

MAIL CALL

SKYLAND'S INK-AND-PAPER ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

Confidence Can Be Gained in Just One Summer

7 in 10 girls believe they are not good enough or do not measure up in some way, including their looks, performance in school and relationships with family and friends.

- Real Girls, Real Pressure: National Report on the State of Self-Esteem, Dove Self-Esteem Fund

Taking a chance. Forging your identity. Feeling a sense of pride in who you are. Feeling brave enough to introduce yourself first.

Can a girl gain confidence in the span of just a few weeks? Absolutely. She just needs the right environment.

Summer camps, particularly overnight camps, offer an opportunity unlike any other to build resilience while learning new skills to bolster a girl's physical abilities, confidence and emotional intelligence. While gathering research for his article on summer camps and resilience in *Psychology Today*, Dr. Michael Unger spoke with 300 camp directors. In these conversations, he discovered a common thread for increasing a child's confidence. (Continued on Pg. 4)

SPRING 2017

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It's almost here!
Skyland's Centennial Celebration
August 4-6, 2017

"Courage, sacrifice, determination, commitment, toughness, heart, talent, guts. That's what little girls are made of."
--Bethany Hamilton



Alumnae Work Weekend

May 26-29, 2017

Join us for the weekend to ready Skyland for the summer! Reconnect with fellow alumnae. Alumnae and guests (21+) are welcome.

Mother-Daughter Weekend

June 9-11, 2017

This popular weekend of mother-daughter bonding and trying out camp is for moms and their K-6th grade daughters.

Skyland Summer

June 24-July 29, 2017

Our full traditional camp session is a special one as we celebrate our Centennial. We kick off another 100 years of inspiring girls!

What We're Reading: *Untangled*



untangled

GUIDING TEENAGE GIRLS
THROUGH THE
SEVEN TRANSITIONS
INTO ADULTHOOD

Lisa Damour, Ph.D.

"For years people have been asking me for the 'girl's equivalent of Raising Cain,' and I haven't known exactly what to recommend. Now I do."
—MICHAEL THOMPSON, Ph.D., co-author of RAISING CAIN

Are you experiencing a push-pull relationship with your teenage daughter? Or are you worried this will be the case when your little girl grows into a teen? You're not alone.

Author Lisa Damour, PhD., and director of the Laurel School's Center for Research on Girls, has worked extensively with teens, and trains graduate students in adolescent counseling. The information in her book isn't unique to this generation; in many ways, the advice feels timeless without falling into cliché.

The book addresses the fact that it is normal to experience confusion and bewilderment as a parent. Dr. Damour's sound advice in *Untangled* can make parents more confident in holding boundaries for their teen girls providing a healthier environment for all.

According to Dr. Damour, girls need to know they are safe, that you are in charge, and you have her back. A teen's job IS to test boundaries. Our job as parents is to hold the line firmly with love. A parent can be an authority figure and still have fun with their children. Well-managed conflicts are useful and a necessary part of growing up into adults. Don't eliminate conflicts for your daughter; teach her how to successfully negotiate them.

As written in a recent article about teens in *The Wall Street Journal*, some girls try to cope with problems by sharing too much or attacking others on social media. Dr. Damour suggests curbing social-media use and guiding girls toward face-to-face activities instead.

Overnight camps such as Skyland are structured specifically to do this; disconnecting all girls from the internet and providing an environment where all activities involve rich interactions with each other. Perhaps that is one reason we loved reading *Untangled*!

Untangled is currently available in hardcover, e-book, and paperback.

Skyland Spotlight: Wendy Burns

We are excited to announce that Skyland has hired a new director who is joining the existing camp leadership team.

“We performed a diligent search in 2016 to find someone with deep experience in girls residential camping, as well as someone who would understand and embrace Skyland’s unique culture and rich history,” said Sherry Brown, Co-Owner and Executive Director. “This was particularly important given the expected 2017 departure of Madi Weisberg, a much loved and highly-valued member of Skyland’s leadership team who has moved to Montana to explore new adventures.”

