

In Touch

from Hidden Acres' Executive Director

April 2011

A place set apart

by Earl Taylor, Executive Director

A Cultural Reminder.... Just my thoughts

A year ago I wrote about how our culture was shifting; how young people no longer look to their parents and the church for answers and direction for life. I have spent the year pondering our current condition: listening to speakers, reading, engaging myself into what young people are doing. I have finished the year with new insight: I have very few answers.

I must admit to you: I watched "American Idol" this season. I watched my first music video - in my lifetime- much to my dismay! I have engaged myself into Facebook as I keep track of former staff and campers. What I see and hear is quite frightening to me. It is probably just as frightening as the hippie movement in the 60's was to my then 70 year old grandparents. They could not imagine how the world was going to survive this "hippie" wildness and nonsense.

We did survive the 60's and early 70's, but our nation was left a bit torn at the edges: the family unit began to unravel quite rapidly. In two generations, the "Cleaver" family has been replaced by the "Ozzy Osbourne" type family. There appears to be more unpredictable variables today that can and do create instability and chaos at home.

According to Walt Mueller, founder and president of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding (www.cpyu.org), children and youth used to get their direction from parents, friends, school, peers, and the church in that order. Today's youth no longer look to parents or the church as their primary direction givers in life; media and friends have taken their place as the most influential sources in their lives. Mom and dad are sorta listened to, but the church is not listed in the top five influences of young people's lives.

Ouch! Our work is cut out for us at camp. Mueller goes on to say that youth today are "dis-integrated" in their faith. They do not integrate their faith into their daily lives. They can say they are a "follower" of Christ, but still indulge in a number of sinful behaviors. I believe/know Walt is right. On Facebook, I read of a young person bragging about drinking his first "legal" beer on a post, but when you read his profile it states, "conservative Christian". This is a big disconnect in my view.

The "Tiger Mom", Amy Chua, has made the news recently as the Harvard professor who has directed her two girls' life with intensity and purpose. Her directions include: no movies, no video games, no tv, no play dates, no sleepovers, no participating in any plays in school and (I love this!) the girls must get straight A's in school and be the top student in every subject. The girls are to play or practice the piano and violin everyday! She rejects the notion that: "everyone is special in their own way, and even losers are special in their own way."

So if we are not Mrs. Cleaver and we are not Mrs. Osbourne, and if the Tiger Mom doesn't describe us, where do we fit in as a parent or grandparent? Regardless of where we think we are, the most effective parenting method will always be "an engaged parent." Not the parent who attends every basketball game/practice, not the parent who waits hand and foot on the child, hovering over him responding to every whim, cough, or dirty face. A parent who is engaged is directing, deciding, deciphering, and asking questions like who, what, when, why and where to every activity or attitude. Becoming a parent is like getting a facial tattoo... once you have it... you are committed for life. Once we have the child, they're ours for all to see!

I have included a list of counselors and staff for you to use as a prayer list for the upcoming months. Thanks for putting it in your Bible, and referring to it often. Our young summer staff has their work cut out for them; they must be able to gain insight quickly into the lives of each camper; this in turn will provide insight into meeting each camper's spiritual needs. In many cases our staff are "over their heads" with what a camper's life story might reveal to the counselor; we pray that the counselor will give biblical advice and wise counsel.

To be clear, our ultimate authority is the Bible, and we quote it often to the staff by saying, "The Bible says." We expect staff to be opposite of the culture in their mind, attitudes and their approach to living. Rom 12:2 We want them to grow and to understand as one who has the "hand of the Lord" directing their lives daily; by living out their faith with diligence and discernment making right choices and giving solid biblical counsel to campers.

From the Heart: I visited with a young person last month who was struggling with her life; I was seeing some additional facial hardware and some behavior that signaled to me a change in heart.

After challenging her about her hardware, she responded, “The piercings are because each time I get hurt or disappointed in my life, I act out by adding one more piece of facial jewelry to help remind me of the pain others have caused me.” That revelation jolted me.

I thought it was rebellion on her part, but she is telling me, “I have been hurt.” Hidden Acres needs to be there for young people, not to yank out their hardware by force, but through Christ’s love and care, play a part of healing broken lives and restoring them back to their “new creation” status.

