
"I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys... so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this."

Isaiah 41:18

A Barren Heights Encounter...

My first introduction to Barren Heights was two years ago when I brought a group of students from Christian Academy of Louisville to serve for a weekend as a part of the school's missions program. Prior to that weekend I had never heard of Barren Heights. That year, the trip was to include a day to work around the grounds and help prepare for the weekend in addition to serving the guest families. Throughout the weekend I was overwhelmed by the way Barren Heights serves families. One reason Barren Heights resonated so deeply with me is because of my own personal experience with a family member who has special needs. Due to complications at birth, my cousin's brain was deprived of oxygen. My aunt and uncle later learned that the resulting damage meant the two sides of her brain could not communicate, and she would likely never be able to express her thoughts or feelings as a "normal" child would.



Christian Academy students from the 2014 mission trip take a picture break in front of the old barn after the guests finished the Goliath challenge.

As she grew up, doctors began noticing indications that she was likely also on the autism spectrum. Then, around the age of seven, she began to have seizures. Several times these seizures have threatened her life. I have seen the challenges my aunt and uncle have faced. I have seen the looks they get in public when my cousin doesn't want to do something and the only way she can express it is to scream or lay down on the floor crying. I have heard my aunt detail the legal "hoops" she had to jump through to become her own daughter's guardian when my cousin reached her twenty-first birthday.

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 1

Then I came to Barren Heights. The story of one of the guests wasn't entirely dissimilar from my cousin's story. At Barren Heights I saw how this guest was loved even when he was loud. I saw how his mother was relieved when no one stared when he made a mess. I saw relief on his mother's face when someone walked with her son around the grounds of Barren Heights so that she could sit and have a conversation with other guests and not worry that he was in need of attention. Through all of this, that weekend at Barren Heights struck deep into my heart and changed me. When I returned home and spoke with the missions coordinator at school, I simply told her, "We have to go back next year." When the opportunity presented itself to return this past fall, I eagerly accepted the offer. Though the guest families and host families were different, and even though only two of the students returned from the previous year, the experience was just as rewarding. Again, the weekend included serving the guest families along with a service day—this year to help clean the camp and prepare it for the offseason. Both years that I have been able to bring a group of students to Barren Heights to serve, the groups have had a wide range of students. Students ranged from freshmen to seniors; we had tennis players, volleyball players, drama club members, band members, and the first year we even had a foreign exchange student. In spite of, or maybe because, of these differences, the students created a bond during the weekend and formed friendships that lasted even as they returned to the daily grind of high school. They too had been changed by their experience at Barren Heights. I am left with the question of what it is about Barren Heights that changes people. I think what has had the biggest impact on me is how real people are with one another. By the end of the weekend, all the walls we put up to protect ourselves have been taken down; the fake smiles we put on to convince people we are happy have been replaced by authentic smiles we can't remove because we have found kindred spirits—someone who understands what it is to carry a burden of someone who shares the joy of serving. This is what you encounter when you serve at Barren Heights: authenticity. Whether you have served there before or not, you will not depart the weekend as the exact same person who arrived.

-Brian Neyhart



YOUTH VOLUNTEERS (age 10+) interested in participating in the
2015 BARREN HEIGHTS Auction Collection Competition (JULY 9)

Contact Natalie at npb97@att.net to register.

We also need parent drivers. Younger children are welcome with parent participation.

The Cross

The ole rugged cross has a new place of prominence at Barren Heights. After volunteering at the first retreat of the season, one volunteer (Craig Lesmeister) suggested that our wooden cross should be moved from the loft to the Barn Church wall. The young men in this photo stayed late and worked several hours at the conclusion of the retreat to accomplish the task. Now the cross is viewed clearly and serves as a focal point in the beautiful chapel.



Prayer Team -

“We all have days that are a challenge, wearing on us, sometimes dragging us into darkness. We don’t know where to turn or who will listen. We silently deal with the issues that concern us. We feel that no one can help us get back into the light... but wait, there is a way! The simple and plain truth is we need to be consistent in giving prayer for those that have asked and by accepting and receiving PRAYER ourselves.”

At Barren Heights we are committed to making Prayer a top priority. Marilyn Ross, our new Prayer Team Leader, recently sent the above encouragement to former guests, hosts and those who had previously volunteered to lift Barren Heights prayer needs.

To volunteer as a Prayer Warrior - PLEASE email BHprayer@Barrenheights.org

To post a specific PRAYER or PRAISE please follow the link below:

<http://www.barrenheights.org/prayer-page>

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday November 14th Barren Heights Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction Louisville, Kentucky

We are currently seeking team members to join the planning committee.
If you are interested in assisting with this year's event, please contact Toni Rose (502) 327-9495 by June 10.
We will be meeting soon to begin preparations.

No experience necessary! There are lots of ways to get involved.

Donation Collecting
Data Entry
Registration
Hospitality
Accounting
Social Media

Errand Running / Driving
Decorating
Stuffing / Collating
Graphics Design
Audio Video
Entertainment

WITH GRATITUDE

What a treat it was to visit with the Children and Leaders at the Nelson County Baptist Association "Children's Ministry Day". The group collected items and prepared special gift bags with encouraging messages for our Barren Heights Families! So fitting with their theme for the year - SURRENDER*SACRIFICE*SERVE.

Thank You Nelson County Baptist Association!



SURRENDER*SACRIFICE*SERVE

WISH LIST

- 1) 9 Square Court Game (\$800) <http://store.9squareintheair.com>
- 2) Eight Conair 1600 Watt Wall Mount Hair Dryer (\$25)
- 3) Bottled Water (17 ounces or less)
- 4) Sensory Toys: Knobby Balls, Shape Sorter, etc.
- 5) Elementary Games: Giant Tumble Tower, batteries
- 6) Giant Soccer Ball (Amazon - Big Mouth Toys gigantic 6' soccer ball)
- 7) Silent Auction Contributions

Barren Heights Christian Retreat Scottsville, KY

Business Office:
9407 Westport Road
Suite 116 BOX 138
Louisville, KY 40241

Phone: 502.327.9495

Website: www.barrenheights.com

E-mail: info@barrenheights.com



Barren Heights Retreat is a non-denominational 501c3 public charity. This Christian charity is operated *solely by volunteers*. The campus, located in Allen County, Kentucky near Barren River Lake was completed in 2005 for the primary purpose of hosting mini-vacation style retreats for families who have one or more children with a physical or developmental disability. The **family enrichment retreats** run Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, and they are free.