“The first time I sat on the back steps of the Big House I fell in love with Skyland,” said Wendy. “I am over-the-moon excited about this summer; getting to meet girls and staff, having the opportunity to be a part of the centennial season, and being allowed to help guide Skyland into its next hundred years.”

Wendy will work side-by-side with Skyland’s year-round team to help enrich each camper’s summer experience and provide thoughtful leadership and support to all of our staff.

“Wendy will be a beautiful addition to the Skyland team,” says Kay Anderson, Senior Director. “We’re simply thrilled that she has joined us to help usher Skyland into its second century of operation. She has tremendous alignment with Skyland’s mission, and a passion for youth development, girls leadership and outdoor education. Her breadth and depth of experience are impressive, but even more so is her love of the camp world and the power that it has in shaping girls, families and future generations.”

Before joining us, Wendy served as the Director of Outdoor Programming and Property for the Girl Scouts Carolinas Peaks to Piedmont council. Over two years, she helped to increase camp use and improve programming for their girls. She also served



Skyland's new summer camp director, Wendy Burns

as the VP of Membership and Resident Director for the Girl Scout Council of Vermont, and was a middle school counselor for Stowe Middle School in Vermont.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in liberal studies and a Master of Education degree in school counseling from Vermont College. She is a licensed school counselor and a certified Red Cross and Archery instructor. She served as an American Camp Association (ACA) Standards Review Board Member for two and a half years, and currently volunteers as a Standards Visitor for ACA’s Southeast Region.

Wendy was recognized by the American Camp Association as a Pioneer of Camping at their national awards ceremony in New Mexico, receiving merit for her 30+ years of service within the camping community.

Say hello to Wendy before summer!

Email: wendy@skylandcamp.com

Confidence Can Be Gained in One Summer, *continued*

“The best camping experiences offer opportunities for manageable amounts of risk and responsibility, what I term the *risk taker’s advantage*,” he writes.

Camp counselors and camp leaders offer this balance of risk and responsibility for each girl, meeting them where they are on an emotional and mental level so their challenges help them gain confidence and grow just outside of their comfort zones. Spending more than two weeks in a new environment, away from the expectations of their daily social group, presents a deeply immersive opportunity for girls to practice new social-emotional skills and be more authentic. At Skyland, where girls are encouraged to “come as they are,” girls have the freedom to be their true selves without judgement or criticism. This environment of acceptance is a natural boost to self-confidence.



For example, Blossom,* a rising 6th grader, attended Skyland Camp as a first-time camper last summer. Prior to arriving at Skyland, Blossom and her sibling had only attended day camps. Both parents had attended overnight camp when they were younger. “We felt it was time for her to have that experience of being on her own, to learn how to be on her own, to make friends and learn coping skills,” her father said.

According to her mom and dad, Blossom was a very shy, reserved girl. Realizing a lot about herself and her personal needs, she learned how to get along with others and also how to be independent. In our overly-connected world, feeling comfortable without the crutch of social media and electronics is a big hurdle for children and adults alike. “We saw growth in her when we picked her up,” her dad remarked. “She felt more mature to us. She had had more life experiences. That was very big for us as parents.”

There are three things at camp that increase a girl’s confidence: responsibility, decision-making, and learning to manage the eustress (good stress) of a new adventure.

Responsibility comes from accepting and completing responsibilities assigned by others. Examples include: keeping cabin and bunk areas organized, working together as a team in the cabin and during activities, and cleaning up a campsite in the woods so “no trace is left behind.” There is an additional type of responsibility that is learned at overnight camp through self-generated actions to help others such as supporting fellow campers, proactively leading a group under the supervision of a counselor, or volunteering to go first in an activity. *Continued on page 5*

Confidence Can Be Gained in One Summer, *continued*

Decision-making begins before a camper even arrives at Skyland. To prepare for sleepaway camp, she needs to decide on clothing, personal items, necessities and logistics while packing. She needs to decide how often she will remain in contact with friends and family while she is away. And, upon arrival at camp, she will need to decide which activities to pursue. As a result, she will commit to values she holds dear to herself, solidifying her confidence that she can make the best choices for her success.

