



crossroads farm

# Down on the Farm



The Quarterly Newsletter of Crossroads Farm

April, May, June 2023



## Puzzle Pieces Fundraising Events



He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Ephesians 4:16

Here is the thing about puzzle pieces. They interlock with as many as five or six other pieces. The picture as a whole is never complete without one piece, but the five or six conjunctive pieces are without context or completion without it as well.

We tend to think of our piece as isolated, but the reality is others depend on us being in our places at the appropriate time, serving our particular purpose. Lives are altered either positively or negatively by our presence or absence. The interesting thing about puzzle pieces is they were designed to fit, specifically.

In April, CRF hosted its annual fundraiser at four locations! We held events in Kalkaska County, MI; Huntington County, Indiana; Harrison County, Ohio; and Hillsdale County, Michigan. At each event we met friends, both old and new.

We were able to tell the story, future and trajectory of this ministry. In every situation, we were simply telling the story of God's faithfulness and grace to rural American students.

At The Lanes, we treated guests to a night of burgers, band and bowling in order to highlight the current renovation campaign. The band played on a stage raised over several of the bowling lanes! The Lanes campaign is designed to increase critical office space, complete internal treatments, expansion of

small group spaces, and recreational space out of doors. We pulled away from South Boardman hearing music, laughter and whispers of hope. Perhaps this is your part of the puzzle.

The National event was held at Huntington University. It showcased the vision of future branches and increased student ministry effectiveness. Guests played a, "How Rural Are You?" game. It proved

(Continued on page 5)





# Summer Camp

Who are you following? That is the question that guided our middle school students at summer camp. We were made for relationship with Jesus, but what does that mean and how do we do it? Through solo time, small group and chapel, students journaled through Matthew, Luke, and Galatians. Our high school students wrestled through connection to God and to others, building their longing for connectivity in their relationship with God in a journey through Scripture in much the same fashion as middle school.

What a privilege for The Shed, The Lanes, and The Mine to be together at camp, learning, growing, serving, and playing! It was truly an incredible week. A sincere thank you to SpringHill Camps for making this possible for our students. WOW. 🙌

"Let's go again"



Blob!

"I am coming back here as soon as possible! This is the best time I have ever had."

I had the best counselor!"

Zipline!



"Is this the camp we are going to come to forever? Because I'll be there!"



"Getting saved!"



"I accepted Jesus into my heart"



Waterslide!

Crud wars!



"I want to go to camp in 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030!"





## Seniors



Some of our CRF students we have had the privilege of knowing and loving since they were in 6th grade, and some come to a branch for the first time in the last few weeks of their senior year. Senior night is special. It's a



### *Some senior quotes of memory and advice:*

"The nights I didn't want to come were the nights I got the most out of it"

"Don't be afraid to be the dumb one in a friend group"

"My favorite thing about CRF is the welcoming environment"

"My friend and I always did the scared side eye at each other each time they announced the crazy game of the night from stage"

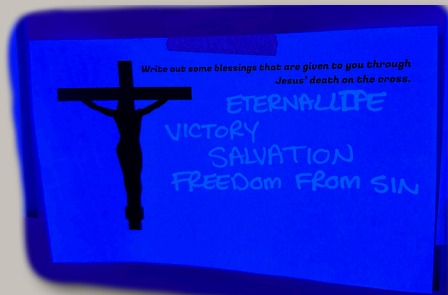
"Trust the process—you don't always know how God is working"

"Being baptized here was really special"

"My favorite thing about CRF was the hours upon hours during the Drive-by Prayer event and the chaos that ensued"

moment of reflection, celebration, prayer in acknowledgement of what was and spiritual challenge into what is to come. For The Mine branch, in their first year of programming, they had one senior and are just beginning their traditions. Younger students are always watching the process of older students at CRF and consistency matters. "Do I get a giant cookie with my name on it when I graduate?!" -9th grade boy 🍪

