

Opportunities for Youth

Project 5132-0852

Contact:

Steven and Janet Marx

Kenneth Law

RR #2

Powell River, B.C.

483-9761

LUND FARM DAY CAMP Summer 1973

Final Report

Prepared by

Laurie Derton

Gerry Karagianis

Kenneth Law

Janet Marx

Steven Marx

Elaine Sorenson

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A. How and why were this project's particular activities chosen?

The idea of this project and the application for an OFY grant were worked out by Janet and Steven Marx and Kenneth Law in late winter, 1973. The three of them were living on an old homestead purchased by Janet and Steven in 1970. All three had extensive experience in working at summer camps with children. Their way of life on the homestead with animals, fruit trees, a large garden and relatively primitive facilities in an unusual<sup>ly</sup> beautiful setting could provide a wide range of inspirations and opportunities for educational and recreational experiences for children. They felt a desire to contribute their talents, experiences and facilities to the public good and to do so in a way that would enable them to be independent and create from scratch a new institution that could develop along its own course at its own rate. An OFY grant seemed a fine way to get the pilot project off the ground.

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B. What were the project's objectives and were they met?

1. To create employment and a source of income for people living in Lund and Powell River.
2. To utilize fully, by making available to many, the natural , aesthetic and historical resources of the Lund Farm and its surroundings.

3. To develop an experimental program of activities for children that unifies education and recreation in a rural setting.
4. To create a public institution controlled by local people rather than by outside forces or interests in an area that sorely needs experiments and examples of indigenous community development; to begin channelling government funds into this district.
5. To fill some of the specific social and educational needs of children in this area outlined in the grant application. (cf Appendix)
6. To create a pilot project for the establishment of a permanent socially oriented, publicly funded, multi-programmed summer camp facility on the Lund Farm.

It is the feeling of the staff that these objectives were met. This feeling is confirmed by feedback from the children, their parents, community residents, local radio announcers, the newspaper and social agencies that had dealings with the camp (cf. Appendix). Our original proposal envisioned an enrollment of 12 children per session. In actual fact 25 children were enrolled in each of the three sessions.

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C. What were the key factors in the success or failure of the project to reach its objectives?

1. Planning. The fact that the staff had several weeks to prepare and plan was crucial. While camp was in session, full staff held meetings for one hour after the children went home in the afternoon to evaluate the day's activities and set up for the next morning. The week between sessions, set aside for the same purpose, was equally important. Being well prepared gave

us the freedom to be flexible and discard plans when the occasion demanded.

2. Programming. The projected ideas outlined in the grant application<sup>a.)</sup> (cf. Appendix) for programming worked out well in practise. Involving the children in farm chores - feeding animals, milking, cleaning stalls, working in the garden, making cheese, carding and spinning wool, etc. - and in farm projects - building a dam and a barnyard fence out of natural and salvaged materials - had several consequences. It provided a context of responsibility in which they could relate to each other as partners instead of as buddies or rivals. It also supplied the satisfaction and self confidence that accompanies real accomplishment. In the cases of children with behavior problems, the fact that their negative energy could be channelled into constructive projects instead of resulting in punishment or isolation served to avert repeated conflict situations.

b.) The creative arts program served to liberate imagination in a disciplined framework and heightened children's awareness of the their environment and their own abilities to make beautiful and functional things from it. Children prepared their own meals on the wood cookstove, chopping wood, baking bread, making preserves from berries they picked. They constructed mobiles and sculptures from shells, pieces of driftwood and junk, they made jewelry from beans and alderpearls, they wrote and planned their own plays in unusual and provocative settings.

c.) Trips were planned to break the daily routine and to enrich it. An afternoon at the beach included swimming, exploring, climbing, study of intertidal life forms. Sacks of seaweed were gathered for use as fertilizer in the garden; shells and rocks were collected for arts and crafts projects. A trip to pick up scrap lumber for use as pickets on the barnyard fence included a guided tour of the sawmill. An excursion to the Craig Farm, a nearby homestead hacked out of the bush with only hand



tools 60 years ago was followed up by a model building project in which the children split cedar to make rails, shakes and beams, and assembled a miniature replica of what they had seen.