Finally, **learning to manage the eustress** of a new environment is a key component in increasing a girl's confidence. For example, consider "Lucy" who started camp the summer before 5th grade. "We knew she had independence issues at home, and I felt like she needed to go somewhere to gain more confidence, to gain more independence," said, her mother.

Lucy attends a small private school, so there has always been the same environment, the same group of people, the same activities. After speaking with friends who had attended summer camp and had made lifelong friends, Lucy's mother thought it would be a great opportunity for Lucy to branch out. "I wanted her to be able to expand on her own and to have her own thing, to build independent friendships on her own." Lucy, in turn, was excited for her first year at Skyland. When asked if she was nervous, she replied, "No, I think it will be fun."



During her first summer at overnight camp, Lucy tried things she never tried before. She learned about chores and accountability. She discovered the power of making her own choices in activities, in friendships, and in daily habits such as deciding what needed to go into her backpack for her day's activities. She also learned new skills, great habits and a wonderful sense of her own independence. "She embraced an umbrella of newness."

"Brand new camp parents need to recognize that they should 'let her fly,'" stated Lucy's mother. "These experiences will help. If they are always attached to us, they'll never be independent."

According to the organization Girls Inc, 74% of girls say they are under pressure to please others. They second-guess their decisions and actions, and suffer from low self-esteem. We can improve that statistic by creating healthy environments that allow girls to gain self-confidence and embrace who they are. One summer at Skyland could be the perfect antidote!

Director's Corner

I love that this issue of Mail Call is focused on confidence! Skyland has been such a key factor in inspiring confidence in girls for 100 years.

It all started with my grandmother, "Granny Harris," who had the courage and confidence to join a circle of men who were bidding at an auction for parcels of the Skyland property – at a time when women didn't do that kind of thing. Not only did she join the bidding, but she had the *confidence* to make a bold bid in order to preserve the land she loved for the future of Skyland Camp. In today's lingo one might ask, "Who does that?"

The answer, of course, is "Skylanders do that!" All of us alumnae have fond memories of trying new things at camp and of the confidence we gained as a result.

Thank you to the generations of Skyland staff and counselors who have inspired confidence in campers by their encouraging words, by example, or by simply believing that each camper had the inner strength to accomplish her goals. Please join us this summer at Skyland's Centennial Celebration as we celebrate the gift of confidence (and so many other things!) that Skyland has provided over the years.



See you soon on Skyland Hill!

Sherry Brown, Executive Director

Reflections of Our Centennial Season

This reunion gives me the opportunity to "come home." I didn't experience Skyland as a camper but I did spend ten wonderful summers in the 1980s as a staff member. The Celebration will bring me back to the Hill for the first time to attend an event and I am excited.

Celebrating 100 years means honoring our history and raising awareness of the people and events that bring us to this time. There would be no Skyland if there had not been a beginning. Understanding the journey from then to now will make us truly appreciate what we each have experienced on this hill in the beautiful Western North Carolina mountains.

--Susan Threlkel

Social media has allowed me to connect with many Skyland friends that I have not seen in many years. I look forward to hugging many long lost friends and meeting their families.

It is through the love and efforts of the Harris-Brown family that Skyland celebrates its century of influencing the lives of young women. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to gather the largest group of alumnae and future alumnae to celebrate Skyland and thank the Harris-Brown family for continuing the tradition of developing friendships and empowering young women to be the best they can be.

--Darden Yerkes

Behind The Scenes: Preparing for Skyland's Centennial

Skyland's Centennial committee is busy, busy, busy as they prepare for the big celebration weekend August 4-6, 2017.

