

ONE HEARTLAND CAMP

INDUSTRY COMES TOGETHER TO HELP MAKE CHILDREN'S LIVES BRIGHTER



The fiberglass pool donated by Viking Pools welcomes its first swimmers.



(L-R) Silvia Glover, Tom Straub, Robbie Amell, Caleb Glover, Jonathan Bennett, Stacy Nelson, and Neil Willenson at the official opening of the pool.

LENDING A HELPING HAND

In addition to Midwest Fiberglass Pools of Michigan and Viking Pools of Sacramento, a number of other suppliers and manufacturers donated their time, services and equipment to the Camp Heartland pool project. These include Viking Pools of Mid-Valley, Zodiac Pool Systems Inc. (Jandy equipment and deck jets to create a splash pad beside the pool), National Pool Tile (perimeter tile and depth markers), King Technologies (commercial 'Frog' mineral water treatment system), and S.R. Smith (handrails). Additional contributors include Pentair Water Pool and Spa, Stegmeier Corporation, Welsh Co., Paramount Pool Products, Nemer Fieger, MNCAR, Kraus-Anderson, Keller Residential Inc., Fiberstars, Engelsma Construction, Chris Simmons, Charisse Simonian, Arnt Construction, Argosy Foundation and Direct Supply Inc. ♦

Camp Heartland offers one of the most respected camping programs for special needs children between the ages of seven to 15. Located in Willow River, Minn., with similar camps in New York and California, this organization offers unique educational programs and diverse activities free of charge to help enrich the lives of children suffering with HIV/AIDS.

In 2007, Camp Heartland founder and CEO Neil Willenson heard the story of three-year-old Caleb Glover, a boy who gained national attention after the owners of an Alabama campground said he couldn't shower or swim there because of his HIV diagnosis. Sylvia Glover, Caleb's mother, was shocked when the family was asked to leave the campground after learning he was HIV positive.

"This was my first exposure to discrimination," she said.

A PLACE TO SWIM

In response to the way Caleb was treated at the Alabama campground, Willenson asked Viking Pools of Jane Lew, W.Va., a manufacturer of fiberglass swimming pools, to provide a welcoming environment where Caleb and other campers could swim and have fun. Viking dealers, Midwest Fiberglass Pools of Michigan and Viking Pools of Sacramento, Calif., were glad to help out. They donated a 5- x 12-m (16- x 40-ft) 'Ocean Breeze' fiberglass pool to the camp, now renamed One Heartland.



(L-R) Tom Straub, Caleb Glover and Stacy Nelson at the opening ceremony for the One Heartland pool.

On June 29, 2008, Tom Straub, vice-president of sales and marketing and Stacy Nelson, director of marketing for Viking Pools, travelled to One Heartland to dedicate the pool in Caleb's name. They were joined by other contributors to the project, along with actors Jonathan Bennett and Robbie Amell (*Cheaper by the Dozen 2*) to celebrate the occasion. The event started with a tour of the 38-ha (94-acre) campground and ended with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, where Caleb was the first swimmer in the new pool.

Despite all the joy and fun the pool offers to the children attending the camp, Willenson reminds people of the many misconceptions surrounding the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

"We all know you cannot get HIV from being a friend, from swimming, from a hug or a kiss, and that is why Caleb is here," he says. ♦