

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Boys' & Girls' at Brigade's Leadership Training Conference Give Back**

For the past 16 years the Boy's & Girl's Brigade has held a Leadership Training Conference for 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth at Camp Onaway on the Chain O' Lakes in Waupaca, Wisconsin. This year's conference was not only a benefit to the students developing their leadership skills, but also the broader community. The overall conference theme was on activism with a focus to teach students lessons on how to give back to others in their community.

Breakout sessions are a part of the conference where students can explore different activities developed by the volunteer conference leaders. Examples of these sessions might be cooking, fishing, scrapbooking, kayaking, geocaching to name a few. However, this year the leaders added a community service/volunteering dimension to the breakout sessions.

Fifteen campers were involved in the volunteering breakout sessions. Along with four leaders, these campers helped with the landscaping of a new park on the Crystal River behind Waupaca's hospital – Riverside Medical Center. The area is being developed for patients and families to be able to enjoy nature. The students enjoyed this project and greatly benefited from the experience.

Another group completed a project called Breakfast in a Jar. They combined all the dry ingredients for a breakfast recipe in a quart jar along with the directions for baking. Seventy of these jars were distributed to Camp Onaway neighbors along the Chain O' Lakes shoreline and also to people in the community. This was a very exciting project and was received positively by the community.

A mystery break out session titled "Give Back" was one of the several different activities that the youth could choose from. Five students signed up for this breakout session with only the title to give them any indication what it might entail. The youth were given an envelope with instructions attached. The note read, "*Before you is an envelope filled with cash. It is your mission to give back as a team. How you do this is up to you and only you. There is information provided for you to use as guidelines.*"

*However they are only that. The options are endless and you are only limited by your imagination. Just because the dollar amount is set in the envelope does not mean it has to remain that amount. You may find a way to make it grow. Spreading the wealth never hurt either. Take some time to plan. Resources are available for you to leave the island and provide you with the tools to complete your mission. PLEASE, if you have cell phones use them. If you have any questions, please ask. We will have leaders at your disposal."*

The students found \$800 of cash donations in the envelope that was raised by the volunteer leaders in advance of the conference session. After a day to deliberate what to do with the money the students decided to try to raise even more money. They sold water balloons to throw at conference leaders and also sold freeze pops in the camp store. Through their efforts they were able to raise an additional \$250.

Students Jacob Ahles, DJ Helwink, Kyle Armstrong, Maddie Jones and Nick Gloede comprised the "Give Back" team. They wanted to reach the most people in need and decided to donate the \$1,050 to the food pantry in Waupaca. On June 16 they delivered the gift of money to the Waupaca Food Pantry. The "Give Back" conference exercise in charitable giving had a significant impact on the students and volunteers at Leadership Training Conference at Camp Onaway as well as the Waupaca community.

The Brigade mission is: We Build Leaders. Leadership programs are offered year round at the Brigade facility located at 109 W. Columbian Avenue in Neenah, Wisconsin, and at summer camp at Onaway Island located in Waupaca, Wisconsin. For more information on the Brigade call 920-725-3983 or visit [bgbrigade.com](http://bgbrigade.com).



CAPTION: Students from the Boys' & Girl's Brigade Camp Onaway Leadership Training Conference raised \$1,050 in cash donations for the Waupaca food pantry. The five students are pictured with staff from the food pantry and are (l to r) DJ Helwink, Kyle Armstrong, Maddie Jones, Jacob Ahles, and Nick Gloede.



Caption: Students and volunteer leaders from the Boys' & Girls' Brigade Camp Onaway Leadership Training Conference on the Chain O' Lakes in Waupaca are pictured on a community service project. The group helped with the landscaping of a new park on the Crystal River behind Waupaca's hospital – Riverside Medical Center.