

Northeast Iowa Christian Camp - History

In September of 1962, the Waterloo Church of Christ (now River'sEdge Christian Church) invited men of the area Church of Christ / Christian Churches to a spaghetti dinner and a program. This was the beginning of the Area Men's Fellowship. At this first meeting it was decided to have a project for the Men's Fellowship. Several suggestions were made including the building of a camp. The men were asked to go back to their congregations and discuss the various options and return in a month to make a decision. At the next meeting, the camp was chosen as the Men's Fellowship project. Previously the area churches had rented grounds to host church camp yearly but this was costly and during the least desirable time periods. Pine Lake Christian Camp in Eldora was one camp that was rented with all ages attending the same week of camp.

After the decision was made to pursue a camp several men volunteered to look for a suitable location. Several properties were investigated: some near Eldora, on free property near Vinton, as well as another property near Bristow. God opened the door for the Bristow property, a 30 acre tract of wooded area and pasture with a creek (Pill creek) meandering thru the property. The price was \$6,000.00 with \$1,000.00 down and the remainder to be paid over the following 7 years at 5% interest. Possession of the ground was set for March 1, 1963.

Between October 1962 and February 1963 churches were asked for a commitment to incorporate. A total of 8 churches accepted the challenge: Bristow, Hampton, Mt. Auburn, Shell Rock, Waterloo, Eldora, Marshalltown, and Goldfield. The Articles of Incorporation were drawn up for consideration. Harley Duffield of Bristow became the first Chairman, John Franks of Waterloo the first Secretary, and Bill Beadle of Bristow the first Treasurer.

The trustee board forged ahead with plans to hold the first camp on the grounds in 1963 but, due to problems drilling a well, the camp had to be postponed for one more year. Another campground was rented one last time. The following is a timeline of buildings and events that have made the camp what it is today.

- ❖ October 19, 1963 – First concrete poured for the main building which housed the kitchen, chapel, dining room, and restrooms, plus two 20 feet by 40 feet dorms were built
- ❖ Four men hand dug the hole for the first septic tank
- ❖ First camp rally was held with Cecil Todd and Lowell Mason (due to heavy rains the rally could not be held on the camp grounds so, it was held in the Bristow High School)
- ❖ June 1964 – First camp was held. Within 2 years we were holding 3 weeks of camp and had 134 paid campers plus the faculty
- ❖ 1965- Canteen was built with half used as a dean's quarters
- ❖ 1966- A girl's overflow was built
- ❖ 1967- Due to camp growth it was necessary to revise and clarify the Articles of Incorporation and bring 14 trustees on board from supporting churches.
- ❖ 1969- Nurse's cabin was built
- ❖ 1970- A boy's overflow was constructed with a storm shelter underneath, 3 outdoor classrooms were built with one expanded to house a basketball and shuffleboard court

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- ❖ 1973- An addition to the girl's dorm was added which doubled the bunk beds and added restrooms
- ❖ 1976- A decision was made to build a chapel due to the crowding in the main building. Three men from the Goldfield Church of Christ informed the trustees that an anonymous donor was willing to build the chapel. The chapel was dedicated on September 25, 1977, and the donor was then revealed to be Mr. and Mrs. M.J. Siemens of Goldfield.
Due to vandalism on campus, a caretakers site was developed and a garage built. The first caretakers were Wilber and Bernice Hanson who purchased their own mobile home and moved it onto the campgrounds.
- ❖ 1977- An addition to the boy's dorm was added which doubled the bunk beds and added restrooms (again the septic tank hole was hand dug by Tracy Chamberlain, minister from Hampton Church of Christ)
- ❖ 1979- The kitchen was expanded and remodeled. New multi-purpose tennis and basketball court constructed.
- ❖ 1981- The new cooks cabin with a storm shelter was constructed.
- ❖ 1987- Heating and air conditioning for the chapel.
- ❖ 2000- The new dean's cabin was constructed with heat and air conditioning.
- ❖ 2004- The water slide was installed west of the main building.
- ❖ 2007- A part time director was hired – Leanne Gallmeyer the minister's wife from Fertile.
- ❖ 2008- An addition onto the main building of a multi-purpose building – useful for indoor volleyball / basketball.
- ❖ 2009- Upgraded electrical throughout campus. Two portable classrooms with air conditioning were placed beside the chapel serving as overflow housing as well as classroom space. Leanne Gallmeyer was replaced by Amy Terrill as acting part time director due to Leanne moving out of state. The current caretakers L.D. and Esther Griner retired and moved to southern Iowa. They had served the camp for over 11 years. Others who had been caretakers or managers over the years were Todd and Melissa Smith and Walt Clausen.

God has provided so many blessings for the camp and blessed the efforts of those with the vision to reach the lost. The Executive Board and Board of Trustees are committed to the future of the camp and any changes that will make the camp relevant and true to God's Word. May the story continue for years to come.....!