

PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

MISSION AND VISION

Imagine a place where kids of all ages don't just hear God's word, but participate in it. Where morning, noon and night, they are surrounded by the irrefutable testimony of creation. Where, without competing distractions, they have time to contemplate the meaning of what they see, hear, feel, and do. Where, in one week, they can more than double the number of hours spent with ministry leaders during the entire rest of the year. Where, when they leave, they are plugged back into a body of believers that guides and nurtures them year round.

Imagine a place where committed followers of Christ disciple others. Where, through mentoring and being mentored, they learn truths about themselves. Where, through daily interaction with different ages and personalities, they begin to understand their strengths and gifts. Where, living in Christian community, they get to serve and be served. Where, in the quiet of the field and forest, they discover their life's calling.

Imagine a place where harried travelers of this world are refreshed and renewed. Where, no matter their status, they are welcomed and treated as honored guests. Where, amid chaos and clamor, they can retreat into solitude and sanctity. Where, freed from their typical routine, they can find rest in safe, inviting, and well-cared for spaces.

Early members of southern Indiana Church of God imagined such a place and, beginning in the 1930's, organized youth camps at area parks and camps. In the 1950s, a member of the Bedford First Church of God donated 77 acres of land to the church, and Camp Challenge was born. Over the next several years, the southern Indiana church body cleared the land and raised funds to build a dining hall and bathhouse. In 1958, the grounds hosted its first four summer camp sessions for 6th-12th graders. In 1959, the camp was christened Camp Challenge, named for how challenging it was to develop the camp.

Since then, Camp Challenge's many volunteers, partners, and friends have provided us with a worship center, 16 cabins, staff housing, pool and shelter house, maintenance barn and equipment, retreat center, administration building, recreation facilities, a year round staff member, several seasonal staff, and an additional 82 acres of land. With these gifts, we have ministered to approximately 30,000 campers and welcomed hundreds of retreat groups, supported by thousands of volunteers.

Today, Camp Challenge develops followers of and leaders for Jesus Christ by encouraging disconnection from everyday distraction and reconnection to God through His creation. We offer exciting summer camp adventures for students, a vibrant staff and volunteer leadership program, and safe and inviting spaces for groups that share our mission. The work of Camp Challenge is still challenging, but the focus has shifted from the property itself to the work of challenging hearts, souls, minds, and strength.

When I was 10 years old I was at Camp Challenge for the first time and felt a distinct tug on my heart to accept Christ. I very powerfully felt Him calling me into His presence...that fall I was baptized at my church.

-Jenny, camper

Camp Challenge is my favorite place in the world. To see life change in campers and counselors alike is amazing. I have NEVER spent time there and not felt Him speak to me.

-Terri, volunteer

I was at a retreat with my youth group at Camp Challenge and felt a stirring in my soul. The Lord's presence was clear. A leader came and prayed with me and I vowed to give Jesus my whole life. My life was altered drastically that day.

-Logan, retreat guest

When I was 8 years old I gave my life to Jesus at camp. That decision changed the entire course of my life. Today I am a pastor (and camp counselor) and I've seen the lives of kids changed.

-Craig, pastor

Camp Challenge is an extremely valuable time to invest in relationships with students in our youth group.

-Rawlin, pastor

I volunteered at Camp Challenge as a Jr. High counselor this past summer. I am still in contact with most of [my campers]...I have heard countless times that Camp Challenge has changed their life; I am so blessed to have been able to be a part of it...I believe that God is doing great things through this camp, and I'm excited about it!

-Kiera, volunteer

I spent endless summers attending Camp Challenge...I returned to camp as a counselor a few years later. The impact Camp Challenge had on my life as a youth was unparalleled.

-Jenn, alumna

I've always really grew up in church but nothing really hit me or truly got to me until I got to Camp my first year on staff...I kinda slowly changed over the years at camp and really grew through the people, kids, and staff to really know God and what I needed to do in life and for others.

-Alex, volunteer

Camp Challenge's vision is to become the camp and retreat destination of choice in southern Indiana. How will we get there? We will choose to focus our resources in three areas: offering students and families high-quality summer camp experiences; providing staff and volunteers with opportunities for significant impact and personal development; and maintaining welcoming and well-cared spaces year-round for the refreshment and renewal of our retreat guests, all for the express purpose of growing God's kingdom.

WHY?

