

Echoing Hills

Connection

Fall/Winter 2021



*Meaningful
Connections*



Greetings from Echoing Hills!



I cannot believe how fast the past six months have flown! However, when you are busy having fun and living life that is exactly what happens. I am so excited for you to see what we have been up to as a ministry. Although COVID has reared its ugly head again, we have still been able to follow CDC and Ohio Department of Health's guidelines and recommendations and get out safely! We have such great friends in the community that genuinely care about those we serve and their safety, but they also understand the value of connecting. Therefore, they are partnering with us to make these trips, outings, and volunteer opportunities happen! In this edition, you will also get a closer look at the talents of our team members and those we serve. And, you will get a glimpse into a new training program that is very dear to me – Leading with the Fruit of the Spirit.

I hope you enjoy taking a deeper dive into the ministry. It truly is a great place to be, and we are excited that you have chosen to partner with us. Whether as a person we serve, a person serving with us, a family member who has placed their trust in us, or an inspired giver, we are thankful you are a part of our greater Echoing Hills family!

May God Bless you and keep you safe!

Tim Neville

Timothy D. Neville

President/CEO

Intuitive and Innovative Leadership

Echoing Hills' President and CEO received valuable advice as he was taking over the realms of the ministry, 'always follow your heart...and lead by the Fruit of the Spirit.' This is something that Tim is 100% committed to, and he has taken it to heart. He has spent months working with Staff Development Director Avy Neining and Corporate Chaplain Donnis Meek developing a training program, 'Leading with the Fruit of the Spirit.' The program has been rolled out to Corporate Leadership as well as the leadership at all the regional locations. The training is very intentional in creating an understanding of each Fruit of the Spirit. Jennifer Massaro, Corporate Communications Specialist, also played a role in thoughtfully selecting a fruit to represent each Fruit of the Spirit. For example, a peach represents gentleness, and a raspberry represents kindness. These serve as tangible reminders. The training also covered the Five Languages of Appreciation and Emotional Intelligence. In a nutshell, this intuitive and innovative leadership training is quite simple, 'Be strong and firm, but loving and compassionate as the Holy Spirit leads from within.'



Being a Part of Something Bigger than Yourself!

A Birthday Fundraiser Celebrating YOU!

Many are seeking ways to make a difference in this hurting and chaotic world. One way that has taken the world by storm is having a Birthday Fundraiser on Facebook. It's really quite simple, and Facebook helps walk you through it step-by-step. A guardian of one of the individuals we serve recently created a Birthday Fundraiser to benefit the residents of that home. She set the goal of \$200 and was exceptionally surprised when it raised nearly \$1,500! We are so thankful she thought of us as her non-profit of choice! The good news, too, is that Facebook does not charge any fees when your fundraiser is for a non-profit. We encourage you to consider a Birthday Fundraiser. What better way to celebrate your special day than to know you are making a difference in the lives of others!



Meaningful Connections

Volunteering is an essential part of life. It's a way to give back and make a positive impact on the community. A common misconception is that a person with disabilities should only be served when in reality, they have much to contribute to the greater world. Two local non-profits in Southwest Ohio embraced the students of EchoingU. The students volunteered with Shoes for the Shoeless and 4 Paws for Ability alongside other community members. These are fantastic opportunities to gain skills and build friendships leading to meaningful connections.



Camp Echoing Hills Returns

Joyce Meyer once said, "Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting." We had the opportunity to practice these wise words after canceling our 2020 Camp Echoing Hills season due to the pandemic.

Were we disappointed? Yes! Did we hold on to hope that we would return in 2021? YES! Our patience, and our attitude of positivity, was rewarded this summer when camp resumed.

Before campers could return, we had to prepare...helping hands from our volunteers.

Over 80 people, comprised of individuals and groups, volunteered across three service days. Volunteers cleaned cabins, powerwashed, cleared gardens, weeded, built benches, painted, and more! They helped to ensure campers would have an unforgettable summer. And what an unforgettable summer it was!

To operate safely, we had to make some changes. These changes included limiting how many individuals we could serve. Typically serving up to 340 individuals each camping season, this summer camp welcomed close to 120. Campers put on their armor (Ephesians 6:10-20) and came to have fun during our eight weeks of camp.

It turned out even better than we could have expected!

We were able to provide an experience more tailored to individuals' interests. One week of camp, for example, saw one camper choosing to fish the entire time. His fellow campers decided to become fish themselves, swimming in the pool multiple times a day. We looked in awe as we witnessed one individual who doesn't walk taking steps within the water. Later that same day, we celebrated one camper who surprised himself when he jumped up to lead prayer after a time of devotion.

