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"Sharing Christ's Love"

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We want to celebrate the amazing staff that God brought together for this summer. They were flexible and patient as we adjusted schedules and job descriptions to operate this summer. Here is our 2020 team: **1st Row:** Ashton Melendez, Natalie Klees, Bethany Horning, Kate Prothero, Talia Christner, Emma Klees, Reese Peifer. **2nd Row:** Matthew Good, Talia Cole, Abby Horning, Caroline Baum, Josie Groff, Corrine Reed, Alicia Beachy, Savannah Alarie. **3rd Row:** Hope Martin, Jasmine Blosenski, Moriah Brubaker, Elizabeth Martin, Vanessa Klinger, Carol Martin, Abby Wenger, Asher Christner, Austin Martin. **4th Row:** Joel Wenger, Doris Beachy, Anthony Sensenig, Elena Hurst, Brennan Hurst, Tristan Sanchez, Ashley Horst, Lauren Nagy, Felicia Przydzial. **5th Row:** Braden Buckwalter, Kara Williams, Joel Wayde, Jalynn Graybill, Sara Petersen, Cordell Gingrich, Adam Fox, Jordan Weaver, Nate Walz. **6th Row:** Gregg Gattuso, Luke Foster, Bill Klees, Avery Klees, Adin Fry, Micah Martin, Caleb Horning, Jason Martin, Kora Behrens.

Absent: Sarah Martin

Family Getaway?

Are you in need of an affordable place to go for a weekend and over the holidays? Our Rock Haven and Sandstone trailers were recently remodeled and are a great destination to consider. Call the camp office to ask about availability and to reserve your quiet getaway retreat for the whole family (or just for two!). Lodging is available all winter long.



Fall

Woodcrest Whispersings

WOODCREST RETREAT

2020

Moving Forward – UPDATE FROM BILL KLEES

The Board of Directors and the Staff give thanks to God for the amazing encouragement that our supporters and friends have shown Woodcrest during this crazy season. What would have normally been a challenging summer because of the staff transitions that have taken place this past year, became even more challenging with the requirements and guidelines from state and federal health agencies.

But the team here at Woodcrest pulled it all together and saturated each decision in prayer as we kept moving forward. At the end of the summer, we managed to serve nearly 1,450 campers (just 60 less than last year's record). In the process, we were generous with our refund policy and even kept our registration fees locked in at our early bird discount. Additionally, we offered nearly \$10,000 in camper scholarships. The end result is that the lives of young people were transformed and parents were filled with gratitude.

Usually Woodcrest settles into a slower routine after camp, but despite the pandemic, we have been busy sharing Christ's love in a variety of ways and following God as He leads us onward. We offered three new programs this fall to support families and provide fun and a bit of normalcy to children.



New Fall Programs

Knowing that youth soccer was affected by state guidelines, we offered **Woodcrest Soccer Break**. We averaged 15 players a week who gathered for drills, game time, and a devotion. It was even extended an extra two weeks at the request of the parents and players.

For nine Wednesdays this fall, we offered an afterschool program called **Wild Woodcrest Wednesdays**. This was a great time for students to be outside, off a screen, and surrounded by God's creation. We had over 20 campers a week meet for games, crafts, nature, Bible time, and more.

Realizing that some parents were



shifting to home-schooling their children and that many co-ops weren't meeting, we were excited to offer a new outdoor educational program called **Woodcrest's School of Wonder**. We ran five classes in September and additional classes are being developed for November and for next spring. In total over 70 families participated.

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Looking Back – REFLECTIONS ON SUMMER 2020

There is a folder in the camp office that is very dear to the staff. It contains the stories and comments from our summer staff, campers, and parents. It is filled with testimonies to how God shows up and changes lives. This summer provided an opportunity to see the transformation that happens through the power of camp and the power of God's amazing love. Join us in celebrating God's faithfulness as you read a few of our favorite stories from this past summer (look for more responses on our Facebook page).

