



From the Desk of Steve Pinkley

As I reflect on my first full year as director and how I might fit into God's plan at the camp, an overwhelming theme emerges: intentionality. I believe that intentionality is a vital component in any ministry, and it has been a theme at Hidden Acres for many years. Every decision started with intentional consideration, and I want to continue that. I also want intentionality to flow into the staff's interactions with guests.

It was an honor to be able to take over the directorship from Earl. The Taylors spent over 30 years developing Hidden Acres, creating systems, investing into staff, and expanding the grounds with countless new buildings so that Hidden Acres could effectively minister to its guests. Over 10 buildings were added in the past 20 years! All of this was possible because of Earl's intentional vision, a hardworking staff, and the support of generous donors like you.

Though Hidden Acres will seek to add facilities in the future, I want to intentionally take a couple of years to remodel some existing buildings, develop the grounds, and enhance programming. The Dining Hall was a huge project and has been a blessing to our staff and guests. Now that it's open, our construction and maintenance workers are being sent out to use their many talents on other projects. I'm excited about these tasks; we have a big to-do list over the next couple years. The back of this letter lists several goals for the future. I know it's exciting to give of your time, talents, and funds to a project like the Dining Hall, but please consider ways in which you might help with these future projects.

My intentionality won't end with enhancing the tangible things at camp. I'm also going to keep pouring into the staff, encouraging them to intentionally minister to our guests. Our mission statement says that we want to make sure every person knows Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. I don't want the staff to forget that they can play a vital role in this. Yes, a lot of our work is behind the scenes. However, this year I've been encouraging the staff to step out of the background and meet our guests. I want the housekeeper and the maintenance worker to not only offer assistance to each guest but also get to know them and offer encouragement and support if needed. There are many stories that have come out of this intentionality, but here are a couple that stick out in my mind:

A staff member was driving around one weekend, looking to meet some of our guests. He saw a college student in a yellow sweatshirt at the three crosses behind Lodge 139, praying with his head in his hands. The staff member noted the student, but kept driving. An hour later, he spotted the same student outside the Family Life Center. Our staff member introduced himself and asked about what he saw earlier that

afternoon. The student broke down, crying about a struggling relationship. Our staff member listened to and prayed with him and has kept in touch.

The student is so thankful that someone talked to him; he said he never would have reached out for help on his own. Since that time, he has solved the relationship problem and has been baptized. He is growing spiritually and looking for ways to serve in his church.



Another staff member recently ministered to a young high school girl. One weekend a concerned youth group leader told our weekend hostess about a girl who came to camp with head lice. Instead of leaving the situation up to the parents to solve, our hostess reached out to a local nurse to educate herself on lice treatments. Armed with the proper supplies, our hostess spent five hours treating the girl's waist-length hair, applying chemical to each strand. The hostess and the young girl bonded, talking about life and the Lord. She came from a broken home and didn't have a lot of friends. The girl was astonished that a stranger cared enough to treat her lice. She said, "No one has ever spent this much time with me. This must be what God's love is really like."

I appreciate our staff intentionally ministering to our guests. I hope their example encourages you, too. How would lives change if we were more intentional in sharing the love of Jesus Christ? Don't forget 1 John 3:18: "Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions." Dear readers, don't forget to be intentional.

I'm so grateful for the Taylors' intentional leadership and I hope to continue that example in the coming years. Please pray for the camp and our staff. Pray for me as I direct everyone into this new season of restoration. Pray that the Lord opens the doors for our staff to minister to our guests both directly and indirectly.

Thank you for your friendship and faithful support of Hidden Acres. May you and your family be blessed this Christmas season in your home and at your church. If there's anything we can do for you, please don't hesitate to call the camp office at 515-547-2751.

Summer Camp Sideline

by Eric Smith

Preparations for Summer Camp 2018 are in full swing! Our theme for the summer is **CULTIVATE**. We're going to look at what it means to cultivate spiritual growth and fruit in our lives. Registration is now open and our early-bird discount expires on March 31, 2018.