3. Setting. The farm supplied an ideal setting for the camp. The children sensed that they were not at an exclusively recreational facility, but at a farm and home that has been in continuous use and has traditions going back many years. They regarded the place with respect, but that respect was combined with familiarity and identification, since it was they (with staff direction) who kept the whole show going and developing. The drama of the birth of 11 ducklings, the escape and recapture of the chickens, the progress on the barnyard fence was their own history that they duly recorded in the log book every afternoon before going home. A farm is a small ecosystem. The children could observe and take an essential role in the mutually supporting interaction of natural processes. For example, on a typical morning, they could milk the goat; clean out her stall, take her droppings to the compost box in the garden, harvest the carrots growing in the enriched soil and feed the tops back to the goat. There is much they learned here about natural harmony and human responsibility.

4. The Children. The children's response to the camp is another factor contributing to the success of the project. They were invariably curious receptive and often enthusiastic. They rarely complained, tried their best to concentrate, and with few exceptions got along well with each other and the staff. The way they expressed their appreciation indicated that for many the richness of exposure and denseness of the program was a new experience. They came from a wide range of backgrounds; from prosperous Grief Point to funky Cranberry; sons and daughters of fishermen mill workers, teachers, welfare recipients, <sup>rural communards</sup> engineers. A disproportionately large number came from homes with single parents.

5. Staff. The staff was also of widely varying background (Lund, Powell River, Victoria, Vancouver, New York City, Los Angeles) and ages (17 - 31). All had previous experience working with children; most had worked before in summer camps. All were unemployed before the start of the project. Each member of the staff had special skills to offer the camp; each felt strong dedication to its objectives. Four of the six staff members were actually living on the Farm. There was a high level of trust among the group; on the few occasions when tensions arose they were resolved by open discussion. At the beginning of the summer older members of the staff took much of the initiative in programming and decision making. In the last session the younger counselors moved to the forefront, chairing meetings and taking full responsibility for the community picnic celebration that concluded the summer's activities.

Staff spirit and energy were highest under pressure - on the three overnights held at camp, on overnight camping trips, at the picnic, on rainy days. During the third session, when ~~the daily operation of the camp tended towards routine~~ the daily operation of the camp tended towards routine, staff morale and energy sometimes flagged. At post-camp meetings we agreed that this decrease in morale was largely due to lack of challenge; that we were ready to take on more and needed a greater clarity of aim. This sort of challenge could be provided by a) a more comprehensive farm operation, b) a residence camp, c) a camp for children with special problems, for example, emotionally disturbed children, or especially gifted children.

6. The Grant. One of the most influential factors in the successful operation of LUnd Farm Day Camp was that it was sponsored by public funds without interference. Members of the staff felt a sense of public trust and obligation; the government was benefitting the community by benefitting us. The grant was modest, but sufficient to cover our

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salaries and expenses. There was a need to economiz e, but there was an atmosphere of plenitude about the project. It was not necessary to pinch pennies to increase profits or pay interest; there was no resentment about anybody making hay or being cheated. We believe that any institution dealing with children requires the kind of dedication and disinterestedness that are incompatible with the financial pressures of running a business. Public funding of the camp also made for good relations between the staff and parents - they felt gratitude for getting a 'good deal:' a two week session costing only\$10.- per child.

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(SM)

C. How was the project organized and managed? Did the decision making process change or present problems throughout the summer?

The project was organized and manged by all staff members participating in oral discussions. The ways of making dēcisions was a good way as far as getting things done, but who should run the show, and be the speaker for all, was one problem we ran into. There seemed to be no sēlution to the problem until it was finally brought out in the open and talked about. There we decided to change who should do most of the organizing and things then carried on smoothly. It was a good experience for all the staff.

(LD)

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D. What kind of community support, practical or otherwise, did the project receive? ~~the people of Lund and Powell River~~

The Lund Farm Day Camp related quite well to the surrounding community. Since we were providing their children with a wholesome, high-energy summer experience, the people of Lund and Powell River were generous with the camp.

The Powell River News interviewed Steven and Janet Marx a few days after the application was officially approved. During camp, they sent a photographer out to the farm and devoted a whole page to pictures of the camp (cf. Appendix) Al Purvin, CHQB radio announcer interviewed staff members on his Talk Show once before the camp opened and once before the third session. Local merchants let us put up posters in their establishments. Radio and newspaper coverage was responsible for our high enrollment for the first session. Later on, word of mouth became our best publicity.

