



The BUCKING Board

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM SILVER BIRCH RANCH



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- Dave Wager

The ministries of Silver Birch Ranch (including Nicolet Bible Institute and Wolf River Refuge) have always focused on fostering and strengthening healthy relationships. First and foremost is our relationship with God, as that affects all other relationships and is vital to any successful human relationship.

Recently, the Office of Children's Mental Health sent out a news release (June 11, 2020) in which they outlined the importance of educational facilities and programs that helped build a child's social and emotional skills.

Here is a summary of some of their findings.

- When kids are taught the skills needed to build relationships, increase self and social awareness, and make responsible decisions, it leads to life-long mental wellness, academic and career success.
- Over 80% of parents and teachers, as well as most high school students think it's important to prioritize social and emotional programming in childcare settings and schools.
- For every dollar invested in social-emotional learning programming, there is an \$11 return on investment in long-term benefits to the student and to the community.

God's Word speaks of the importance of healthy relationships. Educators, social workers, and government leaders speak of the importance of prioritizing social and emotional programming, and they go as far as showing what kind of return we can expect from the resources we invest in these programs.

For over fifty years, Silver Birch Ranch has been a place that has served our nation's churches, youth, and families. We see the importance of people gathering together, learning together, serving together, and worshipping together. We understand the vital role various activities and experiences play in creating a healthy community. We see the barriers that were built between people crumble as students live, play, and learn together.

Our nation has been and currently is in the midst of uncertain times, and it is during these times that we need to look for ways to promote and participate in things that are certain. We at Silver Birch Ranch are certain that each person is created uniquely by a God who loves them, that those who are part of God's family have a unique and important contribution to the whole, and that healthy relationships can be achieved when cultivated in the proper environment. **Continue on next page...**

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

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We have been thankful for the opportunity to be a part of helping our nation's children and youth get back to focusing on real relationships rather than virtual ones. We thank all who have worked with us to help fund, staff, and work through the many details, and we look forward to being able to continue to provide these person-to-person opportunities. We invite you to pray with us that we are able to continue to offer a safe, fun, affordable, and effective Christian camping experience for many years to come.

SUMMER AT THE WOLF RIVER REFUGE

- Matthew Shruck

It's summer at the Wolf River Refuge! This spring has been an odd time for everyone, and that includes the Wolf River Refuge. While we've missed all our friends and guests this spring, we've had some unique opportunities to work around the grounds. For example, next time you visit, you'll notice a lot of new landscaping around the grounds, such as our hillside overlooking the river. You'll also notice a new swing set for our playground! Our hiking trail along the river looks better than ever, and we've added a new small clearing at our best overlook location. Our intern, Joseph, made us some great cut log benches for the overlook, too! It is the perfect spot for a morning quiet time with the Lord, or an evening sunset with your family.

Later this summer we are also installing a dock to our shoreline on the river. Steve Hanson in the mechanic shop at Silver Birch Ranch has already built the dock, and he has done a great job! It is exciting to be able to add pieces to the Refuge that will allow our guests to utilize the property and its surrounding resources even more.

The Wolf River is one of America's best freestone trout fisheries. We are hoping that this dock will see many trout and bass, and many memories made as well.

A new wooden pergola in our main loop of camp has been built with the help of Calvary Memorial Church in Racine, WI. The octagonal pergola includes six swinging benches, an outdoor tabletop, and a firepit. It's such a great addition to the Refuge. It has already been enjoyed by our NBI students, a few families, and a youth group! I am excited for all the conversations that are set to take place there.

The Wolf River Refuge is always transforming, just like the many hearts of those who stay here. COVID-19 presented odd times for our world, our country, our families, and for The Refuge. However, we can always take heart in knowing that God has great plans in store for our good and His glory. We hope to see you all soon as God continues to transform hearts and ministries.

Top 10 List

1. Electric Golf Carts
\$2,000
2. Freezer Compressor
\$3,500
3. Outdoor Basketball Backboard
\$3,000
4. Drum Machine/Drain Snake
\$600
5. Golf Cart Charger
\$400
6. Connelly Tubes
\$250
7. Paddle Boards
\$300
8. Summer Tubing Tubes
\$500
9. Outside Kitchen Grill
\$4,500
10. Cross-Country Ski Equipment
\$500

If you can help with one of these items, please contact us at 715-484-2742. Silver Birch Ranch is a 501(c)(3) organization. All gifts are tax-deductible and are appreciated. If you are interested in finding out about other ways to support the ministry of Silver Birch Ranch, visit our website.



