



Rev. Donald A. Hostetter Leadership Award

Paul Verdesi came to Holmes in 1975 and never really left. Brenda joined him in the 1980s and, as Paul reaches 50 years of working at Holmes, it's time to extend a heartfelt thanks to both Paul and Brenda for their unparalleled devotion and contributions to camp. Holmes is proud to present them with the Rev. Donald A. Hostetter Leadership Award.

Paul first came to Holmes in 1968 when his father, the Rev. Ariel Verdesi, served as chaplain for a week and he was a self-described “Director’s Brat.” In 1975 he joined the summer staff, then worked part-time through his college years at Bridgeport University, and was hired full-time in 1983 by director Don Hostetter to help complete the newly built Agape Center. Over the years he was mentored by some of the most respected leaders at Holmes so has a lifetime of institutional knowledge about camp.

Brenda came to Holmes in the summer of 1982 when her uncle and aunt, Don and Charlotte Hostetter, offered her a job. In the following summers she worked in various jobs including kitchen staff, counselor, and in the office — and met Paul. Brenda and Paul married in 1989. They have two sons, Jake and Ben. Brenda retired in 2022 from a career in human resources, most recently with the New York Power Authority.

“Maintenance Specialist” is Paul’s title but hardly describes his contributions. When camp is full he responds to any and all emergencies. On Saturday work days he manages crews of cleaners, builders and brush trimmers. At all times he is the eyes and ears around camp, diligently checking the site for damage and staying one step ahead when issues arise. He has collected and memorized multiple buildings and storage areas worth of inventory — right down to screws for washing machines — so he has pieces and parts to fix almost anything that might break.

Brenda is always ready to lend a hand. She has been an alumni volunteer for over 35 years and works on event committees, decorates Agape dining hall for galas, assists with mailings, catalogs photos, and even walks up and down Denton Lake Road picking up trash. She checks in often at the Holmes office and is always ready to fold laundry, raise a tent or run an errand. She is an elder and session member at Gilead Presbyterian Church in Carmel and has been the church’s financial secretary for 20 years.

In addition to Paul and Brenda’s hands-on work at Holmes, they have been generous contributors to events and fund raisers. As Holmes approaches its 80th anniversary, we are grateful that Paul and Brenda have been part of camp for 50 of those years.