



DEER RUN RETREAT CENTER

Mail 3845 Perkins Road | Thompson's Station, TN 37179

E-mail Contact@DeerRunRetreat.org

Phone 615-794-2918 | **Fax** 615-794-5123

December 2009

Dear Friends,

Reflection: Deer Run Retreat had many opportunities in 2009 to make a positive, and sometimes eternal, impact on the lives of thousands of children, teenagers, marriages, and families! Many of you have prayed, volunteered your time, and supported financially. The mission of Deer Run Retreat could not be accomplished without YOU!

In one of the toughest years our economy has seen in my lifetime, God has continued to bless and expand the ministry of Deer Run Retreat in the following ways:

- 500% increase in the number of children and teenagers attending Deer Run (summer) Christian Camps!
- expansion of Camp Deer Run (mission camps) from 2 to 3 weeks for underprivileged and inner-city children
- addition of a third Married Couples Weekend to our annual event calendar
- completion of new facilities: 2 Lakeview Cabins, which accommodate 12 guests each and are used to house our summer camp staff for 10 weeks, a 45-foot climbing & rappelling tower, a paintball area, and enclosure of an existing pavilion which seats 100 guests.

God's Hand & Provision: During the final week of Camp Deer Run, we provide a special 2-night retreat for single moms. While their children attend a week of camp, the moms are at The Lodge! In 2008 one of the moms attended because of an invitation from a friend who was coming. This woman showed up bitter and negative about life. She had been through hard times and didn't feel like she had reason to be thankful. The Portside Baptist Church (SC) ladies who were serving at the retreat continually showed her God's unconditional love and acceptance. During a game she won a Women's Study Bible. Her response was "Great, it figures I would win something like that." As the ladies continued to love her, minister to her, and reveal to her what a relationship with Christ meant, she began to respond. Before leaving, she asked the staff who were helping with the retreat to sign her Bible and write their favorite Bible verse on the inside cover. What a change from when she had arrived!

Fast-forward to 2009 Camp Deer Run. We were driving the van to pick up children to bring to the camp. I pulled up to a house, and 2 girls came out—a teenager and her younger sister. While I didn't know them, I felt prompted to pray for them—especially the older one. Later in the week the moms arrived for their retreat and attended Friday night's worship service with their children. A number of children accepted Jesus as their Savior. Later that night we received a call from the women's leaders at The Lodge that one of the moms had accepted Christ and wanted to be baptized that next morning also! It was the mom from the year before who had won the Bible. The two girls I had prayed for were her daughters, and the oldest daughter had accepted Christ as her Savior that night as well. Mother and daughter were baptized in Deer Run's lake Saturday morning during the closing worship service!

The mom shared that after last year's retreat she had started reading her Bible regularly and had asked Jesus to come into her life. She wanted to wait and be baptized at Deer Run because that was the first place she had ever experienced the love of Christ!

That is why this ministry exists! Many lives are changed each year: moms, dads, marriages, children, teenagers, and university students. Families are given hope; the legacy of their family is changed for eternity. Individuals clearly hear the gospel presented, and our staff and other leaders ensure they understand the decision they are making.

Another story I want to share is about God's provision which we experience throughout the year and often on a daily basis. We had a marriage retreat scheduled in October, and although the last several marriage retreats had been sold out, two weeks before the date for this retreat only two couples had registered. We prayed about whether to have the retreat. As we prayed, Liz and I felt that we needed to go ahead with the retreat and trust God for the finances.

For several weeks we had received calls from couples who could not afford to attend, some with desperate stories. Our guest services staff called every inquiry to tell them they could attend regardless of what they could pay. Within a couple of days, seven couples were registered: two paid full price, one paid half price, and one paid \$100. We were \$2,000 short of covering the retreat expenses. Friday afternoon, just four hours before the retreat was to start, I got a call from one of our monthly supporters. He said he and his wife had been blessed financially this year and wanted to make an extra gift in addition to their ongoing monthly support. He said, "It's not much, but it's a lot to us. We would like to give \$2,000."

I shared with this friend how God had worked through his obedience, and because of that, these couples would have an opportunity to have a life-changing experience! The October marriage retreat was one of the most powerful we have ever had because the couples who attended really needed it and God provided it!

Grants & Scholarships: Deer Run Retreat receives requests throughout the year from families who are struggling financially and want an opportunity to attend an event or for their children to attend a summer camp. Deer Run has an application and approval process for providing scholarships for campers, couples, and families (father-son adventure weekend and family camp). In 2009, we were honored to receive grants from Middle Tennessee Electric Customer's Care and the Nashville Predators Foundation, providing camp scholarships for 22 children and teenagers. They experienced a week of camp and unconditional love; plus the Predator's mascot, Gnash, visited Camp Deer Run, surprising the campers! In 2009, 202 scholarships were awarded for campers, couples, and families, totaling \$46,340.00. Please consider designating a gift toward scholarships for 2010 so more lives can be impacted.

2010 Growth: Because the 2009 summer day camps were filled to capacity, we have added two more weeks of day camp for a total of 4 weeks in 2010. We have also added another week of preteen overnight camp because the 2009 camp was almost at capacity. Additionally, so families can have a camp experience together, we are having a Fall Family Camp weekend in September which includes a talent show and the Amazing Family Challenge, a high energy family fun competition.

YOU... Making a Difference! While we are experiencing tremendous growth, the financial needs have grown as well. Please pray about becoming a monthly supporter of Deer Run Retreat; even small gifts make a difference. Our goal is to grow to the point where we can cover all our operating expenses through user fees, but we are not there yet. We currently cover about 70% of our operating expenses through user fees, and we must raise the funds for the other 30%. Our monthly supporters are a vital part of this. You are welcome to call me any time with questions.

I pray that you have a joyful and blessed Christmas season and that you will create family memories that last a lifetime! May each of us remember and be thankful for the most amazing and undeserved blessing we have been given through Jesus Christ.



David Gibson
Founder / Executive Director

THE MISSION of DEER RUN RETREAT

To transform the lives of children, teenagers, and families through a passionate relationship with Jesus Christ and by connecting with one another in a retreat and camp setting.

THE VISION of DEER RUN RETREAT

By partnering with churches, ministries, and community organizations, Deer Run Retreat seeks to create unforgettable retreat and camp experiences that reach, educate, and nurture the next generation of Christ followers by providing spiritual renewal, healing, restoration, inspiration, hope, and adventure.