

My Green Lake Story: Jeanne Shafer Koons

My father and mother were on staff in the beginning. Luther Wesley Smith contacted my father who was serving as an American Baptist pastor in Rutherford, NJ in the early 1940s. My dad was a certified Water Safety Instructor and had taught at the YMCA. Luther knew him and asked him if he would consider heading up the waterfront at Green Lake.

My parents were there in 1945 and 1946. I had my birthday party at Green Lake when I turned six in August of 1945. At my party was Carol Ann Cummings, whose father was on staff that summer; and Laura Smith, Luther's daughter.

My mother served as a hostess at the original Lawson House near Roger Williams Inn. I remember attending the Children's Center with a small group. At that time it was headquartered in the White House. We lived in the "Pink House" that was located near Judson Tower. The Cummings' lived in the brown "Peter Pan House" near the Children's Center. At the time my parents were there, the beautiful inboard boats were in use at the waterfront. I remember Lois Blankenship and Jeanne Crain, who spent their summers working at the Children's Center. It was also a place for Sunday School teachers to come for training during the summer.

I came as a high school student in 1956 and spent two weeks working with Rodney Brittan and other high school students building outdoor wash stands in the camping area and a dock on the waterfront across from the Tea House. I also spent one or two summers working at the waterfront



This attractive house is set aside as a Children's Center, where a daily play opportunity is provided for children from three to twelve years of age. Preschool children enjoy the worship, stories, rhythms, handwork, or the play on the lawn and in the new wading pool. Primary children enjoy nature trips, group planning, swimming instructions, and early evening vespers. The juniors have hiking, swimming, crafts, music, drama and sports, as well as Bible study and worship.

"Green Lake was always presented as Heaven on Earth. It was and continues to be!"



Caroline and Jeanne



in the late 1950s because I had my Water Safety Instruction badge. I remember coming to Green Lake as a high school student to attend a big conference in the Abbey Area that was led by Roger Fredrikson. At that time I was on the Kansas State Baptist Young People's Board.

My daughter Sherry served on the Children's Center staff in 1984. I came back again in 1994 for Green Lake's 50th Anniversary. Soon after that I started working at the Children's Center with Caroline (Jungwirth) Overzet. I worked for Caroline almost every year up until 2014. I attended the 75th anniversary celebration, and it just so happens that it was my 80th birthday week!