



Volume 33 Issue 2- October 2022

HIDDEN ACRES REVIEW

Updates from the Executive Director

Amanda, Hana, Ben and I recently spent some time visiting my family and touring around NB, NS and PEI. While we were crossing the Northumberland Strait on the ferry I was watching the waves gently roll along and was reminded of our theme from camp this summer "Ripples". Hidden Acres is a place where people young and old, come to rest, reflect, play and connect and in the midst of doing all of that, their lives are impacted. They then go out into their communities and share their experiences, learnings, etc. with others thus creating this ripple effect that flows outwards with the central impact point being camp.

Josh Penfold is one those people who experienced the rippling impact of camp. Having come to Hidden Acres for the first time as an ACE Camper in 1998, then a CIT (Counselor-In-Training) in 1999, he went on to spend 4 years on staff as a cabin leader. Since then Josh and his family have stayed connected in a variety of ways: Josh and his wife Rebecca (Holst) met while working at summer camp and got married at the camp in 2004. Josh has volunteered for the Chicken BBQ and both he and Rebecca helped to plan the camp's 50th anniversary celebrations. Josh has lent an occasional hand with summer camp or a school program and has served on both the Board of Directors and the Alumni Committee. His daughters, Ellie and Ruth, are campers and have been for as long as they have been old enough and Rebecca, a teacher at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, brings her students to camp.

Since his time as a camper and staff member at Hidden Acres, Josh has worked on the Outdoor Recreation Leadership Team at Muskoka Woods, served as a Pastor at Wellesley Mennonite Church and provided support to adults with disabilities. It is these experiences, along with his time spent working and volunteering at Hidden Acres, that have prepared him for a new opportunity here at camp. We are excited to share that after a number of months of conversation, prayer and discernment, we have hired **Josh Penfold** in a part-time capacity as our new Outdoor Education Director.



Over the last six months, as we have begun to see things open up and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on programs begin to wane, we have had an increase in interest in our school programs from teachers and homeschooling organizations. We have also in recent years, done some exploring and dreaming about beginning to offer winter outdoor education programs to compliment what we offer in the spring and fall. When we looked at the increased interest, our desire to add winter outdoor education programs and Josh's experiences both at Hidden Acres and elsewhere, we felt that now was the right time to add this role to our staff team, expand our impact and create more ripples.

This also allows Emily, our Program Director, to focus more of her energy on building our summer camp and retreat programs back up after the challenges they faced over the last two years. We look forward to having Josh join us starting in November. We are also excited to welcome **Margaret Wolf** to Hidden Acres. She has joined our staff team in a Housekeeping role and we look forward to her helping us continue to create welcoming, clean and safe spaces for people to enjoy. It's encouraging to be able to share with you updates on new additions to our staff team, stories about the impact that summer camp had on the lives of some of our staff and campers, the inter-connectedness of everything that makes up Hidden Acres, the celebration of our 60th anniversary and our thankfulness for all of the ways that our community supports the work that we do. I hope you enjoy reading the updates in this newsletter.

Submitted by Chris Pot

Summer Reflections from our Program Director, Emily Taylor

"See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19.

When I reflect back on the summer, there is an overall feeling of gratefulness. Going into the summer there were many unknowns for me. This was my first summer as Program Director at Hidden Acres and there was much learning, growth and adjustment. We were so excited to be able to once again run overnight programming for campers and families.

I was reminded of the importance and uniqueness of camp ministry many times throughout the summer as campers would arrive on a Sunday evening with an air of nervous excitement, and then on Friday saying "I can't wait to see you next year"! Campers and staff alike felt the adjustment of reentering the close-knit camp community after two years of relative isolation.

(continued on page 2)

➡ **Join us for our Annual General Meeting on November 22 and help us celebrate 60 years of camping ministry** ⬅

Summer Reflections from our Facilities and Environmental Stewardship Director, Brent Musser

