

# HOLMES CAMP & RETREAT CENTER ANNUAL FALL FUNDRAISING EVENT DINNER - SILENT AUCTION - AWARD PRESENTATION

Event Journal
OCTOBER 3, 2024
FIFTH AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### Congratulation to Tonight's Honorees

Eloise & John Morehouse The Living the Mission Award

Congratulations to you both for your incredible faith commitment and your on-going contribution to the Holmes community of your time, talent, and treasure over the last fifty years!

Brenda & Paul Verdesi The Rev. Donald A Hostetter Leadership Award

Thanks to you both for your continuous involvement and enormous contribution of hard work and support for Holmes and its important mission, and Paul, for your impressive career investment and job accomplishment over the last few decades on behalf of Holmes and especially its wonderful facilities!

Mark Ainsworth
The Outstanding Alumnus Award

Celebrating Mark's journey from camper, to staff, to camp leadership. We applaud your commitment and service, and all of the ways you continue to make a difference at Holmes.

In Admiration,
Nancy & Bob Sellar
Members of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York



### **Event Program**

### Cocktail Hour and Silent Auction | 5:30pm

- Auction curated by Victoria Neilson and the Gala Committee
- Auction closes 7:20pm

### Dinner | 6:45pm

- · Welcome by Kyle Branin, Director
- · Grace by Rev. Paul Alcorn
- Dinner Prepared by Roxo Events

### Award Presentation | 7:30pm

Mark Ainsworth

The Outstanding Alumnus Award presented by Liann Ainsworth

Eloise and John Morehouse

The Living the Mission Award presented by Rev. Mark Hostetter

### Menu

### **First Course**

Arugula Salad, Roast Butternut Squash, Cranberries, Honey Dijon

#### **Entree**

Rosemary Grilled Filet of Beef with Bordelaise Sauce Creamy Celery Mashed Potato Glazed Tri Colored Mini Carrots Roasted Tomatoes Vegetarian Option Available

#### Dessert

Passion Fruit Mousse Lemon Shortcake Cookie Petit Fours

#### Brenda and Paul Verdesi

The Rev. Donald A. Hostetter Leadership Award presented by David Burpee



### **Holmes Camp and Retreat Center**

### **Board of Directors**

### **Hudson River Presbytery Members**

Linda Burpee, Secretary
Edgar Hayes
Rev. Bill Weisenbach
Rev. Anna Grace Claunch
Deborah Milcarek, General Presbyter (Ex-Officio)

### **Long Island Presbytery Members**

Frank D'Andrea
Gary Wolf
Rev. Kate Jones-Calone, Acting General Presbyter (Ex-Officio)

### **New York City Presbytery Members**

Rev. Mark Hostetter, President
Jane Ritter
Rev. Flora Wilson Bridges
Rev. Mary Newbern-Williams, Transitional Presbyter (Ex-Officio)

### **Board Nominated Members**

Liann Ainsworth Rev. Paul Alcorn, Vice President Rev. Victor Aloyo Kathy Frost

### Welcome from Holmes Board President



#### Dear Friends:

Welcome to our 2024 annual gala celebration for Holmes Camp & Retreat Center - we're so glad you're here!

The Holmes mission to **Educate**, **Empower**, and **Renew** rings true for each and every one of us whose lives have been so impacted by our welcoming Christian community, and who have seen their faith grow or lives change through our programs and our beautiful natural setting. Truly a place of stillness and restoration in a turbulent world, Holmes offers hope, renewal and a sense of belonging.

Holmes is vibrant and active, serving our presbyteries, our congregations, and our mission partners with retreats and programs old and new. We're busier than ever! Our facilities are fully booked with youth and adults alike, and just in the short time before Advent we've got on the calendar the Fall Women's Retreat, Reiki Seminar, Culinary Weekend, and more. And of course, our always-popular communicants class weekends continue in full force.

This year we are proud to honor several people who have made that possible through their support of Holmes, and who have made outsized impacts in their communities by living values Holmes Camp & Retreat Center holds dear; Mark Ainsworth, John and Eloise Morehouse, and Brenda and Paul Verdesi. Without them Holmes would be a different place than it is today.

