



From the Desk of the Executive Director

Thank You!

Many of you have been faithful in your service to camp over the years. Maybe you've served as a summer camp representative, a prayer partner, a camp speaker, or an ambassador; maybe you've volunteered on projects or with other needs; maybe you've sent your children to camp, served on the board, donated goods, given financially, or come alongside us in another way.

Your support has not gone unnoticed. You allow us to minister to the guests who visit. With your help we are able to provide "a place set apart" that God can use as guests slow down, unplug, and relax. It's then that many guests are able to hear God speak, and it changes their lives and strengthens them in their walk with Jesus.

Our Local Community

We also want to be "a place set apart" for the local community. We love that our community uses our facilities for a number of activities during the week. We have groups that use the pool for water aerobics, seniors who use the gym to walk during the cold months, and home-school networks that use the gym for basketball. Many families love renting the Family Life Center for birthday parties and outings. I want to start a pickle ball league this winter! We were excited to start community trail rides and horse riding lessons this fall. All of these activities give our neighbors a chance to experience Hidden Acres, enjoy our beautiful grounds and facilities, and see God work in amazing ways. We don't always get to hear about how the Lord uses Hidden Acres, but in the case of this fall's horse lessons, we did:

I just wanted to say THANK YOU for offering horse lessons! My daughter was diagnosed with a very serious medical condition and it has been brutal for her. She's been in and out of the hospital...we had to start homeschooling. Her friends didn't understand all of her treatments...and soon she was lonely. She has stopped talking to most people other than family...even to doctors. It's her way of blocking herself off from being hurt by life even more. But she loves horses, so we were excited for horse lessons to begin. I couldn't believe my eyes and ears when she was talking to the wranglers and wouldn't stop talking! This hasn't happened in two years! Not only that; she's now begging to leave the house, and...she asks daily if we can drive her to Hidden Acres so she can see the stable and see Little Bit out in the pasture. Typically, leaving the house causes her a lot of anxiety. But something about these lessons and the horses unlocked a door that had long been shut. Truly, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you!"



Hidden Acres Programmed Events

Our staff provides a great lineup of programmed events throughout the year that you and your church family could benefit from attending. Here is a list of our upcoming programmed events in 2019:

- * Men's Retreat—January 18-20
- * Sportsmen's Retreat—March 28-31
- * Just You & Me, Mom!—April 26-27
- * Senior Saints Day—May 7 & October 1
- * Just You & Me, Dad!—May 10-11
- * Memorial Day Family Camp—May 24-27
- * Wonderfully Made Family Camp—May 30-June 2
- * Just You & Me, Grandparents!—June 24-26
- * Labor Day Family Camp—August 30-September 2
- * Women's Retreat—September 13-14

I hope you get excited about how you can plug in and promote these to your family, friends, and local church. Here is what a couple pastors say about Hidden Acres:

"Since moving to Story City...we have discovered and love Hidden Acres. It truly is a hidden gem in our district. Harvest EFC has enjoyed a great partnership with Hidden Acres over the years, financially and in attendance. We have sent many to the Men's, Women's, Youth, and other retreats. We've had a number of youth attend summer camp or lead as counselors. My family has also taken advantage of the free Pastor's Cabin! We feel the camps are very reasonably priced and well done! We are grateful for Hidden Acres and all the staff who give of their time and efforts to offer us moments of rest and enjoyment in God's creation." -Steve Frykholm, Senior Pastor, Harvest EFC

"We are so thankful to the Lord for the ministry of Hidden Acres. The facilities, grounds, and programs are top-notch, but what really sets our camp apart is the quality of the staff and the spiritual leadership they provide. We have full confidence in sending our kids to summer camp or promoting other retreat weekends year-round. We are also well-served whenever we come there to run our own programs. Lives are changed at Hidden Acres, and we are glad to support this ministry with our prayers, finances, and regular participation." -Doug Corlew, Senior Pastor, Summit EFC

An Invitation for You

I want to invite you to visit Hidden Acres! Whether your last visit was months or years ago, please stop in and see us. It would be my honor to give you a tour, visiting our favorite locations and sharing some amazing God stories along the way!

Thank you for your friendship and faithful support of Hidden Acres. May you and your family be blessed this Christmas season and in the new year!

Summer Camp Sideline

by Eric Smith

The bookshelf in my office holds an odd conglomeration of items that represent the different roles I have at Hidden Acres. On the bottom shelf are extra supplies for our climbing tower. Above those are jugs of sealant we put on the blob each fall. Next to that is a box with puppets I bring when I travel and speak to kids. There's also candy that I plan to bring to churches, if the Ministry School students don't eat it all first. There's a stack of summer brochures, staff manuals, and devotionals, and some toys for when my kids visit. There's a shelf with Bibles and commentaries I use when I teach and write curriculum. There's a giant porcelain pig for... actually, I'm not sure why it's there...

