



crossroads farm

Down On The Farm

The Quarterly Newsletter of Crossroads Farm

Jan, Feb, Mar. 2014

"I Am That Hero!"

-Doug

There are many things that we do, just to say we did them. Maybe you headed out for ski lessons, climbed a rock wall or jumped into a frozen lake in the middle of winter. These watershed moments help build a story replete with courage, daring and, well, youth. That is a fair portion of the reason that we ask for our supporters to pray and enable students to attend our annual winter retreat. We are building into their stories.

There is a second portion of our students' stories that we desire to be a part; it is the part where Jesus intersects their lives and transforms the plot completely.

At this year's winter retreat 150 of our CRF family did many of those things. Our group was all over the slopes of Caberfae for the better part of 5 hours. To say that their stories were enriched would be a vast understatement. Screams, laughter along with the occasional prayer were overheard all day long. Back to camp where around 20 students and staff, took the polar bear plunge; a fairly recent rite of passage for high school students. It is now a club of nearly 100 students and staff. Tournaments followed until the wee hours on Saturday. Students nearly wore out the rocks as they scaled the climbing wall. Some looked like Spiderman. Others looked more like Garfield stuck to a rear van window. What mattered was the story... the attempt at new things.

Nine students took a different type of plunge into a new relationship with Jesus Christ. Nearly 30 others determined to set their stories straight by committing themselves to a more sincere faith. Still more, over 20 additional students decided to pursue their faith in vocational pursuits like missions work or pastorates. God moved.

Each year CRF attempts to create a living writing tablet on which our students can write their new tales. Thank you for caring enough to help.



"We're going to bed WHEN?"

"The highlight of my weekend was when I got to pray with a student that I have been praying diligently for who surrendered his life to God!!"

-Steve (volunteer)



"I've never gotten to worship like this before. That's my favorite part."
-Ashley



"Skiing was really fun until I ran into a fence."
-Karly



The Newest Board Members




My name is **Brian Slocum** and I am honored to be able to be a part of the CRF story as it continues to expand its impact on rural youth. I have had the privilege of knowing Doug and Dawn for over 20 years after we served together on the staff of Hiawatha Youth Camp. I have played a small part in CRF from afar and have a great deal of respect for what has been established over the last 15 years.

To be able to assist Doug and Dawn as they take things to the next level with CRF is an exciting opportunity. I look forward to serving on the board of directors in any way that I can to both support and guide the ministry toward what God would have it to be. My family (Stephanie, Brielle, Shane and Braiden) and I live in Novi, MI and I also work in Novi for ITC Holdings where I am the Vice President-Engineering.

My name is **Paul Pridgeon** and I began my relationship with Crossroads Farm almost from the moment it was created. I was born and raised in the Reading community and can distinctly remember when CRF was founded while I was in JR High. I began attending when I was a high school student and spent two years on student lead team staff.



After graduating from Reading, I attended Central Michigan University where I continued to be involved in youth ministries at Mount Pleasant Community Church (5th and 6th grade ministries). It was through this church and ministry that I met my wonderful wife Nikki. We have been married over three years now and are expecting our first child in May. After receiving my MBA from Michigan State University, my wife and I moved back to Reading where I joined the family farm (we are hog and crop farmers), and Nikki began working as a physical therapist at Coldwater Community Hospital.

Upon returning home, Doug and Dawn asked if I would be returning to Crossroads to serve as an adult volunteer, of course Nikki and I said yes! We have been on staff for almost three years now and continue to enjoy connecting with kids at Crossroads and making Christ "real" for them. What makes me most excited about joining the Board at CRF is that it allows for me to continue to give back to an organization that helped me take ownership of my faith. I am also excited about working to continue to grow and develop the ministry so that it is capable of reaching more students in my community who desperately need to know who Christ is. 

"Taking The Plunge"



Hello, I am Connie.

I have volunteered with Crossroads Farm for 14 years!! Nothing is more exciting than to watch a student that I have been praying for accept Christ as their Saviour!! Second most exciting is to watch them be baptized!!!

It is very special when Crossroads offers Baptism during regular program. To the students, it can be challenging, exciting, scary, and yet comforting. We are a family at Crossroads Farm and to offer this sacrament in our own building or at the Farm with peers, adult volunteers, family and other friends, makes it almost intimate and extremely special. Doug explains Baptism before the actual event so that everyone understands what it symbolizes. This night is one that I look

forward to each year. We had four that were baptized: three students and one adult volunteer. It is so heartwarming to watch as family members arrive to view this huge statement in their child's life. This night was very special to me, as one of my girls in my care-cell was baptized!! She accepted Christ at winter retreat, and the next day was asking me about being baptized. She had texted me the week after retreat asking if she



could be baptized, and that she already had talked to her parents and they were okay with it. Wow, how exciting is that?! I didn't even have a chance to ask her if she wanted to, she was asking me! That is how the Holy Spirit works; we can be the hands, feet and

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The Shed

-Dawn

but vital to everyday life. We sometimes romanticize them with surrounding gardens, flower boxes and hand painted signs.

