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The Washington Times

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THURSDAY, JULY 12, 2001

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Camp recruits children of lesbians

Girl Scouts leases New Jersey property to feminist group

By Joyce Howard Price
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A Girl Scouts site in New Jersey will be taken over next month by children of homosexuals and other parents dubbed "progressive" by the feminist group that will be running the two-week camp.

"We have a positive business relationship with the Girl Scouts council that owns the camp, and this relationship has nothing to do with sexual orientation," said Karen Miller, who is accepting applications from people wishing to serve as counselors at the Mountain Meadow Summer Camp at Newfield, N.J.

The arrangement means the Girl Scouts are supporting homosexual

"recruitment," said Robert H. Knight, director of the Culture and Family Institute, an affiliate of Concerned Women for America.

"The Girl Scouts has welcomed lesbians for some time now, so it's not at all surprising that they are looking the other way as their property is being used as a recruitment camp for sexual deviants," said Mr. Knight.

He added: "It's clear that lesbianism is no barrier to being a role model for young girls, as far as the Girl Scouts is concerned. In contrast, the Boy Scouts have a policy of protecting boys from homosexuals."

Ms. Miller says there is no reason lesbians shouldn't be role models. "I do feel positive about the way the

Girl Scouts has taken a public stance against discrimination," she said yesterday in a telephone interview from her office in Detroit.

This will be the fourth consecutive summer that the Girl Scouts of South Jersey Pines, which owns what it calls Camp Sacajawea, has leased the property to the nonprofit group dominated by homosexuals that operates the site as Mountain Meadow.

Before that, Ms. Miller said, Mountain Meadow leased campgrounds owned by other groups. One summer, she said, the camp operated on property belonging to a Boy Scouts council in Pennsylvania.

Describing her group, Ms. Miller

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said: "We're all feminists, all activists, and most of us are gays and lesbians. This is a leftist group."

The Mountain Meadow Summer Camp will be in swing this year from Aug. 5 to 18 and will host 85 youngsters ages 9 to 17, said Ms. Miller.

The camp is earmarked for children of homosexual, transsexual, bisexual, biracial, adoptive, single-parent and other nontraditional families.

Ms. Miller said adolescents with homosexual parents have been "an underserved population," who have

not received the counseling necessary to deal with the "teasing and harassment" they receive from other children.

"During the last 10 years, there's been a lesbian baby boom, so younger kids have been getting much more" attention, she said.

Ms. Miller called the Mountain Meadow Camp a "really exciting place," where children with homosexual parents can feel free to be open about their family lives. "Most of these kids are proud of their families," she said.

Gertrude Kaczorowski, assistant executive director of the Girl Scouts of the South Jersey Pines, said that council's relationship with Mountain Meadow is "strictly a landlord-tenant relationship."

"We've also rented the camp to five or six other groups in the past couple of years," said Mrs. Kaczorowski. She said the list includes some football teams, a sheriff's youth group and an organization that sponsors a camp for children whose parents have died.

Those applying for staff positions at Mountain Meadow are asked to discuss the experiences they have had in the "LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered] community."

Job applicants are given the option to answer questions about their sexual orientation.

"When we rent out our camp, we are not responsible for the personnel who are hired," said Mrs. Kaczorowski.

Asked what the Girl Scouts require from the prospective tenant, she said, "We require payment, proof of liability insurance, we require that they follow safety rules, such as allowing no weapons or alcohol on the property, and they must show a copy of their mission statement."

The Girl Scouts declined to disclose how much income it receives for renting out the camp, but Ms. Miller said those who attend pay on a sliding scale. "The average camper pays \$250. We pay an average of \$850 per child," she said.

The Girl Scouts proudly proclaims its policy of nondiscrimination, "and we're in a state that prohibits discrimination," Mrs. Kaczorowski said.

News about the transformation of Camp Sacajawea to Mountain Meadow has been the subject of online articles by CNSNews and the American Family Association.

Both mentioned a woman named Linda Oakleaf, a founding member of a group called Lesbian Avengers in Chicago.

Miss Oakleaf has been active in the Girl Scouts for 15 years — she most recently has served as a troop leader in western North Carolina — and has been a director of Mountain Meadow Summer Camp.

Ms. Miller said Miss Oakleaf will not be at the New Jersey camp this summer because of other commitments.

"But she's a wonderful director," she said.