



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Valerie Holton, Vice President, Marketing  
Camp Fire USA

Telephone: 816-285-2028 (direct)

E-Mail: [valerie.holton@campfireusa.org](mailto:valerie.holton@campfireusa.org)

**Camp Fire USA Celebrates 100 Years of Serving Youth**

[Kansas City, MO – July 23, 2010]

Across America, campfires will be blazing on July 31<sup>st</sup> as thousands of people celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Camp Fire USA. “Ignite Change” is the theme of the Centennial and reflects the transformation of Camp Fire USA from its beginnings as the Camp Fire Girls to its contemporary role as a national youth development organization, inclusive to all.

A special lighting of a ceremonial Centennial Campfire will be held on July 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in each time zone at a place announced by each local Camp Fire USA council. “Thousands of people in towns across America will honor the Camp Fire USA organization in this way,” states Connie Coutellier, Director of Training for Camp Fire USA and national coordinator of the keystone Centennial Campfires.

“These Centennial campfires will be open to everyone – current and past participants, their families and friends, and the many community members and organizations that have supported Camp Fire over the years. We estimate that we’ve served nearly 40 million young people and their families over the past 100 years and this event will be a celebration of that legacy,” continues Coutellier.

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Along with the Centennial Campfire, local councils will have other activities through-out that day. Many will have picnics, cookouts, baseball games, boat rides and other youth activities. The Southeast Michigan council will make a time capsule, while other councils will look back in time with historic exhibits.

In Kansas City, home of Camp Fire USA's headquarters, the centennial will be recognized with a blaze of techno-lights on the side of the downtown Marriott Hotel. "Most folks in Kansas City have seen the great light displays on the Marriott. On July 31<sup>st</sup> the Camp Fire name will be seen for miles around," states Danny Kohrs, Development Director for Camp Fire USA. "We're thrilled that Marriott has offered to honor us with this graphic tribute. We're particularly delighted because Camp Fire's first local council was started in Kansas City in 1918. We have a long proud history here."

Founded in 1910 by Dr. Luther and Charlotte Gulick, Camp Fire Girls was the first non-sectarian organization for girls in the United States. Dr. Gulick chose the name "Camp Fire" because campfires were the origin and center of early community life. This focus on the outdoors, nature, and conservation continues to be a centerpiece of Camp Fire activities.

Today Camp Fire USA has evolved into a contemporary non-profit organization serving youth, with a new name that reflects changing times. In 1975 boys were encouraged to participate, and today 50% of Camp Fire USA youth are boys. Camp Fire is unique in its inclusiveness serving everyone regardless of race, religion, gender, socio-economic status, disability, or sexual orientation.

States Cathy Tisdale, newly hired President and CEO of Camp Fire USA, "Our programs are focused on changing young peoples' lives. Through their interaction and involvement with Camp Fire USA, girls and boys build confidence, independence, and leadership skills. We have an aspirational vision of preparing children to be productive, enlightened public citizens. Our goal is to give them the tools to craft a better future for our nation."

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Along with commemorating the past is an excitement about the future. Tisdale joined Camp Fire at the June 2010 board meeting. Formerly with both The American Red Cross and Girl Scouts of America, Tisdale brings 30 years of senior non-profit leadership to the Camp Fire organization.

“I am honored to be named CEO at this important moment in Camp Fire’s history,” concludes Tisdale. “I look forward to continuing our legacy and to crafting a vision for our next 100 years”.

For more details about a Camp Fire USA Centennial celebration near you go to

[www.campfireusa.org](http://www.campfireusa.org)

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Camp Fire USA is celebrating 100 years of building caring, confident youth and future leaders. Camp Fire USA provides quality programs nationwide for children, youth and families that reflect the organization’s “Four Cs”: We CARE for children with after school programs, offer CAMPS where kids can explore and learn respect for the environment, inspire youth to CONTRIBUTE to their communities with service projects, and CONNECT children, adults, and families together in small groups. Camp Fire USA headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, has 84 councils in 31 states. Last year Camp Fire USA provided nearly 30 million program hours, to over 300,000 youth, in hundreds of communities across the United States. For more information, visit [www.campfireusa.org](http://www.campfireusa.org).