

## **Additional Information About Pennsylvania Council of Churches' Campground Ministry**

A partnership of church bodies and congregations sponsors has supported a significant presence of chaplains in state, federal and private campgrounds for over a half of a century. Trained, caring persons are deployed as "chaplains in the park" in dozens of campgrounds, and personally introduce themselves to hundreds of thousands of campers each summer.

Personal conversations about faith—often dealing with questions of values, responding to crises and pains, offering encouragement, support and healing, are at the heart of this ministry. Worship, Sunday school, candlelight vespers, story hours, campfires, volley ball games, sandcastle contests, and movies provide additional opportunity to provide pastoral care. Many persons who are reached who have no active church relationship.

Sponsoring church bodies and congregations accept the responsibility to share the Good News with persons at leisure, agree to be partners with one another in developing and overseeing policy which:

- Shares the risk—ministry with inadequate funding receives financial help and encouragement through pooled resources, thus relying on the stronger partners.
- Assures equity between those employed as chaplains with respect to stipend and expenses.
- Gathers those engaged in this ministry for training and mutual support.
- Provides necessary interface with the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks, which relies on campground sponsors meeting with it as a single group.
- Assures that a pastoral presence is respectful of all faith traditions and avoids proselytizing.
- Provides technical assistance to manage the partnership (liaison, personnel administration, payroll and reporting functions, etc.). Each sponsor agrees to share its gifts of insight and leadership, and to provide the mutually agreed upon resources in a timely way. Sponsors respect this mutual contract by timely and complete remittance of the "Fair Share" financial support.