The smaller camp size also created additional opportunities to build on relationships. Relationships with other campers, as well as staff. When talking about her camp counselor, one camper shared, "She's my counselor, and she's my hero."

Despite the changes, much-loved camp traditions remained — paintball, arts and crafts, Cross Hill, talent shows, delicious camp food, and s'mores over a campfire.

With so much fun, and memories made, it was hard to see the camping season end. But now that it has, we find ourselves waiting again, positively of course, for camp to return next summer!

To find out how you can provide your time, talents, or resources to Camp Echoing Hills or other ministries of Echoing Hills, please visit www.ehvi.org/get-involved/



Camp Says Goodbye

As the 2021 camping season came to an end, it brought another ending. Lauren Unger, Camp Administrator, and Emily Smith, Program Director, said goodbye (but not forever) to Camp Echoing Hills. They share their thoughts about their time at camp.

How Long Have You Been at Camp?

Lauren: "I have been a part of camp for over 34 years; I was born and raised here. I first started serving at 15 years old as support staff. Over the years, I served as a counselor at Frontier Camp, in summer activities, as Activities Coordinator, Program Director, and then Camp Administrator, where I have been for the past ten years."

Emily: "I began in the summer of 2009 and served for three summers. I volunteered in the summer of 2012 before beginning full-time in December of that same year. I served as cabin leader, overseeing Helping Hands (our volunteer program at the time), and then as the Program Director."

What Will You Be Doing?

Lauren: "I have a heart for giving and would like to take that to another level. I am going back to school to study counseling and look forward to serving people where they are."

Emily: "I will be focusing on ministering to my growing family. I look forward to becoming more involved in my church and community-based services for individuals with disabilities. I will be back to volunteer at camp as well."

Favorite Camp Activity?

Lauren: "Swimming! I enjoy watching the campers have fun in the water, playing games, and talking. This time was often my chance to spend quality time with them."

Emily: "I always enjoyed the activities that involved improvisation, such as Late Night with Lauren, interactive Mad Libs, and our murder mystery show. Some of these involved campers, while others were team-building activities for staff. They were always fun!"

Favorite Camp Food?

Lauren: "I love the campfire breakfast. I make the bacon every time – the key to good bacon is cooking it in a cast-iron skillet."

Emily: "I always enjoyed the campfire breakfast. Lauren would make the bacon while I made the eggs."

Favorite Memory of Camp?

Lauren: "My favorite memories involve any chance to be with the campers. I enjoyed being a mentor at times. Being able to see the fruits that God provided to someone and watching those fruits grow during their time at camp. I am excited to come back to volunteer, working with campers one-on-one."

Emily: "Cross Hill nights were always a special time. A quiet night, filled with holiness. I also enjoyed our travel program. I served individuals one-on-one while traveling to places like Kelly's Island, Memphis, Nashville, Cancun, and Hawaii. I loved the relationships I formed with campers, staff, and volunteers. Being a part of this ministry has helped me grow in my faith. It has shown me what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus."



Next Issue you will meet the NEW Camp Team!

Take Me Out to The Ball Game

Summertime means being outside, cooking out, and of course, baseball! Twenty individuals from Echoing Hills of Northeast Ohio participated in America's pastime thanks to the 2021 Summer Dream League. Forty Corners Church of God hosts the Dream League, which provides individuals with disabilities the opportunity to play baseball during a six-week league.

The league assigns each player with a buddy. These buddies are volunteers from the church and greater community and support the players as they bat, run, and field. Two of those volunteers were Brian Millard, Day Habilitation Coordinator for Echoing Connections of Northeast Ohio, and Laurie Miller, Program Director for Echoing Connections of Northeast Ohio.

Brian attended games in the past; however, this was his first year volunteering. "It was so great to see individuals I serve outside of our typical setting," shares Millard. "It was also great to reconnect with some individuals I am not able to see all the time."

Laurie felt the season was even more meaningful after the pandemic affected the individual's ability to be together. "The best part was seeing the individuals get out again and see their friends," says Miller. "The Dream League is all they talk about – the day of, the day after, who won, who they saw. It's so great!"

The individuals that participated had a great experience as well.

Jamie A. enjoyed playing baseball and was able to sing the National Anthem before one of the games. Jamie shares she prepared by looking up people singing on her tablet and would also practice in front of individuals served and team members while at Echoing Connections.

What did she think of the experience?

"It felt amazing," says Jamie. "I felt like I was on top of the world when I finished. It made me feel important and helped me discover another talent God has given me."

The Dream League season ended with a banquet where participants received a team photo, medal, and DVD of highlights from the season.

"We watched the DVD together as a group at Echoing Connections," shares Millard. "Every time someone came on that we knew, the group would cheer. It was so much fun!"