High quality camp results in larger camp enrollments, which yields **more followers**. Besides better mission attainment, higher enrollments will help us move toward our goal of long-term financial sustainability.

Well-trained and equipped staff and volunteers result in a better quality experience for staff, volunteers, and campers, and more significant **personal growth for staff and volunteers**.

Inviting spaces and responsive staff increase retreat usage, helping meet our mission outside of our own events. Higher use of the camp is good stewardship and moves us toward **balancing rental and registration income with operating costs**.

WHAT PROGRESS HAVE WE ALREADY MADE?

Began evaluating impact--in 2016, **88 campers made first-time decisions** to follow Jesus and **97% said their relationship with God improved**. Camp registration revenue **increased 31%** since 2012. Added a seasonal program director.

Developed staff and volunteer policy based on **national best practices** and moved to a **multi-level training and orientation program** modeled from other Christian camps.

Rental revenue has **increased 279%** since 2012. Camp and rental use met 45% of operating costs in 2012; we project 62% for 2016. We now offer catering and are actively creating, repurposing, and refurbishing amenities for camp and retreat use.

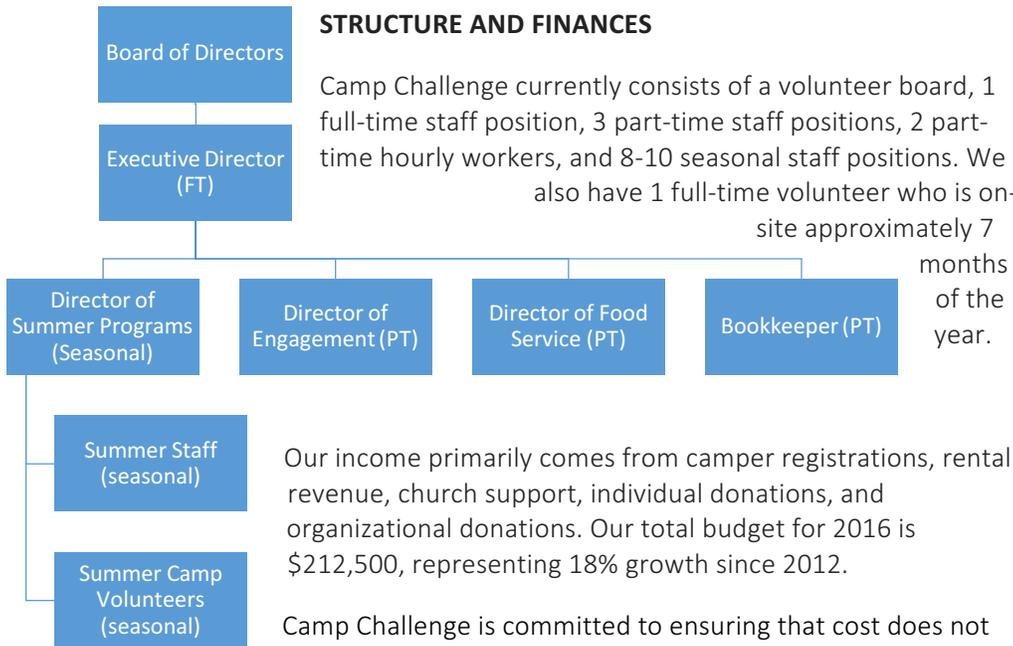
WHAT DO WE STILL NEED TO DO?

Expand seasonal program director to **full-time position** to improve ministry quality and manage camp staff and volunteers (**57% increase in session volunteers** since 2014); link with partner churches to coordinate long-term camper care.

Continue developing our staff/volunteer training, including an **online module**; build relationships with universities and partner churches to aid in year-round staff and volunteer recruitment and retention efforts.

Retrofit facilities and add heated beds and bathrooms to **increase our four season capacity**. Pursue new retreat users and develop evaluation process to help retain current users. Expand hospitality services to retreat users.

STRUCTURE AND FINANCES



Camp Challenge currently consists of a volunteer board, 1 full-time staff position, 3 part-time staff positions, 2 part-time hourly workers, and 8-10 seasonal staff positions. We also have 1 full-time volunteer who is on-site approximately 7 months of the year.

