

## **HIGHLAND LAKES BAPTIST CAMP REPORT**

---

**Jim Shields, Team Leader**

IMPACT. A small word. But the result of the action of the word is one in which we see lives, communities, families, worlds, eternity transformed. Impact. Webster's Dictionary defines impact as, "A colliding force." Fair enough; but what does that colliding force leave as a result? When we think of a meteor hitting the earth, we see the devastation that can occur as the "colliding force" creates a sizable and measurable imprint on that which it collides. This type of impact can transform the landscape in such way as to cause disruption in the current manner or flow of everyday life for the object and all that is surrounding or dependent upon that object. Dick Butkus delivers a crushing tackle in the late 60's...and the impact was felt all the way into the stands. A car crashes into a building and more than metal and concrete morphs into a new reality; all that is touched, both inside and outside, will bear the results of the alteration due to impact. A stone is cast into a still lake, and the ripples emanate from the point of contact, spilling out in concentric circles to affect and effect the surface of the water in a noticeable, recognizable fashion. But what of the water underneath the surface? What of the disruption to the waters beneath the surface?

For the past five years, I have had the privilege of reporting to you how the camp has progressed in various ways throughout the past year. Each year, I am able to bring you a great report of how your staff here at Highland Lakes - Rick Porter, Sarah Wickersham, Craig Kratzer and Linda Collier - work diligently and tirelessly to make this place the best that it possibly can be. You can visibly see the results; and this year is no exception!

Each year, I can sing the praise of summer missionaries who come from your churches to assist in the maintenance, watch care, counseling and encouragement of the eight weeks of summer camps - and again this year was no exception!

Each year, I relay to you the Herculean efforts and accomplishments of various groups of volunteers like the Campers on Mission or the youth groups from your church, who come out here and make the grounds, buildings and projects better and better - and this year is no exception!

Each year, I do my best to make you aware of the improvements that have been completed – like the new amphitheater on the Wild Side, the new Log Cabin deck, the new Human Foosball, Pit Ball and Archery Tag arenas, the bleachers in the Prayer Ridge area, the upgrade of the shower house on the Wild Side for use all year round, just to name a few... and this year is obviously no exception!

Each year, I remind you of the countless numbers of students, of pastors, of leaders, who come here to seek and find a fresh relationship with the Father...and this year is no exception!

But this year, I want you to consider the IMPACT of the investment that is Highland Lakes. “The Impact is forever....and more than you can imagine!” That is the motto or slogan we adopted for the 2018 season as a team here at Highland Lakes. The idea is to consider that what happens here has a much deeper meaning and continual implication than what is originally observed.

So consider the following:

When you invest in Highland Lakes by giving to the Highland Lakes Mission Offering, you are giving to a fund that will help provide scholarship for students of our camps. The scholarship will cover half of the total cost for the recipient of the scholarship. So, on the surface, you can see that financially it will help relieve some of the burden that some of our families may have in sending their child. You can see that it encourages more students to come to camp. What you don’t see is the impact that your generosity has on the life of these students. “About a month ago, I went to church camp and while I was there the Holy Spirit was guiding me to Him. When I came back from camp I felt different....I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and confessed my sins to Him.” This is from a thank you letter from one of our campers. So on behalf of this young camper, thank you for your impact.

When you give through the Cooperative Program, you are helping to support the continual operation of the camp; and when you do that you invest in more than physical buildings that you can visibly see. You make it possible for students such as Jay – a young man who was invited literally at the last minute to come with some friends, who was not a believer, who was looking into

Buddhism for answers to his questions - to find God. Jay was a very passive attendant, but listened intently to the messages throughout the week and accepted Christ at the end of the week. So on behalf of Jay, thank you for the impact. You invest in this camp, and the impact is more than you can imagine.

When you promote the camp at your church and association, you not only encourage parents and children, you also encourage adults to agree to be a chaperon. You can visibly see that take place, but what you don't see is the impact on the life of that adult. An adult like my friend Buddy, who had no desire to come to camp as a chaperon. However, his church had a chaperon who had to back out at the last minute, and when asked by his pastor he reluctantly agreed to be the replacement. Buddy came to me at the end of camp and told me, with tears in his eyes, how he hadn't planned to come. However, now he knew that he was supposed to come...not for the kids, but for himself. You see, he saw how the Father was working in the lives of the campers, and he allowed the Father to work in his life. He let me know in no uncertain terms that he would be back next year. And he thanked me for the camp. So on behalf of Buddy, thank you for the impact.

Impact? How about over 35 baptisms in the pool....or the summer missionaries who leave this camp and go into all parts of the world, whether on mission trips to the very fertile spiritual soil of Ecuador or to the very hardened spiritual soil of their college campuses...or Eric, who at 68 and retired felt the Father calling him into a deeper walk and purpose....or the students who were challenged and encouraged to see the hope of Christ instead of the despair of isolationism, anger and suicidal thoughts.

You don't always see what an impact you have. You don't always see what happens beneath the surface of the visible appearance of your action. But I can tell you for certain that the impact is forever, and more than you can imagine.

So what next? We keep on doing what we do. We ask you to continue to invest so that we can do more, see more and grow more. Our "Mile Markers 2025" include increasing our average camp attendance to 250, from 170 currently; adding more dorm space; adding more retreat space; and eventually adding a

dedicated Recreation and Classroom Center. We ask you to continue to dream the dream that those men back in 1970 had of a missional hub called Highland Lakes that helps others to Discover, Develop and Deploy a Transformed Life in Christ.