

Prayer Requests & Praises

Praise:

- ◆ 807 campers had the opportunity to hear the gospel and experience God's love this past summer.
- ◆ Continue to thank God for our new land—with it we were been able to do rustic tent camping with our oldest campers every week. We are also grateful for the endless possibilities with this land.
- ◆ For the 74 campers who attended discipleship week.
- ◆ We are grateful for a chance to catch a glimpse of the fruit God is producing.
- ◆ Campers reading God's word as they do their Snail Mail Bible correspondence lessons.

Prayer:

- ◆ Boldness for campers who must visit a church as part of their Snail Mail work.
- ◆ That churches will lovingly welcome campers who dare to visit.
- ◆ Wisdom to know the best way to follow up on campers.
- ◆ Wisdom and provision for the remaining \$95,000 needed for the land matching grant.

Ray Bird Ministries, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a board of directors including: Rev. Craig Clapper, Bob Fogley (honorary), Michelle Helmkamp, Jeff Korhorn, Rev. Verneil Lewis, Chris Linker, Randy Meert, Tom Thompson, Billie Jo Wawrzynski, Myrtle Wilson, and Tom Yarger.

The mission of Ray Bird Ministries is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with Michiana children and teens, nurture those believers, and prepare them for participation in local churches. Ray Bird Ministries specializes in serving families who could not otherwise afford meaningful camping experiences.

Donations were made...

In memory of Darlene Doolin

(from Don and Judy Ruszkowski,
Chester and Margaret Schultz,
Tom and Bobbie Leland,
Larry and Linda Buell,
Employees of Entergy in Lonoke, AR

In memory of Ross Billger

(from Ivan and Veryl Nelson)

WANTED:



Pizza Crew on Fridays for summer camp 2012. (We are looking for a small team to assemble our home made pizzas in time for dinner. Email susan@raybird.org for more details.

Backpacks (for backpacking) and **warm mummy style sleeping bags**. (Have any collecting dust in your



(Center Lift) **Pontoon Boat Trailer**



Save the date
Saturday Nov. 12

FALL WORK DAY



We will be raking leaves and getting the camp ready for winter. Workers of all skill levels are wanted. The work will begin at 9:00 AM. Lunch is provided. Please let us know if you are coming so we can plan accordingly. 574-232-8523 or susan@raybird.org.



The Potter's Wheel

A publication of Ray Bird Ministries "God's Hand Shaping Young Lives"



Discipleship

Our favorite week of the year is our 8th week. During this week campers come back to learn what it means to follow Christ at home and at school. They learn about their identity in Christ and God's plan for friendships, marriage, family, and work (school). Campers are challenged to find a good church, to read the Bible regularly, and to pray.

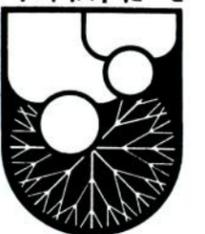
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Pears

Several years ago I learned that Camp Ray Bird has its very own pear tree. For some reason I think this is really cool. Since then I watch it bloom in the spring and when the summer staff arrive, our pear tree is part of the camp tour. If for no other reason, I think they enjoy the enthusiasm I have for this pear tree. I pass by it when I walk from my house to the office at camp, and regularly check for signs of fruit. This year the crop was a mere three pears. They tasted good and something about them was very special to me.



I look for fruit in the lives of our campers too. The last several summer seasons, I have looked forward to our final week of the summer: discipleship week. These kids—33 boys and 41 girls—were invited back by their counselors because they seemed sincere about wanting to follow Jesus. I spent a good amount of time with the boys that week and they were the best group we've had since we started doing this special week in 2008. Over the course of the week it became clear that they understood the good news of Jesus Christ in their minds and for some it was obvious in their hearts that they wanted to follow him.

One boy who I'll call Charles started reading the Bible on his own that week during the mandatory afternoon "horizontal hour." Since he went home he's been going to church almost every Sunday.

Another boy who I'll call Javonte came to discipleship week for the first time even though he has been a camper most summers since he was seven. I remember this because I personally kicked him out that year...and the next... and apologized on his behalf to a volunteer at whose car he had thrown rocks. But this year, he was really different. I bumped into Javonte, currently a foster child, one night after campfire where he learned about some of the ugliness and dysfunction in the lineage of Christ (e.g. Judah, David, Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon) he said, "I have a lot of family problems. But that's OK because God understands my messed up family. And the way he said it I was left thinking that God is going to do something with this 12 year old boy."

I wish I could tell you these two campers represent what happens in all 807 campers we see over the summer or at least all of the discipleship week kids. But it isn't. We will keep working hard, praying hard, and looking for more, but I guess sometimes you just have to be content with the three pears you know about while resting in the knowledge that God is doing things that you don't know anything about.

I had intended to conclude this article with the above sentence but I was told it was depressing and it was suggested that I share a little more. The past summer and the offseason thus far have already been some of our most productive time ever. This fall we have visited most of the campers who attended our discipleship week and have had the privilege to talk with several campers who remain resolved to follow Jesus.

We are reminded of His words that the kingdom of God will grow little by little. During the summer we are aware of at least 34 campers who visited a church—some even attended with a parent. A couple of weeks ago I had a chance to speak a mother who has sent all of her kids (those old enough at least!) to Camp Ray Bird. Over the years we've had the chance to say hello to her in the registration line and have seen her when we have visited her children at their home. And over the years God has been drawing her. She visited a good church in the city where she felt at home, where she knows her kids (all biracial) will be accepted and where I know she will be loved and taught truth. Her son was a boy who attended our discipleship week. I watch and wait in eager expectation to see what God will do with this woman and her family.

Mike Houghtaling, director



Above (from right to left): Javonte, Charles, and Jacob on a fall camp out at Mt. Ebenezer.



Left: The "Queen Esthers" (our oldest girls cabins) enjoy a night of rustic camping on Mt. Ebenezer on our new property. We remain thankful for our new land: 109 wooded acres that nearly surround the camp's original property. This summer we were able to use it for rustic tent camping, nature hikes, and star gazing.

Summer 2011 in review

807: number of kids loved in the name of Jesus weeks 1 through 7

436: number of campers who memorized five Bible verses to earn a summer t-shirt

299: number of kids who made a decision to follow Christ

74: week 8 (discipleship week) attendance

80%: population of campers who paid \$30 or less to come to camp for a week

\$40.08: average fee to campers

\$300: actual cost to Camp Ray Bird:

55: number of summer staff and all-summer volunteers

11,298: number of meals served to campers

Long Live the King!: summer theme

Mt. 7:21: theme verse. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven. Only those who do what my Father in heaven wants will enter." (NIRV)

1: Number of adorable owls in the nature center this summer used to teach campers about their Creator.



Looking for Christmas cards? A friend of Camp Ray Bird has worked to create two variations:

Artwork: drawn by a camper who had learned about how the birth of Christ was good news.



Photo: winter scene at Camp Ray Bird

To order cards or to request a sample, please email mike@raybird.org or call 574-232-8523.