I normally don't pay much attention to the night sky. But recently Jupiter was passing closer to earth than it has in my lifetime. So, one night I trained my binoculars on the bright, silvery white dot above the eastern horizon. To my astonishment, two more little dots appeared just beside it. Jupiter's very own moons! Excitedly, I informed my family and upgraded from 8x magnification binoculars to the 20x & then 60x magnification of my spotting scope. Sure enough, now I could see 4 moons. I was in awe, looking out into a part of the world so distant and yet visible and connected to me. Thanks to astronomers, telescopes and technology-laden science labs rocketing through the solar system, we know Jupiter is a massive and unfriendly ball of gas, but from the grounds of Hidden Acres that cluster of five specks of light against the black canvas of deep space was simple, elegant and beautiful. I have recently been using Google Maps to document the camp's underground infrastructure. Zoom out all the way and you would never know Hidden Acres exists. As you zoom in, a pin appears naming the camp but all you see is a triangle of splotchy green with a dark green forest behind it and an expanse of agricultural fields. Move closer and you see Lake Laverne as a dark blue oval and the parking lots as white patches. Soon you see buildings, walkways, trees, sports courts, the (old) climbing wall, picnic tables - all the features that the community who enjoys and supports Hidden Acres knows and loves. These are the facilities we are responsible to care for. But these things alone are not Hidden Acres. Hidden Acres is a web of relationships that includes people, soil, water, wind, insects, birds, squirrels, buildings, and even the surrounding countryside, cities, planets, stars and galaxies. We often claim Hidden Acres is sacred space. The full meaning of such a statement, I am discovering, is necessarily elusive. But, what I will say today is that the sacredness of Hidden Acres is its connectedness. Sit a while by Lake Laverne on a sunny summer afternoon and you see the dragonflies that emerged as nymphs from the depths. They perch on the vegetation that is nourished by the water and soil and sun. A painted turtle slips from its log into the safety of the water as curious children edge a bit too close. Parents sit on the beach and chat about life. The breeze blows, clouds gather and rain falls, greening the landscape. Retreat participants find shelter indoors from the coming storm, feeding their bodies in the dining room and nourishing their souls in the gathering spaces with prayer, education, earnest conversation, game-playing - the countless ways we share life. On summer evenings campers encircle the fire, laughing at the skits, singing joyfully and then looking up as they amble back to their cabins for the night. What they see in the sky is far away. Yet, somehow, they are connected to everything else and in those connections, we glimpse God, the God in whom all things hold together.

2022 Summer Staff

Brielle Anger - Buncha
Jon Bendi - Cayan
Jackson Bennett - Hi-C
Matthew Berton - Fly
Andy Bui - Robo
Alex Cui - Neo
Lizzy Dufton - Doodles
Niko Forsythe - Tutoo
Kya Gallian - Hue
Beth Goodwin - Mosa
Caelan Guthro - Wook
Rieneke Helder - Sweeto
Lydie Herrle - Troot
Hannah Horlings - Bunah
Hellen Kang - Gami
Ceci Martin - Uno
Hannah Mountney - Knucks
Daniel Peters - S'bregg
Skye Power - Wug
Shandra Raines - Dasha
Adam Roth - Monton
Zoiyaah Sanderson - Fooah
Aaron Schlosser - Tio
Julia Schroder Kipfer - Gohpa
Angela Shen - Tapa
Michael Tri - Doc
Ben Watson - Bea
Meghan Zantingh - Moto
Cassie Zehr - Citrise
Thomas Zekveld - Cowz
Vicky Zhan - Rizzie

(continued) Emily Taylor, Program Director

For myself, one of the largest challenges was adjusting to a new role at a new camp while helping staff and campers through their own adjustment to the camp culture as well. I am so grateful for the year round staff and returning summer staff who were instrumental in helping me transition into my role well, and welcomed me with such grace and openness. I am thankful for the memories and growth that I have experienced and will treasure them as my first summer as Program Director. I am thankful for the constant and steady God that we serve in the newness of the changing of seasons.



Summer Staff Reflection by Hannah Mountney

Reflecting on my time at camp this summer I am reminded of the fond memories and sweet community formed. Camp is such a special space for staff and campers alike to experience personal development within a healthy community. Being invited to the role of Inclusion Facilitator this past summer, it was such a joy to walk alongside Hidden Acres staff and campers; to be a resource in helping provide some of the tools they needed to be successful and enjoy their time at camp! Seeing the growth in the staff team in their knowledge and comfort in working with people from different backgrounds and with different stories than their own brought me so much joy. The experience and perspective I gained this summer is something I will not soon forget!

Summer Reflections from our Single Moms Camp Coordinator, Amanda Pot



It felt incredibly good to be back with the Single Mom families for a full overnight camp experience. One thing that I was deeply reminded of this year was that God remains in all places. Before each week of Single Moms camp, I go to the beach. That may seem strange, but it's very intentional. I have always found such deep peace around large bodies of water, and often sense the presence of God in new and fresh ways. As I drive, which is around an hour from our house, I pray. I pray that I may have eyes to see and ears to hear as I spend time listening, learning and preparing.

I bring a list of each name and offer each family to God, asking, what do they need? How can we love and support them? I sit by the water and listen and thank God for each one. When I went in July I strolled the beach and stopped in front of a washed-up log. How profound it seemed to me, that new life can grow out of something that is no longer rooted. It shouldn't really but does. There is always hope. I printed this picture to send home with each woman on the last day, hoping it may remind them of that truth on days that are hard. When I went in August I remember not wanting to go. There was a lot going on and I felt like other things were pressing. I even pulled the car over ready to turn around, but I couldn't, so I continued driving, asking God like I regularly do, to give me eyes to see and ears to hear. I get to the beach and walk down the stairs. As I walked to the spot where I knew I wanted to put my chair, which was maybe 2 minutes, I kept picking up rocks that were in the shape of hearts, one after another! I would walk a few steps and find one and then another, and another! When I sat down, I counted the rocks, I had found the exact number of rocks as families that registered for the week of August. Do you think I found any other heart rocks that day? No. I could have ignored them, or thought it was not of importance, but I chose to believe that God used them as a reminder to my distracted and a bit grumpy self that day that, "I see you/them" and "I am here". I took a picture of the rocks, after I made a simple altar out of them and offered them up to God. I love how each of them are right up against one another, feeling like they are not alone. I gave this picture to each mom on the last day as I told the story, as well as one of the rocks, as a reminder for them to look back upon. I smile as I reflect on those days, and I am thankful I can share it with you. We may sometimes feel alone, and even question God's presence, but looking back at moments like this can give us the courage and strength we need in order to move forward. These families know this well. May we all.



