

Praise:

- ◆ 732 campers were hosted this summer.
- ◆ Many kids said they believed in and want to follow Jesus. Some of them seemed very sincere.
- ◆ 75 campers returned for a week of discipleship camp. Many seemed eager to follow Christ with their lives—at home, at school, in their friendships, and with their futures.
- ◆ 13 former campers worked on staff and 4 volunteered this summer. We see this as the result of God’s faithfulness in blessing our planning to try to further disciple some of the more eager campers by having them work and volunteer in the summers.
- ◆ Many gave specifically to sponsor campers again this summer: \$28,179 of \$32,704 was given.
- ◆ Mike’s girlfriend, Amy, relocated to South Bend from Austin, Texas.
- ◆ Many groups have made their retreat reservations for the fall. We are glad that the camp can be utilized and the revenue generated helps the camp continue its mission.
- ◆ God has blessed Camp Ray Bird with a couple of churches who are especially passionate about reaching out to our campers and families.
- ◆ About one year ago God provided all the money for the new land.
- ◆ Almost ten year’s ago Mike moved from the roll of program director to camp director and simultaneously God miraculously provided to bring the camp out of debt. Camp Ray Bird is debt-free today.

Prayer:

- ◆ Follow up of campers—especially those who came to our discipleship week. That God will give campers the courage to seek out a good church. Please ask that they would be warmly welcomed by congregations.
- ◆ For campers who are working on their Snail Mail (Bible correspondence lessons). Especially for the boys who attended the discipleship week as they have a tendency to be less faithful than the girls.
- ◆ Financial provisions for the off-season. In addition to off-season work, we ended up with a \$10,365 deficit in summer staff support. This is due in part to the number of former campers we hired, some of whom do not have good support raising networks. (Our summer staff are paid their wages regardless of how much support they raise.)



Ray Bird Ministries, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a board of directors including: Linda Burrell, Bob Foegley (honorary), Michelle Helmkamp, Phyllis Hueni, Jeff Korhorn, John Rader, Tom Thompson, Billie Jo Wawrzynski, and Myrtle Wilson.

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.

Save the date: **Saturday Nov. 9**

Fall **WORK DAY**

Will you join us? We will be raking leaves and doing other odd jobs to get 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. You can email susan@raybird.org or call our office at 574-232-8523.



The Potter's Wheel

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



Inside this edition:

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- Prayer Requests and Praises

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Reflections on Summer Camp 2013

When people ask you about something the common response is: "It's good. [Pause.] It's hard. But it's good." That is how I would describe my 13th summer at Camp Ray Bird.

We often ask you to pray for God to bring the campers that He wants to camp. This summer God brought 3 very unlikely siblings, immigrants from Asia. They wound up coming because a man named Mike, a retired painter/carpenter (not me!) from the community really wanted them to be here. He was sure that the family did not have much money and would be leery of providing any financial information that is part of our application. Instead of any payment, he offered to paint our office (a sight for sore eyes). It's not often we receive an offer to barter like this but I knew we were supposed to take these kids. They came to camp in the middle of the summer and had a fantastic time.

Lots of kids had a good time at camp this summer. We worked very hard to love them all, show them a good time, and share the good news of Jesus with them through our words and our actions. The campers' notes describe their experience better than I can: "I love the camp because we learn about God." "Mike, it has been a good week." "Kylie is a good counselor." "This is the best camp ever." "My favorite thing at camp was being with all of you guys and being with God and Jesus."

I'd be a liar if I didn't tell you that there are snafus from time to time. In addition to coming from lower income families, many of these kids have a lot of hurts and therefore anger. Even under our careful supervision they can whisper mean words, give dirty looks, or in a fit of anger throw a punch. I hate this part of camp. We represent Jesus to these kids and we only have one chance with some of them. I wish things could be perfect for every child and not just 95%. But my coworker and friend Shawn reminded me, "As we teach the campers, sin has truly messed up the world. No matter how well we do things there will be a few glitches." He is right. Nevertheless, this is a hard part of the ministry for me.

I got an email from a friend of Camp Ray Bird about the three siblings I mentioned above: "I get my nails done at the same salon for the last year or so. Most times, three of the owners children are there. I have a jewelry business and normally bring beads and things for them to make something while I'm there. I have come to love these beautiful children. This week her little boy had some string. He asked me if I knew any tricks. Of course I do! We played for nearly 20 minutes with this string. Another patron asked to see his tricks. She asked him where he learned it (I had assumed that his mother taught him). At camp, he says. I had to know which camp. Camp Ray Bird he says. Oh, boy, what I marvelous camp I told him. I asked about songs, which I sang along with him. I asked about the stories, we discussed Adam and Eve, and Satan. He wanted to know where Satan came from. They quoted verses to me. Told me how much they loved their counselors. Even told me they loved the food. I had to ask about swimming, crafts, etc. And they were more than willing to tell me. What an impression camp made on their lives. They couldn't stop smiling!"

So it was a good summer. It was hard. But it was good.

Sincerely,

Mike

Mike Houghtaling, director



In Their Own Words

Camp Ray Bird has a box where campers can write an anonymous note with whatever is on their hearts. These are a few that we received:

My favorite thing at camp was being with all of you guys and being with God and Jesus

I Love Camp Ray Bird!

Love: Tru

Kylie is an awesome counselor

Camp is fun! Extend the age limit

I Love camp because we get to learn about God

I WILL MISS CAMP RAY BIRD

I love camping because I get to go swimming with John and Park Picture →

This is the best camp ever

I'll be back next year

Dear Ray Bird, My very first week at Ray Bird was amazing. I had great fun. And I learned a lot about God and Jesus walking on land.

XXXXXXXXXX

Mike has been it a good week

Below:
2013 Summer Staff