We hope you'll join them in their enthusiastic support of Holmes,

and join us at a program or event, volunteer, and live loudly the values of **faith**, **curiosity**, **conservation**, **community**, **recreation**, **hospitality**, and **rest**. And tonight especially please take the opportunity to give generously, bid up and purchase an item in the silent auction, and sign up to make a monthly gift.

### We can't do it without you!

Enjoy the evening and on behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for celebrating with us this evening, and for your continuing support of Holmes and its exciting future.

Rev. Dr. Mark Hostetter

Wark

President, Board of Directors

# -- Thank you --

### **TABLE HOSTS**

Bedford Presbyterian Church Mark Hostetter and Alex Habib Riverdale Presbyterian Church Brenda and Paul Verdesi

#### **EVENT SPONSORSHIP**

Betty Jones
Karie and Andy Davidson
National Interiors
Jane and Malcolm Ritter
Roxo Events
Joan and Reade Ryan

### **Silent Auction Donors**

Liann Ainsworth and John Eck Kvle Branin Linda and David Burpee Sarah Burpee Fifth Tuesday Ouilters/Comfort Ouilters of Northern Star Quilters Guild Kathy Frost Holmes Camp and Retreat Center Staff Mark Hostetter and Alex Habib Dr. Ansley LaMar Livanos Restaurant Group Ted Masters and Carol Castillo Holly McCalmont Vicky Neilson Jane and Malcolm Ritter Joel Sokolov Brenda Verdesi

# Our Mission Educate | Empower | Renew

Holmes Camp and Retreat Center's mission is to Educate, Empower and Renew by providing a space for people to connect to nature and their faith. Everyone, regardless of their religion, gender, sexual orientation, race, health, age, or disability is welcome at Holmes. For more than 75 years, we have hosted religious organizations, community groups, scout troops, businesses, schools, and summer campers. We also offer our own programming, including women's retreats, confirmation classes, professional development, and nature programs.

### Our Values

- Faith A sense of God and the Sacred which sustains our lives and inspires a vision of how life should be and the world should be for us and for all. Holmes honors our roots in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), but welcomes all into our spaces.
- **Curiosity** Programs and learning opportunities which open us up to new ideas and new ways of thinking and seeing our lives and the world.
- Conservation A deepening care for our communities, our world, and all creation that God has now entrusted to our care and keeping, and responsible stewardship of our corner of that creation.
- Community Young and old. Gay and straight. Settled and refugee.
   Female and male and all others across the gender spectrum. All fall within the circle of God's love. All are welcomed and fall within the circle of our understanding of community.
- **Recreation** To laugh. To splash in the lake. To play with abandon. To sit in the sun or slide on the snow. We are to delight in the wonders of each other and the wonders of God's creation.
- **Hospitality** With more than just words, here you are welcomed just as you are. The whole you. The searching you. The strong you. The fragile you. The inquisitive you. Holmes will honor and respect who you are and who you are becoming.
- Rest In the 24/7 world in which we live, rest and sabbath are a
  necessity. Whether for an hour, a day, or a week Holmes is a place of
  renewal.



### A Note From the Director

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the beautiful Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church for our annual fundraising gala and auction; thank you for joining us here tonight.

Many of you have supported Holmes for many, many years. You've given your time, your talents, and your treasures to ensure Holmes success—and at times survival—through thick and thin at Holmes and at home. **Thank you. We wouldn't be here without you.** 

Some of you are new to the Holmes family, and just starting to journey with us. **Thank you.** You bring fresh perspectives, new resources, and most importantly your diverse experiences and personalities to our ministry.

Some of you are here to support our honorees. Thank you for being here to celebrate them, and to support Holmes. I cannot impress upon you how much of an impact they have had at Holmes, and in their communities, by representing the mission and values we stand for. **We are so glad you're here**, and hope you'll join us again for a program or event, as a volunteer, or as a donor.