In just a handful of weeks, your mailbox with boast paper and a DVD that describes a Shed that will be built at the Farm. A Shed that will hold the romance of a real Savior that died for our sins and rose again. A Savior that will be shared in activities, relationships, mentoring, music, teaching, laughter, and the training that will take place inside and outside of it's doors. There will be nothing small about this Shed. Nothing to be taken for granted.

WE CAN'T WAIT to share more with you! I feel a little like I did when I was about five at Lake Michigan with my Dad. The first few hours of our day were often spent building things in the sand, getting our feet wet,

...conjures up images of something small, but so very useful that we all want one. A shed is often taken for granted, but the contents all

talking about the waves, commenting on the beauty. There was always talk about going out deeper, over my head, but where Dad could still touch. Suggestions thrown out and excitement built about jumping those waves.

As the afternoon approached so did the size of the waves~until it was time. Thrill and fear made my little body shake. Far out where the waves crested and rolled my Dad was going to take me, and we were going to jump them! I couldn't even pretend to be afraid. My Dad was offering me a risk, an adventure...and I loved those things! ...but I was still shaking. A five year old can imagine all sorts of risks.

As CRF approaches our 15 year anniversary, the time has come~to build. Time to go with Dad, our heavenly Father, to places only He can touch, into adventure and beauty and thrill only He can control.

As the song says, "We're going deep, we're divin' in!!!..." **Watch your mailboxes!!** 📧



CRF CHRISTMAS

-Alyssa

home. In my mind I just kept replacing "shepherds" with Hillsdale County. Because He came for the shepherds..the farmers..the crack-heads and meth addicts..the pregnant teenagers and hormone filled middle schoolers. He came for the almost 21-year-old crying in her apartment. He came

for Reading and Quincy and Hillsdale and Camden. And looking at those kids, who will maybe never have anyone but Jesus love them... That was just all the more powerful."

The above quote was given to us following the Christmas parties by one of our first year adult staff volunteers. Whether you wrapped, purchased, baked, mixed, created...however you chose to give love as a part of this project~it is our prayer that your love impacted eternity. It certainly impacted a chunk of earth and the lives of a few hundred students in rural Hillsdale County.

One middle school boy accepted Jesus as his Saviour at the party and begins his follow up with Doug over Christmas break! Just 4 days after the high school party one sophomore boy's father had a

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mouth, but He takes care of the heart!! So, on Sunday, March 2nd, I was privileged to read what my girl had

written (cause she gets too nervous to speak them out in public), and witness her Baptism, hand her a towel, give her a huge hug, and praise God for what He is



doing in her life!! After each person goes under that water, the students, family, and friends cheer and clap so loud I fear the old windows are going to crack. If we are that excited can you only imagine what God and the angels must sound like?!! 📖



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heart attack and died. Your tangible gifts of love touch these real life stories.

PS. There were a few handfuls of presents left over. Our student leaders are door to door delivering those to students who used to be a part of what we do but have fallen away. Pretty cool, huh? Thanks for that too! 📸

The Jacket

-Dawn Crossroads Farm now claims a perfect dozen. Volunteer staff that is, who have served five years with

Crossroads Farm. Jared Wittenbach, a former student turned five year staff vet, and Nancy McNeil, former employee turned five year staff vet. As we look at our current volunteer staff team of 30 we



anticipate awarding many more of these jackets in the future. Consistency in relationship with students is key to impactful ministry. Having a volunteer staff who understands that and gives their service to God here long term, often see incredible fruit. We are grateful. Welcome to the club Jared and Nancy! 📸



Crossroads Farm

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Loving The Rural Teenager



Jericho March

-Dawn

Our second prayer event of the school year took place early on two snowy Fridays in February. Approx. 50 students and adult volunteers from CRF, spanning Waldron, Quincy, Will Carleton, Reading and Hillsdale schools, met at their site for a time of silent prayer.

Walking the halls, cafeteria, gyms, pausing outside of classrooms

and in some cases, even praying in the parking lots of these schools. While it was still dark. Before the chaos of the day came to their buildings...Students. Praying for students, teachers, coaches, staff. May the walls come down! 📸

