



**United Neighborhood Centers  
of Northeastern Pennsylvania**  
[www.uncnepa.org](http://www.uncnepa.org)

## **United Neighborhood Centers' Project Hope Celebrates 40 Years**

**Scranton, PA** – Project Hope is officially forty. On Wednesday, August 4, United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania celebrated the milestone anniversary of the annual summer camp with staff, board of directors and parents on-hand for the festivities.

Since 1970, UNC has been providing community youth with outdoor adventures at Project Hope Summer Camp, located at Camp St. Andrew, in the endless mountains of Tunkhannock, PA. The camp features over 550 acres, which includes fields, hiking trails, a swimming pool and lake to entertain and educate campers ages five through twelve.

Each summer beginning in July, over 500 low-income/at-risk community youth from Lackawanna County travel to Project Hope for a total of five weeks, Monday through Friday. The active youngsters take part in a wide variety of activities that range from archery, music and kayaking to athletics, swimming and arts and crafts. Project Hope also features an Adventure Learning Course that includes a 38' climbing and repelling wall, zip line and team-building outdoor games.

What began as any other day at camp would eventually give way to a day dedicated to not only rejoicing in the success of Project Hope, but remembering how far the program has come and how many youth it has helped grow.

After breakfast and flagpole activities were over, the youth participants were treated to a few special surprises throughout the day. In honor of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Project Hope, campers had the opportunity to play in two different moon-bounces, one in the form of an obstacle course and the other in the shape of a birthday cake. They were also given the chance to get staffers and counselors into a dunk tank. Later on in the day, JoJo the Clown performed and offered face paintings.

Around noontime, UNC staff and members of the Board of Directors began to arrive at camp. After being treated to lunch, they were then taken on a tour of camp along with the parents who had come to celebrate the anniversary.

To end the day, there was a brief speech by Michael McHale, Camp Director, who welcomed everyone to the event. Michael Hanley, Executive Director at UNC, and Monsignor Kelly, who was an integral part in beginning Project Hope, said a few brief words and accepted handmade charcoal drawings of Camp St. Andrew to commemorate their extensive years of service and commitment to keep camp going and funded.

Lastly, a majority of the youth participants put on a talent show for the many visitors that had come to camp for the day. There were a wide variety of acts which included singing, dancing, comedy and even animal facts. After the talent show, everyone was invited for cake and ice cream.

There is no denying that Project Hope has had a profound effect on the youth of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Hanley remarked, "We are lucky to have such a successful program, due mostly to the traditions and reputation Project Hope has upheld. Many of the youth who partake in the summer camp eventually become camp counselors themselves. We also have parents who now send their own children to camp that were active in Project Hope when they were younger. It amazes me that after forty years, Project Hope is still a vital and important part of the community it aims to serve." Here's to hopefully another forty and beyond.