, and it continues today under the ownership of Bruce Ames and Jeff Florer.

The Haslett Heating & Cooling/Stew McHarg stamp is all over Camp Oty'Okwa. They have done the HVAC work for the camp's cabins, activity barn, dining hall, and the recently-completed shower house. In addition, every camper checks in at the Art and Betty Haire Welcoming Cabin. Haslett has also handled the HVAC needs of the agency's Columbus offices. In addition to their in-kind donations for these projects, Haslett Heating & Cooling gave a very generous donation for the shower house this past year. All of these donations have benefitted thousands of kids from around Ohio!

Art hired Stew McHarg to work at Haslett when Stew was an engineering student at The Ohio State University in 1968. Stew's first responsibility was to post the "Yea Ohio" sign, along with Art's famous weekly football score prediction, before each OSU game. Upon finishing college, Stew joined Haslett full-time. He subsequently spearheaded the effort to get Haslett involved in more commercial industrial HVAC work. One of his early projects was the second hamburger stand for a gentleman named Dave Thomas...which blossomed into a long-term professional relationship.

"We are proud of our long association with Wendy's," says Stew, "but that was pretty simple work compared to some of our other complex projects such as CompuServe, which required a high level of HVAC and technology because of their state-of-the-art computer systems."

In 1972, Stew began buying into the company, and after he became full owner in 1981, he carried on Haslett's tradition of supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters. Stew has been a driving force behind the agency's Discover the Magic of Camp Oty'Okwa fundraising events. "I see how much good Big Brothers Big Sisters and Camp Oty'Okwa can do for kids who face challenges, and I want to help," he says.

We are honored to recognize Haslett Heating & Cooling and Stew McHarg with the Milton Lewin Legacy Award, and we thank you for all you do for the kids of central Ohio!



The Milton Lewin Legacy Award Winners

2006	The Robert Weiler Family
2007	Herb Glimcher and Family
2008	Nationwide
2009	American Electric Power
2010	Rockbridge and James T. Merkel, President and CEO
2011	Cardinal Health and George S. Barrett, CEO
2012	The Schoedinger Family
2013	KPMG LLP
2014	Huntington
2015	Haslett Heating & Cooling/Stew McHarg



Just a Note

Camp Oty'Okwa strives to foster a sense of gratitude among staff and campers. Throughout the year, campers write hundreds of thank you letters to our supporters and often times we are privileged enough to receive additional thank you notes directed towards our incredible staff. The letter featured is from Cirus, a young man who started coming to camp in 2012 and is currently involved in our leadership program. As you can see, even if campers do not exactly understand what our camp director, David Schirner, or others might be doing in their roles all of the time, the intent to share the magic of camp is still very clear.

Dear Camp Oty'Okwa,

Especially concerning Matt and Lisa and Dave, but also to all the others at camp, thank you all so much. Camp has become such an important part of my life that I can't imagine life without it. I am aware of the scholarships that you give my sister and I, and I can't even begin to explain how thankful I am, as camp would be less of a probability for us without them.

Matt, thank you so much for all that you have taught me. It has made me a much better person, and for that there are no words. You have been a teacher, and a person to look up to.

Lisa, thank you for being a firm hand to put me in the right direction. If not for you, I feel like I would not have taken as much from camp as I have.

And support staff, thank you all for all that you do for camp. I realize that you are not necessarily the face of camp, but you do an equally important job as anyone else.

Sincerely, Cirus Stowe

P.S. I forgot to thank Dave, but thank you ~~David~~ Dave. Your contributions are too numerous to list.

2015 Highlighted Events



5th Annual Holidays in the Country

Camp Oty'Okwa's annual fundraiser banquet was held December 12, 2015. The mild winter evening was perfect as campers greeted the guests with a fun outdoor photo station, warm cider and treats. The evening progressed with live music, unique silent auction items and a delicious array of appetizers, soups, salad and pasta bar. The program reminisced the past five years of progress made at Camp Oty'Okwa and recognized various partners' contributions to camp's success. By the end of the evening, over \$10,000 had been raised for camper scholarships!



Car Show

A special thank you to Jason and Jenny Snyder for once again organizing a successful car show event. We may be outgrowing yet another venue as this event continues to grow! The campers even got to award a very special "Kids' Choice" trophy to their favorite car!



