

BY: Senator BORRELLO

COMMEMORATING the 100th Anniversary of Dunkirk
Camp and Conference Center

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the quality of life of the citizens of the State of New York is greatly enriched by the availability of exceptional recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center; and

WHEREAS, Established in 1922, the Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center (DCC) is 110 acres of woodland, streams, playing fields, open grounds, and nature trails overlooking Lake Erie; and

WHEREAS, Associated with the United Church of Christ, DCC has been home to thousands of visitors over the past century, welcoming everyone and encouraging diversity; from its guests drive through the pillars, the Dunkirk Spirit can be felt and remains long after the visit; and

WHEREAS, Whether attending one of its sleepover summer camps, day camps, retreats, or a wedding, DCC provides its guests with an unforgettable experience; and

WHEREAS, Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center began over 100 years ago when Reverend Dr. Theodore Mayer, pastor of Friedens Church in North Tonawanda, New York, dreamt of creating an outdoor ministry along the shores of Lake Erie that would serve as a training facility for the Evangelic Sunday School Teachers; and

WHEREAS, In October of 1921, Reverend Dr. Mayer, along with his search committee, settled on a grape vineyard three miles west of the City of Dunkirk, New York; work then began on the neglected farm and vineyard in March of the following year, and the Evangelical Leadership School was born; and

WHEREAS, During its humble beginnings, people slept in tents and cooked over open fires; evening services, known as Vespers Services, were held on a very picturesque point overlooking Lake Erie, coined at the time, Mayer's Point; and

WHEREAS, Construction of buildings began in 1923, starting with the administration building, a cabin, and a dining hall; by 1925, there were over 10 cabins, an education building, a meeting hall, bath house, snack shack and Mother's Memorial, an auditorium built through the donations of mothers who had lost their sons in World War I; and

WHEREAS, By the 1930s, the Conference Center was used by many groups within the Reformed and Evangelical Churches which led to a name change;

the camp was now known as the Dunkirk Conference Grounds; and

WHEREAS, The first Family Camp was formed in 1933, and campers were charged just 10 dollars per person for the week; the fellowship of friends and family in such a beautiful location kept people coming back summer after summer; and

WHEREAS, The breakout of a second World War had a profound impact on the camp, with many of the men going off to war and women filling in in the workforce working manufacturing and wartime production; and

WHEREAS, The 1950s saw a resurgence of the camp; the merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Churches brought people from all over the country to the Dunkirk Conference Center; and

WHEREAS, Over the next 70 years, the camp grew to almost 30 cabins, which were filled every week for nearly 15 straight weeks each summer; during this time, more camps were being developed, from local high school band camps and swimming camps to train lifeguards, to most recently, a day camp for young children in the surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to its community, Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center has hosted countless events, including Music on the Shores, Halloween Happenings, the Walk for DCC and the DCC Flea Market and Craft Show; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, in 2019, the camp was one of the locations utilized in a blockbuster movie sequel and in 2020, this beloved establishment closed for the very first time during the Covid-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Remaining true to its mission, Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center inspires and enriches people of all ages through fellowship, learning, and fun in a welcoming Christian environment; and

WHEREAS, Today, generations of families, friends, and staff of DCC are gathering to celebrate its 100th Anniversary, and to set forth plans for the next 100 years of sunsets, the laughter of children, fellowship and faith; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center.