## Touching The Cross



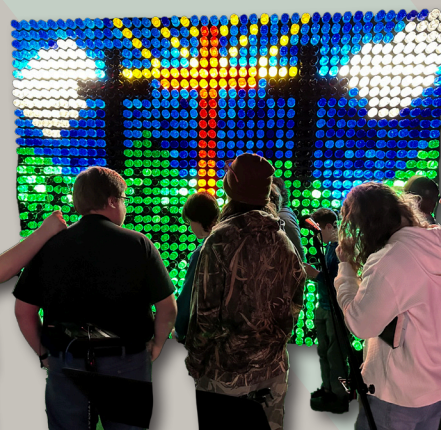
Over the last couple of decades, CRF has begun a tradition at each of our branch locations which highlights the darkest day in faith through Good Friday events. Each year students are connected experientially with the sacrifice of Christ. Physical tasks, emotional interactions and sacramental moments have come together in order to allow students to kneel at the foot of the cross.

This year's theme was Stations of the Cross.

One student at The Mine branch, after tasting the vinegar offered to Christ, responded with, "I sure wouldn't want that if I was thirsty." Students at The Lanes branch nailed anonymous confessions to the cross in an act of confession. At The Shed branch, students burned grievances they had against others in forgiveness.

Blacklights and invisible ink demonstrated truth is present even when we cannot see it. Others identified their spiritual "Mothers and brothers." This station was led by an adopted son. Tears, sniffles, whispered prayers, silence and nails being hammered all allowed CRF kids a tactile connection to Christ and his work of sacrifice.

Celebration in a fabulous breakfast contributes to the sense of a greater spiritual family. In the truest sense, CRF students can say they have a clearer, "Knowledge of Christ and a fellowship in His sufferings. 🍷





# From the President

## June 2023

I've known Jesus, or at least a personal version of Jesus that a 16-year-old, white, midwestern, fortunate child of a Baptist minister, can. Now before you dismiss this letter as some form of "Wokeness," I'd encourage you to read on until the end. It may help you appreciate Jesus in a different way.

My first trip to Israel was when I was 16. I knew Jesus. This recent trip connected me to a far more emotional relational reality. I love Jesus.

The epiphany happened while I was sitting in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives a few weeks ago. I was praying in confession, in anticipation, and in submission to the presence of Christ. The time there was significant for me in that God revealed a profound truth. Jesus Christ was aware of the eternal enormity of His life and death even here, in this place, at this moment.



I began to think about the world He lived in... a middle east, 2000 years ago, in the hills of Nazareth, Galilea, and ultimately, Jerusalem. His relationships with the land, customs, and people are easily understood. He was on the water, in the desert, and at the epicenter of worship for the Jew. He walked in the City of David and drank water from the spring Gideon, Elijah, and Naaman used. He spoke overlooking the vistas of God's provision. He talked about freedom to Jews in an area occupied by Romans. He broke unleavened bread baked on stones and walked on trails beaten down over centuries of bare-footed traffic. He saw Solomon's temple, read Scripture in synagogues

scattered across a small country, and called followers to him from the fishing boats on the beaches of Capernaum. His life is more than history, however.

Our guides talked about the perfect timing of His arrival. Herod had built port cities for world commerce which Paul would use less than 40 years later. His childhood home allowed Him a view of the Megiddo Valley, the future Armageddon; a plot of ground which must be possessed to control Africa, Asia, and Europe. This valley had been warred over for centuries. The world was united in the cities of Rome. Trade languages, Roman currency, and travel had reached exponential potential. The Roman decision to obliterate the temple was a necessity given the sacrifice Jesus was required to make. Without temple sacrifice, Jesus' death became the only means for redemption. His life was more than a time-stamped event though.



Here in the garden, I was overwhelmed by a simple thought. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He was thinking about a sixth-grade boy in a little rural community, who would not be born for another nineteen hundred and eighty-six years. An 11-year-old who had not yet made all of life's biggest mistakes. This young boy would wander into a Crossroads Farm branch having virtually no knowledge of the garden I was praying in, nor the events which took place on a hill not far away.

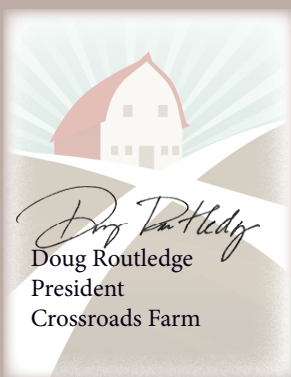
It boggled my mind to grasp that these two divergent worlds were connected by the blood of Christ.