I'm very new to Holmes compared to many of our steadfast—often lifelong—supporters. This is only the fourth time I've joined you for this event. I began my journey with Holmes in a time of turbulence, in the heart of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In 2020 and 2021 Holmes, by necessity, served fewer people than it had in decades. And reopening our doors meant adjusting to the new realities in society, and at Holmes, that the challenges of those years exposed.

Bringing Holmes back to our pre-pandemic success took the support

of so many people. It took countless hours of often backbreaking labor from dozens of volunteers. It took the financial support of over a hundred individuals and congregations. It took a dedicated few who went above and beyond in more ways than I can possibly enumerate. Our honorees tonight are each among those dedicated few. Each of them has done so much to support Holmes through the years, to brings Holmes back after the challenges early in this decade, and to be examples of Holme's Values to their communitites.

Holmes is ever evolving, and things may look different, but make no mistake–Holmes Camp & Retreat Center is stronger than ever! In 2024 just shy of 4,200 people will participate in programs, retreats, and other events at Holmes, more than any year on record. Collectively these individuals will spend over 12,000 days and 8,000 nights at Holmes, and eat nearly 14,000 meals from our kitchens. Holmes has served over 50 congregations from half a dozen denominations. Holmes has served 15 other youth-serving orgs, including hosting 6 weeks of summer camp with several different partner organizations. These organizations shared the magic of summer camp with over 500 youth and young adults. By the time we close the calendar year Holmes will have hosted 110 programs, events, and retreats, for over 60 different organizations.

This year we have invested over \$100,000 at Westminster Lake and Lodge, to extend the life of the building, improve water quality, expand recreation opportunities, and to increase climate resiliency. We have continued to invest in the revitalization of the Agape Center and Nunemaker, most notably with the creation of a dedicated Pastoral Retreat space that will serve as a no cost respite opportunity to those serving the church. We have added several wonderful new individuals to our staff.

We did all of this with your support. So please, give generously tonight (and throughout the year), and help us continue to grow Holmes!

Thank you,

J. Kyle Branin Director

# Mark Ainsworth The Outstanding Alumnus Award



Mark Ainsworth is an award winning chef and author who has been central to food service and events at Holmes for many years in his roles as chef, planner, and manager of the kitchen staff. For these and other contributions, the Holmes Board is delighted to recognize him with the Outstanding Alumnus Award in recognition of his exceptional commitment to Holmes and its mission, and serving as an inspiration to others.

Mark is a Holmes Camp alumni who attended family camp for 25 years from the 1960s into the 1980s when his parents directed family camp. When he was 15, he started working in the Holmes kitchen, progressing from washing dishes to washing pots and pans to assisting cook Ann Richardson and, when Ann retired, to becoming head camp cook.

However, Mark's interest in cooking actually began earlier, at home. When his mother went back to school to get her masters degree she had each of the four children cook one night a week. She wrote a recipe booklet for them to follow, reviewed with them what they were going to make, and had the ingredients on hand. With that training, Mark felt he was good at cooking — as are all of his siblings — and eventually enrolled at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY.

Mark has cooked in restaurants and kitchens around the world and shares his passion for food through his teaching and writing. Having graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in 1986, he first worked as a professional chef then became a professor at C.I.A. in 1993. In his early career as a chef, he worked at New York City's renowned restaurant Le Bernardin, on a cruise line, and in restaurants in Germany and the British Virgin Islands. He has written two books, "Fish and Seafood" and "The Young Chef: Recipes and Techniques for Kids Who Love to Cook."

At Holmes, Mark has planned and overseen gala dinners, contributed group cooking lessons to silent auctions, and served as an event committee member planning gala venues and menus. He has melded his roles as teacher and volunteer by enlisting his C.I.A. students to work in the Agape kitchen and serve as wait staff for events. In all activities, his expertise has been indispensable.

In addition to planning and presenting meals at Holmes, Mark has volunteered at work days, helped manage and reimagine the Holmes farm during Covid, and, as a member of the facilities committee, who lives near Holmes, often responds to urgent issues or lends a hand on maintenance projects.

Mark is also a beekeeper and has two daughters, Darby and Kaleigh, who are also active at camp.