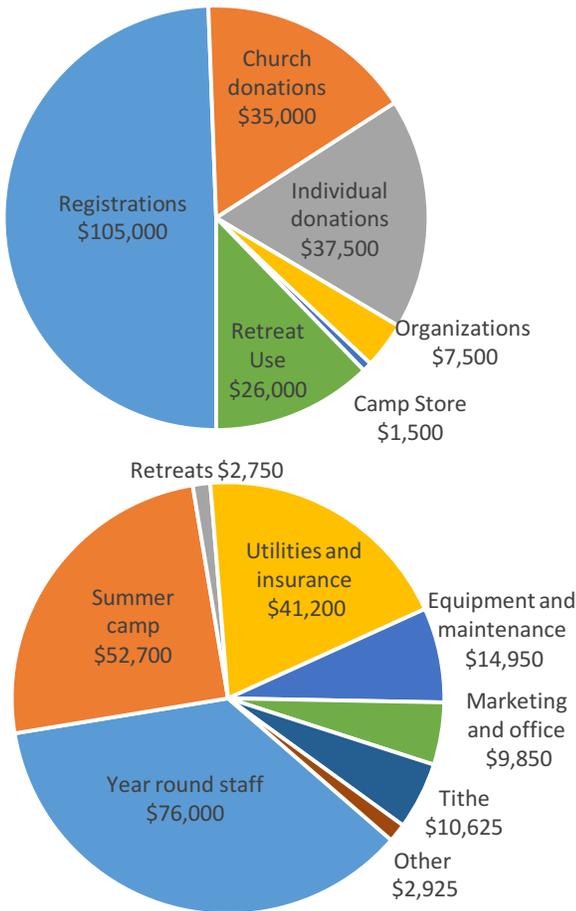
Our income primarily comes from camper registrations, rental revenue, church support, individual donations, and organizational donations. Our total budget for 2016 is \$212,500, representing 18% growth since 2012.

Camp Challenge is committed to ensuring that cost does not prevent any child from experiencing the transformative power of camp. **Donations keep the price we charge our campers to**

attend camp as low as possible and fund scholarships to help those who still need assistance. Even as enrollments rise and retreat use increases, donations still remain critical to **guarantee high quality programming, trained and developed staff, and well-maintained facilities.**

Our current fund raising methods include the Fire Circle monthly donor program (which has grown 322% since 2012!) and a year-end direct mail campaign. Our donor base is changing—more funds are coming from individuals and unaffiliated organizations and less funds are coming from unsolicited church support. In light of this new funding reality, we are **actively pursuing strategic church partnerships**, expanding the giving options we offer to our individual donors, including stock and non-cash gifts, planned gifts, and planning a capital campaign to kick start our transition to intentional year-round operation.

2016 INCOME (top)
AND EXPENSES (bottom)



Knowing that you are teaching them about God's love for them is life-changing and the main reason we send them to Camp Challenge. I am a Camp Challenge alumna myself—and I absolutely love that my kids attend Camp Challenge, too. For us it was a “no-brainer” that Camp Challenge would be THE summer camp for our kids. It warms my heart that they love it as much as I did.

-Jennifer, camper parent

I attended the camp and enjoyed my experience, but I did not anticipate returning. However, a small group of friends who had already come to a saving faith in Christ persistently sought me out in love...throughout the year. When the next summer rolled around, I was excited to attend Camp Challenge again because I knew that those people who had loved me so well would be there...After another year at Camp Challenge, I fell in love with the camp...On the first night of my third year I heard...that I had the opportunity to come to know Jesus personally. I accepted the invitation, committing my life to Christ.

-Matthew, alumni

Helping at Camp Challenge is always a must for my summer. Knowing the life change that Camp brought to me and my friends in school, I want to be a part of that life change for today's students. Camp Challenge plays such an important role in the life of youth and kids in Indiana and I want to support the camp as they share Christ with these students.

-Kaitie, volunteer

My son became a "sidekick for God" at Camp Challenge. I'll never forget hearing those words come out of his mouth. He was only 9 at the time, but it had to be one of the most innocent yet powerful phrases I had ever heard. Camp Challenge made a huge impact on my son's life.

-Brian, camper parent

I first accepted Jesus into my heart in sixth grade at Camp Challenge. We participated in a hike in the woods...at the end, I had a conversation with my counselor about what it means to be a follower of Christ. I then asked the Lord into my heart and it has been an ongoing walk since that day.

- Tessa, camper

PARTNERSHIP WITH CAMP CHALLENGE

Camp Challenge is fortunate to have several supporting churches that provide critical operational funds. However, true partnership goes even deeper—Partner Churches provide financial support AND participate in camp ministry.

