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April 5, 2010

Dear Colleague,

Arizona 4-H, 4-H National Headquarters, and the American Camp Association are developing a new resource titled, *Family Camp Best Practices: A Guidebook for Youth Development Professionals*. Your professional assistance is requested to bring this project to fruition. Intended for youth development professionals working in camps and other community and non-formal educational settings, the *Family Camp Guidebook* recommends best practices for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating family camp programs. With support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this guidebook features the very best in family camp programming.

4-H, the American Camp Association, and organizations like yours have a strong tradition inspiring kids and families to be outdoors, in nature. As youth development professionals, we know the many positive effects that experiences in nature afford children; in turn, children will grow to care for their environment if positive connections are fostered when they are young.

The *Family Camp Guidebook* is one sure way to continue our collective tradition. 4-H has provided leadership to a national initiative, Connecting Youth with the Outdoors which has inspired this particular project. Camps are important settings for healthy family development. Through hands-on, multisensory experiences at camp, family members connect with the outdoors and with each other. This guidebook is necessary and timely.

A movement has blossomed across the United States. Impassioned individuals and dedicated organizations are identifying and addressing barriers that limit our children's access to nature. Adults share childhood memories of playing outdoors until mom called out, "dinnertime!" Now, parents themselves, they are emboldened to tell their children, "go outside and play!" Neighborhood groups are tugging at kids to walk away from screens, look up from texting, and pull out the ear buds. Kids are inspired to explore and play outside and families are greening neighborhoods and seeking quality time in the outdoors—even right outside their backdoor. And they are enjoying family camp adventures.

Are you interested in joining the effort?

Camp professionals who work in day or resident camp settings, have expertise in nature-based programming, and experience writing curriculum are invited to apply for the Family Camp Design Team. We intend to recruit a small group of professionals to serve a 6-month term (May to November 2010), meeting once a month via teleconference. Between meetings, the Design Team will provide expertise, review curriculum, and share general feedback and recommendations that reflect best practices.

To express your interest to serve on the Family Camp Design Team, please submit the enclosed application by April 20. If you have questions, call me at (520) 319-9868 or email suzannedhruv@gmail.com. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Dhruv, Program Coordinator
Arizona 4-H Connecting Youth with the Outdoors

Kirk A. Astroth, Director
Arizona 4-H Youth Development



FAMILY CAMPS: Connecting Families with the Outdoors
A collaborative project of Arizona 4-H and 4-H National Headquarters with support from
US Fish and Wildlife Service and the American Camp Association.

Design Team Application

Camp professionals who work in day or resident camp settings, have expertise in nature-based programming, and experience writing curriculum are invited to apply for the Family Camp Design Team.

The Family Camp design team will meet once a month, via teleconference, from May 2010 until November 2010. Completion of the *Family Camp Guidebook* is scheduled for November 2010.

To be considered, please submit the following information.

Contact Information

Organization: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Email and Telephone: _____

In **500 words or less**, please explain the following:

1. Describe your experience in planning, implementing, and/or evaluating family camp programs. Include information regarding (a) program focus, (b) target populations - age, gender, ethnic/race groups, (c) time of year offered, camp length, and number of years offered (d) number of families served, (e) the intentions or goals of the camp program.
2. List your organization's best practices for conducting family camps and resources available through your organization that could contribute to the overall success of this project.
3. Describe your interest in participating as a member of the Family Camp Design Team.

Please submit your application electronically, by April 20, 2010, to Suzanne Dhruv, Program Coordinator at suzannedhruv@gmail.com. All questions about this project should be directed to Suzanne.

Thank you for your interest in the Family Camp Design Team.