# 60 YEARS OF

## ANNUAL REPORT

2021

"For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies." -Psalm 57:10



# STATE OF THE CAMP

When I take the time to check in and think about how Spofford is doing, I look at three things – the corporation, the community and the calling. Let me share with you my take on how we are doing in these areas as we look back on 2021.

#### THE CORPORATION

I would like to think that Camp Spofford is as healthy of an organization as you will find right now. In 2021 we saw the elimination of all debt for the first time in more than 15 years. Financially speaking, we finished the year with no debt and a surplus in our operating budget. We met or exceeded all of our financial goals that we set a year ago. We saw the return of Youth Camp and Retreats after being shut down by COVID-19 with record numbers in our summer programs.

We have been able to invest heavily in the property. Starting in 2020 with the completion of Hillside, our new dorms and chapel, we continue this year with a series of smaller projects that have tackled some of our greater needs. Now we are looking ahead to 2022 and 2023 when we will finally replace our three oldest buildings - Lower Girls, Cooks Cabin and Chesterfield, and build a new Girls Staff Cabin and a new Family Lodge!

Our staff has been rebuilt with a variety of new hires this year and has grown to Camp's largest year round team ever - a staff of 13 men and women committed to working together to fulfill our mission for God's glory.

#### THE COMMUNITY

Relationships and commitments are often tested within a community when circumstances get difficult, and you and I have felt this difficulty in so many areas of our lives - our churches, our schools, our communities and even our homes. Spofford has not been immune to these difficulties, but I believe our community has only gotten stronger over this last year. At times I had to have hard conversations around decisions that were made, especially in regards to COVID-19, but it never fractured or ended a relationship. We continue to lead with love and care for one another.

In addition, our community has proven to be both resilient and committed to the work of Camp Spofford. We continue to see more and more people join in the work we do with their time, talent and/or treasure. I am always amazed by the generosity and consistency of those who partner with us. Our community is also growing. Because of the amount of turnover in Family Camp and Youth Camp, we have seen over 100 new families get involved at Spofford over the last year as well as over 200 kids from the local area attend Camp this summer. This is more than we have ever had before. God is opening new doors and expanding our reach both locally and in the region.

#### THE CALLING

We took time over the last two years to think through our mission statement and refine it to refocus our attention on the work God has always called Spofford to - being a place where people can know Jesus, follow Him together and rest in the beauty of God's creation.

We must never take for granted the work God is calling us to do at Spofford. We stay committed to our work with families, kids and churches who come to Camp. I am sensitive to the Spirit's leading and step forward in faith, knowing it is His work and His power that make it happen. We continue to explore the horizon to see where God may be calling us to next.

If there is a verse that captures my thoughts for Spofford during 2021 it would be this:

"The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. (Exodus 14:14-15).

The Lord fights for Spofford, he is responsible for so much good that has happened here and he calls us to both be still and move on. Our soul finds rest as we move forward with the confidence that God is fighting for us. Praise be to God.

> -Dan Syvertsen Executive Director

To be a place where people can know Jesus, follow Him together and rest in the beauty of God's creation.

# WELCOME TO THE TEAM

Meet the New Staff Around Camp

### AARON DOCI (INTERN)

Hey! I'm Aaron. Fresh out of college and my first summer at Camp Spofford, you're likely to find me working housekeeping, serving a meal or helping Dave around the grounds. A jack of all trades! Other than being in close proximity to the lake for an occasional fall swim, Spofford's felt like a breath of fresh air in an intentional community I'm grateful to be living in.





#### NICK JOHNSON (GUEST GROUP COORDINATOR)

Hey, I'm Nick, the new Guest Group Coordinator here at Camp Spofford. I have been around Spofford since June of 2020, but just recently accepted this full-time role in October. My role mainly consists of booking and hosting retreat groups throughout the year. Growing up going to and working at a camp had such a positive influence in my life. This led me to pursue a career in camp ministry to try and help others experience what God can do through camp. The environment and community created at Camp is impossible to beat. Part of that community building is being competitive, so if you swing by the volleyball court on a summer afternoon, there's a good chance you'll find me there!