I see the ministry at the camp as being even more important today than ever before in pointing young people to the healer of all hurts.

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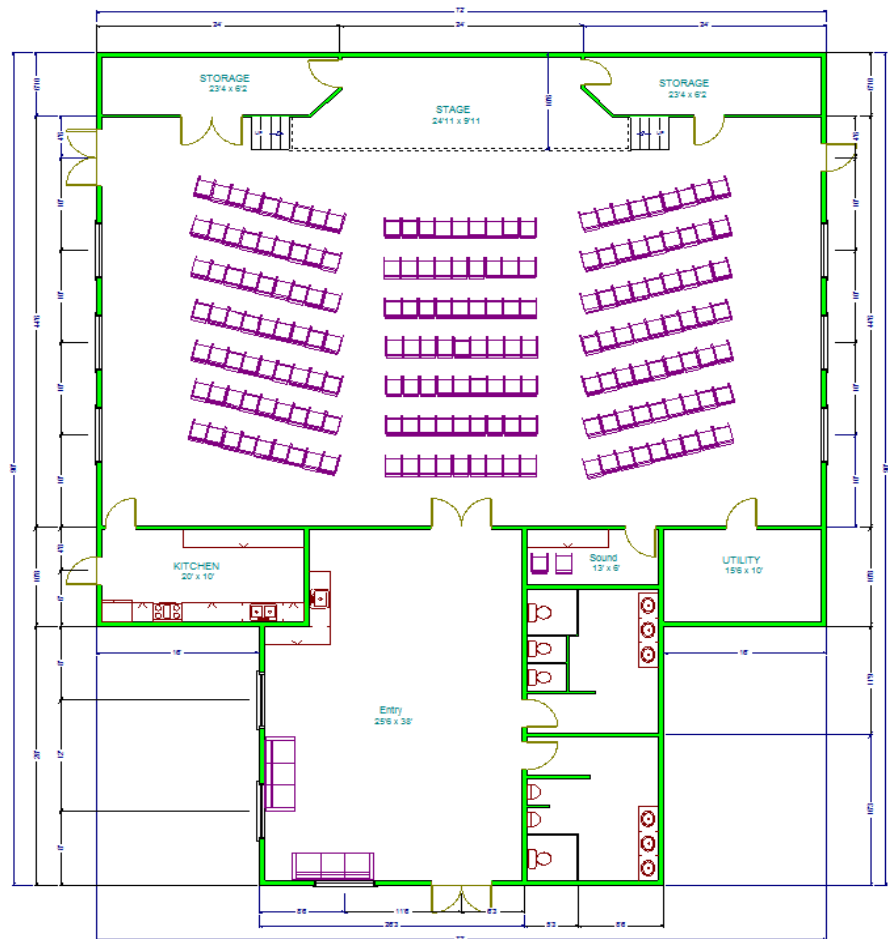


New Construction:

Another building is going up! You shouldn’t be surprised! It has been nearly 8 months since the last building was completed and dedicated over Labor Day; it is time to get back to work and build our next ministry center!

The demand is there to rent the boys and girls cabins as well as the tree topper cabins, however there is no large meeting space for the groups. With that need, we began designing and developing plans to build another “chapel” type building that would provide meeting space, bathrooms, and perhaps even a secondary dining/reception/wedding/staff meeting area near our cabin units. See the below diagram.

And the good news: one family donated \$100,000 to build this new building. Isn’t the Lord wonderful in supplying all our needs at the right time?



And the great news! 150 young people will arrive in late May to be trained to be effective counselors and staff. We know we have a great group of kids who are going to work for “peanuts” in comparison to a job back home. As you come in contact with them at church, be an encourager to each young person: remind them you will pray for them and that you want an end-of-the-summer report.

If your child or grandchild has not registered for summer camp, there is still room in several of the different camps. For specific questions call the camp office

Note: We do have scholarships available for children of deployed service men and women. Call the camp for additional information.

Ten Most Wanted or NEEDED!

1. Wildlife art prints
2. Gator type vehicle
3. Picnic tables
4. Water slide for lake
5. Back packs with frames
6. Dump truck
7. Large meat smoking unit
8. Electric clay pigeon throwers
9. Horse trailer
10. Modern playground or even used school type playground