



# Reflections on Summer Camp 2019

*From the desk of the Executive Director*

I say it every year: How can we top this year's summer camp? We broke records in 2018, we had an amazing summer staff, lives were changed, and it happened again in 2019! We set another registration record, had even more salvations and rededications than in 2018, and again had a quality summer staff!

There are many awesome stories of transformation from this summer! The following are just a couple that stood out to me.

*"God worked in my life greatly this summer. I was reminded that God wants my whole heart. He doesn't just want me having Christian friends or going to church or singing praise songs or saying a quick prayer before I eat and go to bed. He wants it ALL. God wants me to take the time to read my Bible and spend time with Him daily, not just in a corporate setting, but when I'm by myself. Every time I read the Bible by myself and really dig deep in a study, I feel myself growing closer to Him. It was a much needed reminder for me and something I'll continue."*

*"As I reflect back on one of my toughest weeks as a senior counselor, I can't help but cry tears of pure exhaustion and pure joy at the same time. When I felt the weakest and the most discouraged, God proved Himself faithful and reminded me that He is always at work to transform lives and to further His kingdom. That is why I constantly love my campers and share the gospel with them, to join God in His work. This summer, through it all, God was still faithful and most definitely transformed campers' lives and my own life!"*

I believe hiring the right summer staff is one of the reasons for our continued growth. It takes a commitment from our full-time staff to not compromise on biblical truth, to be thorough during the interview and hiring process, and to continue to pray that God will provide the right young men and women. A full summer staff consists of our leadership interns, specialists, senior and junior counselors, and support staff. Interns, specialists and support staff serve in key program areas. Counselors spend 24 hours a day with campers, teaching, encouraging, laughing, and growing with them. And while God is at work changing the campers' lives, He's also changing the summer staff too!



It's such an honor and privilege to hear about and witness these life changing events. The memories will stay with me for a lifetime. I remember visiting with an intern one morning, talking about life and drinking coffee, and then it happened: We heard the salvation bell ring! I love watching as the whole

camp pauses, turns toward the bell and joyfully cheers as they recognize that a camper's life has changed forever. That morning as the intern and I approached the ringing bell, we saw that the counselor had lifted the camper so he could reach the bell. Amid the cheering I noticed the counselor was the son of a friend from my hometown. I took out my phone to take a picture, and I sent it to my friend with this note: *"Your son is making a difference this summer in the lives of campers. This young camper with your son just rang the salvation bell...PTL! Thank you for allowing your son to work and serve at Hidden Acres!"*



Why did I thank him? Because I know it's a sacrifice for young people to work at camp, to give up higher paying summer jobs, vacations, sports, and summertime activities. I appreciate and commend parents that see the value in youth serving at camp. I believe that these young people will not only see their lives and campers' lives changed forever, but they will also build a biblical foundation that will forever keep them grounded through the trials of this evil world. I encourage and challenge you to not rush your children and grandchildren into getting those higher paying summer jobs. Let us have them for a summer or two, or three or even four and beyond! Let's allow God to continue to work, build, and strengthen His relationship with them. I guarantee you will never regret that decision!

So, what were the final numbers for summer 2019? We had a record number of summer staff, 155. They were amazing! We had a record number of campers, 2,716, in only six weeks! We had a record number of salvations, 236, and 157 rededications, too. And those are just the recorded decisions. We know every year there are more private decisions and rededications that are not recorded.

We are looking forward to Summer Camp 2020, and I hope you are too! I love our theme, **20/20 Vision**, and theme verse, *Hebrews 12: 1-2, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and the perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* Join us in prayer that we may have another equally impactful summer in 2020!

Thank you for your friendship and support. I look forward to seeing you soon!

# Marketing Minute

by *Rachelle Heisterkamp*

If you follow us on Facebook, you may have noticed a week-long contest pop up at the beginning of October. Hidden Acres had a new addition to announce, but we chose to reveal it slowly, piece by piece much like a puzzle, over the course of seven days.