### Paul and Brenda Verdesi

### Rev. Donald A. Hostetter Leadership Award



Paul Verdesi came to Holmes in 1975 and never really left. Brenda joined him in the 1980s and, as Paul reaches 50 years of working at Holmes, it's time to extend a heartfelt thanks to both Paul and Brenda for their unparalleled devotion and contributions to camp. Holmes is proud to present them with the Rev. Donald A. Hostetter Leadership Award.

Paul's first came to Holmes in 1968 when his father, the Rev. Ariel Verdesi, served as chaplain for a week and he was a self-described "Director's Brat." In 1975 he joined the summer staff, then worked part-time through his college years at Bridgeport University, and was hired full-time in 1982 by director Don Hostetter to help complete the newly built Agape Center. Over the years he was mentored by some of the most respected leaders at Holmes so has lifetimes of institutional knowledge about camp.

Brenda came to Holmes in the summer of 1982 when her uncle and aunt, Don and Charlotte Hostetter, offered her a job. In the following summers she worked in various jobs including kitchen staff, counselor, and in the office — and met Paul. Brenda and Paul married in 1989. They have two sons, Jake and Ben. Brenda retired in 2022 from a career in human resources, most recently with the New York Power Authority.

"Maintenance Specialist" is Paul's title but hardly describes his contributions. When camp is full he responds to any and all emergencies. On Saturday work days he manages crews of cleaners, builders and brush trimmers. At all times he is the eyes and ears around camp, diligently checking the site for damage and staying one step ahead when issues arise. He has collected and memorized multiple buildings and storage areas worth of inventory — right down to screws for washing machines — so he has pieces and parts to fix almost anything that might break.

Brenda is always ready to lend a hand. She has been an alumni volunteer for over 35 years and works on event committees, decorates Agape dining hall for galas, assists with mailings, catalogs photos, and even walks up and down Denton Lake Road picking up trash. She checks in often at the Holmes office and is always ready to fold laundry, raise a tent or run an errand. She is an elder and session member at Gilead Presbyterian Church in Carmel and has been the church's financial secretary for 20 years.

In addition to Paul and Brenda's hands-on work at Holmes, they have been generous contributors to events and fund raisers. As Holmes approaches its 80th anniversary, we are grateful that Paul and Brenda have been part of camp for 50 of those years.



# Eloise and John Morehouse Living the Mission Award



Holmes is proud to present the Living the Mission Award to Eloise and John Morehouse whose lives and work exemplify the mission of Holmes to educate, empower, and renew through faith, community and hospitality.

Eloise and John both grew up in Brooklyn and attended Brooklyn Friends School there, but in different years. John was baptized and confirmed in the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn. Eloise is a member of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends. They now live in the Bronx where for many years John has been a member of Riverdale Presbyterian Church.

The couple met at summer camp in 1960 and married five years later. They have two children, Liz and Tim, and three grandchildren. The couple will celebrate their 59th wedding anniversary in November.

Eloise and John were introduced to Holmes by the Rev. Don and Charlotte Hostetter while John served as an elder and clerk of the old Ft. Washington Presbyterian Church. Following the merger of that church with Washington Heights Presbyterian Church in the 1980s, he transferred to Riverdale Presbyterian.

Over the years Eloise and John have come to Holmes for fund raisers at Agape, Friends Days, and the weddings of friends. John is retired from a 40-year career in the textile and apparel industry and Eloise as a publishing executive. After retirement, John, with help from Eloise, became executive director of the old Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit and was on the board of a large artists club for 17 years serving in various positions including treasurer. Eloise has served on the board of Brooklyn Friends School.

At Holmes, John served thirteen years on the board, including one as

president. During that time, he chaired gala committees for six years, raising money for camp operations and for renovations to the Denton Recreation Hall and the Denton Dining Hall. He has recently spearheaded fund raising for renovations to Agape.

John has a deep love for history and Holmes Camp. Moreover, as much as he loves what Holmes has been and has meant to so many people, he also has a passion for what it can become and embraces the changes that lie ahead. He is often a quiet leader of fundraising efforts for projects and improvements. He is always willing to offer support and guidance to projects at Holmes.





