



From the Desk of Steve Pinkley

Proverbs 27:1 "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth."

Proverbs 16:9 "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."

Have you ever noticed that things don't always turn out the way you wanted or planned? Maybe it's because God has a better idea! I have felt the power of these verses over the last several months as I spend a lot of time praying that God will direct me to lead Hidden Acres. I love to dream, look at the big picture, have a vision for a project, make a connection, and see a plan come together.

We have been aggressively remodeling our buildings and grounds over the last several months. Improvements have been made to the Main Lodge, Pavilion, Chapel, and Family Life Center. During these renovations I have had one exciting project in mind: the lakefront! I have talked to many people over the last year about my ideas for developing the lake area. We have since reshaped the lake hill, put in a new parking lot across the ravine, and talked about adding a double zip line going across the lake. As we were making our final plans for the zip line and getting ready to schedule a company to come out for a site visit, God showed up in a mighty way!

Some of you know I was with Adventureland Amusement Park for 14 years before coming to Hidden Acres. During my time there, I met the owner of White Water University in Pleasant Hill. White Water was the premier water park in Iowa at one time, but it has been closed for ten years. Last summer when I was in Des Moines, I drove by the old abandoned water park. God stirred in me an idea that day. Wouldn't it be exciting to have those slides up at camp? Wouldn't it be fun to give that equipment one more chance to put smiles on kids' faces and cause joyous laughter once again?

I have always lived by this motto: It never hurts to ask a question; the worst someone can say is no, and they might say yes! I was able to find the owner's number to call and reintroduce myself. I explained that I was the director of a Christian camp now, and I asked him about his plans for the water slides. "I'm trying to sell the slides first," he said, "but stay in touch and maybe we can work out a deal."

That was all I needed. He didn't say no, and I saw a little bit of an opening for God to go to work! I started praying for the owner that day and continued to call him over the next eight months. In January I heard from a few sources that the property at White Water had sold over the holidays. I hadn't talked to the owner for a couple months, so I reached out to him the first week of January.

"I heard your property sold," I said, to which he immediately responded, "Yes, the slides are yours. The problem is that they need to be off the property by February 16." We only had five weeks to remove 900 feet of commercial water slides that had been sealed and bolted together. So, my next call was to a close friend of the camp. He is always positive and optimistic, and no project is ever too big for him! We met the next week with our key staff from Hidden Acres and developed a game plan to tackle this massive project.



It was awesome to see our staff and the numerous volunteers work so hard to disassemble and haul the slides up to camp. Now we will redesign, construct and reassemble the 900 feet of water slide at the lake area.

What a blessing it was to see God's hand at work, moving the owner to agree to donate the water slides and pump equipment to Hidden Acres. Through this process we can continue to see God at work. The owner has agreed to come up to camp and help us with the design and planning process, and he has shown interest in sending his grandkids to summer camp!

We never want to get ahead of God's plans. We don't want to start the double zip line now until we have the final layout of where the water slides are going. I thought we had a good plan for the lake remodel, but as we can see, God had a bigger and better plan! "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth." "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."



It will take us over a year to install the water slides. If you are interested in donating, use the provided envelope. If you want to volunteer, call the camp at 515-547-2751 or email me at steve.pinkley@hacamps.org.

Summer Camp Sideline

by Eric Smith

Summer Camp

It may not feel like it outside, but I promise it's almost time for summer camp! If you haven't registered your child yet, you'll need to do that soon, because spots are filling up fast. Registration can be completed on our website at hacamps.org.



Last weekend we had our first training with this year's summer staff. We had over 100 of them at camp, getting to know each other, learning the Cultivate curriculum, and getting excited about the things that God is going to do!

The Ministry School

We're excited to announce our new program, starting this fall!

The Ministry School is a gap year program in partnership with Trinity International University for college-age students interested in living, learning, working, and growing at Hidden Acres. The program is based on four pillars of growth: academic, spiritual, vocational, and personal. It's designed for students who either want to enter full-time ministry or are unsure of their future career plans and could benefit from an intentional year of growth before starting college or a full-time job.

Students will take accredited online courses from Trinity (for only \$150/credit!), be trained in seven different departments at camp, and participate in weekly life skills classes and Bible studies. For more information, questions, and applications, email me at eric.smith@hacamps.org.

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Hidden Acres Christian Center
3837 Union Ave
Dayton, IA 50530
www.hacamps.org
515-547-2751
Email: steve.pinkley@hacamps.org



Ministry Corner

by Ryan Graden

We've been very busy with retreats since our last letter! On a cold weekend in January we hosted the annual Men's Retreat. Despite the weather, over three hundred men made the trip to fellowship, have fun, and be challenged by Pastor Kyle Schiff from Crossroad Church in Earlham, IA.

Next up was our Sportsmen's Retreat on yet another cold, very snowy weekend. This retreat, now in its 28th year, was another amazing opportunity for guys to leave their normal routines and enjoy the outdoors, break bread together, and hear the gospel message. Over 600 guys attended the retreat and some made first-time commitments to Christ. What a life changing weekend!



As we look to spring & summer, we will be running a marathon of busy weekends. Some of the retreats coming up include Just You & Me, Dad!, Senior Saints Day, and Just You & Me, Grandparents! These events would be great retreats for your family & friends to attend. You can read more about these and get signed up at hacamps.org.

Please be praying that lives would continue to be ministered to as we serve here at the camp. We absolutely love the opportunity that God gives us to do what we do. Our heart is to keep the gospel at the center of our service. As we continue to minister that way, God continues to change the lives of those who choose to come to camp.

Around the Grounds

by Elly Mullen

I love my job! I love to rethink and redesign spaces, and that's exactly what I've been empowered to do here at Hidden Acres. I've been dreaming for a while about switching around the camp store and snack shop in the Family Life Center. I knew the camp schedule had a two-week opening around Easter, and I was given the green light to start this dream project. I assembled a team and jumped in head first! The new snack shop will have an outdoor walk-up window for ordering and we're going to add a patio area with picnic tables on the south side of the building. We hope that these changes will help with traffic flow & quality of service in the Family Life Center.

Looking ahead there are a lot of other projects on my radar. I have all the supplies ready to carpet and add doors to the Oakdale dining room. We're also going to be painting in the upstairs of the Inn and the Family Life Center, adding a fireplace to the Bunkhouse, upgrading the Johnson Lodge & Main Lodge kitchens, pouring concrete pads for the Dining Hall dumpsters and FLC patio, and adding new lights to the swimming pool. We also want to remodel one Treetopper Cabin to kick off our "Adopt a Treetopper" program and to serve as an example of what that project can accomplish. Stay tuned for more information on that fundraiser.

Our Camp Volunteer Day is Saturday, May 5th. We have several projects slated for that day. If you want to volunteer as a family or church group, please call the office at 515-547-2751. If you can't attend that day but would be interested in volunteering or working on a special project, let us know so we can reach out in the future.