From Our Counselors

"At the beginning of the week [my camper] was completely averse to anything about God. On Tuesday he asked about the Bible lesson. On Wednesday he asked if the Bible was true. Once he found out that it was real, he was more interested and on Thursday he told me he accepted Christ." ~Savannah

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(Moving Forward continued)

Campground Expansion

In the works before the pandemic were plans to expand our campground and offer new seasonal sites for campers who enjoy Woodcrest all season long. This year the campground at Woodcrest was busier than usual as families opted to stay local and enjoy the fresh air of the woods. This expansion will add ten new sites. We anticipate these being ready for opening day in April 2021.

Summer 2021

Of course, our passion is for summer camp. We are already looking forward to next summer and the new things that we are dreaming of for 2021. Plans are being developed to expand the playground area by the pool by adding a multistory treehouse with lots of playground equipment that will keep kids happy and entertained during their week at camp. Our end of the year letter will share more about this project and how you can support its construction.

There are plans to expand our middle school day camp (what we call Trekkers Camp) and adding a second week of our staff in training program (R.I.S.E) along with a new outbound adventure trek. You can also expect new themes, games, and activities that will keep Woodcrest moving forward and being a favorite destination for campers, families, and churches.

Summer Celebration Picnic – A TIME OF CELEBRATING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

We want to thank everyone who came out in August to join us for our Summer Celebration Picnic. Because our spring banquet was cancelled due to the pandemic, we upgraded our regular summer BBQ to be a special evening of fellowship. The Board of Directors acknowledged Cliff Martin's 30 years of service and presented him with a special gift thanking him for his dedication to Woodcrest. The Board also formally introduced Bill Klees as the new Executive Director. The evening was a huge success and was capped off with an amazing, outdoor concert by Commandment 11 as they shared their Scripture saturated songs and stories of redemption.



(Looking Back continued)

"We were at Bible and there was a short break at the end. One of my campers said he had never committed his life to Christ, so I lead him in a short prayer and explained what it means to follow Jesus!" ~ Josh

"A camper who couldn't swim really wanted to swim. He worked hard to learn over the past few weeks. It was so amazing to see him pass the swim test this week. He was really proud." ~ Matthew

"All my girls have been really seeking truth. They were challenged to know they are saved and how to stay on fire for God after camp. They brought up almost every question I ever had myself. God was really moving in the hearts of these campers. It's so cool to see these teenagers searching for a closer relationship with God. This summer has a purpose!" ~ Kora

From Parents

"Day camp was the perfect thing for my son this year. He had such a great time. His comment was "I wish day camp would never end!" Thanks for providing this opportunity for kids, especially this year!"

"This was very restorative after such a long time of stay-at-home orders in which we had minimal access to playmates for our son. It was great to hear him laughing and talking about what he had done with his friends from camp."

"My daughter was very hesitant to engage in her first day camp experience. She was nervous and anxious about what to expect. She was put at ease immediately and couldn't wait to get up to go back every day of the week. After begging us to let her go for another week, we put her on the waiting list for later in the summer. Thank you for such a wonderful experience for our sensitive, anxious little girl."

"We love Woodcrest and see a wonderful shift in our son's wellbeing during the weeks he is at camp. He loves going and is constantly recruiting all his friends to go. His goal for when he is old enough is to be a counselor."

From Campers:

"Camp gets better each year! I hope to keep coming back until I am a counselor."

"I learned that no matter where you are you can go to God. Jesus loves you so much."

"Being here this week, I was impacted by the fact that God is always present in every activity we do."

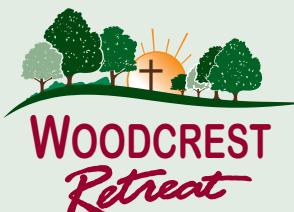


Winter Camps

Blast - Wednesday December 30th (ages 6-9)
New! Frost - Monday January 18th (ages 9-12)



schools are out for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, you can enjoy the day at camp. Both days will feature outside games, Bible time, singing, and crafts. A hot lunch is provided. Our winter camps make a great gift idea!



