

Working together until Metro Richmond is...

TRANSFORMED



God is Still Love at Camp Alkulana

Editor's Note: The spread of COVID-19 made it impossible to have the usual sessions for children and youth at Camp Alkulana in 2020. This year Camp Director Beth Wright, staff, and volunteers made many adjustments to offer camp sessions. While Camp Alkulana did not operate at full capacity, it did provide the four sessions—one each for younger boys, older boys, older girls, and younger girls.

John Rutter's "Candlelight Carol" asks how to measure something intangible,
How do you capture the wind on the water?
How do you count all the stars in the sky?
How can you measure the love of a mother?
Or how can you write down a baby's first cry?

When it comes to Camp Alkulana, how do we measure it? We can report numbers about the camp. For example, at its full capacity during four week-long sessions of camp we can host more than 200 campers. This year the camp operated at reduced capacity to allow for safety protocols related to COVID-19. We hosted a total of 146 campers during the four weekly sessions.



Twenty-seven of the 146 campers came as a "counselor-in-training" or CIT. Similar to an apprenticeship, our CIT program helps develop the next generation of counselors for future sessions of camp. Even though we did not have in-person camp sessions in 2020 we had campers who wanted to train as counselors. The gap year produced more CITs than usual. It also meant the youngest and oldest campers we might have hosted missed camp last year.

God blessed us with experienced counselors this summer. Not having to train them in more routine duties helped the camp's leaders devote more time and attention to special practices and duties related to COVID safety. All 25 of this summer's counselors had served before, and 18 had first discovered Camp Alkulana as campers.

It takes more than a director, registrar, and counselors to operate Camp Alkulana. In round numbers, it actually costs about \$1,000 per camper (or more) to operate Camp Alkulana. Gifts to River City Faith Network, the annual offering, donor support, grants, fundraising events, and volunteers help us ensure this ministry continues. This summer 21 volunteers served in the kitchen, helped in the infirmary, provided craft activities, kept our buildings and facilities operating, and helped when the buses loaded and unloaded.

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PLEASE TAKE NOTE

Please let us know if you have updates to your contact information. We appreciate it!

Please update your contact information for **Church Hill Christian Wellness Center!**
The new phone # is 804-234-3549

The RCFN Stewardship Committee is currently working on the 2022 Budget. Please contact Steve Allsbrook with any questions as you are planning for the new year. 804-329-1701x102

MINISTRY OF THE WEEK SEPTEMBER 2021

- 9/5-- Lighthouse International
- 9/12-- Morning Star Baptist
- 9/19-- Mount Carmel Baptist
- 9/26-- Mount Sinai Baptist

WMU Fall Celebration
September 21, 2021
10-12 a.m. BGAV Chapel
804-338-7416

CAMP ALKULANA
GOLF TOURNAMENT
October 11, 2021
Lakeside Park Club
Register at
www.alkulana.org

God Is Still Love at Camp... (continued)

Perhaps our most important number this year relates to COVID-19 cases at Camp Alkulana: 0. Thank God for zero cases of COVID-19 at camp!

We can measure and report numbers like that. How can we measure things we find it hard to quantify?

As in past years, our campers said many wonderful things about camp. One said, “[Camp Alkulana] is the most fun place I’ve ever been.” We are glad campers had fun.

Some other things they said make us glad too. A camper said, “This is a place to be free—when you come here you’re happy.” We like our campers to feel happy.

Feeling happy and having fun are important for people of any age. Other things are important too. Camp Alkulana offers a different environment for our campers. Many of them live with food insecurity or in settings where noise and even violence are common. Imagine our joy when a camper said, “When I come to Camp Alkulana I can forget everything about the outside world.”

That different, safe place stands as a hallmark of Camp Alkulana. Our campers find a different setting here. They also find different values than they find in “the outside world.” As one camper said, “I feel like myself here.” Knowing and valuing oneself are among the things we value at Camp Alkulana.



The DNA of Camp Alkulana comes from Christian ministry. We serve Jesus Christ as one part of God’s Kingdom work. It thrilled us this year when we heard a camper say, “I learned that God is home, and since God follows you everywhere, you can always be home.” Someone say, “Amen!”

Year after year we watch our campers grow into leaders whose growth shows a beautiful testimony of the



work of God in their lives and in this ministry. We often see that in the camp’s Piney Park, our worship space.

Our CITs led the concluding worship service at the younger girls’ week. These 15- and 16-year-old former campers shared God’s word and their own faith stories. They told campers about the timeless truths of God’s love. Our campers worshiped through writing and releasing personal insecurities. Each one saw their own face in the mirror as they read the affirming things they had written to themselves. As each one spoke to the next person, they gave and received gifts of kindness. The older girls led the younger 9- to 11-year-old girls as older girls had once led them. They spoke from similar experiences with voices the younger girls could hear and believe.