On October 3rd, the new feature was released: Hidden Acres now has a fully-functioning Online Store! The entire set up process took a few months of research and development, but we're happy to have it available for you now. You no longer have to be on the grounds to check out our new additions to the gift shop. Shop online, from the comfort of your home, and keep up to date with Hidden Acres apparel and accessories.

You can also use the Online Store to donate to Hidden Acres or purchase an e-giftcard for friends and family to use toward store purchases.

You can access the Online Store from our website, [hacamps.org](http://hacamps.org), or you can navigate directly to [store.hacamps.org](http://store.hacamps.org).

## Enclosed Envelope

by *Steve Pinkley*

Don't forget about the enclosed envelope. If you would like to donate to our Development Fund, you can do so using this envelope.

Why donate to the Development Fund? Your gifts help us further develop the grounds, facilities, and programs at Hidden Acres. Our current projects include foundation repairs for the Welcome Center and Johnson Lodge.

*In Touch*

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# Ministry Corner

by *Ryan Graden*

It blesses my heart to see how God will use a camp in the middle of nowhere to minister to those who choose to come.

At the beginning of the month we had our Fall Senior Saints event. These biannual day events are designed as a quick camp getaway for folks age 50 and up, and they're one of my favorite events of the year. This fall, we had around 180 seniors make the trip, which is impressive considering the forecast called for rain all day. We're thankful that the weather cooperated long enough for the guests to enjoy our outdoors activities, like wagon rides.



I had many conversations as I served and helped run activities. Multiple times I was told things like, "This place is so beautiful!" or "Hidden Acres means so much to our family." What an incredible blessing to hear this kind of feedback. And, I agree with them! Camp is "a place set apart for you" as our motto declares. However, God does remind me in these moments that it's His work on display here. My prayer is that our ministries, grounds, and relationships with guests will always reflect Jesus. Without Jesus, this camp and our work doesn't hold much meaning.

## Around the Grounds

by *Ryan Graden*

Twice over the last few weeks I've had guests tell me that camp looks so polished. I agree! We have had an incredibly busy Grounds schedule since spring. And based on folks' comments, I think we're seeing the results.

We've had a few incredibly committed volunteers tending to our flower beds. Almost every day they're weeding or planting something new. Our landscaping looks so beautiful now and it's being noticed.

Watershed issues were also addressed. Thankfully, when it rains now, the water heads in the correct direction. We'll have a little more work in this area during the fall, but we're confident that we'll see less mud and better road conditions when spring thaw hits next year.

Other ministry events this fall included Labor Day Family Camp and Women's Retreat. Both events offered our guests great speakers, delicious food, and tons of activities. We may not have any "Hidden Acres" events left this year, but rental groups will keep us busy through the remainder of the year, with many weekends exceeding 400 people in attendance.

And then it all starts over again! January is Men's Retreat, February has the Winter Blast Jr. High Retreats, March welcomes the Sportsmen's Retreat, and so on. We look forward to seeing familiar faces, taking care of guests, and showing them Jesus.

Please be praying for two things. First, pray that our staff keeps their lives full of Jesus, allowing us to minister to those who make their way to Hidden Acres. Second, please pray that God would open the hearts of our guests to receive his teaching and that God would be praised.



We'd love to have you sign up for one of our programmed events like Men's Retreat or Family Camp. Also, if you're in the area, stop by! We'd love to share coffee and visit!

This fall, we'll be focusing on removing some dead timber. But we'll use what we remove! We'll stock up our firewood stores (we love having fireplaces roaring when our guests arrive), then send some wood to a mill to make usable lumber.

That second use-milled lumber-is thanks to an exciting new partnership. We're working with a local sawmill to create lumber for new tables, end tables, and mantles around Hidden Acres. It will be nice to see these new additions used by our guests.

We feel blessed to have the property we've been given, and we will always do our best to care for this gift. Thank you for your support of Hidden Acres over the years. I hope you're able to visit soon!