Praise God! ...

- For the wonderful summer staff that God gave us
- For the Bible teachers who shared God's love and truth to the campers
- For the campers who received Christ as their Savior this summer and for the lives that were transformed by His grace
- That we were able to run summer camp when many camps were not
- For the faithful supporters who have given generously during the pandemic
- That He provided us with the needed staff to keep things moving forward
- For the faithful partnership with our local churches

Please Pray ...

- For the campers who were here this summer and that God would keep His Word in their hearts and minds
- For the summer staff as they are back in school or at jobs
- For our year-round staff and the Board of Directors as they plan future development
- For a successful Extra Give event and the needed funds to close the gap in funding for this year
- For this year's Journey to Bethlehem and that it would offer hope at a time when we desperately need God's hope

Thank You For Serving –

A SALUTE TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

"Serving may be as appreciated as a good testimony in a worship service, but typically it's as thankless as washing dishes after a church social. Most service, even that which seems the most glamorous, is like an iceberg. Only the eye of God ever sees the larger, hidden part of it."

~ Donald Whitney,
Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life

The work that was accomplished this summer was not accomplished without the effort of hundreds of people. Though we are thankful for the summer staff that we hire to counsel and serve the campers, we could not survive without the volunteers who give countless hours serving—often times

behind the scenes and unrecognized. Woodcrest depends on volunteers to help with day camp counselling and to help in the kitchen preparing and serving meals. Many churches serve by donating food. We rely on volunteers that serve as our Bible teachers and Fireside speakers. There is a

faithful team that keeps the grass mowed and another team that gathers to send out mailings. Some keep the flower beds watered and weeded. Another amazing team are the couples that serve as weekend hosts for the campground and guest groups (this allows our year-round staff to have a few weekends off during summer). We are thankful for each person who steps on this mountain and gives of their time and talents to serve God and help build His kingdom.

Opportunity To Bless ...

If you are able, please consider how you can help meet some of these needs. Donations toward any of these items should be marked for the item. All gifts are tax deductible.

- Wood cutters and splitters (you can call the office to arrange a time to help replenish our campfire wood supply)
- 12-15 Passenger Van (2012 or newer)-\$26,000-\$30,000
- Commercial Walk-in Freezer/Cooler -- \$18,000
- Golf Cart -- \$3,000

Staff Updates

This has been a year of transition as several staff members moved to new opportunities and God brought new (or not so new faces) to join the ministry team.

Welcome Jason Martin

Back in February Jason Martin returned on staff after a hiatus. Jason previously served as Woodcrest's Facilities' Manager from 2002-2012. He returns to serve as our Operations Director. Jason is overseeing the daily operations of the camp including guest services and managing new project development. He brings his previous Woodcrest experience and a passion for camp ministry which will be valuable as we prepare for the next phase of Woodcrest's growth. Jason is married to Jennifer and they have two teenage children—Alaina and Clayton

Welcome Paula Leaman

With both our part-time Administrative Assistant and Receptionist leaving at the end of summer, we had an extensive search for a new office manager position. Paula was selected from a pool of amazing candidates. She brings administrative experience and heart for serving others to the office. When you call, it will be Paula who you will most likely

hear. Among her many responsibilities is updating our reservation system to streamline our growing rentals. She is married to Lowell. They have three children—Lydia, Nathan, and Rachel.



Thank You Anthony Sensenig

For the past seven years Anthony has faithfully served at Woodcrest as our Facilities' Director. He kept our buildings and grounds in operation and looking beautiful. Additionally, Anthony added to the ministry with his gentle spirit and keen insight. He left at the end of August to join the maintenance team at Landis Homes. He and his wife Julie are expecting their first child next year.

Welcome Gregg Gattuso

Gregg is working to keep the buildings and grounds ready for

the guests that enjoy the property. Gregg has previously served in various roles at Woodcrest during the past summers including this year as our new maintenance support staff member. He also helped with the renovations of our cabins last spring. Gregg was instrumental in helping with our Soccer Break this fall serving the pivotal role of "Coach."

