



Friends of Hidden Acres: Fundraising Season

By Steve Pinkley, Executive Director

By now you may have heard that our fundraising focus for 2025 is two development projects: swimming pool renovations & a sewage lagoon expansion.

We officially kicked off this fundraising season with our Second Annual Giving Tuesday Telethon on December 3rd. We livestreamed to social media from 12-8 pm. Every two hours we had a new emcee pair bring their fun personalities to the screen. We started with Damian Peasley & Eli Doss from Madrid EFC, then welcomed Nick Burgus & Ryan Smith from Grace EFC in Mason City. Summer camp volunteers Carson & Bethany Norine traveled all the way from Blair, NE, and led the next two hours. We wrapped up with staff members Ryan Graden & Mandy Stenberg. Each pair guided viewers through the story of Hidden Acres and our many different program offerings. They showed videos, told stories, interviewed special guests, and explained our Development Campaign projects to viewers while also challenging people to give financially to those projects.



Hidden Acres Staff Having Fun at the Second Annual Telethon

Personally, it was so fun to see our entire staff excited and be involved in some part of the day. They sent out letters ahead of the event to friends and family and invited them to get involved. Each staff member was in the room for at least an hour of the telethon. Many were interviewed on screen and spent time taking donations over the phone. It was exciting to see my own friends and family from ten different states get involved. Other friends stopped in to visit, to bring donations, or to be interviewed. No matter the size of the financial gift, it was wonderful to see so many people eager to be involved in the ministry of Hidden Acres.

We set a goal of \$175,000 for the telethon. At 8pm when everything was totaled, God provided \$208,189. Amen! While that total does not cover the total cost of the two projects (\$850,000), it's a good start to build on with the rest of our fundraising season still to come. Two big pieces of this season are year-end giving and our Annual Gala.

Annual Fundraising Gala

Our Fundraising Gala was another new event last year. We planned a big party for a Sunday in February, with tons of fellowship, a delicious meal, a guest speaker, and three different types of auctions. It was such a fun evening for us and it even ended up being a great date night for many couples so close to Valentine's Day.

Mark your calendar now with this year's date: Sunday, February 16. Details will follow, but expect registration to open in early January. You'll have the option of purchasing individual seats or an entire table.

Year-End Giving

At the Telethon, we heard so many amazing stories about how our ministry has blessed families. Craig & Crystal Tjeerdsma stopped by with their sons, Oscar & Carson, for a family interview. During the interview, they mentioned how much camp has shaped their family, from attending retreats, sending their sons to summer camp, and having both sons serve on summer staff where they learned how to share the gospel with campers. About their family's future involvement in camp, Crystal said, *"We're so excited for the next season of life, for our future grandchildren that we might have to come to camp and enjoy this place. It's so wonderful."*

As you're reflecting on 2024, think about what's most important to your family. If you believe in the ministry of Hidden Acres and you're a friend of the camp, please consider sending a year-end donation. It will help us reach our budget, help us support our development projects, and allow us to keep blessing children and families for years to come. You can send a check in the enclosed envelope or give online at hacamps.org/donate.

Thank you so much for your partnership with Hidden Acres. I hope your family has a blessed Christmas season, and I look forward to perhaps seeing you in the new year!



Summer Camp 2025: WILDERNESS

Our 2025 Summer Camp Theme is **WILDERNESS**.

In Exodus, God was with the ancient Israelites through every stage of their wilderness journey, from their slavery in Egypt, through the Red Sea, and all the way to the Promised Land. And He's with us today too! We might not be in the same wilderness as the Israelites, but their story foreshadows the gospel story: if you place your faith in Jesus, He will free you from slavery to sin, guide you through life's struggles, and lead you to eternal life. He promises to be with you at every stage of your journey, all the way through the **WILDERNESS**.



This summer we are going to be studying the Exodus story and how it connects with the gospel story presented in the New Testament. We are excited to spend lots of time studying the Old Testament and seeing how God has been working throughout the generations to bring salvation to the world. Campers will see how God is with them during every stage of life.

In Touch is published by:

Hidden Acres Christian Center
3837 Union Ave,
Dayton, IA 50530
www.hacamps.org
515-547-2751
steve.pinkley@hacamps.org



Our Vision for Summer Camp

By Taylor Mugge & Josh Constant, Summer Ministries Managers

Our summer camp program aims to be extremely intentional about accomplishing our vision of **providing camp experiences, sharing the gospel, and equipping Christ-followers**. We do this by creating a safe environment where both campers and staff can grow spiritually, personally, & relationally. Here are a few ways we do that:

1. **Camp is disconnected.** Camp is a set apart space, removed from the hustle and routine of daily life. We facilitate this environment in a number of ways. Campers and staff do not have access to their phones during the week, enabling them to connect with each other on a deeper level. Also by design, camp is literally "set apart" from everywhere—where campers experience creation and nature in ways quite different from most of their daily lives. In these and other ways, everyone is freed to wrestle with and practice their faith away from the normal distractions of life.
2. **Camp is experiential.** Our unique camp experiences are a tool to point campers toward Jesus. Campers don't just observe, they participate. Campers are given the opportunity to read the Bible for themselves. Campers are encouraged to practice loving their neighbor with their cabin mates. Lessons are turned into experience, and experience into lessons. At the same time, our staff gain experience sharing the gospel, serving others, depending on God, teaching Scripture, and so much more. Our goal is that everyone will use the skills they practiced at camp to serve Christ in their church, family, school, and community.
3. **Camp is relational.** Campers and staff enter into a new, temporary community during the summer. The camp experience is lived out with others; no one walks alone at camp. This community is nurtured primarily through intentional mentorship. All campers and staff are mentored by someone who encourages them toward spiritual, relational, and personal growth.
4. **Camp is faith-centered.** Daily schedules, devotions, activities, and even meals are intentionally designed to point campers to Jesus. Counselors are taught to share the gospel with every camper every day and nurture their faith. We call this "planting and watering seeds." Whether during a devotion, a conversation while walking, at a meal, or while playing a game, counselors always look for opportunities to share and equip.

We asked 2,500 campers about their experience at camp this summer, and 92% said they grew in their faith in some capacity. We had 248 campers say they put their faith in Jesus for the first time while at camp. Obviously, we don't measure our success by numbers like these, since we know the Holy Spirit is always working in the hearts of people in ways we can't understand. However, it is encouraging and exciting to see some of the amazing miracles God has worked in staff and campers' lives. Here is what one of our summer staff members had to say about what God did in their life while at camp:

"He taught me ultimate dependency on Him. God taught me that His timing is perfect over and over again. I tried to weave the gospel in-to everything, but it was always when I was least expecting it that a conversation would take place and a camper would come to know our Lord as their Savior. Through our [staff] study of the book of Philippians, God began the work of helping me to deny myself. I struggled with wanting recognition for what I was doing, but that is not why I was serving this summer. The very things we were teaching our campers, He made me aware that I needed the same lessons. Only God is worthy of praise."

Thank you for your support of Hidden Acres and our summer camp program. We're excited for a fruitful Summer Camp 2025 season!