But who, exactly, IS the committee and what are they doing behind the scenes?

The Centennial committee consists of nine alumnae volunteers who represent a wide span of Skyland generations. It was important to have each generation and decade represented on the committee.

The group, ranging in age from early 20s to mid-70s, has been working together in beautiful and meaningful ways. Communication is smooth and everyone is having a great time coordinating the event. Teamwork and the importance of communication across generations was instilled in them from their time at camp!

"The most exciting part of planning is definitely the people," says Madi Weisberg, Centennial Celebration Coordinator. "As tempting as the ice cream and chocolate sauce may be, what is driving people to come to the celebration is the community and the connection. Through our outreach efforts, we've reconnected with Skylanders who will be returning to the Hill after for the first time in thirty or forty years."

Since registration opened early this year, the committee has seen a flurry of activity. Lodging in the Big House and cabins is already sold out. There are still rooms available, at discounted rates at Lake Junaluska, and Skyland will have a free shuttle to transport folks from Lake Junaluska to camp. The committee anticipates the weekend number of attendees may be bigger than they initially projected, which is exciting.



The Centennial Celebration will give alumnae and attendees a chance to relive memories and enjoy "traditional" camp activities and food. Horseback riding, Tallyho and Trossach games, singing camp songs, fried chicken, and more are on the schedule.

Additionally, the weekend will feature some new and special activities:

- A recording booth where people will be able to audibly record their favorite memories and contribute to Skyland's official history. Inspired by the podcast, *StoryCorps*, these audio recordings preserve the most important part of Skyland: its people.
- An attic costumes photo booth will offer a chance to get silly again and flaunt what you've got.
- Attendees will get to sit around the nightly bonfire and enjoy storytelling with Bunny and the Brown family.
- An historical timeline and panel will highlight the strength and spirit of camp through the decades.

Continued on page 8

Behind The Scenes: Preparing for Skyland's Centennial, *cont.*

"As we bring together Skyland's different generations, we see that even with variations in people, traditions, and the state of the world at the time, there is a central theme to our experiences: Skyland welcomes campers as they are and wraps them in a community that inspires them to flourish," says Madi. "This celebration is about honoring that ever-important legacy and all of the people who have been a part of it as we propel Skyland to continue this work in its second century."

The weekend will spotlight this legacy that Granny Harris left behind with a special auction. Proceeds from the auction will go to the Skyland Camp for Girls Campership Fund, which set a new fabulous goal of raising \$50,000 this year. A campership, like a scholarship but for camp, provides financial support to families whose campers would not otherwise be able to attend Skyland. The Fund is operated through a partnership with the American Camp Association, a nonprofit public benefit corporation, so all donations to the Fund are tax-deductible. The Campership Fund not only opens doors for those with financial need, it strengthens the Skyland family through making Skyland more accessible to campers of diverse backgrounds.

Suzanne Hoover Klimek, committee member, attended Skyland Camp from 1971 to 1984. "I think this Centennial Celebration is important because we will not only celebrate the last 100 years, but we will lay the groundwork for propelling Skyland into the next hundred years by renewing our commitment to its spirit and providing support for future campers' attendance at Skyland," she says. "This reunion is a party with a purpose!"

The Centennial Team Has Volunteer Openings For YOU

If you want to join the planning and coordination efforts leading up to the big weekend, the Centennial Celebration committee has several volunteer openings. Before the weekend event, the team needs volunteers to help with:

- Centennial event outreach
- Coordination of auction items
- Creative logistics planning
- Organization of alumnae updates and content
- and more!

Details about these positions can be found at: <http://www.skylandcentennial.com/volunteer>



There will also be plenty of volunteer opportunities for the weekend of the celebration itself.

Contact Madi Weisberg:
alumnae@skylandcamp.com and the team will get you on board!

