

Camp Alkulana

Good morning. Have you ever wondered about the source of the word **Alkulana**? I did, so I Googled it, and that took me to Wikipedia, and there was the answer. Alkulana is a Native American Indian word which means “Bright Eyes.”

There’s probably a lot more behind this story than we’ll ever know. I still wonder, how did the Native Americans know that this place, which would be selected many years later to serve as a youth camp, would in fact produce... “Bright Eyes.”

For, that’s what we see now, “Bright Eyes” in all of the literature photos, and the video entitled “Ripple Effect.” Dozens and dozens of “Bright Eyes” looking back at us with deep gratitude written all across their faces. If you haven’t seen the video, please do. It can be found on the church website or in weekly email communications.

Jesus told us to love, bless and become like the children. In Mark 10, we find these words.

These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Unless you accept God’s kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you’ll never get in.”

Alkulana’s camps reflect that. And, this is an opportunity for us to actually see our donation work in these well-managed and inspiring camps.

We are nearing the end of this campaign to provide camperships for under-served inner-city kids here in Richmond. Each campership costs about \$500. The Friendship Sunday school class raised over \$8,000 and will provide at least 16 camperships to attend the camp this summer. We in the church have been challenged by the class to match or exceed that number.

I’m happy to announce today folks, you have so far in this campaign challenge, donated over \$5,800. That’s a great start. Congratulations! Thank you! Now, we have one week to discover if that’s the best we can do. I think we can double or even triple that.

For example, consider how many of us are here today. The ushers tell me that attendance during the summer months runs from about 250 to 350. Suppose there’s 200 people here today that did not donate in the Friendship Class ‘campaign and have not yet donated in the church challenge of the campaign.

Suppose all of the folks included in that estimated 200 or so, could manage to donate this week, an average of \$45 each. That’s less than one dinner out at your favorite restaurant. Some of you can and will donate more than \$45 to reach that average. Thank you. An average average of \$45 would add \$9,000 to the approximately \$5,800 already collected in the church challenge. That would bring the total to over \$14,000 which would fund 28 new camperships for this summer.

Imagine the difference that would make to 28 children, who instead of hearing the usual sounds of the inner city, would now hear mountain brooks bubbling and new friends laughing with each other. It will change their lives, as camper histories confirm. History also shows that 64% of the campers return and become counselors.

Now, 28 camperships is more like a genuine River Road response. We can raise the funds this week folks for this great cause. Donations can be made online or by check to RRCB with Alkulana in the memo field. They can be mailed to the church office or simply dropped in the offering plate next Sunday.

To help us remember this week, take one of the green envelopes in the pew back home with you. Put it with your car keys at home as a reminder.

Help us change the lives of 28 inner city Richmond kids waiting to see if they’re included in this summer’s camperships.

Let’s do it, folks.

Thank you.

C. Page Highfill