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The parents were as enthusiastic and cooperative as their children. The Parents meeting before each session was well attended. Each family that had a vehicle available participated in the daily car-pool. Parents contributed craft supplies and several made costumes for the last play of the summer.

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The Big Brothers Association of Powell River enrolled eight of their 'little brothers', participated in the car-pool and paid registration fees.

Whomever we asked if we could take the children to their beach or homestead or a sawmill or junkyard responded positively. When it came time for the Savary Island overnight trip, the proprietor of the local Marine Machine Shop used his tugboat to ferry the whole camp across the water. We were charged only for gas; boat and crew service were donated.

There was quite a lot of volunteer help on the project. Local artists



stopped by for afternoon workshops. Four teenagers volunteered to work as junior counselors. Any private visitors on the farm became involved with the children, leading or participating in camp activities. There are many more local artists whose talents could be tapped, and would be if the project continues.

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The final Lund Farm Day Camp Picnic and Hoedown was well attended by campers, parents, friends, relatives and neighbors. A Powell River Band played country music for five hours. There was dancing, games, the children's play about the early inhabitants of the farm, and a huge potluck supper.

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We actively sought to put the project in the public eye, and nearly everyone up this way is aware of its existence. We did our best to create and maintain a good reputation for grant projects in the Powell River area. Since this area has had so little grant funding, and could benefit so much from it, we have tried to create a favorable climate of opinion toward OFY.

(JM)

E. Do you feel the project should be continued? If so, by whom and how?

Throughout the course of the project and particularly during its last two weeks, children, parents and other members of the community have asked us if the Lund Farm Camp will be in existence again next year. The answer has always been, 'Yes, if we get funded.' The main focus of the staff's post-camp discussions has been on the projected program and format of the camp next year. From the beginning, it has been understood that this was a pilot project for the establishment of a longer range institution.

The direction we seek to move is towards the creation of a full summer camp facility, a facility which could provide a much more intensive experience for children by having them in residence at the farm. This

would mean the construction of a bunkhouse or cabins, a kitchen and dining tent and separate sink and shower facilities. It would also mean a development of the farm as to provide more animals, better facilities for animals, and an expanded program of animal husbandry involving children.

camp's objectives would also  
Such a deepening and expansion of the program would involve us in working together with social agencies in Powell River and elsewhere, setting up programs to deal with children with special problems: behavior problems, slow learners, anti-social children. We would want to work with a qualified psychologist or psychiatrist in a therapeutic context.

For next summer we propose a three week session as a day camp for emotionally disturbed children, to be followed by a three week session as a residence camp for children of the type that attended this summer. These two would be pilot projects. The following year, the camp and staff would be prepared for three sessions, one or two of which could be residential camps for emotionally disturbed children, both from Powell River and from larger urban centers.

(SM)

~~Q.~~ What comments does the project have regarding its relationship with O.F.Y., the principle of O.F.Y., or the administration and operation of the programme.

Concerning our relationship with O.F.Y. we feel we would have liked our Project Officers to take more interest in our project. We understand due to the large number of projects in this area and taking into consideration the distances the project officers had to travel in order to visit all the groups in their region that they gave us as much attention as was physically possible. One of the major setbacks in the smooth runnings of our project was the incredible waits we had for our checks to arrive. Considering how the distribution of funds is divided (40%-40%- 20%), the least O.F.Y, could do is be a little more prompt with delivery. For most part we were disappointed that we never really got a sense of any kind of feeling of OFY as a group. It would be much more rewarding. We feel a solution to this type of problem would be a little more flexibility in the program. Some projects have higher initial expenses than other; could it not be possible to make the percentage of the first check higher on this type of project? It would be much more rewarding for all involved if there was more communication between various OFY projects in their respective areas. We all feel that OFY is a enourmously socially redeaming project but would like to see better organization on the side of the government agencies of OFY.

(KL)

6 OFY is also interested in receiving an outline of activities carried out during the summer, any briefs or studies prepared by the project, or any other reports generated.