Alumnae Updates

Share your own memories, updates, and lessons learned when you update your alumnae record.
Update online at SkylandCamp.com/alumnae

Julia Durham got married this past summer and is enjoying wedded bliss. One of her bridesmaids included Skyland alumna, **Ann Lowry Brown**. Julia and Ann became friends at Skyland when they worked together as co-counselors.

Anna Hugli Knowles ('73-84) is proud to announce she is a grandmother again! Her daughter, Whitney Knowles, gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, William Everette Cowart. Although being a Skyland camper is out for him, she says "workerboy is still a possibility in the future."



Anna Hugli Knowles' grandson, William

Whitney Atkinson ('95-98, '02, '03) is excited to announce she said "Yes!" on December 11, 2016 and is engaged to Benjamin Becker.

Jodi Underhill ('62-68) was widowed in 2012. She continues to help individuals and families as a Florida-licensed mental health counselor since she began in 2007.



Jodi Underhill

Pamela Turlington Ilorens ('61-63) is enjoying a new slice of sunny Florida since she moved from Miami to Chiefland. She retired from teaching after thirty-four wonderful years in the profession.



Pamela Turlington Ilorens

Nancy Brown announces that **Elizabeth Brown** married Gene Pearson in January. **Katherine Brown** married Miles Welch in June 2015.

Sally Whittle Stein ('60-'62) lives in the beautiful mountains of Asheville, North Carolina. She was lucky enough to find her way back to the Smokies twenty-five years ago. She would love to attend another reunion and sing the old camp songs.

Marian (Hurlbut) Jayne recently revisited Skyland--along with her husband--for the first time in 40 years! They enjoyed a great visit with Bunny, talked about the changes as well as reminiscing about old Jacksonville connections. "What a treat!" she says.

Ellen (McMillan) Hickl ('85-'98) married Matthew Hickl on March 25, 2007. Her daughter, Sarah Grace, was born on February 16, 2009, followed by the birth of her son, Hank, on March 29, 2011.

Empowering Girls to Become Confident Young Women: *The Campership Fund*

To kick off Skyland's second century of empowering and inspiring girls and young women, the camp's leadership team recently announced a new campaign to raise \$50,000 for Skyland Campership Fund. Camperships, closely related to scholarships, are grants that support a camper's attendance at summer camp. Skyland makes camperships available for families who demonstrate financial need to help cover the cost of tuition.

As a woman who has experienced the magic of a Skyland summer, this is a beautiful opportunity for you to be able to support a Skyland experience for a young girl who may not otherwise have the opportunity. Your gift to the Fund directly underwrites her session so she can explore, play, learn, and discover the potential within herself.

Who are our Campership Fund recipients?

Each recipient has her own unique story to tell...that's the beauty of the Fund. The camper you support may be a girl from your same state, or she may be from the opposite coast. This may be her first time arriving at summer camp, with a smile on her face and butterflies in her stomach. Or this may be her third summer, the one that will make all the difference in how she thrives in the next school year. Staying true to the Skyland mission, Skyland inspires each camper to become the best version of themselves. The Skyland Campership Fund empowers girls so they can shape the world around them into a better place as a result of the values they've learned on Skyland Hill.

5 Key Things You Should Know About the Campership Fund

1. The Campership Fund is earmarked through the ACA (American Camp Association), a third-party nonprofit, so your gift is completely tax deductible.
2. Campership Funds are used to support new campers, as well as established Skyland families whose financial circumstances may have changed.
3. The Fund is a unique way for previous generations of Skyland women to empower the next generation of girls.
4. Skyland alumnae can donate to the Campership fund through annual giving, monthly recurring payments, sponsoring a single camper for multiple summers, establishing an endowment, through estate gifts or through a one-time donation.
5. Contributions can be made securely online or by mail with check or credit card.

To learn more and donate, visit: SkylandCamp.com/donate

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CONNECTION. CREATIVITY.

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Skyland Camp for Girls inspires girls to be curious, creative, confident and connected to each other, and to the world.