



Volunteers of America®

WESTERN WASHINGTON

## Common Questions and Answers

### **Re: Reorganization of Camp Volasuca and Accessible Recreational Travel (ART) Programs**

#### **How will these programs be reorganized?**

- The mission of Camp Volasuca (to provide recreational opportunity for adults with developmental disabilities) will be combined with our Accessible Recreational Travel (ART) Program. ART will incorporate camp experiences into their travel activities.
- Recreational opportunities (services previously offered by Camp Volasuca and ART) will now become a new offering/program as part of our disability services.
- We will develop best-practice, year-round recreation services to adults with developmental disabilities. This holistic look at our services means that we will identify, develop and offer even more opportunities than ART or Camp Volasuca were able to provide previously.

#### **Why are these programs being reorganized?**

- Camp Volasuca as a full-fledged camp program is not sustainable. However, our Accessible Recreational Travel (ART) Program is. This new approach will better serve our mission is to provide services that enhance the quality of life for adults with developmental disabilities.
- Demand for services in Sultan/Sky Valley is growing. We currently operate a preschool for low income children (ECEAP), an alternative high school, and transitional and permanent housing and services for homeless individuals. Having access to Camp Volasuca acreage and focusing our Sky Valley facility on services to the community puts us in a strong position to maximize our program growth opportunities. This change will give us the opportunity to focus our resources in east Snohomish County on providing services to Sky Valley.

#### **What does this mean for other programs at Volunteers of America Western Washington?**

- The past five years have been a period of tremendous growth and change for the agency. Given the current economic conditions, it is imperative that we are focused agency-wide at the best use of our resources to solve community problems. We are examining our work to

ensure that we direct all our resources in the most efficient and effective way possible. Despite the current economic challenges, our agency remains strong.

- Camp Volasuca has struggled over the last few years with decreasing enrollment and revenue from our kid's camps, and limited revenue from our camp sessions for adults with developmental disabilities. During the same time, the demand for alternative recreational opportunities has grown.
- There will be an emotional loss felt by the agency and our community. We have been operating Camp Volasuca since 1947 and it provided life-changing summer camp experiences for many. It is important for us to honor the history of Camp Volasuca and the many individuals who have had a hand in its legacy over the years, including the many loyal donors, campers and valued employees.
- Demand for services in Sultan/Sky Valley is growing. We currently operate a preschool for low income children (ECEAP), an alternative high school, and transitional and permanent housing and services for homeless individuals. Having access to Camp Volasuca acreage and focusing our Sky Valley facility on services to the community puts us in a strong position to maximize our program growth opportunities. This change will give us the opportunity to focus our resources in east Snohomish County on providing services to Sky Valley

#### **What about the current employees?**

- All current employees will be focused on developing the new, year-round recreational opportunities program.

#### **What is the benefit to Volunteers of America Western Washington clients?**

- We will be able to develop and integrate our continuum of services (including expanding recreational services) to adults with disabilities. We will align all of our services with our strong history of innovative programs and support for adults with developmental disabilities.
- This change will enable the organization to focus on providing maximum year-round services to the Sky Valley community. The Sky Valley facility currently serves thousands of individuals each year through direct service and community partnerships.
- We will be able to reorganize the camp acreage and facility to better serve the current strong demand for services and future growth in Sultan/Sky Valley and provide better services to our clients.

#### **What about the adults with developmental disabilities who attended Camp Volasuca?**

- Adults with developmental disabilities will have more opportunities for recreation in the coming year, not less. We will develop a new continuum of "best practice" services for year-round recreational opportunities with additional and innovative ways for adults with

developmental disabilities to have excellent recreation opportunities. Supporting the most vulnerable in our community is central to our mission.

- We already offered recreational opportunities outside of Camp Volasuca through our Accessible Recreational Travel program. We will integrate these recreational services with our existing services to provide a truly comprehensive way to serve adults with developmental disabilities.
- We are expanding and aligning our existing services for adults with developmental disabilities to continue our long history of committed service and innovation.

### **What about the low-income children who attended Camp Volasuca?**

- The historic role of Camp Volasuca as a camp which served low income children has diminished. The number of youth campers Camp Volasuca served each summer had been decreasing. Many other camps offer similar opportunities for low income children in the region. We are confident that the relatively small number of children we were serving at Camp Volasuca can be served by other area camps. We will create a list to refer campers, and also post this information on our website.
- We will continue to serve low income and at-risk children in many ways through our other programs including mentoring, childcare referral, preschools, and basic needs services.

### **When will this reorganization take effect?**

- Effective immediately, we will begin contacting any campers who had registered early for 2009. We will also notify past campers who were likely to return to Camp Volasuca this year
- We will offer three (3) extended weekend sessions for developmentally disabled campers this summer as a transition:
  - Session I - July 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>
  - Session II – July 30<sup>th</sup> – August 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - Session III – August 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>
- We will develop a new, year-round calendar of recreational and travel opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities.
- We will refer youth campers to other summer camp programs in the area.