

## **Midlake 2016 Report**

**By Don Boche, Delegate WIUPMI**

The Midlake Alateen Conference was again held at Devel's Head Resort in Merrimac, WI on May 27-29, 2016 and hosted by Illinois. The theme was "Opening Our Hearts" and every year I'm touched by the sharings in the meetings. Hearts are opened and the raw emotions pour out. I've heard Alateens share things there that they never shared before, with anyone! I still don't fully understand what it is about Midlake that that moves the members to share so deeply and so freely with each other. I guess if I had to try to explain it, it would be the underlying theme "PFM", I can't tell you what this is, you had to be there! There was no explanation but you would see "PFM" on a door here and there. In a conversation I overheard a teen say it and my immediate reaction was, YES, that's it! That's what it's all about! When I think about "Opening Our Hearts" and "PFM" together I still get emotional.

The Opening Ceremonies and Ice Cream Social started the event at Friday 7 pm. The around the clock meetings were in Cliffhaus B & C with a different meeting topic in each room, every hour and they were well attended. There is always the "Rock" meeting outside Saturday afternoon when we all gather outside on this pile of bolders. Everyone picks a small rock from a basket and reflects and shares on the word written on their rock. This meeting is always very popular. Someone must be watching out for this conference because it rained and rained, but stopped when we had outside activities. Could this just be a coincidence, or is HP really that close to us? Saturday at 5 pm is a good time for Alateens to check in with Sponsors and get dressed for the Banquet. The speakers were incredible, sharing their stories from the heart. One a well known Alateen and the other a well seasoned male AMIAS. The banquet meal was great and I think I had two desserts. The dance followed the banquet, it was so hot in there but the Alateens were having fun.

This year we were housed at the Inn, a building by itself next to the main resort. This was better because we were not so mixed in with the general resort population. The last several years the Inn was being remodeled and not available

for Midlake. The Hospitality Room was in the Smokies building in front of the Inn. The only drawback was there were several flights of steps, being somewhat up on a hill. It is a good size building and lots of open space for the teens. There was so much food there, snacks, water, puzzles and games. The Smokies was a great place to hang out.

As always, my interactions with the Alateens and Sponsors (AMIAS) are memorable. Some stand out more than others and I will cherish these memories in my heart forever. Although I know I have a lot to share with the Alateens, I still feel honored when Alateens I don't know begin talking with me. I love it when they ask me direct questions, one on one. I feel I grow with the Alateens and I'm a better person for attending Midlake.

Sunday morning about 8 am is breakfast and then packing and cleaning. About 9:30 am is the closing and the Alateens taking the open mic, sharing their experiences and growth during the weekend. This is always an emotional time with sharing from the heart, or "Opening Our Hearts". We close with the song "Lean On Me". Some Alateens have not slept all weekend, and are ready for that long drive home.

Please, if you are good with teenagers and would like to share your Al-Anon program, YOU ARE NEEDED!

Some time has passed since Midlake. Considering I believe in full disclosure, I feel obligated to tell you about an incident at Midlake. This time was well spent looking into all the details. The NI Delegate, Sandy, started looking into this incident immediately upon hearing of it. She made many calls interviewing people on Memorial Day and many days after. All involved were interviewed, including the Alateens. Sandy kept me fully informed and also talked with WSO. Sandy told me "We take this seriously" and she did. I'm so grateful for her and the time she put into this. There were so many statements because this took place over the weekend, starting on the bus ride to Midlake. Someone saw this small interaction and someone saw that interaction and each reported their part. These

interactions between the two Alateens and the male Sponsor continued till Sunday morning, when the police were involved. I believe the police seen this for what it was, a serious disagreement, with bad behavior by all involved, and no report was filed. The male Sponsor has resigned and is being removed as an AMIAS by Illinois. Now, we could look at this incident as negative or positive. Let me tell you about the positive. WIUPMI Alateen Coordinator Connie formed a task force to look into the Midlake Alateen guidelines. I'm involved in this task force and I believe we have learned from this incident. We have also looked at Alateen conference guidelines from many other states. We will bring revisions to the AWSC this August for approval of the revised Midlake Guidelines. Within these revised guidelines will also be the requirements for a Conflict Resolution Board. Considering the Midlake Alateen Conference is held in Wisconsin, we will ask Illinois and Minnesota if they can live with these new Midlake Guidelines. If they have feedback, we will incorporate their ideas into the Midlake Guidelines for approval. In case you don't know, this is **huge!** One multi-state Midlake Guideline, something we have been trying to put together for years. Illinois North Delegate, Sandy and I have already talked about one multi-state Midlake Guideline and she is expecting to receive it soon. I call that one big positive for Midlake and all the Alateens that we love so much. And that my Friends is **Pure F...ing Magic!**

In Your Service,

Don Boche, Delegate WIUPMI