In the upper right corner of the bookshelf is a vase full of seeds. There are exactly two thousand, five hundred sixteen seeds in it. I know because I counted them. I wanted to create a visual to show our summer staff the impact they had this summer. We had 2,516 summer campers this year!

Our summer theme was Cultivate; we studied the fruit of the Spirit and what it looks like to cultivate spiritual growth. At the end of the summer, I showed the vase to our staff and reminded them of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3, when he says that God is the one who causes growth. We plant and water, but only God can create true change in a person's life.

We had 215 campers make a decision for Christ. God was the one who caused that to happen. Our staff was faithful to plant and water, but we trusted God to cause the growth.

One counselor shared with me about a 6-year-old camper whose parents didn't bring her to church anymore. The counselor was faithful to plant a Gospel seed, and she had the privilege of helping that girl give her life to Christ. She said the camper began jumping up and down with joy when she understood the truth of the Gospel!

What a privilege it is to work in a ministry that is so faithful to plant Gospel seeds. Our staff of 157 students poured their hearts into their work this summer. They planted and watered seeds, and saw God create growth.

As I look at the vase on my bookshelf, I'm reminded that each seed represents a person. There's one for the 6-year-old girl jumping with joy; there's one for the 14-year-old boy who learned how to study the Bible; there's one for the 17-year-old girl who wants to work at camp because of the influence her counselors had on her. Each seed represents a camper who heard the Gospel at Hidden Acres this summer.

The vase also reminds me to pray and prepare diligently for the upcoming summer. We're accepting applications and have started interviews for summer staff, have our speakers lined up, and started writing the curriculum. Our theme for 2019 is Illuminate; we're going to look at the themes of light and darkness in the Bible.

My bookshelf is mostly a practical holding place for the things I need to do my job. The vase, however, serves as a sentimental reminder of God's goodness and faithfulness to our ministry. He brought 2,516 campers to Hidden Acres and allowed us the opportunity to plant Gospel seeds.

I'm excited to think about the campers' lives He's going to change next summer. I'll have to come up with a new visual reminder to put next to the vase of seeds on my bookshelf!

Ministry Corner

by Ryan Graden

December isn't as busy as other months at Hidden Acres. It's nice to have things slow down a bit over the holidays, but our schedules will pick up again in January with several guest groups each weekend.

Before winter's end, we'll host two of our big programmed events. First is the Men's Retreat, which falls January 18-20. This retreat is a wonderful opportunity for small groups, friends, and family to come together for a time of rest, relaxation, fellowship, learning, and a little fun! Don't miss out on this awesome opportunity—get signed up soon!

The second big programmed event of 2019 is the annual Sportsmen's Retreat. This year that retreat falls March 28-31. The Sportsmen's Retreat combines the fun, excitement, and camaraderie of shooting firearms and bows with educational workshops, worship, and biblical teaching.

In the past, God has done some big things during these weekends. Will you join our staff in praying that this would be the case once again?

More information on both of these great events can be found online at hacamps.org.

Around the Grounds

by Elly Mullen

We sure have been blessed these past few months with gifts and volunteer help for remodeling projects. If you've ever assisted in this capacity, thank you! We couldn't make improvements to Hidden Acres without people like you!

Many areas have been refreshed around camp recently. Our latest project has been the Family Life Center gym. We

working on finalizing the plans for the interior of the building. We're excited to finally provide an outdoor space for Welcome Center guests!

Looking ahead, we're hoping to purchase some new beds, tables, and chairs soon. The Inn Meeting Room could use 150 new chapel-style chairs. The Main Lodge needs new bunk beds upstairs, and several of the buildings could use more durable "Tough Stuff" couches and chairs in entryways and lounge areas. We'd also love to purchase 20 new 8ft rectangular tables and 20 new 5ft round tables to replace older damaged ones. If you think



you can help with any of these supply needs, please reach out. We've spent time cleaning out the maintenance shed, organizing supplies and donating things we no longer need. The Welcome Center project started; some ground work has been completed and we're

you can help with any of these supply needs, please reach out.

Thanks so much for your support over the years. As mentioned, we really couldn't make these projects a reality without your help.

I've previously called this the season of remodeling, refreshing, restoring, and repurposing. Help us with this season by using the envelope provided to give toward the Development Fund and assist with these projects and others. -Steve

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