

Dover celebrates 50 years of Groh-ing kids

Every student at Dover Middle School knows that May is a very special month. For the past 50 years, thousands of Dover students have been going to Camp Tippecanoe to be part of sixth-grade camp. Dover's outdoor education is the longest continuous program of its kind in Ohio and longtime educator Glen Groh has been a part of every one. That fact has not gone unnoticed, and this year Dover Middle School celebrated Groh and the program's 50th anniversary.

On the night of May 6, a surprise celebration dinner was held at Camp Tippecanoe in Groh's honor. Under the theme of 50 Years of Groh-ing Kids, students, staff, community volunteers and Groh's wife Ann gathered together to praise the father of one of Dover School's finest traditions.

The evening, marked with thoughts from past and current students, was highlighted by a performance from the Dover High Steel Drum Band, who braved bad weather and worse road conditions to provide a joyful cap to the event. Groh was also honored with the planting of a Purple Leaf Sand Cherry Tree, the hanging of more than a dozen specially built bluebird houses and the presentation of plaque to mark the occasion.

"I was really surprised by the whole thing," said Groh. "I knew that it was the 50th anniversary, but I had no idea they would be honoring me. I really thought Steve was joking when he told me five years



submitted photo
Camp Tippecanoe Director Scott Weigley (L) presents Ann and Glen Groh with a cake commemorating Dover Schools Outdoor Education Program and 50 Years of Groh-ing Kids.

ago he would put me on the T-shirt when I made it to 50."

Current Dover Camp Director Steve Shumaker was not kidding. "This has been in the works for over a year. Do you know how hard it is to keep a secret from a person everyone in town knows? Glen Groh is an institution in our community; everybody knows him. He has done so much for Dover schools and our children. Did you know Glen has never missed a session of camp, even when his children were born? How could we not honor him?"

When it all started 50 years ago, then-teacher Glen Groh never imagined that he would be leading a night hike when he was in his late 70s. Groh just wanted to be sure that Dover students had the opportunity to experience the wonder of nature's gifts and to provide them with the knowledge and understanding to help

maintain and preserve those gifts for years to come. The program was never meant to be under his watchful eye for so long; yet once again in May 2009, he was at Camp Tippecanoe taking 150 Dover Middle School students on a brisk walk through the woods their parents probably took years before.

"Over 10,000 Dover students have passed through here in the last 50 years, so you are part of something very special," said Scott Weigley, Tippecanoe Camp director, to the Dover campers. "You are so fortunate to have a community that supports

and values a program like this. Many school districts have dropped their outdoor programs or made them a daytime only thing. The program Dover has is outstanding and to have someone like Glen to be part of it makes it even better."

When asked if he planned to keep taking part in the program Groh replied, "Camp is good for me. When I have had aches and pains over the years, I just remind myself that I need to be ready for camp in the spring and I feel better. I enjoy it; the whole thing gives me something to look forward to."