### The First Weeks

In the weeks prior to the first active session much work was done preparing the farm for the opening. The grounds and barn were cleaned, areas were cleaned of long grass and repairs were finished on the driveway. A wood-burning cookstove was removed to the woodshed in preparation for camp cooking classes, and people were contacted in connection with the advertising and promotion of the coming activities. Fortunately the local radio and newspaper people were interested enough to set up dates for articles and spot appearances which were initiated then and once more during sessions. The radio spots were enthusiastically recieved by the public and we saw many children attend as a result. Parts of the main house were converted to hold personal belongings of the children. In additions, camp insurance was taken out and health and safety standards passed by the respective inspectors. As a final push for informing the local residents, leaflets were drawn up, printed and distributed along with poster in laundromats in schools and at public meetings. And we were off -- "HURRAH"

### The First Day

The first day of each session was explosive for staff and kids alike. Prior to 9:00 a.m. the staff met briefly over tea and conferred about the days plans and did car pool and registration adjustments. Around 9:00a.m. the cars began arriving and unloading



and everyone came together under the apple trees beside the house for a brief meeting to discuss rules. Personal belongings were then placed in cubby-holes and labelled with name tags. These movements preceded an hour of song and games for learning everyones names. A tour of the farm then buised us until the lunch bell tolled. During the tour children learned to milk the goat, feed the animals and collect eggs; an especially wonderful experience for the city kids. After lunch there usually ensued games of some sort and endeavors such as erecting a vollyball net and slinging a huge hammock between two apple trees took place. The day ended with a song fest and the entering of envents into a camp log and in both activities the children were encouraged to take the lead. Then it was 4:00 and with much waving and dust and noise our charges changed hands again until the morrow, tired, but with great expectations. The day was almost done, but before that the staff reconvened to discuss tomorrrows plans with todays in mind. A good day with much to look forward to.

#### The Sessions

Thereafter the staff and the children grew much together as the days passed almost too quickly. Each day began with a sing-along, rain or shine, ending in the same and the entering of events into the log. Activities, games and play sessions changed with each day except when a project involved enough work to be carried over. Luckily, owing mainly, we hope, to the surveillance and presence of counsellors in charge of each group, accidents were minimal. Some other activities were: batiking, volleybal, erecting and romping in fish-net hammock, camp craft and woodlore, jewelry making, bead making, bread and cookie making, leaf printing, drawing cartoon

figures, wood carving, visiting old homesteads, collecting shells and driftwood at beach, building a model homestead, participation in games, childrens theatre with a play each session, singing with songs the children picked, string typing, berry picking swimming excursions, animal husbandry, barnyard building project, tending garden, candle making, leather work, song writing, cheese making, and wool processing from farm sheep.

In each class where some craft was taught the children were encouraged to create something useful they could take home. A surprising number from each session constructed many fine articles, although it was, for a few, difficult to concentrate on something for long. These children were usually separated from the group and a game was played or another activity started for them.

Now with a number of events and classes certain, assistants and craftsmen volunteered their services to the camp and were scheduled accordingly. So throughout the sessions at set times people would hold special lessons which co-ordinated with the camps regular activities. A local theatre group, Calumet, also an OFY grant, visited and performed on a camp over-night. Children from the audience invited to join in a number of sketches performed very well and the evening was a beautiful experience. This event was part of a dinner which the children helped prepare.

During the first two sessions an overnight camping excursion took place on Savory Island off the coast near Lund. The father of one of the consellers, allowed the transportation of the group on his tug-boat to the island and back on the last day. There on the camp-site we situated near water and maintained the open fire preparation of two meals a day; the lunch was sandwiches.

A spooky play was staged in a grove under the stars and everyone loved it. Here on Savory more than at any other time the action was intense but on the whole worked very smoothly in spite of predictable problems, and was for all included an experience to be remembered.

The final session had the smallest number of children in it; there being of mixed ages were 21 children. Four less than the first and second group. Instead this time having an overnight, it was unanimously concluded that a community picnic be planned which would include children and parents from all sessions. Preparation were made and coincided with normal camp happenings until the Friday of the final week. The picnic was a blossoming success. There were games with prizes, including tug o' war, three legged race, egg and spoon, and sack races. Providing the background music for a fantastic day was a local band. Children and adults alike danced and sang and played on through the sunny afternoon. Before the feast was set up a play about early settlers on this very farm was acted out by the children in camp with old fashioned costumes for the delight of the audience. Then the boiled corn and delicious delicacies separately concocted for the day were lined on tables and served by the staff. A rousing treasure hunt threw everyone's digestion off by occurring close after dinner and the losers and winners alike, had icecream. For those still awake enough to join in, there was a bon fire sing-a-long under the stars. Everyone was tired and luckily all the farewells had ended before too late and it was bedtime after the perfect end to the summer program.

(GK)