

In Touch

from Hidden Acres' Executive Director

November 2013

A place set apart

by Earl Taylor, Executive Director

Dining Hall Project

We knew we had a problem; we just tried to ignore it for years, hoping that it would solve itself. It was a GOOD problem—too many people and not enough room to feed them at one time.

One month ago, reality set in when Salt Company from Cornerstone Church in Ames needed to rent a tent in order to seat all the students in one chapel building. We loved the sight of the tent sitting in the middle of our soccer field. We managed to feed the masses by dividing them into two groups, telling them to eat fast and keep moving. However, our kitchen struggled to keep that much food prepared.

We knew we had 850 beds in place, but only had a dining room to seat 350 guests. We knew our current kitchen was built to serve 250 guests but was cranking out food for 500+ regularly over the summer months. So we drew up a floor plan for a new dining room/kitchen. We identified the site. We measured out the field and laid out service roads for unloading truckloads of food and removing dumpster loads of garbage. We had a plan, but no money to build and no real prospects of any.

That all changed last month! We received a phone call and a visit from a friend of the camp. “Tell me about your next project,” he said. We talked and toured the potential site. Then he spoke, saying, “I think I could give



\$500,000 toward this project as a matching gift!” We listened!

We got out the orange flags and survey sticks the next day—we were excited about the news. The addition of the Family Life Center, the Inn, and the closing in of the Chapel has allowed us to grow steadily over the last six years. We have tripled our retreat business during these six years and added ten new staff positions to handle our growth.

As the project is drawn today, it will be a 145’ x 145’ building. It will include one large dining room with seating for 600 people that could be divided into four separate dining

rooms to accommodate our multi group retreat season. It will have an additional small, secluded dining room for staff families, summer coaches, speakers, etc. There will be a great room, similar in size and scope to the Family Life Center foyer. The kitchen will include all the necessary cooking and baking equipment needed to provide meals for 600+ guests. The serving area will divide the kitchen area from the dining room area, allowing traffic to flow in and out of the building.

This great news is not to ask for you to donate—**not yet anyway**...
(continued on p. 2)

Summer Camp Report

The summer is long over, but the fruit of the summer continues. Our 2014 summer camp information is available online now. What a blessing each summer is to me. I love Sunday afternoons as parents bring their kids to camp—they are excited! I get to hear the good reports from our closing ceremonies and the constant chatter of children as they try to explain to their parents all that they have experienced.

2014 Upcoming Events

Men's Retreat

January 17-19

Sportsmen's Retreat

March 27-30

Homeschool Family Camp

April 25-27

Just You & Me, Dad!

May 9-10

Spring Senior Saints Day

May 13

Memorial Day Family Camp

May 23-26

Summer Camp 2014—Identity

June 8-July 18

Just You & Me, Grandparents!

June 30-July 2

Labor Day Family Camp

August 29-September 1

Fall Senior Saints Day

September 30

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Dining Hall Project (*Continued*)

...that will come later. We share this great news with you now so that you too can rejoice with us at God's faithfulness. We have over 70 buildings scattered over the property; each one has a story. Each one has someone who saw a need and gave generously. I have now been here long enough to not worry or fret about where the next dollar will come from to build another building or to add another program.

Now the fun begins for us again; watching the Lord supply the last \$500,000 for this project. I have been asked, "Will you walk across Iowa again?" Probably not. Plans are now being put together on how we proceed with raising the money. But guess what? The Lord has that figured out already too. And I am willing to keep trusting and keep obeying Him as He directs our paths, as He leads us beside the still waters, as he lights our way. We will continue to be thankful for all He has provided and all that He will; He sustains us always.

Lodge 139 Update



It is a beautiful site; a lodge overlooking a pond with a deck close enough to water that you could catch a fish and reel it up to the deck. In my old age, I like to do things the easy way!

But the purpose of the building is not to create another fishing opportunity for me; instead it will house our summer camp **Creation Center** and be transformed into a mini retreat center that holds up to 40 guests during our non-summer months.

We have the geothermal loops in the ground, siding is almost completed, windows are in and the doors are all being installed. We are now ready to let the snow fall and we can move inside to finish off the work throughout the winter.

Staff Changes

Steve Pinkley will be leaving us at the end of the year in order to take the position of General Manager at the new grocery store/bakery/café in Bondurant. Over the past four years, Steve has led the retreat staff and has marketed to new retreat groups. He has been a blessing to the entire staff as well as to our churches, and we wish him well in this new adventure.

Christina and Dale Driver will be joining us on or before January 1. The Drivers are coming to us after serving at Inspiration Hills Camp in Northwest Iowa. Christina will take over many of Steve's responsibilities and she will also assist Ryan Graden with summer camp programming. Dale will be replacing Jordon Mullen, who left in August, as our shop foreman. He will be responsible for vehicle repair, hay, lawn, and roads. We are excited to welcome them to our staff and can't wait for you to meet them! Praise be to God for His provision!