### Mark Your Calendar!

### 2024 Fall/Winter Retreat Weekends

Women's Retreat | November 1-3

Jikiden Reiki Seminar | November 8 - 10

Culinary Weekend | December 6 - 8

Community Night Dinner | December 12

For more information or to Register, scan here.





### 2025 Events

Community Night Dinner | March 20, 2025
Confirmation Retreat | April 25 -26, 2025
Community Night Dinner | June 19, 2025
Friends Day Weekend | July 26 - 27, 2025
Community Night Dinner | September 18, 2025
Annual Fall Fundraiser | October 4, 2025
Women's Retreat | November 7-9
Jikiden Reiki Seminar | November TBD
Culinary Retreat Weekend | December TBD
Community Night Dinner | December TBD

### Plan Your Next Retreat



As part of Holmes's mission to **"Educate, Empower, Renew"** we strive to provide comfortable and affordable lodging and meeting space to empower churches, nonprofits, and community groups to carry out their own mission through programs, retreats, and meetings.

Every group is different and we are excited to work with you to provide an experience that meets your needs. We can provide programming and support that empowers you to hold a fantastic event to further your mission.

Holmes offers full food-service for guest groups, and can accommodate most dietary restrictions. Many spaces also have kitchens available for groups who wish to prepare their own food.

Holmes is ready to work with your group on day outings, weekend or week long retreats. We are currently booking through Winter 2025. Dates fill up well in advance, so please be in touch soon!

FOR MORE INFORMATION \TO BOOK YOUR NEXT RETREAT contact Holmes@Holmescamp.org or call 845.878.6383 Ext. 1.

### Lodging and Meeting Spaces include:

Vinik Hilltop: 10 hotel style rooms | 2 conference spaces

**Agape Center:** 10 hotel style rooms | 2 conference spaces | Pastoral Studio **Nunemaker Center:** 12 bunk rooms | sleeps 80 | kitchen | meeting | lounge

**Hayden Cabin:** 4 bunk rooms | sleeps 20 | kitchen | common area **Steidl Cabin\*:** 4 bunk rooms | sleeps 16 | kitchen | common area **The Lodge\*:** Meeting space | fireplace | picnic area | waterfront

Robinson Pavilion\*: Pavilion | electric | restrooms & shower | grill | camping

### Want to Make a Big Impact?

### Monthly Giving has never been easier!

A recurring monthly gift helps Holmes budget and plan for projects. It's now easy and secure to set up your recurring donation on our website.







# Set up a monthly gift tonight and get a complimentary Holmes Lapel Pin

See any staff member to set up your recurring gift. Cancel anytime by emailing Holmes@holmescamp.org.

# Thank you to Our Current Monthly Donors!

Jean Hrbek
Sally Kopher
Holly McCalmont
Kathy Gorman-Coombs and Tim Coombs
Ted Masters and Carol Castillo
Lillian Masters
Kathy and Fred Frost
Garth Robinson
Cheryl Holder
Blake and Missy Ainsworth
Alice and Lew Pulliam
Sandy and Ron Small

Brenda and Paul Verdesi



# Congratulations Paul & Brenda Verdesi

nilsenexcavating.com 1-800-344-3478 (1-800-DIG-DIRT)



### Pastoral Respite

Holmes is grateful for the leadership, sacrifice, and service pastors, elders, missionaries, and others serving in ministry share with their churches and communities. In honor of that service, and in alignment with our core values of Faith, Hospitality, and Rest, Holmes now offers free respite and personal sabbath lodging.

Our Pastoral Respite Lodging, made possible in part by a grant from the Houston Family Foundation, includes a queen bed, desk, and kitchenette including refrigerator, stove, convection oven/microwave and sink. There is a private accessible bathroom. You are welcome to enjoy your privacy and prepare your own meals, or purchase meals for \$10 per person/per meal when the dining room is open and operating.

