

CONTACT

PIONEER CLUBS®

in

SUMMER 2006

Octogenarian Club Leader Still Going Strong

When Nora Schuster was first asked to be a Pioneer Clubs leader at First Presbyterian Church in Trenton, Michigan, she readily agreed. "I have always been ready to serve the Lord, so I said I would certainly try," Nora remembers.

That was 25 years ago. Nora, now 81, still sits cross-legged on the floor with her Voyager Club members for songfests and Bible explorations. "At 81, God can still use me," says Nora. "I can still sit on the floor with them, play games, learn songs, do crafts. My 'cup of tea' is to teach them about prayer."

Working with young girls has filled a void in Nora's life. "Never having had children of my own, it warms my heart to watch them open up to each other and to us leaders," she says. "They come in so shy, and slowly they begin to learn their Bible lessons and verses and how to get along with each other and with us."

Almost half of the girls in Nora's club don't attend First Presbyterian Church or don't attend church at all. "They so

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often don't come from Christian homes," Nora says. "I can teach [them] Bible verses that will stay with them forever, and help make them aware of how much Jesus loves them."

Nora's love for her club members is evident in how she interacts with them, says April Schrameck, Pioneer Clubs coordinator. "Nora loves the girls," April says. "She does an amazing job with the Bible awards."

The Pioneer Clubs program at First Presbyterian Church recently celebrated 40 years of ministry. It involves 100 girls in grades one through twelve. This year, 19 girls received highest honor awards. Several club members have completed the Camp Cherith® Campers in Leadership Training program. In recent years, two members have received the Virginia C. Patterson Continuing Education college scholarship award.

One of the reasons behind the program's success is devoted, long-term leaders like Nora. "Pioneer Clubs at First Presbyterian is built on strong traditions," says April Schrameck. "We depend on the Lord and on prayer. Our leaders are so dedicated."

It looks as though First Presbyterian Church can continue to depend on Nora, who doesn't see herself retiring from Pioneer Clubs leadership soon. "I plan to be there until the Lord tells me different," she says. 🙏

Club Members Hit the Trails for the 9th Annual Kids for Kids Hike



Club members, leaders, family members, and friends hit the trails this spring for the ninth annual Pioneer Clubs Kids for

Kids Hike. In addition to walking, kids enjoyed a variety of activities connected to their hikes. Club members from Centro Evangelistico Magdiel in Laredo, Texas, for example, observed native plants and animals with the help of a

tour guide during their hike at the Lamar Bruni Vergara Environmental Science Center.

Hikers from Bethel Bible Church in Decatur, Illinois, enjoyed a similar

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experience hiking at the Rock Springs Center for Environmental Discovery. According to hike coordinator Cheryl Mahnke, the hike coincided with the center's Spring Festival, so kids were able to participate in hands-on activities and learn about various



◀ Club members at Amity United Methodist Church in Mount Vernon, Ohio, hiked at Kokosing Campgrounds in Fredericktown.

◀ (photo courtesy of Kim Beaver)



(photo courtesy of René Johnson)

◀ Hikers from Sure Fellowship Church in Walkersville, Maryland, did a splatter painting art project as part of their hike.

Club members from First Christian Church in Johnson City, Texas, hiked at Pedernales State Falls Park. ▼



(photo courtesy of Maria Puente)

Hikers at Centro Evangelistico Magdiel in Laredo, Texas, hiked the Paso del Indio Nature Trail at the Lamar Bruni Vergara Environmental Science Center.

animals and habitats.

Club members at Sure Fellowship Church in Walkersville, Maryland, worked toward their Voyager Club Outdoors Activity Award during their hike. Hikers felt and sniffed nature items, caught insects and observed them under a magnifying glass, did rubbings of tree bark, and created splatter paintings. According to Club Coordinator René Johnson, the hike gave kids an opportunity to not only observe creation, but to learn to treat it properly. "I'm a nature fanatic," René says. "It's important to teach respect for the creation of Christ."

