

Faribault Rotary Camp History

In the early 1960's, Dorothy Fredrickson, wife of Rotarian Felix Fredrickson presented the Faribault Area Girls Camp Committee a gift of \$12,000 that was to be used to establish a camp which was to be dedicated to camping opportunities for girls in the Faribault community. Mrs. Fredrickson was an ardent advocate of opportunities for girls and women.

The Girls Camp Committee included Nancy Jirik, Shirlee Madow, Marcia Onkka and Irene Hoysler. Their first order of business was to locate lakeshore property that was close to the Faribault area. Their searches lead them to Basil Heselton who owned property that suited their needs on the north shore of Cedar Lake in Shieldsville Township. Convincing Basil to sell the land was easy since his wife had been active in scouting activities prior to her death.

Once the land had been found, the committee felt they would need some assistance to help in their efforts to purchase the land so they could proceed with their project and fulfill Mrs. Fredrickson's request. Many of the committee member's husbands were Rotarians so they approached the Faribault Rotary Club to see if they would be willing to participate in this venture. The agreements were drawn up and the group established the organization which would be known as the Faribault Youth Service.

Once this new Board was established they decided to expand the mission and purpose of the camp which would now include not only camping opportunities for girls but for all youth and the Faribault community in general. Contributions, both monetary and labor were solicited. The first order of business was to establish access to the property. A large culvert and driveway would need to be constructed across a drainage creek and ditch which isolated the land.

The Rotary Camp is located on the shores of Cedar Lake which is 8 miles west of Faribault. The camp consists of about 18 acres of natural state which includes woods, wetlands, and one open grassy area, along with 2000 feet of lakeshore

The project has been the pride of many Rotarians over the past 50 years. Rotarians have been responsible for the tree planting, brush removal, lakeshore improvement and the construction of the lodge facility. The three season (rustic) building contains a kitchen, appliances such as an electric stove, microwave, refrigerator and a sink. It also has picnic tables, a fireplace and two indoor restrooms. It can handle up to 100 people. In addition it has a large walk around exterior deck almost as large as the building itself. Other features include a dock and a campfire site. There is plenty of outdoor space available for outdoor activities. The use of tents is greatly encouraged.

The Rotary Youth Camp has been the site for many day camps for Brownies and Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, the Faribault Day Activity Center and church youth groups. It has also provided overnight camping opportunities for Boy Scouts and 4H groups. The camp has also played host to Boy Scout troops from states south of Minnesota as they travel to the Boundary Waters Canoe area. For several years the Faribault Rotary Club hosted a camp for all the in-bound Rotary Exchange Students in the district. It is also a unique location for reunions and company picnics.

The Rotary Camp has been and will continue to be a great asset for the years to come!