

# Green Lake experiences span six decades and four generations for DeWitt family

From the 2012 Green Lake Special Edition



**Bill and Jan DeWitt (seated) at Family Life Celebration Week in 2011 with son Jim & grandson Josh**

It's been going on since 1944--the DeWitts have been trekking to Green Lake from all over the country to work, play, pray, camp, learn, make friends and experience Green Lake!

It started when Jan worked in the bookstore as a youth in 1944 during Green Lake's first summer season and experienced "A Closer Walk with God" in many ways.

She returned in 1951 with a carload of Sunday School teachers from her church to learn new ways of teaching children about faith. In 1955 she and her husband Bill brought their first child to Green Lake and had such a good time they returned annually for vacation. Eventually all three of their children spent many happy days getting acquainted with other children at the Children's Center.

Jan began attending the American Baptist Women's Conference and in 1983 was hired to serve on Green Lake's program staff.

After retiring in 1998, her children and their families began attending Family Life Celebration Week, an intergenerational experience. "We all looked forward to going there each year and being together. Green Lake has become 'my place of renewal,' Jan said.

For Jan's son Jim, who has been coming to Green Lake all his life, memories start with staying in the cabins by the tennis courts. "I remember the fun discovering the trails behind the cabins that would take you up to the Children's Center. I loved going on any kind of boat on the lake and swimming off the island. The boats I remember are Captain Bickel, White Cloud, row boats, canoes and paddle boats. My love for the lake started early, especially sailing," Jim said.

Now a member of Green Lake's Board of Directors, Jim says, "I can't think of any other place more special to me. The connection I feel to God at Green Lake is special. Many of my life decisions were made there. Some of my favorite places are the Boat House, Spurgeon Chapel, and the clearing off the Winnebago Indian trail overlooking Norwegian Bay. Green Lake renews me, family memories are made there. It has been an honor to serve on the board the last few years and see God at work in people's lives."

Jim's son Josh served on the Quest staff. As a kid, he cherished arts and crafts with his family at Troster, late night games with cousins, new friendships at the Children's Center, boating on the lake while complaining about seaweed, blue raspberry slushies from the Country Store, and songs around the campfire at Family Life Celebration Week.

As an adult, he cherishes all the same things while finding a greater appreciation for reflection on the

point, long runs around the grounds, late night conversations with cousins and friends, and discovering the history behind the beautiful architecture on the grounds.

Josh said, "Throughout the years, Green Lake has always been a place where I learned and refocused on my priorities. I was baptized in the lake by a dear family friend, Joel Fredrikson, and each time I return I am reminded of that outward expression of faith.

I had the privilege of serving on the Quest staff for four summers where I developed friendships with incredible Christian leaders, observed Christ awaken the hearts of youth, and became inspired by the passion that He has put in the hearts of youth."



**Editor's Note: As Program Associate and later Vice President of Program at Green Lake, Jan developed, coordinated and led conferences, and was a mentor to many. Following her retirement in 1998, she continued to speak at and coordinate retreats at Green Lake up until her passing in 2015. A portrait of Jan painted by artist John Martin was dedicated at the 75th conference. It hangs in the lobby of Kraft Centre next to a portrait of Roger Fredrikson, also painted by John.**