#### DANNY DEGIROLOMO (INTERN)

Hi! I'm Danny, an 18-year-old from Trumbull, Connecticut. I graduated from high school in June of 2021, and decided to take a gap year prior to attending Southern Connecticut State University. At Camp I've worked housekeeping, facilities, kitchen, hosting and waterfront between summer 2020 and this current period. I love Camp Spofford because of the bonds that are formed here; Camp rapidly becomes a second home and a family for any amount of time spent here, be it as a guest, summer staff, or fulltime retreat staff. As a young man, I have received mentorship and excellent examples of adult faith and life from my co-workers and friends here.

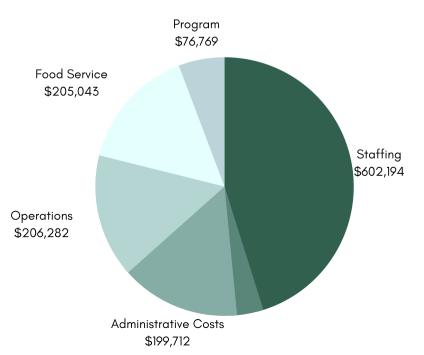


# FINANCIAL REPORT

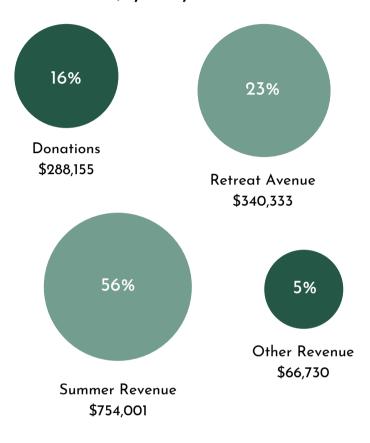
### OTHER MONEY RAISED

- 2021 Step Forward Campaign
  - Room Improvements: \$89,196
  - Emergency Fund: \$119,148
- ALL of the debt remaining on Granite Lodge (\$86,515.52) has been paid off. Thank you to our incredible donors!
- Annual Golf Classic: \$40,051





### TOTAL INCOME \$1,449,219



"To be able to bring a group of Christians, Muslims, and Hindus together to study about Jesus was truly a work of the Holy Spirit, and I am just so grateful to have a spot like Spofford where this can happen."

> -Chris Rowley Week Six Guest & Retreat Leader



### YOUTH CAMP UPDATE

Imagine being an Israelite, living in Egypt during the time of the 10 plagues. This guy Moses, former Egyptian royalty, is now back in town and wreaking havoc on the nation. Your drinking water has turned to blood, you've got frogs under your mattress, and boils are afflicting people everywhere. You've heard rumors that Moses is acting on God's behalf. He says he's trying to free you from slavery, but it's kind of hard to listen to when you have to eat soup filled with flies and breathe gnat-saturated air. In a few short weeks though, as you were marching out of the city, passing through the bed of a deep sea, and seeing your enemies destroyed before your eyes, you probably would have learned a significant lesson about God: sometimes He brings great good out of great suffering.

While our COVID-19 struggles have not been on the same level as Israel's struggles back then, there has still been very real pain, suffering, and tragedy within this year. As I write this and think back on Youth Camp this summer, I can't help but think about God's process of converting pain to beauty. By God's grace, five out of six weeks were nearly sold out this summer, something that hadn't been done in more than a decade! Back in the fall of 2019 prior to the pandemic, we set a goal of filling Youth Camp by 2025, so to see this almost come to fruition four years earlier blew us away.

