



YMCA Camp Huckins Board Member - Kathleen Mulkern

Kathleen Mulkern was born and raised in the Mount Washington Valley. In 1974, when she was in the third grade, she heard from

her two friends about an awesome camp called Camp Huckins and she asked her parents if she could go there. When her mother heard that she wanted to go to camp, her Mother told her, "You live here in the mountains, you don't need to go to CAMP! (which may have been her mother's way of covering for the fact that they really couldn't afford to send her to camp). Later, Kathleen's mother received a call from Audrey Vorperian, whose husband Zaven was the director of Camp Huckins, letting Kathleen's mother know that there were scholarships available and soon she was packing her trunk to go off to Huckins.

Kathleen spent nine wonderful summers at camp, becoming a C.I.T., and a counselor. Her favorite things about camp? The lake wind bringing up that pine needle smell on a hot day, vespers, the singing, candlelight, packages full of goodies (apologies to now-a-days campers), reading at rest period, swimming in the lake, lifeguarding, canoeing Black Brook, and

hearing Indian counsel fire drums in the distance. She still has the letters her campers would send to her after they left to return home after their sessions. Kathleen went to college at U.N.H., studying Nursing and then received a Master's degree in Public Health and Nurse-Midwifery from Boston University's Nurse-Midwifery Education Program within the School of Public Health. This midwifery program was started as a response to poor quality prenatal care in the Boston area. The program was started based on studies that showed an improvement in the health of inner city mother's and their babies when their prenatal care was provided by nurse midwives.

Kathleen fulfilled her dream in 2003 of returning to the valley after many years to live and work at the Memorial Hospital in North Conway NH. She moved here with her husband Reed, daughter Mae and her two sons, Liam (Mae's twin) and Finn. She loves skiing, snowshoeing, and just roaming around in the woods. Indoors, she enjoys restoring antique quilts, playing the fiddle, and singing. The practice of midwifery fulfills Kathleen's desire to connect with the women she sees and to make a difference in the world one woman and one birth at a time. It is her goal to empower women to become healthier, mentally and physically, to better care for themselves, their families, and their communities. She recently "caught" her 890th baby at The Memorial Hospital.

Not long after moving back to the Valley, her daughter Mae, who was in third grade, began asking if she could go to Camp

Huckins, having heard about it from her friends. Kathleen's reacted with uncertainty at first. She wondered how she could ever send her little girl away to camp so young and she could hear the words of her own Mom, "Why does she need to go to camp, she lives in the mountains?" But looking back on her own experiences, she knew that Mae, being the strong, confident child that she was, was the perfect Nellie Girl! Kathleen found out about the Camp Huckins Songs CD and bought it for Mae (who loves to sing), to learn some camp songs before she went that first summer. She put it on one evening for Mae to hear and while listening to it, the tears came pouring down and all her Camp memories came flooding back. And with those songs, Kathleen's ties to camp, (like a lanyard tied with gimp), were reconnected. Mae exclaimed "Mom, why are you crying!?"

So off Mae went, with her trunk packed. One day, soon after Mae came home from camp, she gave her Mom a hug and said, "Mom, NOW I understand why you were crying when you heard those songs!" Mae is now a second year Senior Counselor and will be a double Huckster this year. Kathleen is still sending Mae off into the world, as she is spending her gap year traveling the world in South America for three months in September 2015 and right now across Europe for three months.

Soon after Mae started attending camp that first summer, Kathleen received a call from Jody Skelton, to see if she was interested in becoming part of the Huckins Board which she is still

happily a part of today. She is now lucky enough to get to visit
camp a lot and smell those pine needles!