Welcome Heather Klees

Heading up the teaching for the new School of Wonder is Heather Klees. She has extensive experience in outdoor education. Previously, she served as the camp Naturalist at Camp Susque in Trout Run, PA. She is a certified PA science teacher and has taught in Newark, NJ and at Eastern Lebanon County school district. She moved to Woodcrest last fall with her husband Bill and brings her contagious smile and enthusiasm.

Congratulations Adam Fox

Adam is not new to Woodcrest and we are thankful for his continued service as our summer camp director. However, he makes this list because this past September he married former summer staff member, Tasha Martin. They had a beautiful Woodcrest wedding at our outdoor chapel. We are excited for them both and pray God's blessing on their life together.



Journey to Bethlehem – CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Friday and Saturday - December 11 & 12, 18 & 19

This is a special milestone for Woodcrest's popular Journey to Bethlehem. In recognition of ten years, you will find a few special things this year. The big one is a brand-new scene! Join the wise men as they wrestle with a decision: Do they stay in their comfortable palace or begin a long, dangerous trek through the desert, just for a chance to meet some far-off king?

Also new this year is the need to **pre-register**. Like many events, Covid-19 restrictions have caused us to make changes including limiting walk-in openings. You can register for a tentative slot online or by calling the office. You will find a convenient registration form on our website (<https://www.woodcrestretreat.org/journey>) along with all the details.

Extra Give – An EXTRAORDINARY NIGHT

Every November Lancaster County shows how generous we are. The Extra Give is a massive, one day, online giving event that attracts thousands of donors to give to over 500 different nonprofits. Woodcrest has been blessed to be a recipient of that generosity. This year nonprofits are perhaps in greater need of that generosity.

Once again Woodcrest is participating in the Extra Give being held **Friday, November 20th**. Those who give online that day also help us receive a portion of a matching stretch pool as well as making us eligible for different cash prizes throughout the day. Last year we raised over \$22,000 and this year we have set an ambitious goal of \$30,000. Reaching that goal would be a huge boost as we face lower income and increased costs due to Covid.

Additionally, we are excited to announce that we are holding a special event on November 20th. Join us at Woodcrest for an evening of fun, laughter, and food. From 6:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. there will be special events including campfires, wagon rides, open mic, trivia contests, and so much more. We will have snacks including special s'mores to roast. Family time with special activities for children will be from 6:00-8:00 that evening. We will be live streaming the Extra Give so that people can donate at special times to help us win special prizes. Follow us on Facebook to get the full schedule.



Three Successful Events

This fall Woodcrest held three fundraising events which gave an opportunity for our Woodcrest family to gather and support the ministry. The annual **3D Archery Shoot** was held at the end of August. Over 150 people shot through the extensive course of targets. There was also a hot brunch and Brian Martin, pastor at Weaverland Mennonite Church, gave an inspiring message. Thank you to the committee who put this event on and for the businesses that sponsored it.

Rescheduled from the spring, the **27th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament**, was moved to the end of September. Twenty-eight teams competed for cash prizes and enjoyed a delicious meal together. Thank you to the golf committee who organized this event and for all the businesses



and individuals who gave financially to support Woodcrest.

The third event that was held this fall was the annual

Auction and Kids Camp Bonanza

on the first Saturday in October. Like everything else, it was modified due to Covid but we still had an amazing turnout. We are so thankful to the businesses that supported Woodcrest by donating over 300 great items. On our website you can find a list of those businesses.



The Kids Camp Bonanza, which runs concurrently with the auction, had a great turnout as families brought their children for a morning of games and special activities. Estimates put this year's Bonanza as the largest ever.

One highlight was the annual baking contest where children bake their favorite goodies which are then auctioned off. Over \$700 was raised for Woodcrest's summer camp through this year's baking contest. Thank you bakers!

Firewood by Donation



Need firewood? You are invited to come to Woodcrest to cut and haul your own. Call the camp office for pricing and arrangements.