Hikers from Bethesda Chapel Freewill Baptist Church in Wheelersburg, Ohio, enjoyed a picnic lunch at the church after a two-and-a-half mile hike at Lake Katherine Nature Preserve. "The kids thought they could smell hot dogs five miles away," reports hike co-coordinator Sue King. "Needless to say, they were hungry and ate very well!"

Thirty-five hikers from Eagle Vision Church in Norwalk, Iowa, also enjoyed



(photo courtesy of Cheryl Zoeller)

a hotdog picnic as part of their hike, which was held at Gray's Lake in Des Moines, Iowa.

Alliance Bible Church in Dillsboro, North Carolina, used their hike as an opportunity to promote Pioneer Clubs to the community. After picnicking at a local park, hikers handed out flyers publicizing club and the church's upcoming vacation Bible school program at a nearby retail outlet.

Several churches participated in the Kids for Kids Hike for the first time. Hikers at New Testament Church in Massena, New York, hiked at the nature center at Robert Moses State Park. "It went great for our first time," says hike

coordinator Heather Ramsdell. "We are excited for future hikes!"

Shilo Little, who coordinated the hike at First Southern Baptist Church in Pomeroy, Ohio, echoes Heather's comment. "For our first walk, everything went so well," Shilo reports. "We can't wait to do it again next year!"

Money raised through the Kids for Kids Hike is used to start Pioneer Clubs programs at additional churches so



(photo courtesy of Paula Brown)

▲ Voyager and Pathfinder Club members and leaders from Eagle Vision Church in Norwalk, Iowa, hike at Gray's Lake.

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PIONEER CLUBS' MISSION

To serve God by providing the most effective and educationally sound programs to help children follow Christ in every aspect of life.

Summer Reflections

by Daniel Taetzsch



It's summertime again! A time to have fun, with trips to the beach and picnics by the lake. Taking in a ball game, or embarking on a sight-seeing vacation.

It's also a time to reflect and re-connect with friends and family. Reading a book in the grass under a tree. Sipping a cup of coffee while sitting on the porch step in the coolness of the morning. Conversing on the patio late in the evening.

At the beginning of each summer, I like to ask my three daughters what they will remember best about the past school year's activities, including those they experienced at Pioneer Clubs. When I posed that question this year, I received a variety of answers. Alison, one of my twin daughters, said she would remember producing a skit about Jonah. As she recounted how her group had re-created the story, I could tell that she had learned the Bible lesson well.

Sarah, the other twin, said she would remember the time when her leader, Cardinal, brought in her two dogs and talked about them. The experience gave Sarah more confidence in knowing how to approach some of the dogs we meet while walking in our neighborhood.

Emily, my oldest daughter, thought for a moment and said, "The teachers were nice and it was fun. I liked my leader, Macaw. She earned everyone's trust." Without missing a beat, Sarah added, "That's God! Loving and kind!" Emily and Alison said, "Yeah!"


I had to stop for a moment and process what had just happened. My daughters had quickly recognized and

articulated that they could see God through the actions of others. Thanks to the faithful work of their Pioneer Clubs leaders, my daughters are better able to see God's work in the world.

That's what happens each week during the school year, as Pioneer Clubs leaders across the continent teach kids about the Bible, help them learn practical life skills, and take time to listen and be a friend. After I caught up with my thoughts, I said, "You're right, Sarah, that IS God."

For decades, Pioneer Clubs has carried out its mission of "helping children and youth make Christ Lord in every aspect of life" with excellence. Through Pioneer Clubs and Camp Cherith, the organization provides leadership, training, and resources to make that mission a reality. I know this personally, because I see the result in my children and in the other kids that I meet at Pioneer Clubs.


With your help—by praying regularly for this ministry, volunteering your time, and giving your financial support—Pioneer Clubs will continue play a major role in leading children to know Christ and effecting God's work in their lives.