Cocktails for Camp: Ugly Sweater Party

For the second year, **bar145** in Grandview hosted an Ugly Sweater Party for Camp Oty'Okwa. Chef Nick designed a special camp-themed menu and cocktails. Winners of door prizes, 50/50 and raffle tickets were announced throughout the evening. The live music and guests clad in very festive sweaters made for a fun evening of giving. If you missed out on the fun this time, you can plan to join us December 2016 and enter the Ugly Sweater contest. Maybe you could walk away with the coveted 1st place trophy!



Discover the Magic

In June of 2015, our annual camp scholarship appeal was highlighted with a camp-infused breakfast experience at Qwest Conference Center. Community members gather to meet and interact with children and leadership teenagers from Camp Oty'Okwa. This intimate setting provided the chance for some of our campers-turned-staff to tell their personal stories, and explain how Camp Oty'Okwa was there to help and support them through difficult times. Guests were moved by their brave stories and the resolve of these amazing young people to already be giving back as they do. Keep an eye out for your invitation to this year's unique event!

Author and Photographer: David FitzSimmons

Keeping with the fall speaker series at Camp Oty'Okwa, David FitzSimmons gave an incredible presentation of his journey photographing various animals with white background and publishing his *Curious Critters* series of children's books that explain accurate natural concepts in fun and interesting ways.





nūrtūr
the salon



What's New? Upcoming Events in 2016

Earth Jam Fashion Benefit

May 24

The Aveda Institute Columbus and Nurtur salons, under the artistic direction of Hauns Korpela of Scott J Salon, NY, NY, will once again sponsor their annual Earth Jam Fashion Benefit. Institute students and Korpela will present a runway show that will showcase their talent and creativity. It's always a fun evening and proceeds from the event will support environmental education at Camp Oty'Okwa. Last year's event raised over \$60,000! Be sure to look for more information on ticket sales this spring!

Community Hikes

Come explore Camp Oty'Okwa's amazing trails, forests and natural features during our many FREE community hikes throughout the year. Feel free to bring the family along, and you just might learn something! We will also be offering several volunteer opportunities with our Adopt-a-Highway program. Volunteers will be provided lunch and snacks. Questions and RSVPs can be directed to Al Marietta at amarietta@bbbscentralohio.org. More scheduled dates will be listed online at www.campotyokwa.org

Saturday, February 20	Community Hike	10am-12 noon
Saturday, March 19	Adopt-a-Highway	9am-1pm
	Community Hike	1pm-3pm
Saturday, May 7	Community Hike	10am-12 noon
Saturday, June 18	Adopt-a-Highway	9am-1pm
	Community Hike	1pm-3pm
Saturday, July 9	Community Hike	10am-12 noon

Inaugural Birds of the Hills Festival

April 23-24

Rural Action and Camp Oty'Okwa are partnering to present the first "Birds of the Hills Festival" at Camp Oty'Okwa. This two-day family festival invites participants to explore the natural world. Join us for tours of the surrounding area led by experts, fun and educational children's activities, and presentations by local naturalists.

Registration for the event is \$10/adults & \$5/youth younger than 12. Additional costs for individual activities, lodging, and meals. Interested parties should RSVP with Becca Farley at becca@ruralaction.org

2nd Annual Golf for Girls' Sake

September 26

After a few years of sponsorship from Delaware County's Women's Leadership Network, we began to realize that leadership opportunities specifically targeted to girls were especially beneficial with the youth we serve. To grow our outreach to include girls from all over the state of Ohio, we hosted our first female-only scramble golf tournament fundraiser. In September 2015, we raised over \$35,000 to support our very first girls only summer camp session, which is planned for June of 2016. So to all those female golfers out there, save the date! What a fun way to get involved in helping our girls succeed!

Smoke Signals: Winter 2016

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio

Camp Oty'Okwa

1855 E. Dublin-Granville Road
Columbus, Ohio 43229



We're Growing!

An incredible **7341** campers were served by Camp Oty'Okwa in 2015. Improved facilities, academically augmented programming opportunities, more partnerships and increased outreach to the local community has allowed camp to serve more groups, more schools, and more children than ever before.

Look inside to see what a busy 2015 Camp Oty'Okwa had and all the exciting happenings that will be coming up very soon in the new year!