

**UPDATE FROM YOUR ISLAND HOME
BY JOHNSON JEFFERS, PROGRAM DIRECTOR**



This summer marked the **ninth** summer of Family Camp at Mustang Island Conference Center, and it was an amazing one. Over 800 kids and adults attended Family Camp to beat the heat and enjoy some family fun on the beach. Led by the summer camp's teachers, Meredith Gardial and Suzanna Frey, we adopted the diocesan theme of the "Parable of the Sower." With help from chaplains and staff, families explored the parable through worship, family discussions, skits, and hands-on activities. Through daily lessons, families applied the parable to their everyday lives and deepened their relationships with God.

Everyone escaped the summer heat, the Texas drought, and enjoyed the clear blue waters of the Gulf. From surfing and boogie boarding to following Brown Beard the Pirate on a treasure hunt, the beach was full of activity both on and off the shore. We even had some participants try their luck at fishing in the surf, reeling in some interesting catches. Our very own Father Paul Frey, of Christ Church Episcopal in Laredo, managed to catch a bonnet head shark using none other than Kathy's boiled shrimp as bait! Clearly, all creatures, great and small, of land and sea, cannot resist the cooking of Kathy and Sandra. This was especially true this summer when Kathy and Sandra out did themselves by switching up the menu, adding new dishes and more options for families to enjoy the blessing of their delicious cooking.

New and returning families played hard on the beach during the day and enjoyed each other's company into the night. While everyone else in Texas had a burn ban, we were daring enough to have a campfire on the beach with s'mores, close to the water for safe measure. Each night presented new entertainment, but by far the most entertaining night of the weekend was the talent and dance party. Singers, dancers, actors and actresses, magicians, musicians, and many more talented kids and parents showed off their talent, and then their dance moves, providing many laughs and lasting memories.



Overall, this summer was a wonderful testament to the ways in which Family Camp continues to grow and be an amazing ministry of the diocese. It is vitally important in this fast-paced, digital age that families are able to come together in a Christian environment to enjoy each other's company, grow together in their relationship with Jesus Christ, and get back to the basics of love, fellowship and worship. We are blessed with a beautiful place in Mustang Island Conference Center where families are able to escape the constant pressures of life and view the gift of God's creation in such a peaceful setting.



This year could not have been successful without the hard work and dedication of the summer staff, Brian Noll, Elizabeth Ellery, Suzanna Frey, Meredith Gardial, and Amber Schkade, including our two Sewanee interns Forrest Burnson and Marshall Williams. Alongside the amazing staff at the Conference Center, Kevin Spaeth, Lynn Corby, Kathy Jansen, Sandra Schneider, Roxanne Schlabach, and Peggy Gonzales, their service to each other, this ministry, and the families who attended Mustang Island Family Camp this summer was nothing less than remarkable.