



# 2023 Annual Report



# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

But he said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

Luke 18:27

One of my stories over the last year has been the work God has been doing in my own soul and the personal growth I have experienced while leading Spofford. It actually began in the fall of 2022 when I joined a coaching cohort with Unhurried Living and Alan Fadling, author of *The Unhurried Leader*. I would spend the better part of six months under Alan’s coaching, where he would introduce me to a new way of thinking about my work. It was a subtle, but meaningful shift that I am still learning to apply:

My work at Spofford is not something I do **for** God, instead it is something I do **with** God.

Learning to work with God, instead of for God, has been life giving and freeing. I am learning to not carry the anxiousness of leading Spofford by myself and taking more opportunity to slow down, seek God and enjoy working with Him as the gift that it is. That is a glimpse at my story from this year, and I would love to share more with you the next time we see each other or talk.

Reflecting back on 2023, I remember coming into the year knowing it would be a pivotal one for the Camp. We were facing major repairs to the gymnasium, fundraising for the Something New Campaign, completing the new Girl’s Staff Cabin, starting construction on a new Family Lodge and hiring an Associate Director, all while running sold out and full programs and retreats (just writing all this out makes me thankful that I work with God, and not for Him)! It is humbling to look back now and see that all of these have been accomplished, as you will read about in the rest of this report.

I also thank God for the staff and volunteers that I get to work with here at Spofford. For the most part, our year round staff has now been together since 2020, when we were facing great uncertainty and challenges. I have a vivid memory of one board member saying at that time that there is no way God had put this team together to do nothing, and she was right. So much of the great work God is doing at Spofford can be traced back to our year round staff, our Board of Directors and our summer staff. It is a joy to serve alongside each of them.

This year we added Lisa Martens and Rachel Sanders to our year round staff and saw the promotions of Tory Abrahamsen and Katie Johnson to lead and manage our growing staff.

The best way to capture the work God is doing at Spofford is through stories. Stories of the kids, families and churches who come to Spofford and find a place where they can know Jesus, follow Him together and rest in the beauty of God’s creation. This year’s annual report is a collection of both ministry updates and stories from a few people whose lives have been impacted by their time at Camp. I hope you will find them as encouraging as I do and join me in giving to God all the glory for the great work he has done (and is doing).

Thank you for your consistent and generous support of Camp Spofford. You are having an impact greater than any of us will ever know this side of eternity.

Let’s keep going.

Dan

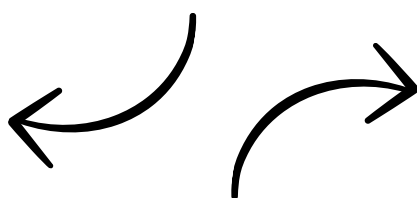




# NEW TO THE TEAM



Hi, I'm Lisa Martens. I moved here from Vermont this summer, and am in the middle of my first year working in the housekeeping and food service departments. It's been a blessing meeting so many wonderful people while integrating into camp rhythms, and I've been blown away watching God orchestrate the details of a new season of life!



Hi, I'm Rachel! I grew up in Westmoreland, NH, attended undergrad in Tennessee and moved back here to find an amazing opportunity to work at Camp Spofford. I have an energetic little girl named Eve who loves camp life. Between watching my daughter create strong memories at camp, as well as the opportunity that I have had to build new relationships between campers and staff—2023 has been a wonderful year of God working in the stories of our lives.



## SUMMER STAFF

We couldn't do what we do here at Spofford without our wonderful staff. Our 2023 summer staff truly worked together as a team and pushed one another to become more like Christ. We consider the staff to be a ministry in itself and it brings us joy to see how much growth can happen when you work at camp, surrounded by other believers and caring mentors. We are thankful for all of the high schoolers, college students, and adults who served all summer long!

# MEET OUR INTERNS



GEORGE DIMITRIADIS

Camp has been a special place for me for over a decade now. I first came as a 10 year old guest and now find myself working as an intern after three summers on staff. This is where I personally found Jesus and where Jesus pointed me in different directions in my life. As a guest, the week my family spent here was the highlight of my year consistently. It was the place I could be surrounded by those who think like me and a place where worshiping Jesus was not only fun but freeing to not hold back my love for him. My first summer on staff I decided to be baptized, changed my career path and dedicated my life to serve him and his people.



