

In Touch

from Hidden Acres' Executive Director

August 2011

A place set apart

by Earl Taylor, Executive Director

The summer is over; Labor Day is right around the corner; what a great summer of ministry. There were 2,012 campers who attended camp this summer. Retreat usage is at an all time high. We are blessed to be a part of the work of the local church; helping the church in growing stronger believers and being an evangelistic tool to bring the lost to Christ. We are honored.



Matt and Joylyn's Wedding

I visit many camps. I love seeing how others have put their camps together and watch different programs being run. I also always look and listen to other full time staff. I know of many mom and pop camps that run on the backs of a husband and wife- these are usually the very tired camp em-

ployee- they are responsible for everything- food, mowing, promotion, fund raising, and program. By the end of a summer, the couple is frazzled to a point of exhaustion (I too remember what it was like to go at the work alone).

Hidden Acres is considered an extra large camp and has one of the larger full time staff of Iowa camps. Over the years, we have added new staff as needed. As our growth demands, we look at the holes in our service caused by new buildings and more guests. We have always expected our staff to be multi-functional and always available to meet guest's needs. Nobody gets to specialize in any one responsibility. We have 4 who cook and each one has other responsibilities: i.e. horses, housekeeping, store, accommodations. We have 5 in the office, but 4 can also be seen outside doing construction jobs or mowing and cleaning. It is our culture- it is how we function.

Recently we hired a young man, Matt Ites, to be the building maintenance supervisor. Matt grew up attending the Iowa Falls Free Church and came to camp since an early age. This past year

he was one of our Launch students (Leadership development program). I had a year to watch him work along-side of our other full time staff and realized he would be a great fit into our camp culture. On August 14th, he married Joylyn Johnson from the Britt Evangelical Free Church. The wedding was held at Hidden Acres, where the couple met several years ago as campers. Joylyn will also be working part time for the camp as weekend hostess, housekeeper, horse person, and in the kitchen while she attends college for equine science in the fall.

I love this concept: grow your own staff. We currently have nine full time staff who attended camp as youngsters. Because of their long time relationship with us, they bring passion and dedication to their work; they know and remember how valuable their camping experience was to their spiritual development. In addition to passion, they are faithful in their work.

Hidden Acres now employs over 20 full time and part time year around staff. Because of our steady growth over the years, we now have 850 beds scattered around our 70+ buildings. That is a lot of doors to repair, shingles to replace, toilets to keep flushing, and a lot of floors to keep clean. For years, we have limited how many families lived on the grounds. I used to be a firm believer of forcing staff to live in the community and have a life outside of camp. I still know that is a healthy approach, but the time has come that we add another staff house to the camp.

Could you help me with another project? It is a small one (compared to what we have done the last 3 years). I am wanting to build Matt and Joylyn a small cabin on the grounds. It will be a 900 sq ft. cottage that will provide housing close to their work. Both will be on call most of the time, and living in camp will allow them to pop in and take care of needs and maintenance requests quickly.

I need to raise \$25,000 in the next month so that we can begin the project before winter. Enclosed you will find an envelope. Thank in advance for encouraging the staff with your gift.

Katie Northey headed to the mission field in the Canary Islands

What a blessing this young lady has been to Hidden Acres. In two short years, she has helped in developing a great program and has solidified our summer camp operation.

Katie will be finished around November 1. She will be available to present her ministry to churches in order to raise up partners for ministry in the Canary Islands with CrossWorld. Katie will be working with high school and college students. Feel free to contact her if you wish to have her come to your church. katie.northey@gmail.com or 515-520-7618

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When the dust settled around camp, and we look back on the summer, we DID have a great summer of working with 150 summer staff and 2,012 campers. I am always amazed at how the Lord puts together just the right blend of staff. God is so faithful. This is how the counselors described their summer of ministry.

- *Quite glorious indeed.*
- *Wonderful. Amazing. Incredible. Awesome. Epic. Stellar.*
- *Really good experience. God truly worked in my life and others.*
- *This summer I felt super challenged, and I know that God used this summer to make our relationships stronger.*
- *I feel I learned more this summer than any other. I so hope that God leads me back here, maybe, as a SC next summer. I loved seeing God's work done before my eyes daily!!!*
- *It was so good. Such a learning experience. I loved working in God's creation and getting to glorify Him so much. Also getting to preach the gospel so much, it gave me an even greater passion. I praise Him so much that this is where He put me this summer.*
- *Awesome relationships were built between campers and counselors and the gospel was clearly shared with all campers.*
- *So great! So many things: good, bad, hard, exciting, indescribable, great. God was glorified.*
- *I feel this summer was great! I learned a lot and God taught me a lot. It was really great to be surrounded by people who were on fire for Christ and support you. It was so encouraging to see God working in the campers.*
- *God grew me so steadily this summer that I can't point to a day or moment of dynamic transformation. My faith is stronger and I can tell because of my attitude.*
- *My prayer life is stronger, and I can tell because I am real with God.*
- *My gospel presentation is better because now I know how to explain repentance.*
- *It was encouraging and I really grew in my faith. This prepared me better for college and life after that and it forced me to rely on God more.*
- *It was my most challenging, growing, and exhausting summer! I wouldn't trade it for anything.*



Northwest Iowa Hall– To be completed this fall and winter. Volunteer crews welcomed all throughout the fall for siding, sheet rocking, and installing wood ceiling. Contact Earl to discuss the work opportunities this year. 515-230-1083 or email me.

Ten Most Wanted or NEEDED!

1. Wildlife art prints
2. Benches around camp
3. Gator type vehicle
4. Hay mower/conditioner
5. Water slide for lake
6. Hay– we are very short this year
7. Car trailer
8. Dump truck
9. Snow Blower
10. Leaf Blower