Summer Staff Reflection by Jon Bendi

My experience at Hidden Acres is one that will stay with me for the rest of my life. Having the opportunity to be part of this community of staff who work so hard to provide campers with an environment where they can make new friends and be their genuine self is one that I will be eternally grateful for. I remember the nervous feelings I had going into my first week of camp. It seemed like a far cry from the work I had been doing during the spring school groups, but after getting a chance to get to know my campers, I knew that this is where I was meant to be.

Camp has done more for my own personal growth than I can ever imagine. If someone told my high school self that I would be performing while dressed up as a grandma, or singing worship songs, I would've thought they were lying. But being part of a staff team always working to uplift each other helped me come out of my own shell. Camp has helped me learn much more about myself and has also helped me begin reconnecting with my own faith. After spending so many years feeling disconnected from that aspect of my life, spending the summer learning about faith has left me curious about what place God has in my life, and has inspired me to seek out the answer to that question after the summer was over.

My time at Hidden Acres is something I wouldn't trade for anything, and the opportunity to come back for even one week of future summers is something I hope I'm blessed with again.

Remembering with gratitude, those who have been a part of the Hidden Acres Community.

Albert Martin passed away on July 4th. Albert had a passion for bowling, and he faithfully bowled for Hidden Acres annual bowlathon, representing Hawkesville Mennonite Church, for over 25 years. We always enjoyed when Albert dropped by the camp with the money he raised and stayed for a chat. His interest in and support of Hidden Acres will be truly missed.

Martha Schwartzenruber passed away on August 28th. Martha and her late husband Gerald were supporters of Hidden Acres from the early years. We appreciated their affirmation of the mission of Hidden Acres as well as their support and involvement over the past years.

cut here and mail in

Membership Application

cut here and mail in

I would like to support the ministry of Hidden Acres by becoming a member of the Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp Association. I agree with the Hidden Acres mission statement which is "to provide a welcoming, peaceful gathering place where diverse groups of people experience life-giving connections with God, one another and nature."

Enclosed is my \$25 membership donation

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

THANK YOU

Many individuals, groups, organizations and businesses give their time, energy and finances to support the mission of Hidden Acres. While we can't list every name of those who help us, here are some of them. Thank you for your support.



School Sisters
of Notre Dame
Legacy Fund

We are thankful to have received \$13,100 from the **School Sisters of Notre Dame Legacy Fund** to support our Single Moms Camps.



Ontario Trillium Foundation
Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario
An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

We are grateful to have received a \$100,000 grant from the **Ontario Trillium Foundation through their Community Building Fund - Operating Stream.**

Chicken BBQ Update

It was good to be together again for our 55th Chicken BBQ and 14th Pie Auction. We had a great turn out with over 925 meals served raising more than \$9500. For this year's pie auction we were aiming for 60 pies for 60 years. We ended up auctioning off 64 pies raising a record \$5025. Thank you to everyone! We look forward to seeing you next year!

Upcoming Events

- Annual General Meeting - November 22, 2022
- CLASP - Every Thursday in November & December
- Summer 2022 Staff Christmas Reunion - Dec/Jan
- Family Day Open House - February 20, 2023
- Grandparent & Grandchild Day - March 13-14, 2023
- Bowlathon - March 2023
- Spring Seniors Retreat - April/May 2023
- Alumni Weekend - May 19-21, 2023
- Chicken BBQ & Pie Auction Fundraiser - June 13, 2023

Opportunities to get Involved

- Pray for Hidden Acres
- Volunteer on our Board of Directors or one of our committees (property, seniors retreat, alumni, bowlathon or chicken BBQ)
- Become a Member (see page 3)
- Bring a group and help with a project at camp
- Support a camper or Single Mom by making a donation towards a subsidy.

Thank You to:

Rhino Excavating for donating labor to complete grading/drainage project around the Brown staff house
George Poole for donating labor for electrical work
Shantz Mennonite Church Volunteers for staining Focus Shelter, picking apples and cleaning Oakview Cabins
Don Erb for building maintenance and repair
Akins-Brewer Lumber for discounted stain for the Focus Shelter
Gerry Pot for staining Focus Shelter
John Iujzi & Carl Erb & Cecil Wagler for mowing & trimming
Devon Grainger who volunteered for program and maintenance for a week during the summer
Brian Markle for donating a flatbed wagon to replace our current world-weary one.

Wish-list

If you have any of the following items and are willing to donate them, please let us know!

- Two new household sized stoves
- Metal picnic tables or frames
- Pillow protectors & mattress protectors

Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp & Retreat Centre

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519-625-8602



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