



The Wild Wild West, Winter Retreat '16, was a blast! See page 3 for more!

Down on the Farm

The Quarterly Newsletter of Crossroads Farm



2016 Blows 2015 Away

Jan, Feb, March
2016

Kids came looking for a new place to start a new year. About 150 students came to The Shed with the promise of pizza, a band, Chinese lanterns and the Orange Bowl. As they came, in part to check on the progress of the new building, the game quickly became a bust. No one seemed to mind.

The group tore through 45 pizzas in about 45 minutes. Even though they were "only" pizzas, maybe not the most special dinner fare ever, no one seemed to mind. The band started at about 9:30. They were from Minneapolis. John Chuck and The Class played and the group danced laughed, worshipped and just plain, "hung out." Although not everyone is a fan of R and B

music, no one seemed to care.

They were challenged spiritually to set their hearts toward God, to let their prayers ascend to heaven. They wrote down their hopes for 2016. A crew of volunteers were stationed at the door in order to light the lanterns and launch them at midnight. As the wind turned the first three lanterns into spiralling bombs which bounced across the lawn, we decided to stop launching. Again, it didn't really matter.

As 2016 blew 2015 out, we realized that kids really just want to be around each other. *God knows what each of them wrote on those earthbound lanterns. It's his promise to honor them that really makes all the difference.* 🌟



What's So Good About This Friday?

As a part of what CRF has done traditionally, each year we have hosted a Good Friday Brunch. The objective is to allow students to identify with the pain and suffering of Jesus Christ. We desired to make this day an emotional pillar of their faith. This year was no different

By noon, we had the pancakes stacked, sausage piled, and the fruit, juice, milk and coffee ready to go. By 12:40, it was all gone. There was only a small piece of one pancake left which students had considered too insignificant to put on their plate. That afternoon over 40 students meandered into the old ministry center in Reading for the Good Friday remembrance brunch.

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And Now... The Work

In a staff meeting last week we calculated ***the number of people who have contributed to The Shed Project. There are nearly 400 households*** which have given sacrificially in order to see students in the Tri-County area have the opportunity to come into a life-shaping relationship with Jesus Christ. These commitments empowering this ministry to thrive will never be taken for granted, nor entitle us to anything.

The people's prayers and gifts make an even more profound statement. They say, "We believe that you can do even more."

That belief would be enough to paralyze the most ambitious ministry team in the world. You see, a beautiful building may draw students to it for a short time, but it is the relationships that we build which allow students to see, accept and walk with Jesus. This is not simply a math problem. It is a spiritual challenge. It is one that we intend to trust, plan and work for. There is a vital place for you in this gauntlet. ***You must be in prayer and give with us as we fight a malicious enemy for the kids who can not see.***

Here is our workload.

Our ministry model is that each of our volunteer staff builds a relationship with 5 students. Currently we have 25 volunteers on our active staff. If each one of these concerned and trained adults were able to do that, we would be effectively ministering to 125 students. Each year, Crossroads Farm sees over 800 different students come to events like the Murder Mystery or Winter Retreat and regular programming. The field is ready but ***the need for involved, invested,***

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and committed adults is the key to enabling kids to live out their faith past Crossroads Farm.

Within the next 8 to 10 months our professional missionary staff team will double in size as well. That is critical as we look years down the line. We need to be developing teams of people who have the capability to launch and lead rural community ministry. It means that we will be reaching out to new communities, establishing networks of min-

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volunteers applying polyurithane to old barn wood



**New Board Member Added:
Rick Stewart**

"It's an honor to be included as part of the Board of CRF. I've been involved with the ministry since it's beginnings - My wife and 2 daughters came to one of the 1st workdays -planted flowers and have kept in touch with Doug & Dawn and their family over the years, witnessing God's amazing work at Crossroads! I serve in the AV-Tech industry through a company called ASG/ Sweetwater. ***My team was able to help with the AV design and implementation for The Shed*** - which is an amazing ministry building - WOW! I also serve on staff as Worship & Exec. Pastor at New Hope in Traverse City. I'm excited for the ministry of Crossroads & Love Teens / Youth and Outreach into the Hillsdale County area and surrounding communities. I'm also excited that CRF is a "model" for how to implement effective ministry in rural communities. Excited for the strategic development and growth of the ministry for God's Glory. Prov. 3:5-6 has guided me through my life - and it's a joy and privilege to serve and volunteer at Crossroads!"



