

In Touch



from Hidden Acres' Executive Director

September 2016

A place set apart

by Earl Taylor, Executive Director

It's time to reinvent myself! I will be retiring from Hidden Acres in March of 2017. It is time for a new person with a different skill set to take over. I am so pleased to announce that Steve Pinkley is the man! Steve will begin his duties this October.



Steve, a native of Ohio, graduated from Cedarville University in 1983. He has since served as a youth pastor, run his family's restaurant, led the food service and staff marketing programs at Adventureland Park in Altoona, IA, and managed the Brick Street Market Café in Bondurant, IA. He and his wife Dana have been married for 33 years and have four grown children and two grandchildren.

Steve returns to Hidden Acres after having served as our Adult Ministries Director from 2010 to 2014. During his four years at camp, he learned our systems and our culture; he accepted who Hidden Acres was and how we functioned. He learned about our churches and our district. He became familiar with our donors and our retreat groups. His transition back into Hidden Acres will be nearly seamless.

For some time I had been concerned about the potential transition that would happen when I did retire. I have watched other large camps stumble and falter due

to poor transitions from a long-time director to a new director. When I heard that Steve felt called back into camping ministry, I knew immediately that he was the person who could and should follow me as the director of Hidden Acres. I am confident in his leadership, his relationship with the current staff, and his ability to continue to grow the ministry and business of Hidden Acres. The District Superintendent, the district board, and the camp board all agree that Steve is the right person to lead the camp and they have given him their vote of confidence.

As I reflect back over my nearly 32 years of being employed at Hidden Acres, I have nothing but wonderful memories of watching the Lord provide the people, the staff, the campers, the buildings and the friends who made this all possible with their donations and gifts of labor. Whenever we needed a different vehicle, someone gifted one to us. Whenever we needed to build another building, many contributed. Whenever we needed an extra hand in the office or the nurse's station, someone volunteered. My heart is full of special memories.



I was called to Hidden Acres back in 1985; at that time there was a brand new main lodge, six tentels, a house

Summer Camp Update

Thank you so much for praying for our Summer Camp program! We just wrapped up a wonderful season with the theme "Engage." Our hope and prayer was that we would challenge campers to not only read and understand what Scripture calls us to as Christians but also to take action and DO what it says.

After having welcomed 138 summer staff members and 2,254 campers, I think God helped spread the Engage theme loud and clear. We had 86 campers make first time commitments to Christ this summer. Another 67 campers rededicated their lives to Christ. Each one of those decisions is a reason to celebrate and praise God! We also hope that campers who were already believers were able to strengthen their relationship with Christ.

We are looking ahead to next summer and ask that you would pray for us as we begin to prepare. We need to hire staff, travel to churches to speak about summer camp, plan the curriculum, and work out the details of schedules, activities, speakers, worship, food, and more. But, with God leading the way, we hope to have an amazing summer camp in 2017. Thank you for your prayer and your support!



In Touch is published by
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that needed remodeling, and a brick hog shed. I didn't know what I was getting into at 30 years of age; I was full of energy and made myself available to any task. Seventy buildings later I lack energy, but I now have six more months to push to complete my final building project: the new dining room and kitchen. It is our desire that our first large group to use this new facility will be the 600 guys who attend Sportsmen's Retreat in late March.

DeDe and I will continue to live nine miles south of the camp. We will be available for consultation and advice. However, I will also begin the new adventure of helping smaller camps as I continue my consulting work. I'm starting the process of developing an interim director's program that will help fill a need on a national level. I have recently finished my second book on camping, which will give me even more opportunities to lead seminars and workshops for other young directors who are looking for advice and encouragement. I will be available to fill pulpits or speak to any type of group. I have also resurrected my writing of magazine articles on hunting, camping, family, and the Christian life.

Being a part of your life and your church's life has been my reward; I consider myself very blessed to have worked alongside three different district superintendents and 60 different camp board members. We began the journey together wondering if we could ever add buildings and pay off our mortgage, and we will end our time together celebrating the completion of the dining room and kitchen.

Pray for DeDe and me as we adjust to our new lifestyle. I doubt I can sit still for long. I have done all the sightseeing and traveling that I ever wanted to do, but I am hoping to make it to Alaska for camp consultations. We also have 14 grandkids who are growing up and becoming more involved in activities, so I can imagine there will be a few more ball games, plays, and concerts to attend as well.



Please also pray for the camp, for Steve, and for the staff as they adjust to a new leader. There will be some changes in style and the way the camp operates, but Steve will guard the "spirit of the institution" and will ensure that God's Word is the ultimate authority for everything he does. He has the ability to grow the camp beyond what I was capable of doing.

Blessings to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Earl Taylor".

Earl Taylor