There seems to be a reason for this growth though. As we quickly realized, kids needed camp more than ever. It had been a year and half since many kids had the chance to have real community with their peers, and it showed. The depth of hurt, pain, sorrow, depression, and tragedy that we heard come out of the mouths of nine year olds was horrific. Listening to their stories left our counseling staff in tears often, pleading for God to show them a way to help in the short six days we had with each camper. We had the privilege of watching God answer that prayer time and time again. By Friday afternoon chapel each week, it was an entirely different group of kids. Sorrow turned joy, timidness to freedom, despair to hope. We read many emails from many families about the change they saw in their kids, starting with the ride home from Camp. Counselors saw kids come to know Jesus for the first time every week, our Senior High Week students began a bible study group that continued after Camp ended, and our Aftershock crew decided to meet up in the fall just to reconnect and keep their new friendships alive. We gave away more than 250 bibles to kids that didn't have one before. We gave out more than \$45,000 in scholarships thanks to your generous giving. We served about 250 kids from the local community through our new day camp program and Adventure Day Camp program. I can keep going, but the point would be the same. This summer, God took the deep hurt we've all been going through and redeemed it into something beautiful.

We are forever thankful for what happened this summer, even after having to cancel Teen Week One due to a COVID-19 outbreak. We were given a chance to jump start change in more than 500 kid's lives and to see our own lives change alongside theirs for the better. We are filled with anticipation for what next summer will look like, and to see how God continues to grow this ministry!

> -Tory Abrahamsen Program Director

### SPOFFORD HIGH

In 2020, we began a youth ministry for students in grades 9-12, which we named Spofford High. The idea was to be a place where students from the area could form community with their peers and also connect with local church youth leaders, who serve as the adult leaders on the Spofford High team. In our first year, we had anywhere between 6 and 12 students each night, and we had a blast!

At the end of this summer, our team of adult and student leaders came together to plan for and dream about another year of Spofford High. It became abundantly clear to us that for many of the students attending, the night became a highlight of their week. We also learned from speaking with other churches across New England, that COVID has had a big impact on youth ministries. Many churches lost their youth leaders, lost significant resources, and no longer had the bandwidth to run a successful youth ministry. It was all the more reason to continue on Spofford High for another year.

So far this year, we have roughly 25 students attending every night, from four different school districts, some of which attend church regularly and others who come because their friends do...and maybe for pizza too. It's a privilege to see how God is using this ministry to offer kids who don't attend church a safe space to meet Christian people, learn that not all Cristians are like the ones they see portrayed in the media, and begin to open themselves up to teachings of Jesus. Spofford High meets every other Wednesday from 6:30 - 9:00 PM.

> -Tory Abrahamsen Program Director

### RETREATS

This retreat season felt like we were back in full swing! Between the Men's, Women's, Fall Foliage, and Family Weekend retreats, our Camp and staff served over 430 guests. It has been truly remarkable to see so many people come back after a year where everything was shut down and the fear to gather was prevalent. God has been so faithful to Camp Spofford! Here's a quote from our Family Weekend retreat that I feel pretty accurately sums up how He moved through us this fall: "Time spent at Spofford allow[ed] us to rest, reconnect with family and friends, and experience our relationship with God and each other in a different way than we [do] at home." To God be the glory!

> -Alissa Abrahamsen Office Manager



### **60TH ANNIVERSARY**

This year we are celebrating 60 years of God's faithfulness at Camp Spofford! We hope you can join us May 20-22 for a celebration weekend. A few of the highlights are a fundraising banquet, concert, and Sunday morning chapel. We are so excited to gather with old and new friends to praise God for all that he has done for us!

"When I think of Spofford I think of the peacefulness we experienced. The quiet moments spent privately with the Lord in devotion by the lake and other areas of Camp were super special; later some even shared what God revealed to them."

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Board of Directors officially approved a new project that involves three of our oldest buildings - Cooks Cabin, Chesterfield, and Lower Girls Staff Cabin.

The plan includes relocating Lower Girls to the current Chesterfield, which will be gutted, renovated and rebuilt as a large cabin with bathrooms inside.

The second part of the plan is to demolish the current Lower Girls and Cooks Cabin and build a new two-story year-round lodge with a walkout basement. The lodge will include four new accommodations, laid out as a suite (two bedrooms, bathroom and sitting room).

