

2016 Annual Report

It's not at all unusual, in the off-season, for us to find an older gentleman or lady poking around camp, perhaps with a spouse and/or family, maybe grandkids, in tow. Most likely, it's an alum... maybe back for the first time since childhood, looking very much "at home", and explaining in detail to his or her other half, and perhaps kids, which cabin he was in, where the dining hall is, how cold the lake was, who her counselors were, remembering Chief and Calla. We always enjoy seeing these folks. Some stay in touch frequently, some not so much. But all are welcome.

Stories come out. The common themes we hear repeated over and over:

"Camp meant so much to me as a child."

"Camp friends have lasted over the years."

"I learned life skills here."

"I remember that trip to Cantrell Creek/the Nantahala/Linville Gorge/... it rained for days, and we had a ball."

It's hard not to be prejudiced, but I do think that the camp experience is hugely important to many kids. It's certainly different from almost any other experience it's possible to give our young folks. There are challenges, physical, mental and social, and also the guidance and the tools to overcome those challenges. When a kid who comes to camp afraid of the water learns to swim, or another who's scared of bears in the woods goes on a three day backpacking trip, or in some way overcomes a fear or a handicap, we all cheer. It can be life changing.

The enclosed, lightly edited, letter from Gordon Grant is as eloquent a confirmation of that as I've ever seen. It's worth reading. It's about a kid here on scholarship, one who needed camp more than most.

Mondamin and Green Cove attempt to serve a broad range of economic backgrounds. In 2016, the camps provided \$114,525 in financial aid, roughly 25% of which (\$28,701) was underwritten by the Frank and Calla Bell Scholarship Foundation. This contribution represents about 5% of the total assets of the fund, a level designed to allow the fund to grow. We are working to build a foundation which will cover an even higher level of financial aid: our long term goal is \$5,000,000. The fund grew by \$107,000 in 2016, even after its contribution for '16 financial aid.

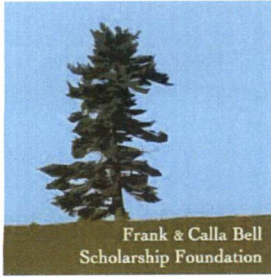
The generosity and enthusiasm of our donors, which include (but aren't limited to) an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 alumni and alumnae, is tremendously important to the effort. We'd like to count you among the supporters. A really fun way to contribute is to join us for a paddling clinic in May (proceeds go to the fund), and/or for alumni camp on Labor Day weekend... Friends of the Foundation attend free (details at www.chiefandcalla.org).

There's a lot more on that website, including information on who the board members are, how to donate, etc. You are also welcome to contact me personally if you have questions with which I can help. I can be reached at frankdbell@gmail.com, or 828 243-4590.

Sincerely,

Frank Bell
Chair, FCBSF

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Frank and Calla Bell Scholarship Foundation, Inc.

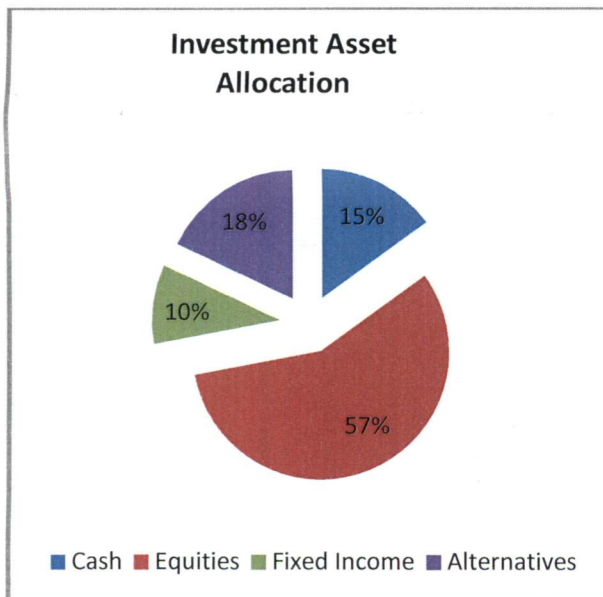
Financial and Asset Allocation Information

Fiscal Year Ending December 2016

Statement of Activities

Changes in Net Assets

Net Assets 01/01/2016	\$534,346
Gifts/Contributions	\$109,849
Investment Income	\$10,238
Net Realized Gains (Losses)	\$3,702
Net Unrealized Gains (Losses)	\$16,225
Scholarships	(\$28,701)
Investment Management Fees	(\$226)
Accounting	(\$395)
Printing/Postage & Other Income/Expenses	(\$1,049)
Compensation Expense	(\$2,400)
Net Assets 12/31/16	\$641,589



Balance Sheet	12/31/2016
<u>Net Assets</u>	
Cash	\$97,988
Investments	\$543,601
<u>Liabilities</u>	<u>0</u>
Total liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$641,589</u>

“Tommy”

(Tommy - not his real name - was a camper some years back, from Asheville. He was African American, very overweight, and a non-swimmer, but very willing to try. Gordon Grant – also a former Mondamin camper and staff member, and at the time a school principal for an alternative school in Asheville – was his sponsor. Gordon came for a visit one day.)

Frank,

When I arrived at camp yesterday, it was a pretty slow afternoon. Most of the big trips are out of camp, and the only campers left are the real youngsters and the ones who counselors, as I recall, often categorize as unskilled or unmotivated to acquire skills. Not the glamour part of camp – nothing exciting going on. Yet, if one believes that adventure is activity on personal frontiers, there was plenty going on, and it was amazing.

Tommy's parents are astonished at the transformation that has been wrought over the summer, and it is having no small effect on them as well. They see the positive changes in his physique and self confidence and they are applying those same changes at home so that he will build on them when he returns. Literally: they will probably change where they live, they are changing their dietary and exercise habits. He has changed dietary habits, lost weight, gone on hiking trips, tried riding, climbing, and a number of other activities and been a willing participant in sampling things that are way, way out of his comfort zone. Most importantly, he has overcome the fear of swimming. When he and I went down to swim, he flung himself off the dock and vanished into the water. He stayed down for a few seconds, rising slowly. I looked over to see if Mark (head of swimming) was concerned with the disappearance and he just smiled and said:

“He sure couldn't do that at the start of camp.”

When Tommy and I swam around – and believe me, he is still a struggling and awkward swimmer – I marveled at what courage it must have taken to get into the water when he wasn't at all sure the first time he did it if he would rise to the surface. THAT's cutting loose! That's extreme adventure! That is identical to the feeling of commitment, the fear an athlete feels when confronted by a big rapid like Gorilla, or running it out on a thin section of 5.11 face climbing. There is no real difference. You could even argue that it's more of a leap into the unknown for a beginner, because in those other situations one at least has some skill sets in place and is making some rational judgments about whether those skill sets are ready for the challenge. But Tommy has risen to the surface: he's gaining confidence, and he's drownproofed – **he can do something no one else in his family can do**: stay in the water and afloat and treading it for twenty or more minutes, a skill that could easily save his life some day. To watch him awkwardly and gamely try to improve on that, to learn the crawl and the elementary back stroke (which might take him another summer or two to accomplish at this rate) – that was very moving and inspiring, and I climbed out of the water as impressed with the accomplishment as with any athletic event that I have ever seen.

It goes beyond whether or not the struggling learner ever gets particularly good in an activity. Moving a camper from being a non swimmer to being drownproofed in a summer is a much bigger accomplishment than just polishing up a set of skills that move a camper from the Nantahala to the Ocoee: the first accomplishment completely changes a life, the second is an enhancement.

Best,
Gordon