One of the girls, Savannah, shared, “Today we’re going to talk about self-acceptance and self-love. Everyone is unique and has their own special qualities that make them uniquely themselves. Sometimes it’s hard for us to accept ourselves because we feel different, but different does not mean we are not worthy of love. The things that make us different are also the things that make us beautiful. God made us the way we are and loves us even when we don’t love ourselves; he sees the beauty that we all have inside and out. Something that really helped me learn to love myself for who I am is the love and acceptance I got from everyone I love here at camp. I noticed that they saw something in me that I didn’t know was there and it made me think about it. I realized they saw all the wonderful things that I have accomplished and the things that I have to offer to this world that not only made me see those things in myself but also in others.”

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HELP US REACH THE CAMP ALKULANA OFFERING GOAL \$125,000

**YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT
THIS SUMMER THAT WILL
LAST A LIFETIME!**

For more information about the camp or to give online, please visit the camp website: **www.alkulana.org**.

Camp Alkulana is a ministry of the River City Faith Network, and all gifts are tax-deductible.

God Is Still Love at Camp... (continued)



Zinya, another of the girls, shared this. "My first year of camp I was alone with no friends. After a couple of days, I was asking myself, 'Why am I not making friends?' 'Am I not good enough?' 'Am I not cool enough?' I had to take a step back and realize I was trying to be somebody I thought

people would like. I started to be myself and it took a lot for me to learn that in order to love myself and others I have to be myself and include others for who they are. Inclusion is a two-way street, you have to include yourself in order to be included by others. Take a chance and include and love everyone for who they are."

A mother stood watching her daughters board the bus to head for camp this year. The younger daughter had not been before. The older daughter went as a CIT. "The first time my older daughter went to Camp Alkulana," she said, "I expected her to get homesick and come home early." When the older daughter got off the bus after her first week of camp that daughter asked, "When can I go back to camp?" That happens year after year.

Join us in celebrating God's work through the ministry of Camp Alkulana. Thank you and those who created this wonderful ministry that makes it possible for boys and girls to discover so much more than they find "in the outside world." Pray for our ministry. Pray, too, for our campers who returned home better equipped for the world into which God has sent them and for how they may transform it as they keep growing. Even if we cannot find a way to measure that transformation, we will give our lives to help make it happen so long as God and you make it possible.

—Beth Wright and Steve Allsbrook



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE!
**MONDAY,
SEPTEMBER 20, 2021**

5:15-8:30 PM

MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH
11220 Nuckols Road, Glen Allen, VA 23059

WWW.BAPTISTLEADERS.ORG - (804) 314-0294

DINNER, BREAKOUT SESSIONS, AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
DR. JOHN UPTON
"JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN"
(GENESIS 12: 1-4A/HEBREWS 11: 8-10)



BREAKOUT SESSIONS:



"A Proper Sense of Who We Are"
- John Upton



"One Church - The blending of online and in-person congregations."
- Tom Lewis



"Reclaim. Reimagine. Reignite ministry for minors."
- Kim Boswell & Chris Wondree



"Church Branding on a Budget: Telling your church's story"
- Alison Fallecker



"Crisis Care in the Post-Covid Church"
- Kristen Curtis



"Bridging Racial Divides through Worship & Discipleship"
- Randell Williams & Josh Hayden



"Live Streaming: Tools Anyone Can Use to Become a Pro"
Panel Discussion: Ed Baber, Jim Barbour, and Lindsay Ray

RCFN Church Directory

Contact Information forms were distributed to all churches. Please return it as soon as possible if you haven't already done so. Please help us ensure that your information is correct for all in the RCFN community!! If you have any questions, please call 804-329-1701. Thank you!



COVID-19 Vaccine Information

For all information regarding vaccinations and updates regarding Covid-19, please be sure to visit the websites listed below.

<https://vaccinate.virginia.gov>

<https://vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus>

River City Faith Network
Richmond Baptist Association
2828 Emerywood Parkway
Richmond, VA 23294
Phone: 804-329-1701
office@rbaonline.org
www.richmondbaptist.org

Electronic Service Requested

*Working together until
Metro Richmond is...*

TRANSFORMED
September 2021



THE **River**
City FAITH
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Richmond Baptist Association

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**HATCHER MEMORIAL
BAPTIST CHURCH**

2300 DUMBARTON RD
RICHMOND, VA 23228

OCTOBER 17th, 2021

SAVE THE DATE!

Information available at
www.richmondbaptist.org
or call 804-329-1701



Richmond to Race
September 10-11, 2021

Raceway Ministries will be present, but our ministry will be scaled back. Please contact us with questions and for updates.

We will need volunteers to assist on Friday, September 10th for an evening shift as well as two shifts on Saturday, the 11th. One day shift (11-3 p.m.) and one evening shift (5 p.m.-9 p.m.).

Looking for help with Guest Services, Chaplains and more.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Charles Ward at (804) 262-3612 to sign up.

Church Hill Christian Wellness Center has a NEW PHONE NUMBER!
804-234-3549—Please update your number for “The Well”—804-234-3549