(top left) Entrance to The Milking Parlor; (top right) volunteers applying polyurithane to old barn wood; (bottom right) offices with painting; (bottom left) student collecting stones for fireplace



WILD WILD WEST

Just over the foothills of Boyne Mountain and past the Little River Casino they rode, 120 strong. They came from small towns like Basswood Corners, Frog Eye, Hillsdale, Pittsford, Camden and Waldron. They all shared a dream of looking on the shores of Lake Onkama and starting over there.



The trip was arduous, with rock climbs and bathing in the frozen lake. They slept on bunks and forfeited sleep. They rode bulls and roped steer. At one point they made a desperate stand against bank robbers with dynamite, untied

fair damsels from the train tracks and battled re-appearing ground moles. They stood in long lines waiting for chow.

The hardships were forgotten as music flooded from the small stage of the local chapel. They had found a place to settle, unwrap their sleeping rolls and set a spell.

It was a winter retreat set in the scenes of the Wild West. Cowboys, law-men, scoundrels, saloon maids and villains did more than just these few things. They stacked crates 35 feet



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At the close of brunch, Doug talked about what made this particularly evil day, "good." The answer is that on that day, the single most defining trait in each of our lives, sin, was placed on Christ and He took it to the grave with Him.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (II Cor 5:21)

Each student was asked what sin they knew that they carried. They then heard about the fear carrying hidden sin creates. We are afraid that if anyone ever were to discover how vile we really were they would reject us, mock us or withdraw their love from us. Because of this, we fear intimacy. But Christ has taken that away. He allows us to enter into the Holy of Holies.

Students were asked to write these fears and sins on the inside of a mask then to put the mask on. Only they knew what was on the inside. The students were then instructed to stand in a line and approach

"the cross." A station had been set up with two mirrors; one as they entered and one as they exited. On the outside of the mirror at the entrance were some of the sins that we are sure were written on the inside of the masks. As our masked students looked at the mirror that condemned them, some cried, some prayed, all were silent as they entered the booth.

They stood in front of a video presentation that used the song "Above All," by Michael W. Smith and excerpts from the film, "The Passion." The students literally stood at the cross where Jesus was being crucified for the sins written on their masks. Students stayed. They watched. They did not move from the cross. The element of the cross was planned to take 30 minutes. It took far more than an hour.

As the students exited the booth, they were instructed to take their masks off and destroy them. The things that had been written on the inside had been removed by the cross. Then they looked at the second mirror. Boarding this mirror, which now showed them their own face, were words of love, forgiveness and position in Christ. They joined the rest of the group who had begun to sing worship songs to their Savior.



(left) This is the "sin mirror"
(below) This is the "redemption mirror"

Several students expressed that this had been the most significant Good Friday celebration they had ever experienced. Sometimes, pancakes are simply tools to draw us closer to our Lord. We spent our brunch time at the cross.





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high, while standing on them. They played Bubble Soccer, basketball and euchre into the wee hours.

Spiritually however, ***it was an incredible weekend of listening to hear God's voice, worshipping to the music of ATTABOY, and being moved to action by our speaker Kerry Ray.***

I asked the CRF staff about the retreat. "If you were to ask the 120 students to come with us again next weekend to another retreat like this one, how many would say "Yes?" Their answer was 200.

We would like to thank ***you***, and the incredible staff and administration at Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp, for making this wild west experience available to the students from our tri-county area. 🙏



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Loving The Rural Teenager



Prayer Closet

For this quarters' "Yahoos and Take It To Jesus," we have bolded various lines throughout the entire newsletter. Use those bolded statements as springboards for prayer. Thank you for interceding for rural youth.

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istry resource providers, and finding young people with a missionary mindset and youth ministry skills. All of this needs to be done during the time when we develop program, care for the grounds, and train an increased number of volunteers.

Our new facility will accommodate over 220 students. Our current staff can meaningfully meet the needs of 125. That is our work. We are begging for your continued prayers and support as we look to make good on the trust of our friends.

"To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. "
2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 🙏