**"What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him?" Hebrews 2:6**

How infinite are the mind and heart of God? That Christ should know this child's name, pray in the knowledge of the sacrifice, and in completion, die for the sake of this boy is beyond human comprehension. In light of this thought,







I have a handle both on the reticence to make such a great commitment and also, such willingness to make it.

This is the great God we love. He saw us, in all of our insignificance, willful defiance, and eternal ignorance, and prayed to the point of hemorrhage for the sake of this boy, me, and an eternity of people yet to know Him.

This is what we have the opportunity to share with rural America. This is also what you have the honor of sharing in with us. 🙏



## Inhale and Exhale

"I am so glad I came back to Crossroads Farm at the end of this year. I didn't realize how much I missed it, and how much I needed it. I'll definitely be back in the fall when school starts up again!"  
- 10th grade girl



"I found an antler!"  
-6th grade boy



After the Gospel presentation, a brand new sixth grade girl just hugged her Coach and said, "I just wanted a hug." Later, she texted her and asked how to be saved.



"...we pray for more next year..." -CRF branch director

It's just never enough-really. As we shift from school year programming to summer programming, we inhale.. and exhale. We always desire for God to do more. For more students, more faith, more than we could ask or think. It's with that sentiment that we closed out our school year programming across our branches and added a few bonus events as well. 🙏

*Puzzle Pieces Fundraising Event*" continued from page 1) to be loads of laughs! The heavy hors d'oeuvres stations were buzzing as guests caught the vision of what God is in the process of accomplishing in rural America. The smooth jazz music from our forever friends, The Peppermints, played. Perhaps the most important component to the evening were the Rural Stations Exhibit. Friends of the Farm shared their different rural life styles and the ways CRF intersects their communities. Horse pulling, 'coon hunting dogs, life on a hog farm, a classroom full of people who learned about organic sunflower farming, and a day in the life of being a rural pastor provided a spectacular buzz.

Both The Shed and The Mine shared the comedic talents of nationally known comic, David Dean. The food and the music, again provided by The Peppermints, (Continued on page 6)







## Crossroads Farm

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## Loving The Rural Teenager



## Prayer Closet

### Yahoos:

- All three branches finished the school year with growing attendance and visitors, even on the last night for regular programming.
- The Shed had 309 students register at a regular program this year, The Lanes had 247 in their fourth ministry year and The Mine had 60 in their very first year!
- Crossroads Farm turned 24 years old in May!
- Many students are signed up for summer trips and small group Bible studies

### Monthly Prayer Letter

If you would like to receive the monthly email prayer update from one or more branches, please let us know by emailing [contact@crossroadsfarm.org](mailto:contact@crossroadsfarm.org), or call 517-283-3982.

### Take It To Jesus:

- Buses and van routes account for 40% of our students being able to attend weekly programs at The Shed and The Lanes. All branches are in need of new or like new vans/buses for transportation and more drivers for these developing routes and growing number of students. (The Mine branch will begin routes this fall)
- For God to multiply our efforts and fill in the gaps of summer programming, and for Him to raise up program associates for all branches, as well as some key national positions.
- Our graduated seniors as they move on to their next, that they would be grounded in churches and continue to grow in their relationship with Jesus.
- The Lanes Purchase and Expansion Campaign-we are nearly half way to our goal and are working to break ground late fall. 🏗️

For the ongoing work in the  
lives of rural youth,  
special gifts were given:

In Honor Of  
*Maci Tinkel*

In Memory Of  
*Evelyn Van Hoosear*  
*Brenda Sprow*  
*Jeb Bridgeman*  
*Donna Luchenbill*

*Puzzle Pieces Fundraising Event*” continued from page 5) supplied a light and energetic view of both our oldest branch and our newest. Testimonies from students resonated with our attendees at all four of these evenings. Every once in a while, the laughter would slow and God’s voice would move someone to tears.

The issue with a puzzle is that one missing piece provides a hole in the picture. Maybe God is tapping on your heart. We know He was doing this at each of the events. 🧩