



# From the Desk of the Executive Director

## *Meet Me at the Rocking Chairs*

As I reflect on Summer Camp 2018, there are so many great memories that come to mind. The summer staff was outstanding; I loved seeing them ministering to our campers and I enjoyed spending time with them on the weekends. I looked forward to Sundays and Fridays where I could visit with parents, grandparents, and other family members dropping off and picking up their campers. What great stories they would tell!

Some of my favorite memories from this year's summer camp come from a new tradition: spending my early mornings sitting in our new white Cracker Barrel rocking chairs outside the Welcome Center.



First thing in the morning, before anyone else was up and moving, I would brew a fresh pot of coffee. I love that smell and I enjoy the first sip of the day. I would make my way to my favorite rocker with my mug of coffee, Bible, and study materials. Usually it was still pretty dark out, very quiet, and peaceful that time of the morning. I would quietly rock for a while, enjoying my coffee before digging into God's Word. Finally, I would take some time to meditate, pray, be still, and listen to Jesus. For me, this time prepares my heart and mind for the day. I hope you have a routine in the mornings and a favorite spot where you can spend time with Jesus, too.

And then it starts...the camp begins to wake up for the day! The nurses begin to arrive at the nurse's station. I see in the distance the kitchen staff arriving at the Dining Hall. I start to hear the sounds of distant carpetball games. I hear kids' voices, vehicles and ATVs driving by, and counselors and campers gathering around the flag pole for skits and prayer time. More sounds, more people, and camp is alive once again!

The rockers under the porch at the Welcome Center provide the perfect opportunity to see and talk to people. Counselors and campers pass by, I get a lot of "Good Morning, Steve" high fives, and a few kids even stop, rock, and talk. What a blessing it is when a counselor is so excited to pause to tell me stories from the night be-

fore. I heard many accounts of campers giving their hearts to Jesus! I see the joy in the counselors' faces as they share their stories. Not only were campers' lives changed forever this summer, but the counselors' lives were also changed!

It's interesting hearing the stories of how so many lives have changed at Hidden Acres over the years. Why? I heard it explained like this: God doesn't speak any louder at camp, we just listen better! I agree, and I think having a special getaway spot around camp helps us unplug from the world so we can be still and quiet and spend time with God.

I love my new spot at the white rockers. I love the quiet and peacefulness of the early mornings, and I love the excitement of seeing and experiencing the camp wake up and come alive! Do you have a favorite place when you come to Hidden Acres, a place that is special to you, a place where you can be quiet and still to talk and listen to Jesus? Or maybe it is a place where you can sit and watch all the excitement and activities of camp?

At your next visit to camp, I pray you will spend some quality time at your favorite destination. If you don't have a getaway spot, I have several suggestions:



*Jenny's Chapel overlooking Lechler Lake*

White Rockers, Welcome Center Porch; Waylon's Gazebo, by Jesse's Pond; Prayer Tree Cross, Prayer Tree area; Badger's Cabin deck, Badger's Cabin; Jonathan's Tree House deck, Prayer Tree maze; Three Crosses, near Lodge 139; Jenny's Chapel, by Lake Lechler; Kolby's Dock, at Jesse's Pond.

I look forward to seeing you at Hidden Acres soon. Maybe you can share your favorite destination place with me, or we could meet at the rocking chairs!

*"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:10*

*"Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him." Psalm 62:1*

# Summer Camp Sideline

by Eric Smith

This summer was our largest to date with 2,516 campers. We had 128 campers accept Christ for the first time, and 87 rededicated their life to Christ. We praise God for His continued faithfulness to our ministry and for the countless lives that were changed this summer!

A favorite story from this summer is about a camper named Wyatt. His dad told us that Sundays were often a struggle getting everyone up and ready for church. The Sunday after Wyatt came home from camp, his dad came downstairs at 7:30am to see him fully dressed and ready for church. His dad was shocked! Wyatt was sitting down, reading from Romans. "What are you doing?" his dad asked. Wyatt answered, "I'm reading my Bible like I was taught at camp!"

The campers weren't the only ones impacted by our ministry. We had 157 summer staff who served in a variety of positions. One counselor, Ethan, said this summer taught him how to share his faith. "In the past," he said, "I was never very intentional about sharing my faith, but after leaving camp, I approach situations differently. I am more open with my faith, and I feel prepared to share the gospel whenever God calls me to do so."

The ministry of camp is truly changing lives all over the world, as campers and staff grow in their faith and take what they learn back to their home, school, and community. What a privilege it is for us to be a part of what God is doing!

In the fall my focus shifts to The Ministry School, our new gap year program. There are three students in the inaugural class! They're taking classes from Trinity International University, being trained in different departments at camp, and enjoying living and serving here. It's been great to see how they fit into our ministry so far, and we're excited to see how God uses this year to cause growth in their lives.

Applications for 2019 summer staff, 2019 summer internships, and the 2019-2020 Ministry School year are already up on our website. If you have any questions, email me at [eric.smith@hacamps.org](mailto:eric.smith@hacamps.org).

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# Ministry Corner

by Ryan Graden

What an amazing summer we had here at Hidden Acres! I saw smiling faces, heard amazing God stories, and witnessed new and existing friendships blossom during summer camp and the subsequent weeks of retreat season. We are blessed to have been a part of it.

Labor Day marks a change of pace for Hidden Acres. We see fewer mid-week guests, yet our weekends are very full. We're still busy, but in a different way. We're just wrapping up our own programmed events with Senior Saints Day on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, a day full of fellowship, hymn singing, and delicious food. Next, we'll start planning 2019's events.

Right away in the new year we'll host the annual Men's Retreat. Next year's dates are January 18-20. This weekend getaway is a great opportunity for men to come together in fellowship and learn what God desires of them as husbands, fathers, and leaders in the church and the community. Registration will open November 1 for that retreat, all other Hidden Acres programmed events, and summer camp.

Be praying that God would continue to bring people to Hidden Acres and that we as a staff would continue to have a servant's heart and attitude with the opportunities that are before us. See you soon!

# Around the Grounds

by Elly Mullen

We're still in the middle of a season of necessary renovations. Roofs are being repaired, while HVAC and hot water heaters are being upgraded.

The Snack Shop/Camp Store project was a big hit. Next time you visit camp, you'll see that the two locations inside the Family Life Center have been swapped. We've also replaced the gym and pool lights with brighter, more efficient LED fixtures.



This summer we completed several other small projects. We added two new flag poles, one by the Dining Hall and another by the playground outside the Family Life Center. The Main Lodge patio received some new wrap-around tree benches, and several carpetball tables have been added around our grounds. We've added new directional signs for the path to the tower and lake, and we built a new privacy fence for the

dumpsters outside the camp kitchen. The Oakdale Dining Room received carpet and doors to help with acoustics. The shelter house by the lake received a fresh coat of paint, and the Main Lodge kitchen received fresh paint and finishing touches.

This fall we will start moving dirt behind the Welcome Center in preparation for a walk-out basement. That project should be finished in 2019. We're also planning on renovating the Treetopper Cabins soon, and we'd love to remodel the exterior of the Johnson Lodge as well.

After visiting a training workshop in Michigan, we're considering adding to our Horse Barn programming. We're discussing monthly horse rides with meals over the fire for local families who have their own horses. We'd also love to start a horse lesson program for local children in the near future. Pray that we would be effective in sharing the Gospel through these programs.

I always have a list of work projects if you want to bring a group to Hidden Acres for a work day. You can email me at [elly.hacamp@gmail.com](mailto:elly.hacamp@gmail.com).

*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. -Steve*