

In Touch



from Hidden Acres' Executive Director

December 2014

A place set apart

by Earl Taylor, Executive Director

We wrote a book this year: *Be All You Could Be* (Amazon). I say “we” because it truly has been the staff at Hidden Acres that has created the camp. Sure, I did the writing, but it was the staff who worked tirelessly, unselfishly, and without many accolades. They wrote the book with me through their sweat, energy, and dedication.

Piece by piece the camp has been put together. One year we built a new lodge, another year the giant swing was erected. One year we built the Family Life Center, and another year new staff housing was constructed.

What pushed the construction of the camp? It is nothing more than the ministry. Ministry has been the fuel that drives the construction. We don't follow the Field of Dreams mantra, “*Build it and they will come.*” We follow our own mantra: “*They are coming... so we will Build!*”

Thirty-five years ago, 45 Evangelical Free churches saw the need to own their own piece of real estate and develop a camp. A grandiose master plan was developed by a professional site developer. It looked great, complete with an air strip, golf course, radio station, lodges, lakes, cabins, and a horse barn. Wow! It was more than we could imagine; the thought that a raw piece of ground COULD become this spurred our church people to give generously.

Pieces began to be put in place: rustic cabins and a lodge. A staff house was moved onto the grounds. Over thirty years later, there are 70+ buildings on the grounds. No golf course, no radio station, no air-strip. However, a giant swing, airsoft course, toboggan run, and zip line exist, things the master plan could not even fathom.

Now we are ready to begin one of the last big pieces to the plan: a new kitchen and dining room. “*No room only a manger of hay... no room*” as the song goes that we sing each Christmas. But I have another song: “*No place, only the floor to sit... no place... no place to sit!*” Ok, ok, I will quit being cheesy and stop milking the season.

If you have been a Facebook user over the past year, you may be aware of my silly acting job and the videos we created to demonstrate the need for a new dining room. You have found me perched on the swing or the climbing tower, on a horse, and sitting on a dining room table eating my lunch, lamenting the fact that there is no place to sit in our current dining room.

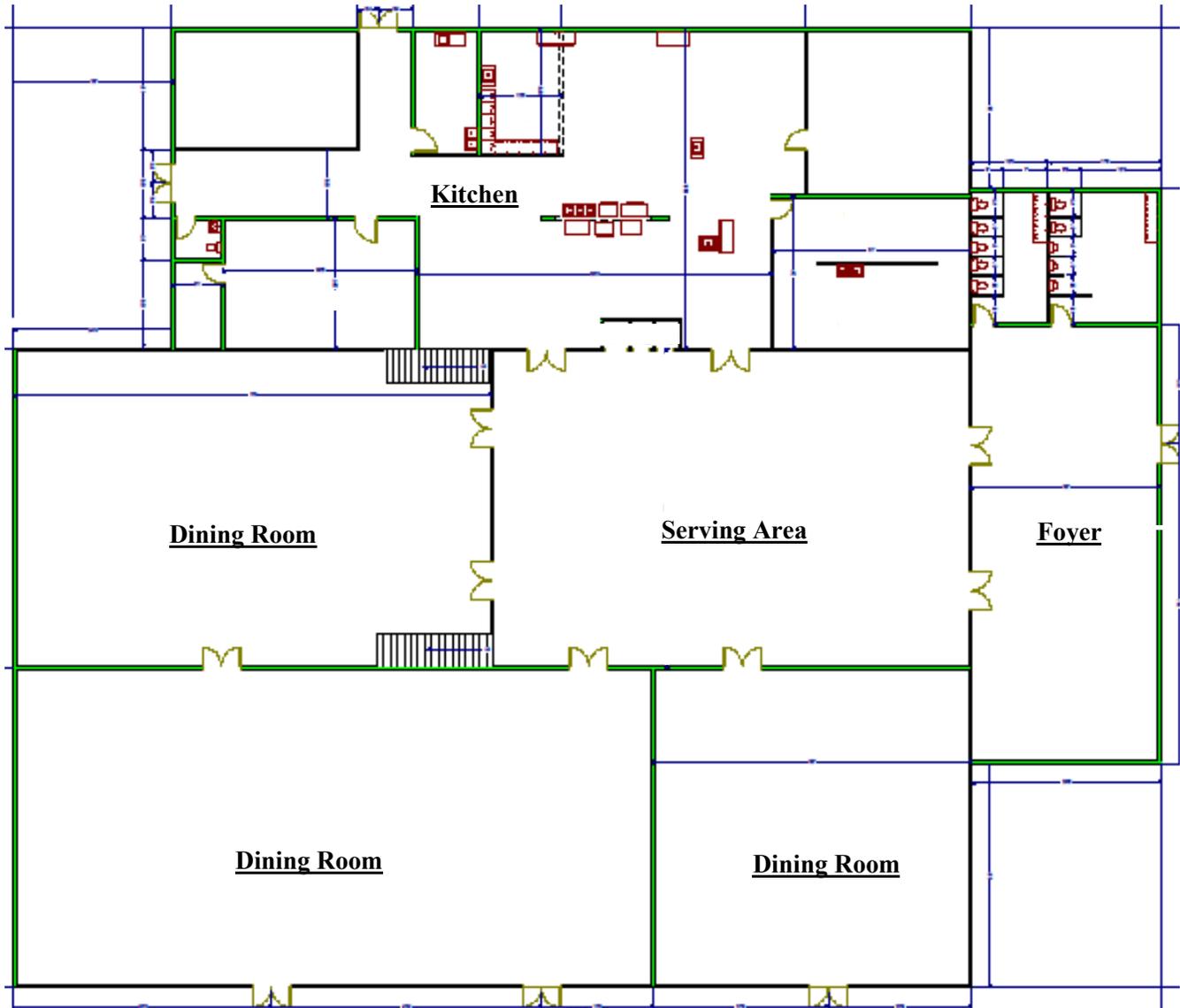
We have received a wonderful challenge of a matching gift of \$500,000. It is our goal to raise the last \$500,000 in order to have enough funds to build this 20,000 sq. ft. structure that will be capable of seating over 700 guests at one time. To date, we have raised \$100,000 of the \$500,000.

The work has been started. During this past year, the staff moved dirt to create the building site. They installed 30,000 feet of pipe for the building's geo-thermal heating system. A new pond was dug to handle part of the geo-thermal system, but also to create a beautiful place near the dining rooms.

Could you help us? The master plan from 1979 looked great. The MASTER's plan from 2014 looks greater. We are humbled that we can be a part of His plan to reach the next generation for Christ.

The Floor Plan

This 700 seat dining room will provide several different sizes of dining rooms to handle the multiple groups throughout a given retreat weekend. During our summer months, summer campers will fill every nook and cranny of the building. We are currently feeding over 600 campers weekly during the summer by running two shifts for every meal.



In Touch is published by
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Other Hidden Acres Happenings

- Our online summer camp registration process is up and running. Sign up a child for Christmas!
- We have a scholarship program for children with parents who are deployed or are wounded warriors, or even children who lost a parent in combat. Please help us find these special children so that we can ensure they are able to attend camp this summer.
- Please contact Judy if you'd like to volunteer as a summer camp nurse: (515) 547-2751.
- Upcoming retreats: Men's Retreat, January 16-18; Sportsmen's Retreat, March 26-29.
- We are now hiring summer staff for 2015. Interested young people should download an application from our website: www.hacamps.org