

New Dining & Conference

The cornerstone of the facilities plan for the retreat season is the new dining and conference facility, which will also serve as much needed rainy day program space for summer conferences. This new building will make it possible to convert the Cedars into space that will house two or three groups of a size that is typical of the groups that now use Silver Lake during the retreat season. The existing Retreat Center will be replaced and other retreat season buildings will be renovated to achieve a uniformly higher standard of accommodation, greater energy efficiency, and handicap access throughout.

This construction and renovation program represents a significant investment in the youth and adult ministry programs for the churches of the Connecticut Conference. It will modestly increase the capacity at Silver Lake, but more importantly it will enable the facility to be operated at a much higher utilization rate, because the renovations and new construction will accommodate more groups at the same session.

Annual Meeting Action

Our architectural firm, Susan Maxman Associates, is creating the designs for the building renovations and construction as recommended in the Strategic Plan. A specific goal for the campaign will be presented for vote at the Annual Meeting of the Conference in October 2005.



The Campaign for Silver Lake

**A Campaign of the
Churches of the
Connecticut Conference
Summary of the Case for
Support**

Silver Lake Conference Center

For almost 50 years Silver Lake has been the center for the Outdoor Ministry programs of the Connecticut Conference. Silver Lake has been an integral part of the youth ministry of many churches in Connecticut. This is a place where people of all ages but especially youth:

- ✦ share the experience of a nurturing Christian community
- ✦ explore their identity and grow as Christ's disciples
- ✦ discover their gifts for leadership in the church and in the world
- ✦ volunteer as deans, counselors, and camp staff for summer conferences

Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that Silver Lake will continue to be a vital and viable part of the ministry of the churches of the Connecticut Conference.

Recognizing its importance in the life of the Conference, the Board of Directors authorized the development of a Strategic Plan for Ministry for Silver Lake Conference Center, and hired Kaleidoscope, Inc., as consultants. This comprehensive plan was completed in June 2005, after a six-month process of data gathering and evaluation of the site, facilities and management systems.

Strategic Plan

A key finding of the Strategic Plan is that the long-term viability of Silver Lake requires upgrading and renovation of many of the buildings, and the replacement of one, the Retreat Center. Some of them are old and, frankly, rather shabby after years of hard use. Almost all of the buildings are due for renovation simply because they were designed for the needs of the past and do not meet our current and future needs for housing smaller groups and for greater energy efficiency.

Renovation of the Silver Lake facilities has already begun. A new Health and Welcome Center is in the final stages of completion. Some of the oldest buildings, the summer cabins, are being replaced thanks to the gifts of materials and labor by many churches. Some 11 of the nineteen projected new cabins have already been completed and have been used in the 2005 summer conference season. When that "sweat equity" project is completed we will have a capacity for 225 summer conferees with volunteer counselors in 5 or 6 "villages".



The Campaign for Silver Lake will address these other Summer Conference facilities:

- ✦ a meeting and program lodge with deans' rooms for each cabin village
- ✦ new bathroom and shower facilities
- ✦ expanded dining space and refurbishing of the Social Hall
- ✦ conversion of the existing maintenance shed into a new and larger Arts Center
- ✦ refurbished space for nature and environmental programs
- ✦ improvements to the waterfront

While most of us think of Silver Lake primarily in terms of summer conferences, more people actually use the facilities during the retreat season. With the goal of making Silver Lake an attractive and affordable resource for both youth and adults during the retreat season, the Campaign for Silver Lake will create:

- ✦ quality sleeping and meeting spaces for 200 youth and adults
- ✦ dorm style accommodations (bunks, shared baths) with meeting space for a wide variety of group sizes
- ✦ semi-private rooms for 2 to 4 people with attached baths to accommodate between 50 and 70 people in two to three lodges
- ✦ a new dining facility with seating for 200 at meals and with separate meeting space, also seating 200