Each summer we hire around 140 summer staff members to make our summer camp possible. If you know any high school or college students with a heart for ministry, encourage them to apply! The application deadline is January 1st and applications can be found at hacamps.org

Working at camp is a great way to grow in your faith and encourage others to do the same. When reflecting on the summer, one counselor remarked, "I saw people change...and I really mean it. I had campers completely change. I saw other counselors completely change. The power of the Lord is beyond my comprehension. It is absolutely astonishing what God has done over this summer." Another counselor recommended working at camp because "you won't regret whatever you had to give up to work here!"

This year we are also offering 12-week paid internships for college students. These internships can be used for college credit, where applicable. We have six internship positions, as well as the option to create your own position based on your skills and academic needs.

We're also excited to announce a new Gap Year program coming in fall 2018. This program is designed for college-age students who are interested in pursuing vocational ministry or are undecided on future plans and could benefit from a year of work and ministry experience before starting college or a full-time job. Students will live at camp in our newly-renovated Pavilion and participate in ministry training, Bible studies, life skills seminars, and community activities. Look for more information about this exciting new program in the coming months.

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What's Next for Hidden Acres?

by Steve Pinkley

"What is the next new building project?" I get asked this question all the time now that the Dining Hall is open. Like I said on the front page, we are going to take a couple of years to remodel and repurpose our buildings, develop grounds, and enhance our programming activities. I hope that these improvements will allow us to better minister to our guests.

Below is a list of projects through 2018. I want to thank you for your continued prayers for and support of the ministry here at Hidden Acres. You have been so faithful and generous whenever there has been a new building project or special need at camp. I hope you will continue to help us with these new projects, too!

- Paint exterior of Welcome Center
- Paint roadway light poles
- Install new exterior doors on Bunkhouse
- Reconfigure and enhance the camp's wi-fi
- Remodel the Main Lodge: turning the loft dining room into two new bunk rooms, turning the two small dining rooms into new bunk rooms, remodeling the old commercial kitchen into a guest kitchen, and creating a craft room out of the old kitchen bakery
- Remodel the Pavilion into guest and staff lodging
- Shape and repair camp roads
- Build two new ponds in our pastures for our horses
- Develop and improve the land for use behind the lake shelter area
- Build a new road and parking lot to access the lake from the shelter house
- Remodel the lake shelter house and docks
- Build new double zip line across the lake utilizing the existing toboggan tower
- Repair the foundation at the Welcome Center and add a walk-out patio on the back
- Install 19,000 square feet of carpet in the new Dining Hall
- Finish the staff dining room in the new Dining Hall
- Finish the geothermal in the new Dining Hall
- Install new LED lighting in the gym and pool in the Family Life Center
- Add four new summer camps: Softball, Soccer, Culinary, & High School Horse Camps

If you feel led to give to any of these remodeling, grounds, or programming projects, please use the enclosed envelope to donate to the Hidden Acres Development Fund.

Ministry Corner

by Ryan Graden

These last few months we've been very busy getting ready for the 2018 retreat season. We host up to 12 different retreats through the year and love seeing lives changed during these events. It's neat to be on the front lines of ministry and see what God does.

Several of our marketing materials are already online for next year. You can download brochures and even register online if you'd like. Let us know if you'd like several copies of a brochure printed for distribution – we'd love to send some your way!

Our first retreat of the year will be Men's Retreat on January 19-21. Last year our attendance numbers were up, just over 300 guys. I issued the challenge to get that number up to 375 for this year. I'm praying that God would motivate us to get the word out and see more men attend this year.

Truly though, it's not a "numbers" thing. Our heart here at camp is to create an opportunity for somebody to disciple somebody else. Isn't that what Christ calls us to? What an easy way to share Christ with somebody who doesn't know him. Just invite them to a retreat full of great fellowship, excellent food, fun activities, and a great speaker. God will do the rest!

So, as the year rolls on, please be encouraging friends, family, and church leaders to use Hidden Acres' retreats as tools for your ministries. I think we have something that would fit anybody out there. And most of all, be praying that God would use those times here on the grounds as life changing moments that might have an eternal impact on somebody!