SMALL BY DESIGN

- Steve Sanford

In a time when bigger is often viewed as success, NBI has intentionally limited itself to stay small. Though we are sometimes smaller than we'd like (20 students instead of 30), we have decided to put an upper limit on the student body in order to keep our focus on meaningful, intimate relationships.

When COVID-19 hit and students were sent home after Spring Break, their reaction was telling. We expected to hear that they missed their friends and wanted to come back, but it went much deeper - beyond the dorm and classroom to the strong connection with the entire staff as instructors, mentors, and friends. NBI/SBR had become their extended family.

This family connection makes sense on a couple of levels. First, in an age of unlimited information, NBI provides access. It provides access to instructors and mentors who will speak into their lives individually - answering their unique concerns and questions. Additionally, students minister alongside of staff watching God work and provide in amazing ways. The combination is powerful. It's no wonder that NBI is much more than a school.

So, we will remain intentionally small in order to maximize relational connection.

You can learn more about NBI by going to our website: nicoletbibleinstitute.org.

CAMP RELATIONSHIPS

- Jason Kemper

One of the things that makes camp unique is the opportunity to get away from the busyness of life and enjoy being immersed in God's creation. I've heard many of our campers, both young and old, reference camp as being their "happy place." In a lot of ways, camp is a place where people can unplug and refocus on relationships - our relationships with others, but even more importantly, our relationship with God. I think now, more than ever, that is exactly what we need.

Each summer, for as long as I can remember, SBR welcomes a group of people called Summer Staff. Our Summer Staff is primarily made up of college-age students who have been called to invest their entire summer to help make summer camp happen. Many of you might have even been a Summer Staffer at some point (perhaps under a different name at the time). I draw attention to our Summer Staff because I see them as a perfect example of the importance of being able to get away and focus on relationships. Indeed, they help us run and facilitate many of our activity areas at camp, but in the process, they are surrounded by relationships. As a supervisor of some of these staffers, it's been amazing to see the transformation that takes place from beginning to the end of summer. Besides the strengthening of friendships that takes place, seeing the deepening in their relationship with God is second to none. Since many of the "normal" distractions are gone at camp, it creates an opportunity to focus on God. The atmosphere pushes them to lean more into their relationship with Jesus on a daily basis. As a result, transformation happens.

Camp creates a platform to embody what Psalm 46:10 encourages: "Be still and know that I am God." Camp provides an environment where we can turn down the "volume" of everything that is going on around us so that we can hear the whispers of God's voice in our lives. As a college student, and a former Summer Staffer myself, I remember writing these words in a poem:

**"I long for the Silence
The place of His embrace
Where He comes alive and speaks to me
Knowing and seeing the warmth of His grace
Silence is the place I want to be."**

DONATE ONLINE!

Did you know you can donate to camp through our website? If you go to www.silverbirchbranch.org/donate, we offer a simple way for you to give to our ministries. You can choose if you want a recurring donation, choose from a suggested amount if you are unsure how much you want to give, and choose where you want your donation to go. Check out our on-line donation process today and consider giving so you can help more kids come to camp this summer!



DONATE

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CAMP RELATIONSHIPS

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Even in my experience, camp was a special place. It allowed me to refocus on the fact that God designed me to be in relationship. It helped me to realize that so often I filled my life with so many things that just created “noise,” distracting me from the very relationships for which that God created me. So now, more than ever, I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity that camp provides. It’s a chance to take a break from the deafening roar of distractions that surrounds us, so that we can embrace the silence of God’s creation and refocus our intentionality to be in relationship with the living God of the universe.



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Follow Us On:



- **Homeschool Family Camp**
August 27-30, 2020
- **Ladies' Retreat #1**
September 11-13, 2020
- **Ladies' Retreat #2**
September 18-20, 2020
- **Father-Son Retreat**
September 25-27, 2020
- **Fall Men's Retreat**
October 2-4, 2020
- **Fall Couples' Retreat**
Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 2020
- **Scrapbooking Retreat**
November 12-15, 2020
- **Quilters' Retreat**
November 19-22, 2020



Scan QR code with your smart phone to learn more about our events and retreats!

SUMMER STAFF 2020

