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“i want what she’s having”

education · inspiration · connection

CampExperience™ Network Celebrates 15 Years of “Doing Good & Having Fun” and Raising \$1 Million for Charities

Colorado-based organization hosts annual fall women’s retreat with COVID-safe approach.

Englewood, Colorado (September 23, 2020) – The Colorado-based [CampExperience™ Network](#) recently celebrated reaching its 15th anniversary, raising more than \$1 million for charity, and touching the lives of more than 5,000 women who have taken part in the organization’s activities. “Doing Good and Having Fun” is the motto for all CampExperience™ Network events, especially the annual fall retreat held on Sept. 18-20 at La Foret Conference Center in Black Forest, Colorado.

The CampExperience™ [fall retreat](#) that started it all was held at Copper Mountain Resort in 2006 and since then has become known as one of the best weekend getaways for women seeking relaxation, friendships and a place to help others through raising money via an auction, paying for donated personal services, shopping at the Bow-tique and more. The fall retreat also delivers a weekend of education, inspiration and connections for women's business and personal lives.

History

In the summer of 2005, Denver, Colorado-based [Betsy Wiersma](#) and 14 volunteers gathered to design a weekend getaway, CampExperience™, that would both uplift and support busy women and make a difference. This first team focused on creating a summer camp atmosphere where participants could disconnect from the hustle and bustle of every day and reconnect with themselves and like-minded women.

A series of hands-on workshops, storytelling experiences and activities that connected attendees with their mind, body and spirit was created, and it became the format for all future fall retreats held annually. Approximately \$20,000 was raised for charity in that first camp weekend held at Copper Mountain Resort in 2006, and the magic of CampExperience™ began!

What started as one weekend a year has grown into an always-connected CampExperience™ Network with 50 [events](#) annually, allowing women to be as involved all year long or as much as

their schedules and desires allow. Most events, other than the Fall Retreat, are held in the Denver metro area and slightly beyond. “The \$1 million in cash and in-kind donations have supported more than 50 charities in Colorado and around the world. At this year’s fall retreat, \$15,000 was raised through a Power of the Purse auction, \$8,000 donated through on-site shopping and activities, and \$5,000 contributed via an online auction for a total of \$28,000 raised. We are so proud of this 15-year accomplishment,” says Betsy Wiersma.

2020 Fall Retreat Highlights

The highlight of this year’s 2½-day retreat was an outdoor Art, Music and Ideas Festival on Saturday afternoon and an evening 15th anniversary party featuring keynote speakers Dr. Janine Davidson, president of Metropolitan State University of Denver; Tamra Ryan, CEO of Women's Bean Project; and Dr. Tracy McCubbin of Radiance Functional Medicine. Featured entertainers included singers Hazel Miller of Denver, Megan Burtt of Longmont and a Billy Joel and Elton John impersonator.

Throughout the weekend, there were breakout sessions on topics ranging from How to Become a Brand Champion and Marketing Superhero, Sustainable Health, and Find the Courage to Grow in Your Life to Creating Emotional Intelligence, Rock Your Relationship, and Mobilize Your Gut and Brain to Work Together. There also were fun hands-on workshops like chocolate and wine pairing with the Chocolate Therapist Julie Nygard; a painting party with artists Mandy Thomas and Maria Borrego; and PsycheHikes® with Audrey Boxwell, PhD.

Other activities included happiness hours, archery, gong meditation for stress release, yoga, arts and crafts, shopping, and personal services like massage, facials, acupuncture, Reiki and more.

The surprise finale rounding out the music weekend featured a barbershop quartet After Dark and a surprise distribution of the pre-press run of Wiersma’s new book “The STEW: Smart Talk Exceptional Women.” “The STEW” feature the stories of 62 women to uplift and inspire the world; many of the authors are the Camp Sisters.

“I can’t think of a more perfect and safe weekend to uplift and our sisterhood,” says Wiersma. “We demonstrated the power of women united for good!”

Sisters Safe Approach

When the impacts of COVID-19 became evident, Wiersma and her team went into overdrive figuring out how to safely make the 15th Annual Fall Retreat a reality. Wiersma tapped her many years of special event planning experience to come up with creative solutions.

First and foremost, the retreat was reorganized to stay in line with local, Colorado and federal rules for safe gatherings. Campers were given four ways to participate:

- Attend camp as an overnight guest, which is the usual format;
- Drive to the retreat on a daily basis and not sleep on-site;
- Take part in the Saturday celebration, all day and evening; and

- Stay at home and enjoy a virtual celebration package.

The result? Sixty-two Camp Sisters stayed overnight, 40 drove in daily and 40 attended online from as far away as Norway, England and Australia. Accommodations were spread out with two to per room, less-than-normal guests per cabin and three per yurt, and there was the option to bring a tent or camper. Sponsor Escape Campervans provided a discount for participants wishing to rent a colorfully painted sleeper van for the retreat.

Other COVID measures involved modifying the event layout and meal service and utilizing the beautiful outdoor surroundings at the 400-acre La Foret as much as possible.

- Outdoor assemblies each day and socially distanced seating for the evening indoor assemblies;
- Meals served in small waves, not buffet style;
- Breakout sessions in distanced locations with small groups and many were held outside;
- Outside activities included PsycheHikes®, walking the labyrinth and trying archery; and
- An outdoor live Music, Art & Ideas Festival on Saturday afternoon.

For more information, visit www.campexperience.com.

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Photos: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13yFqjOR6aq8XOMi_1F5drp9acICkTSUs

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