

Great Oaks News

Camping & Urban Youth Ministries

Jan-Mar 2018 Report

Over the past couple of years, the Great Oaks Board has really begun to dream about the future of camp and ultimately, what it would look like in the days to come. Well, one of our (long time) supporters caught wind of this dream and decided to make it a reality. Last November, on the day of the Fall Banquet, I received a phone call from him letting me know he would like to donate \$240,000 towards a specific project the Board had been talking about starting! At our Annual Banquet this year, coming up in April, you will be able to hear more about that project, and of course, our next newsletter will release the details. It's important I tell you this because in 2008 camp's future was in question. There were days where I was worried we might have to close because of a lack of revenue and funding. However, over the last 10 years, God has blessed us beyond belief. In addition to this upcoming project (made possible by the donation mentioned above), we have built a new High Ropes Course, added a 3-person Zipline, built a new cabin (Hickory Lodge), added a new well and completed so many necessary repairs at camp. Also, over the last 10 years, we have never wavered from the original purpose of Great Oaks, which is to provide free camp to at-risk youth from Peoria during the summer. In addition, this year we have begun to collaborate with our local community to expand our ministry efforts to the surrounding areas of Lacon, Sparland, Varna, and Chillicothe. Also, we have seen our Retreat Group Ministry more than double. It has been such a blessing to serve God during these times.



Thank you to all of you who make this possible. We are excited about our upcoming events in April, so be sure to mark your calendars. We would love for you to join us as we celebrate God's blessings. In the newsletter, you will see the three events coming up. Please join us and see what God has done here at Great Oaks.

Director's Desk

Annual Banquet:



Don't miss our Annual Banquet on Thursday, April 19th at 6:00pm at the Peoria Civic Center. Because of scheduling reasons, we have moved our Annual Banquet from the Fall to the Spring, but don't let that be a reason not to join us! This year we will hear from our Board President, Dr. William Washington. Along with serving on the Great Oaks Board for the past three years, Dr. Washington is Vice President of Student Affairs at Bethel University in Minnesota. He came to know the Lord at Great Oaks Camp in 1982, so he has a special place in his heart for the ministry of Great Oaks.

Also, at the Banquet we will unveil our plans to begin construction on a new building. This is an exciting time at Great Oaks, and we are anxious to celebrate God's recent blessings. Please be sure to join us! You can purchase tickets online at www.greatoakscamp.org or by calling the office at 309-246-4005.

Spring Work Day:

Immediately after the Banquet, on Saturday, April 21st, we are having our Spring Work Day at camp. We will have a variety of projects going on: building a new dock, painting buildings, moving mulch, installing our new turbo slide, and much more. Please be sure to mark your calendar to come and serve with us! You may sign-up by emailing Jim at ropes@greatoakscamp.org or by calling the office at 309-246-4005.

Open House Invite:

The following day, Sunday, April 22nd, we will be having our Open House. It is a completely free event, so please come join us anytime between 2pm-6pm to hear about what is happening at Great Oaks. God has blessed us immensely over the years, and we want to be able to share that blessing with you. Our Open House is a time for former staff, friends of Great Oaks, former campers, and donors to come and see camp, while also having the opportunity to experience it, as well. Most of our activities will be open, including our High Ropes Course and Zipline. Don't miss this opportunity to come enjoy Great Oaks and reconnect with people. If you know former staff, former campers, donors or friends of Great Oaks, please invite them. Please RSVP by visiting our website: www.greatoakscamp.org or by calling the camp office at 309-246-4005.



Summer Camp 2018

This year the theme for Summer Camp is Champions of Choice. Because the overarching theme for the summer will be sports, each morning we will see our campers compete in some "Wild and Wacky" games! During the Bible Studies and Chapel services, we will be learning about the life of David and how God worked through him (and in him), despite some of the choices he made throughout his life. Our theme verse(s) for the summer is John 6:68-69, "Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.'" Throughout the week of camp, we pray the campers will learn (and remember) that each choice they make is important. For those who have not chosen to follow Jesus yet, we pray the Lord will work in their hearts and invite them to begin that journey. Campers will learn from David's good choices, as well as learning about God's grace when David made poor choices. As always, the week of camp will be full of fun activities in the pond, in the field, on the Adventure Challenge Course and around the campfire!