BROOKE RODGERS

My family was invited to Spofford by church friends when I was 8 years old. As an Adventurer in Family Camp, I witnessed healthy and authentic Christian role models. I was 13 and still so excited to go to camp that I packed months in advance. I am 18 now and working as a 2023-2024 intern. I did Aftershock in 2020, worked on waitstaff in the summer of 2021, kitchen in 2022, and was a counselor this past summer. At first sight working on staff is appealing because it looks like everyone is friends, and it is true, but the friends I made at camp are not like all the others. They care about my faith and life journey. Being a counselor was a completely unique and special experience. Particularly when I saw how God used my challenges to help another person. I learned how to be more patient and love others better. Camp Spofford is where I really learned what it meant to follow Jesus with your life, made my best friends, and had an immense amount of fun.



JORDAN SCHUCH

My first summer at Camp Spofford was in 2023. The opportunity that God has given me to be involved in such an amazing ministry is such a privilege. The time I spent as a counselor gave me a new perspective on things and allowed me to put the lives and wellbeing of the campers ahead of my own. The internship so far has given me time to reflect on my faith and take a step away from the fast-paced nature of the outside world. The community that I've become a part of and the relationships that I've built with the staff and the guests has been the experience of a lifetime. The Lord has done and will continue to do miraculous things at Camp Spofford and I am truly honored to be able to serve at Camp as well as to serve the guests that choose to spend time here.



# GRACE'S SUMMER STAFF STORY

While on staff at Spofford this summer I was blessed beyond any expectations that I had when I first applied. I gained friendships that I never thought I was going to have and I was blessed to have Godly mentors in my life who continuously poured into me! This summer I made the decision to get baptized and my youth pastor, who introduced me to Spofford, made the trip up to do it in the lake. Above all, my relationship with Christ grew significantly over the summer.

When I arrived at Camp, my faith was pretty strong, but I truly believe that I learned how to actively live out my faith. Every week, Dave Nelson would say, "Love God, love people." It seems simple but I truly learned that my life isn't about me. It's about serving God and showing people who he is. Whether that's through picking up food that a baby threw everywhere or giving somebody a giant smile. God really used this experience to not only humble me but show his faithfulness in my own life.

Looking back on my decision to work at Camp, I can see God's faithfulness. In January, I was so lost with what God was doing in my life, I was desperate for community and uncertain if I should apply. At the same time, I wrote a bunch of things that I was going to pray about in 2023. One of those things was Spofford and I put a question mark next to it. I took a leap of faith and filled out an application, not knowing what God would do with it. A few months later, I opened up a job offer in my inbox. I pondered it a lot and that's when doubt and fear set in. I knew the devil was trying to instill fear in me. Despite this, God was tugging on my heart so I accepted the offer to work.

In the months leading up, I felt so much fear that I wasn't going to have friends, I was going to hate it, I was going to regret it, etc. Once I settled into my camp life, I realized how silly those fears were. The adult staff ended up being some of the nicest and friendliest people I ever met. Then making friends wasn't hard because of just how welcoming people were. Lastly, although we were there to serve the guests, it became evident from the first day that the leadership prioritized our walks with God. It felt like it was going to be a long summer of working, but it ended up being so short and left me sad thinking about leaving my Camp family. As I reflect on how God brought me to Camp, I can't help but have gratitude for God hearing my prayers and answering them.

Most people who don't know Spofford personally may think that it's just a little summer camp on a lake. While these things are true, more importantly it is a place that embodies the idea of love and putting God above all. Thank you God for giving me a second home on this earth.



# RETREATS & FAMILY CAMP

## RETREATS

Our fall retreat season continues to grow more than we could've ever hoped for. Once again, our Women's Retreat was full, our Men's Retreat numbers grew, and our Fall Foliage Retreat maintained its vitality. Because our Women's Retreat has now filled up several years in a row, we have decided that it's time to run a second retreat in 2024 - both to allow more women to join us at Camp and to ease some of the cramped housing and dining hall/chapel congestion. Winter Family Weekend has also become a new and annual tradition in our retreat schedule. It is a chance for the whole family to come and enjoy one another, rest and follow Jesus together. Our prayer for next year's retreats is that God would continue to use Camp Spofford and our staff to point guests to Him and give them the physical and spiritual rest that is so desperately needed in a world where our culture prioritizes the pursuit of business.



