



May 4, 2012

## Camp Ernst undergoing renovations

*By Stephanie Salmons*

Campers heading to YMCA Camp Ernst this summer will notice some changes under way.

The facility, which opened at the location on Camp Ernst Road in 1930, is in the first phase of the camp's first major renovation since the 1970s, thanks to the "For the Love of Camp Ernst Capital Campaign."

Camp Ernst executive director Eli Cochran said the goal was to raise \$4 million for the renovations. Just under \$3 million has currently been raised.

Two projects – two new bath houses – will be completed by this summer while another – a new welcome and health center – should be finished by this fall, she said.

The remainder of the planned projects will be left for a future phase that will "hopefully get started" within the next year, Cochran said.

Both new bath houses replace older structures.

One of the new bath houses under construction replaces one originally built in the 1940s.

It's "lived a great life," Cochran said, but was outdated "and really needed to be replaced."

"The new one is bigger and will be a better function for the campers," she said.

The second soon-to-be completed bath house will also replace an older one in the camp's "leadership village."

"It serves the function we need at camp now," Cochran said.

Funded with a lead gift from the Schiff Foundation, Cochran said the new welcome and health center will house the camp's administration functions, a health center for the camp nurse and a basement storm shelter while improving safety by allowing camp leaders to better monitor those coming and going.

"It's so great that in this climate, people still see the value of the camp experience and they want to give back and make sure camp is available for generations to come," Cochran said.

Other planned renovations include a new pool, kitchen, horse barn, fine arts center and some camper cabins, according to Cochran.

"We have worked very hard to create the best camp program, but our facilities have seen a lot of kids," she said.

According to Cochran, the camp offers nine one-week sessions and sees around 3,000 kids a summer.

It's time to put new buildings in place so the camp can "continue to carry on for the next 80 years," she said.

### Additional Facts

Open houses planned

Two open houses for potential camper families will be held from 1-4 p.m. May 6 and May 20.

The May 6 open house will be followed by "Bringing in the New Light" from 4-6 p.m. to thank those who contributed to the For the Love of Camp Ernst Capital Campaign goal and to tour the facilities. Those interested in attending "Bringing in the New Light" should RSVP by calling 513-362-2012.

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