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*For more than a century, the Christian Camp Meeting Association's Craigville Retreat Center has welcomed guests and visitors from all walks of life to enjoy and embrace this "Special Place of Grace by the Sea."*

*This article features one of many academic/religious groups who've also enjoyed a long-time, successful relationship with us.*



Over the course of a year, you might see the streets of Craigville teeming with teenagers here for a school retreat led by Boston-based Xaverian Brothers School's Campus Ministry program. Between the months of September through June, the school visits The Craigville Retreat Center (CRC) at least 12 times. With group sizes averaging 35-to-70 students, a lot of teenagers are here enjoying a getaway that builds leadership, relationship skills and spiritual growth.

Xaverian Brothers High School is a private, Catholic, college preparatory day school for boys in grades 7-12. It is based in Westwood, Massachusetts.

Since 1997, or 24 years now, Campus Ministry Director Jim Conley has been shepherding his band of young men to the retreat center, where they spend a day, night or longer getting to know one another, share their respective stories and bond during volleyball games on The Green, playing ball on the beach, or watching movies at The Lodge. Naturally, dinner at The Craigville Inn Dining Room is an event to which they all look forward. "Teenage boys love food, and dinner is their favorite activity," says Conley. CRC feeds them well.

"We fell in love with the retreat center years ago," says Conley. "We like the accommodations, the food, going to the beach, and the beautiful surroundings. We have had kids say they had life-changing moments there. It's not hard to feel God's presence at Craigville."

Generally, the group fills both The Lodge and The Manor atop The Bluff. Both buildings contain large rooms where visitors can share accommodations. "The boys prefer to sleep in rooms together, to bunk in a room with a lot of beds."

A typical day starts with breakfast, followed by morning prayer at the beach. Then they often break out into small groups for various discussions throughout the day and evening. "We have the time very structured, up until midnight, so they are ready to go to sleep."

"I cannot recall how we originally discovered Craigville," says Conley. But on the first trip, his group knew this was the perfect place for the school's retreats. "It's just not the surroundings, but the buildings are excellent for us, and everything is there to make a retreat go well."

Usually, a team of five, including some faculty, come along to provide oversight of the students. "We have our regulars," he says, "and they would be upset if not invited."

It is an experience looked forward to and enjoyed by all who come.

Traditionally, the retreats are based and arranged through Xaverian's campus ministry program. However, noting CRC's environmental beauty--- in that it is nestled between the ocean, a river and a lake--- Conley says he plans to alert the school's environmental sciences department for potential retreats.