The project will also include a new leach field in the trailer park and stormwater management around the creek to reduce runoff into the lake.



### ESTIMATED COST: \$850,000

Raised over two years (2022-2023)



### TIMELINE

- Planning and Approval Stage: Winter of 2021/2022 (currently underway)
- Permitting and Selecting a Contractor: Spring of 2022
- Begin Construction: September 2022
- Complete Construction: May 2023

### **GROUNDS & FACILITIES UPDATE**

Winter is almost upon us...frosty nights, short days, sun shining, boats away, dock and raft out, summer buildings winterized and leaves falling. Except those Oaks that won't give up their leaves. It makes me want to shake those trees to get the leaf removal behind us. The seasons fly by. Hard to believe Camp is again getting ready for the winter retreat season.

One of our exciting fall projects around Camp is the newly renovated trailer park bathroom with epoxy floors, painted walls, new lighting and fixtures, as well as heaters and higher toilets (as requested). This is one of the many projects that was completed this year at Camp. Some of the others you may have noticed this summer include:

- Chalet Deck
- Granite Lobby
- Hillside Stage
- New furniture in lobbies throughout Camp
- New window treatments, lamps, & artwork in rooms
- Renovation of Cheshire 3 room to make Cheshire 3 & 4
- New "queen" mattresses in Tentels

We are excited about 2022 projects, including getting an estimate on the cost of replacing the pull chains in the Tentels with longer ones. We hope this estimate comes in under budget.

Looking forward to seeing each of you at the 60th!

-Dave Nelson Operations Director

### PSALM 121

#### A Devotional

The last two years have been difficult in many ways for all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic, political unrest, and racial tensions are just a few of the big picture issues. Yet these circumstances have downstream consequences, wreaking havoc in individuals' and families' lives, including: financial hardship, emotional struggles, and relational heartache. And this doesn't even begin to count the toll of other personal issues: parenting trouble, health trouble, or trouble at school.

One thing is clear: we need help.

Psalm 121 is a psalm for those in need of help, which means it's a psalm for all of us. In these few verses, the psalmist comforts and directs our hearts to trust in the Lord, who is "your keeper" (121:4).

Rather than the earthly resources we are prone to look to when we need help, the psalmist reminds us that our help comes from the Lord alone. "My help," he writes, "comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (121:1).

But what form does this help come in? We might be surprised with the psalmist's answer, because he doesn't say that God solves all our problems. The Lord knows better than to remove our troubles too soon. Instead, the psalmist describes how God delights to meet us in them and to carry us through them. He refers to this divine help with the word "keep" (sometimes translated "watch"). In fact, he uses it six times in the psalm!

This idea of God as our "keeper" comes from the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6. The priests of Israel were to bless the people, pronouncing these words over them: "The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." (Numb. 6:24-26)

When life is hard we can become confused, angry, and suspicious that maybe God has forgotten us - or perhaps worse, maybe he's given up on us. Maybe he's not keeping us after all? But the psalmist reminds us that this couldn't be further from the truth.

He describes the Lord's unceasing care, saying, "he who keeps you will not slumber" (121:3). Unlike humans, God is not limited by any physical restriction such as the need for sleep. Therefore, under his watch, "the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night" (121:6). In other words, under his sovereign protection you are safe (121:7), because he is always on guard.

Moreover, the psalmist says the Lord keeps "your going out and your coming in" (121:8). That's a Hebrew way of saying he leads and guides you in and out of circumstances. Whether in valleys or on mountaintops, the Lord is with you, directing your steps. No circumstance will come your way that he hasn't designed for your eternal good.

In times of trouble, we have this hope: the Lord is your keeper. Because of this truth, we can find rest and strength in him when we need help. Trusting that his hands are tenderly leading you in and out of your darkest moments is the key to striving towards the light at the end of the tunnel.

-Jon Deming



## THE FACES OF CAMP SPOFFORD



