To start, free respite lodging will be available to all those engaged in professional ministry, chairs of session, and retired Teaching Elders within the Presbyteries of Long Island, Hudson River, and New York City. We will also welcome those serving in full-time ministry outside our three presbyteries. Lodging may be reserved up to 2 nights per calendar year, subject to availability. For a full description and photos of the Pastor Respite Lodging, scan below.

#### **BOOK YOUR VISIT TODAY!**

We look forward to serving our leadership. Please call the office at 845-878-6383 ext. 1 or email Holmes@holmescamp.org to check availability and make a reservation.



# Superkidz Kamp



www.superkidzkamp.com

## -- Thank You --

### **FALL EVENT COMMITTEE**

Without your support, this event could not happen.

We are grateful for their tireless efforts

and commitment to Holmes!

Kathy Frost, Chairperson Victoria Neilson, Auction Coordinator Mark Ainsworth Jane Ritter Brenda Verdesi

# To all our dedicated Volunteers who regularly take the lead on projects, throughout the year, that improve the camp experience for everyone!

Mark Ainsworth JP Nilsen and Crew

Gretchen Brokaw Ted Masters
Rob Buck Ken McQuire
Jack Buck John Morehouse

Chris Burke Sang Park

David Burpee Katherine Pater

Amanda Cabrera Patterson Community Church

Casev Carbone Alice Pulliam Tory Chisholm John Ouesada Flise Russel-Bates Ivy Conner Cheryl Silvernail David Frost Alex Habib Louis Silvernail Madhumitha Kannan Steve Silvernail Jan Knickerbocker Jama Toung Claudia Kuhn Chad Turner Brenda Verdesi Hunter Lamar

Dave Neilsen





### JOHN FORMISANO

ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE

566 NORTH STATE ROAD / BRIARCLIFF MANOR, NY 10510 914.873.8267 / 914.698.0774 FAX / 203.948.5043 CELL jformisano@suburbancarting.com

## -- Thank You --

#### YEAR-ROUND STAFF

J. Kyle Branin, Director
Ashley Branin, Office Assistant
John "JJ" Branin, Hospitality Manager & Chef
Grace Buck, Administrator
Aly Hawana, Facilities
Carol Ruther, Housekeeper
Charles Schappach, Facilities
Paul Verdesi, Maintenance Specialist
Alexis Zhina, Kitchen Assistant

### **On-Call Staff**

Charles Wilde, Chef Deborah Wilde, Kitchen Assistant



# To this year's entertainer, who has shared his faith and love of community through their art.



**Hunter LaMar** is a pianist and vocalist with extensive experience in live performance and artist development. A graduate of Berklee College of Music, he manages multiple wedding and event ensembles in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles while also serving as a freelance arranger, music

director, and educator. In addition to his music career, Hunter has been involved with Holmes Camp since childhood and continues to volunteer, including serving as the associate director of Superkidz Kamp, hosted at Holmes Camp since 1997. His passion for community and the arts shines through in every performance.



570-226-4571 • amskier@amskier.com • amskier.com



Building a Community of Faith, Hope, and Love

First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills 7035 112th St, Forest Hills, NY 11375, USA Tel#:(718)-268-4036



congratulates

### John and Eloise Morehouse

The Living the Mission Award

Thank you for all you have done for the RPC and Holmes communities!



### **Brenda and Paul Verdesi**

The Rev. Donald A. Hostetter Leadership Award

Thank you for keeping Holmes looking beautiful for 50 years!



### **Mark Ainsworth**

Outstanding Alumnus Award

Thank you for all your delicious offerings over the years!





### There's No Place Like Holmes

Holmes Camp & Retreat Center is a ministry of the Presbyterian Conference Association, Inc. and is affiliated with the Presbyteries of Long Island, Hudson River, and New York City of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). You do not need to be associated with the Presbyterian Church or identify with any particular faith to attend; everyone is welcome at Holmes! We build community and encourage people on their own spiritual journey.

For the latest information on our programs, join our eNewsletter by scaning here.





Holmes Camp and Retreat Center 60 Denton Lake Road · Holmes, NY 12531 845.878.6383 · HolmesCamp.org