

Religious Education

Erica Shadowsong, Director of Religious Education

Life is a beach

Last weekend, youth, advisors and DRE took a much-anticipated and deserved trip to Virginia Beach.

We left on Friday afternoon and serenaded ourselves to maintain sanity as we navigated D.C. area traffic. Car time always affords unique opportunities to bond, and I heard quite a few humorous stories on the ride down. We arrived late at night at a camping and travel park, where we stayed in some very nice cabins. We were happy to have shower facilities nearby, and also a miniature golf course, pool and even a modest arcade.

On Saturday morning, we headed for the beach. Fifteen youth and three adults set up a tableau of towels, sunscreen and sunglasses and battled the waves. We were blessed with beautiful weather. After getting salt and sand-soaked, youth played volleyball, explored the beach front or napped in the sun. Some of us adults got some reading in, but for much of the time we chatted about ideas for next year and things that had gone well this year. Youth had lunch together at an area pancake house. In the early evening we returned to the park for some non-beach downtime. A couple of us went out for a food run for dinner, which would be a cookout of hot dogs (tofu for the vegetarians), fruit, salad, and chips. After dinner we all wanted to go back to the beach and get a taste of beachfront nightlife. When we arrived, everything was still busy; live music could be heard from more than one block, a carnival was in progress, and families strolled, biked and rode odd bicycle-carriages everywhere. I buried my face into a giant ice-cream cone and that's all I remember. Some youth explored henna tattoos, gifts and souvenirs. We reconvened in the parking lot and got back to the park around midnight, where we sat on the basketball blacktop outside of our cabins and, to the sound of crooning frogs, held an end-of-the-year sharing circle by candlelight. It was a poignant moment filled with memories and reflections on the year past, and hopes for next year. We departed Sunday morning after a large breakfast at Waffle House (or McDonald's, depending on the car and the crowds) and made good time back to UUCA Sunday afternoon.

Our time together was very special, and I know I speak for the other advisors when I say that we will hold the youth in our hearts all summer and as the new year, with its challenges, opportunities and joys, approaches. Some of us will have new roles, but as we told the youth Saturday night, we'll always be available for them when they need a listening ear, as they will be for each other.