The season provided fun, memories, and a way to be a part of the greater community – talk about a homerun!



Meet Chuck

Who lives at Echoing Hills of Northern Ohio

Camille Adams, Starbuck Home Manager, is happy to assist Chuck with daily living skills at Echoing Hills Community Living of Northern Ohio. She shares more about Chuck with us!

Can You Tell Us About Chuck?

Chuck moved into the Starbuck home almost five years ago. We had just suffered the loss of a dear friend and never imagined that anyone could fill that void in our hearts so soon. Chuckie has a smile that melts your heart! He loves to help staff, the maintenance men, and his instructors at his day program. He loves to learn and is always looking for opportunities to use tools. He takes great pride in talking about memories of cooking with his mother or working on cars with his father. His face lights up when he talks about his brother, sister-in-law, and nephew, who are very active in his life.

What Is Something Chuck Enjoys?

Chuck loves to be outdoors! We have been on a few fishing adventures, one that included chartering a boat on Lake Erie. He is very familiar with the process of baiting hooks and using weights and bobbers. Chuck's family took him camping at East Harbor State Park, where he was happy to use his gear from a shopping trip he took to Cabela's. Some of the places he has enjoyed eating perch and walleye include the Jailhouse Tavern, Shooters on the Lake, and Route 6 Pub. The rest of the guys are looking forward to our fish fry, as well!

Chuck Had An Eventful Summer! Can You Tell Us About That?

This summer, Chuck participated in outings such as Cedar Point, Nickel Plate Beach, Dave and Busters, Lorain County Fair, Sweetie's Candy, car shows, an African Safari Wildlife Tour, went to a Cleveland Indians game, spent a day at "The Flats" in Cleveland for a boat tour, and cruised the island of Put-In-Bay on a golf cart.

What Is Something Chuck Is Looking Forward To?

Recently, Chuck's shed was delivered, and he couldn't be more proud! He plans to put his toolboxes and extra supplies in there, along with decorating and using a part of it for his art studio. During the COVID-19 shutdown, Chuck evolved in his creativity. He found that he enjoys painting abstract art with bright colors such as yellow, orange, blue, and purple – his favorites. The shed is located right behind the garden. This location allows Chuck to enjoy the plants and flowers that he loves to work with.

How Does Chuck's Family Feel About His Support at Echoing Hills?

As Chuck strives to gain greater independence, he and his family appreciate the quality of support and services he receives from the staff and management of Echoing Hills.

Chuck's sister-in-law, Dawn, recently shared, "You have no idea how much it brings, John and I, peace knowing that Chuckie is safe and cared for so well! We love all the guys here and they have become part of our family. It thrills us to see Chuckie and the others living their best life!"



Meet Rachel

Rachel Ulbrich is the Director of Adult Services
for Echoing Connections of Southeast Ohio

Can You Tell Us About Yourself?

I am married to my husband, Greg, and have four children – Michala (who also works at Echoing Hills as a Lead Direct Support Professional), Hannah, Chloe, and Zachary. I also have a dog, Bernie, and a cat that found us. I enjoy music, driving, and baking/decorating cakes. I am self-taught and have made cakes for birthdays, baby showers, wedding showers, and weddings.

How Long Have You Been With Echoing Hills?

I came to Echoing Hills in 2002 after seeing an ad in the newspaper. I started as the Dietary Manager for Echoing Hills Southeast Ohio before serving as the Director of Adult Services for Echoing Connections in 2015. I had never worked with individuals with disabilities prior; however, quickly saw the love in their hearts and eyes.

Can You Walk Us Through A Day at Echoing Connections?

Each day is different, which I love! Typically, individuals begin arriving around 8:30, and the day is truly person-centered. We help with personal care but also help with things meaningful to the person. For example, if someone wants to work on writing skills, we help them write a letter to a loved one. If someone else wants to work on job skills, we assist in filling out job applications. We have one individual who works in the greater community delivering food, we take her around to make her deliveries.

Activities make up a large portion of our day. We enjoy arts and crafts, as well as gardening. In the greater community setting, we have enjoyed basketball and football games at Ohio University, the rodeo, and watching plays at Alexander High School. We even helped make some props for a set in their production of the Wizard of Oz.

We also have several community partners. These partners allow the individuals to contribute to their communities in a fun and engaging way and include: Honey for the Heart, The Athens County Community Choir, River Road Rabbit Rescue, Team Heart and Soul, and the Hocking Valley Sportsman Club.

Why Do You Like Working at Echoing Hills?

I enjoy working at Echoing Hills because the individuals are family. I get to help them reach their goals and celebrate their accomplishments. I am an introverted person by nature. When I am at work, however, they pull out my extroverted side. I am glad to be a part of their lives!



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