Have a great summer! 

Daniel Taetzsch is serving his first term on Pioneer Clubs' board of directors. He is Director of Finance for Humana, Inc. Daniel and his wife Cindra attend Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Warrenville, Illinois, where their three daughters are Pioneer Clubs members.

Thanks to all the churches which participated in the 2006 Kids for Kids Hike! If you haven't already sent your hike report and bike contribution, please mail them to: Development Department, Pioneer Clubs, P.O. Box 788, Wheaton, IL 60189-0788. And be sure to include a photo of your hike for posting on our Web site. Digital photos can be e-mailed to info@pioneerclubs.org.

even more children can attend club. Club members who raise pledges for their hike effort act as missionaries by helping other kids learn about Jesus through club.

For a list of churches which participated in the Kids for Kids Hike, visit Pioneer Clubs' Web site at www.pioneerclubs.org. 

In Honor Of...

Peggy Jones

Carolyn Blossom
Gary and Charlyene Wall
William and Alyce Van Til

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In Loving Memory of...

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Rita Landry
Gail Campbell

Mary Alice Montgomery
Peggy Jones
Mary Hackman
Virginia Patterson
Sara Anne Robertson
Sandi Vander Kooi

Dorothy Henderson
Mary Hackman
Virginia Patterson
Sara Anne Robertson



Firsthand Experience In Club and Camp

When I was in third grade, the church where my parents sent me for Sunday school launched a Pioneer Clubs program. Right from the start I loved Pioneer Clubs. Who wouldn't love it? So many neat activities-like playing games, baking cookies, biking, hiking, camping, singing, and a host of other exciting things-kept me, and all the other kids in club, eager for more.

Along with all the "fun" activities, my club leaders faithfully taught us God's Word and showed us how to live our lives in accordance with what the Bible taught. Pioneer Clubs became a great laboratory setting for practicing these biblical principles on a weekly basis.

Over time I was introduced to Pioneer Clubs' camping program. In spite of being pretty much a city kid, I loved Camp Cherith® and enjoyed being in the outdoors. I willingly gave up my city streets and tall buildings for dirt trails and towering pines. I learned so many new things at camp:

- how to light a campfire and cook an entire meal on that fire
- how to read a compass and then hike following its direction
- how to shoot an arrow with a bow and almost hit the target
- how to paddle a canoe and actually reach the other side of the lake
- how to swim and dive

These were pretty exciting things for a 10-year-old city girl!

When my first week of camp was over-which happened all too soon to suit me-I was determined to make Camp Cherith® part of my summer for the rest of my life. We sang a song at

camp called *I'm Going to Camp Until I'm 73*. I wanted that to be true in my life and always sang that song with great gusto.


Learning all the new camp activity skills was fun and I really enjoyed them, but I also discovered many new and exciting things about God and his Word. The same Bible Exploration time I enjoyed at Pioneer Clubs each week was a regular part of the daily routine at Camp Cherith. Camp was where I learned the importance of a regular devotional quiet time with the Lord. I'm fortunate to have learned that habit pretty early in my Christian life. Pioneer Clubs and Camp Cherith played a key role in my early Christian development.



Today, Pioneer Clubs and Camp Cherith continue to influence thousands of young people throughout North America. I count myself fortunate to have had such great grounding in my faith as a result of my club and camp exposure. I know firsthand what club and camp can provide for a child. I invite you to pray with me for today's young people as they experience these same wonderful opportunities this summer. Your prayer and financial support will help us reach this generation with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. Thank you for your faithfulness, and have a wonderful summer.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
(Hebrews 13:8)

Judy Bryson
President



inCONTACT
SUMMER 2006

This report is published quarterly. Send change of address to Pioneer Clubs®, PO Box 788, Wheaton, IL 60189-0788. Printed in USA. Except where noted, photos are from Pioneer Clubs files. All gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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www.pioneerclubs.org	