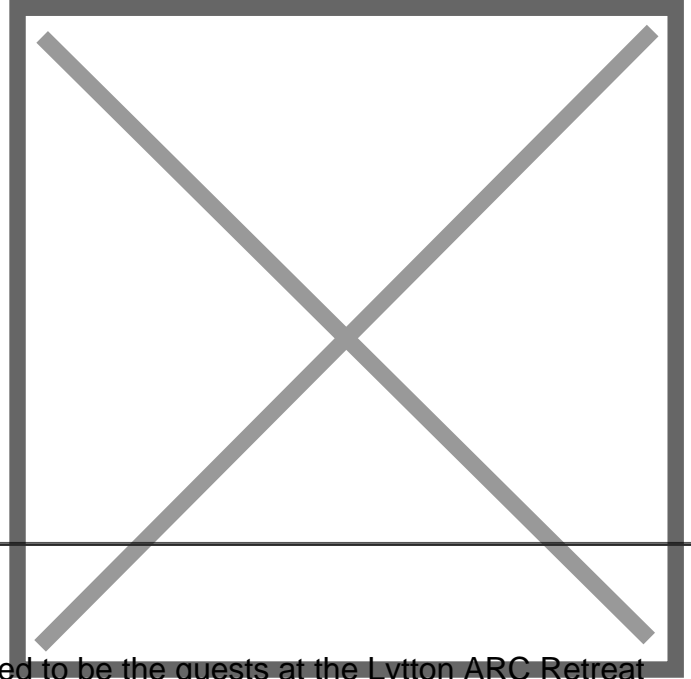


Sathers Share Deeper Life At ARC Retreat

Redwood Glen Camp

BIBLE
ARC retreat

STUDY—Major David
Boyd leads a Bible
study during the
retreat.



by Colonel Esther Sather –

My husband, Colonel Donald Sather, and I were invited to be the guests at the Lytton ARC Retreat held at Redwood Glen camp in Northern California.

Just getting away from the city, with fresh air, outdoor tournaments, Bible studies, and 12-step meetings all combined to provide a weekend of restoration and relaxation.

As we walked to the dining room, the line for lunch had already formed. The men were smiling and introducing themselves to us, asking about us as well. They want to belong to a family. We were the guests for the weekend, and information about this new part of the family was important to them.

I have gotten over my nervousness about asking directly. “Tell me about how did you come to the Army? Is the program working for you?” The life stories break my heart at first and then offer healing when the man smiles and tells about his recovery in body, mind and especially in his spirit.

One of my assignments was to sing the solo “The Well is Deep” on Sunday morning. Even as I practiced at home, I was fussing about the words. Who would understand about the well? Does a ‘draught of the water of life’ connect with someone outside an Army corps?

I asked the officers and counselors at camp to explain to me the difference between being sober and being clean and sober. I learned that being sober is ‘white knuckling,’ being dry without a program, on their own power. Being clean and sober is working a good program utilizing the tools given in the ARC Program.

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There were men at camp going through the program for the second and third time. The first time they stay about two to three months. They get sober, convinced they are well and can conquer the world. When they get out in the world, however, they relapse. They went back to all their old behaviors...whether alcohol, drugs, whatever. They had not learned to utilize the tools given to them in order to continue in sobriety.

The men who return for a second or third time know now what will be required of them, are much more focused and motivated toward recovery.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well about the water of life offered to her. He was talking not about a shallow well with water sometimes available and sides that might cave in, but a deep, deep well where there is water clear and pure and constant.

On Sunday morning, that was how I explained my solo to believers and non-believers alike. Someone only dry and sober has settled for the shallow well. Graduates of an ARC in recovery have moved from seeker to believer...in their program, in themselves and in their relationship with God. We're all in recovery and we all need to be working our program, but most of all we need to go for the deep, deep well.