

SUMMERLANE SCHOOL & CAMP  
STATEMENT FOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Summerlane School and Camp, a non-profit school chartered under the laws of the State of North Carolina, has been established on Frozen Creek Road near Rosman, N. C. It is a wholly autonomous school established in part by Humanitas, a lay brotherhood for service, and related to the Summerhill Society, a national educational association.

Summerlane is directed by the Reverend George von Hilsheimer, a Baptist minister, who is minister-in-residence of Humanitas, and Director of the Fund for the Migrant Children, as well as a consultant to the President's Committee for National Voluntary Services, and a nationally recognized authority on early childhood education, particularly among the underprivileged.

Reverend von Hilsheimer is a native of Florida, and has pursued most of his professional career in the South. His wife, Dian, is a native of North Carolina, the daughter of the Daniel Kirks of Bogue Sound, N.C.

Summerlane Camp is primarily a work camp. Teenagers from all over America will come to Summerlane to spend the summer learning work skills and contributing their summer efforts to the improvement of the life of the country around them. The teenagers volunteer for work ranging from helping in clinics and child care centers to building roads and cabins or cleaning old dumps.

Summerlane School is patterned after the work of Homer Lane and A. S. Neill. In Homer Lane's school, called the Little Commonwealth, boys and girls worked for their own money to buy their food, clothing and other needs, and in turn were made responsible for their own choices. Summerhill, which is now in its 43rd year was patterned on the Little Commonwealth, where children take responsibility for their decisions from the earliest grades.

Western North Carolina was chosen as the site for this school after many meetings with representatives of many areas. Last November Rev. von Hilsheimer lunched with Governor Sanford and his personal staff and the final decision that this area best suited Summerlane's needs was made. We are here because we like this area the way that it is. Its geography, the attitude of its people, and the conservatism of its government, all suit our understanding that the function of the school is to train a competent individual capable of making his own decisions and assuming responsibility for them.

We intend to develop the year round program quite slowly and conservatively. With financial success, similar schools will locate in the Blue Ridge area. Our goal is first firmly to establish our own school and then to aid in the conservative development of more schools, deeply committed to protecting the character of this area.