

# In Touch

from Hidden Acres' Executive Director

December 2011

## A place set apart

by Earl Taylor, Executive Director

### ***She set the table for me!***

I grew up poor; we had very little, but we didn't know what we were missing. My dad was a single parent for a few years. An unfaithful wife left him alone with four kids under ten. We managed. We survived. We stayed close together through it all. Dad was the breadwinner and the bread-maker. There was no Friday night pizza tradition for us. It was the time to do laundry at the laundry mat in Grinnell.

Occasionally we made a trip south to Auntie Anne's and Uncle E. R.'s house. They lived near St. James, Missouri, in what we thought was the most beautiful home we ever saw; it was one of those modern ranch homes complete with large windows overlooking a manicured lawn and flower garden. We had never been around anything so elegant.

We had no fancy silverware; ours was a hodge-podge of several sets. Our drinking glasses were the colored aluminum ones that set your teeth on edge when they touched the rim. Tablecloths and crystal were non-existent for us; we only heard about the rich having such luxuries.

But always, when we visited our dear auntie, she set her table for me. Crystal glasses were used which created rainbows and colorful prisms when placed on a sunny table. Plates were pulled from the china cupboard. Tablecloths and flowers covered the tables along with napkins, coffee cups, saucers, and soup bowls. The table was full of colors and smells.

I often think of this act of kindness and love and wonder how often I "set the table" for those

around me who need to enjoy a crystal glass or two. Am I too self-absorbed in my own life to stop and consider the neighbor who is down on their luck and needing some care?

During the summer at camp, we try to set the table for many campers by offering them scholarships so they can attend. For the past several years, Hidden Acres has provided over \$40,000 each summer in scholarships for families who need a touch of crystal and tablecloths in their lives.

We are grateful for our churches supporting us throughout the year with their regular gifts from the church budgets. In addition to our scholarships to campers, churches' gifts allow us to keep our summer costs down. For every camper that attends Hidden Acres, it costs us \$40 more than we receive from the registration fees. We had 2,012 campers last year, and lost \$80,000+. Again we are grateful for the gifts from our churches which off set this loss.

You will be celebrating most of this month- too much food and too many presents to people who have everything they need. My challenge to you – set the table for someone or for a family around you that could use a touch of mercy and kindness.

Just last week I returned to Missouri to visit my dear auntie and uncle; it was their 70th anniversary celebration and I was asked to conduct the renewal of their vows. It was a thrill for me to be involved and to share the love and care they had shown me 50 years ago.

Kindness and generosity never go unnoticed; look around and set the table!

*It is never too early to be thinking about summer camp 2012. If you are looking for a gift for a grandchild, call the camp and have a gift certificate sent to you for a week of camp.*

*Your gift to a child may be the gift that brings opportunities for renewed spiritual growth.*

*From the Heart— from a parent of a camper. “DeDe approached us at church and told me if the girls wanted to come to camp, she would see that their fees were covered. DeDe may not have known it at the time, but she was being used tremendously by God to touch our lives. The girls were provided with a great opportunity to grow in Christ, and, in Tehillah’s case, to be of service to the Kingdom of Christ. Our other daughter mentioned that she was really blessed by the messages and that she went up front to write things that she wanted to give to God. She mentioned to me that she had never felt that way before. It was the Holy Spirit moving in her life. We thank God for the scholarship and for the work that is being done at the camp.”*

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## Building Projects:

We have been busy this fall working on the new Hall. This 300 seat chapel-type building has already been used twice in the month of November, even in its unfinished state. Throughout the winter, we will finish sheetrocking and complete the kitchen and bathrooms. It will be 100% completed by spring.

This new building will allow us to use our summer cabins more efficiently during our retreat season by providing a meeting space for the cabin users. It will also be used as our summer staff meeting area during summer camp. It is going to be a blessing.

The staff cottage that we raised money for during the fall (about \$12,000 has come in so far) will be built this spring. We ran out of time and didn’t have enough funds in place this fall to get started as we had hoped, but the site is ready to be built on once the snow is melted. We are still needing to raise about \$12,000 more to complete this project.

Hidden Acres welcomes volunteer groups to come and help us as we continue to expand the camp. This past summer we had five retired friends spend the entire summer with us helping out with a variety of projects. Husbands usually did construction or maintenance, while wives were there to help in the office, run our lost and found, and show love and care to campers. We encourage you to get in touch with the camp and come and spend a summer working with us. We love having the steady hand of the senior involved along side our younger summer staff.

- After January 1st, we will be offering a much improved method to register your camper online. Family camp registrations will be available online as well.
- New programs for the summer include: Cowboy camp, Rough Riders, and Airsoft camp.
- A new waterslide will be installed at the lake by next summer
- Applications are being accepted until January 1 for summer camp positions. Applications can be downloaded from [www.hacamps.org](http://www.hacamps.org)
- Launch students can apply anytime for the 2012-13 session. Applications can be found online also.
- During the past year, vehicles, trucks, wildlife art, televisions, furniture, hay, horses, 1000 bushels of corn, and fencing supplies were donated to the camp. Gifts in kind are tax deductible and are a blessing to us.
- We are honored when we are listed as the recipient for memorials. We have several small projects that can be done in memory of a loved one. Talk to Earl about the specifics of the projects.

## Upcoming Events in 2012

January 20-22- District Men’s Retreat  
 March 23-25- 24 Hours with the Guys-  
 March 30-31- 24 Hours with the Guys  
 April 27-29- Homeschool Retreat  
 May 11-12- Just You and Me, Dad  
 May 15- Senior Saints Day  
 May 25-28- Memorial Day Family Camp  
 June 12- 2nd Annual Golf Retreat

## Ten Most Wanted or NEEDED!

1. Wildlife art prints
2. Gator type vehicle
3. Picnic tables
4. Backpacks with frames
5. Large meat smoking unit
6. Electric clay pigeon throwers
7. Horse trailer
8. Modern playground or even used school type-playground
9. Bulldozer
10. Fireplace for new Hall