Each Partner Church must decide what level of support makes sense for its congregation, but all Partner Churches have these elements in common:

- sends regular operational support**
(suggested action: designate 1% of income or 10% of mission budget for camp)
- promotes camp attendance as part of children's and student ministries**
(suggested action: offer financial assistance with camp fees)
- commits to sending volunteers to help staff camp sessions**
(suggested action: recruit at least 1 volunteer for each session that has campers registered from the church)
- encourages facility use by groups under the church umbrella**
(suggested action: schedule 1 new retreat at the camp)
- communicates camp news and information with its congregation**
(suggested action: include camp information in church announcements; share social media posts and newsletters)
- participates in the care and maintenance of the camp**
(suggested action: send volunteers to Fall or Spring work weeks or Mission Camp and/or schedule own work group)

BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH CAMP CHALLENGE

Camp Challenge aspires to have reciprocal relationships with our Partner Churches, helping you achieve your goals as you help us achieve our mission through your support. As such, we express our appreciation to our Partner Churches by offering:

- Free personal retreat of up to two nights annually for any full-time pastoral staff members of a Partner Church
- 1 camp scholarship annually for use at our Partner Church's discretion, with an additional scholarship for every 25 additional campers registered.
- 20% discount on current rental rates.
- Sponsorship of children's/student ministry fund raisers, with attendance at the event when possible.
- Participation in missions and/or ministry fairs.
- Camp promotion visit to your church in late winter/spring each year.
- Acknowledgement as a Partner Church on camp web site and annual report.

IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITIES

For churches interested in sponsoring the cost and/or volunteer labor for an entire project, we have identified the following big-impact needs:

- **Full time program manager position.** Estimated cost: \$24,000 (year 1), \$16,000 (year 2), \$8,000 (year 3).
- **Camp house crawl space repair, moisture remediation, and bathroom restoration.** The camp house, in which the executive director and his family reside, has significant moisture and drainage issues stemming from plumbing leaks and poor crawl space grading and access. Quoted cost (with professional labor): \$20,000.
- **Dining hall roof replacement.** Built in 1957, the dining hall has served us well. However, the roof has been leaking for several years and our continual attempts to patch and repair it have been exhausted. In order to prevent permanent damage to the building and its contents, we must replace the roof as soon as possible. Quoted cost (with professional labor): \$15,000.
- **Replacement dining hall tables and chairs.** Our hand-me-down tables and chairs are stained, damaged and failing. Estimated cost: \$7,000.
- **Stairway system to East Hill to replace washed out trails.** Significant rain during the summer of 2016 caused the main trails at camp to wash out. A work camp focused exclusively on trail repair and building a stair and platform solution to the east hill must occur prior to the 2017 camp season in order to provide a safe environment for our campers and guests. Estimated cost of materials: \$5,000.
- **Kitchen equipment and health code updates.** Estimated cost of materials: \$4,000.
- **Technology updates.** Because the camp computer no longer functions well, staff are using personal computers for work. The printer/copier is not able to scan or color copy and is so old that we can no longer get parts for it. Estimated cost of equipment: \$3,500.
- **Retreat center ice maker.** Estimated cost of equipment: \$1,500.

We praise God for the impact Camp Challenge has had on more than 30,000 campers, hundreds of retreat groups, and thousands of volunteers over the last three generations, even as we imagine what more we could do with additional Partners: serving even greater numbers, with even higher-quality programming, through even more excellently-equipped staff, in even better-cared for facilities! Please consider partnering with us in developing followers of and leaders for Jesus Christ through outdoor ministry.

This camp has a special place in my heart...my husband and I met here, and it is an honor to be able to bring my children to camp years later. Camp Challenge is one of the absolute best places to grow close to God & build life-long relationships.

-Pam, alumna

My husband and I appreciate the love, teaching, and modeling that you offer to our children. It is a gift that we could never give them. As parents they expect love from us...but it's special when they feel loved by other members of the "family of God." That makes Christian faith seem bigger, more relevant and connected to their worlds. Thank you for sharing with them the love of Jesus, for loving them where they are at, for pouring into them all the goodness that springs from a camp experience.

-Melanie, camper parent

I love Camp Challenge. Over the past 25 years I have been blessed to see lives changed as thousands of youth have committed their lives to Christ. God is at work and it is amazing to see those youth now adults serving a mighty God.

-Judy, volunteer