## FAMILY CAMP

As we moved into the winter season, our staff often reflected on how wonderful our 2023 summer season was. Our Family Camp program continues to reach families from all over the country, including many local families and first-time guests. We continue to sell out year after year, and our 2024 program is no exception! On November 1st (our open registration day for Family Camp), we received over 30 calls within the first few minutes of our office being open. As our waitlist continues to grow, we desire and pray for ways to serve these families too. Our staff is so grateful for the many families who set time aside to join us year after year, and we love that our reach continues to grow through stories of the life-change, connection, and rest that happens here.



# YOUTH CAMP



For the past couple of years, we have been working on maximizing the time and resources we have available to us for Youth Camp purposes. Our goal has been to fill every bunk every week, and to offer a full Youth Camp week for every week of Family Camp, with the hope that more kids will come to know Jesus. Youth Camp has been growing rapidly towards that goal, coming to fruition in the summer of 2022 when we added a third Junior Week mid-summer to accommodate multiple waitlist campers.

In January of 2023, we entered our registration season with a full 7 weeks of Youth Camp planned, and an expectation that we would have a waitlist almost every week of the summer. We were able to serve 716 campers this summer across three Junior Weeks, three Teen Weeks, one Senior High Week, Aftershock, and six weeks of Voyagers. We had waitlists for twelve of those sessions, more than 275 campers coming from our local community, and a full team of counselors - some of which had never been to Camp Spofford before. Praise God! Those numbers are absolutely worth celebrating, but only when we connect them to our purpose. We know we are not in this for finances or bragging rights, but to bring rest and the knowledge of Jesus to our campers.

There is another number from this past summer though that holds even greater significance to us: **three**. In each week of Youth Camp, campers are given the Gospel message by their counselors, and an opportunity to respond to that message. We also give out bibles to anyone who does not have one at home to read. Many times, we get to witness the joy of campers turning their lives over to Jesus for the first time; however, this summer we had the chance to do something we've never done in Youth Camp before: baptism!

**Three** campers approached us this summer, one from Teen Week and two Aftershockers, with a desire to be baptized before leaving Camp. With their parents' blessing, we were able to baptize all of them in the lake after their week of camp, with their family, friends, and fellow campers and counselors in attendance. It was a powerful reminder of why we work, why we get muddy, why we play games, dance in chapel, enjoy meals together and swim to the raft on a hot day. God is working the whole week, chipping away at cold hearts to show his beauty, love, and joy on offer.

As we look ahead to 2024, we will continue to offer seven weeks of programming and we pray that once again, God will continue to be in our corner, allowing us the honor of bringing His Gospel forward to hundreds of kids and teenagers.





# WHITEOUT

Whiteout is our winter retreat for New England and Tri-State youth ministries. Our goal is to offer a weekend filled with high energy programming, live music, relevant speakers, and good food for students in grades 6-12. Oftentimes, youth leaders plan their own retreat weekends and spend their time focusing both on overseeing logistics and building relationships. At Whiteout, we take care of all the details so youth leaders can focus solely on building those deep relationships and mentoring their students.

This past winter, roughly 400 students and adult leaders flooded Camp for a few days of competition, food, ice skating, sledding, and four sessions filled with worship and teaching from local pastors. We were blessed with incredible music from SEU Worship out of Southeastern University in Florida, and the Noah Ayers Band from Cedarville, Ohio. At the end of each weekend, students were asked to consider what God was calling them to do with their lives, choosing between five options, using the acronym F.O.C.U.S.:

- **Follow** Jesus for the first time
- Commit to serving **Others**
- Find a solid **Community**
- **Update** their spiritual rhythms
- Keep **Searching** for God if they are not ready to commit to Jesus



We had nine students choose to Follow Jesus for the first time, 130 choose to serve others more, 81 committed to find community, 108 chose to update their rhythms, and 36 decided to keep searching for Jesus.

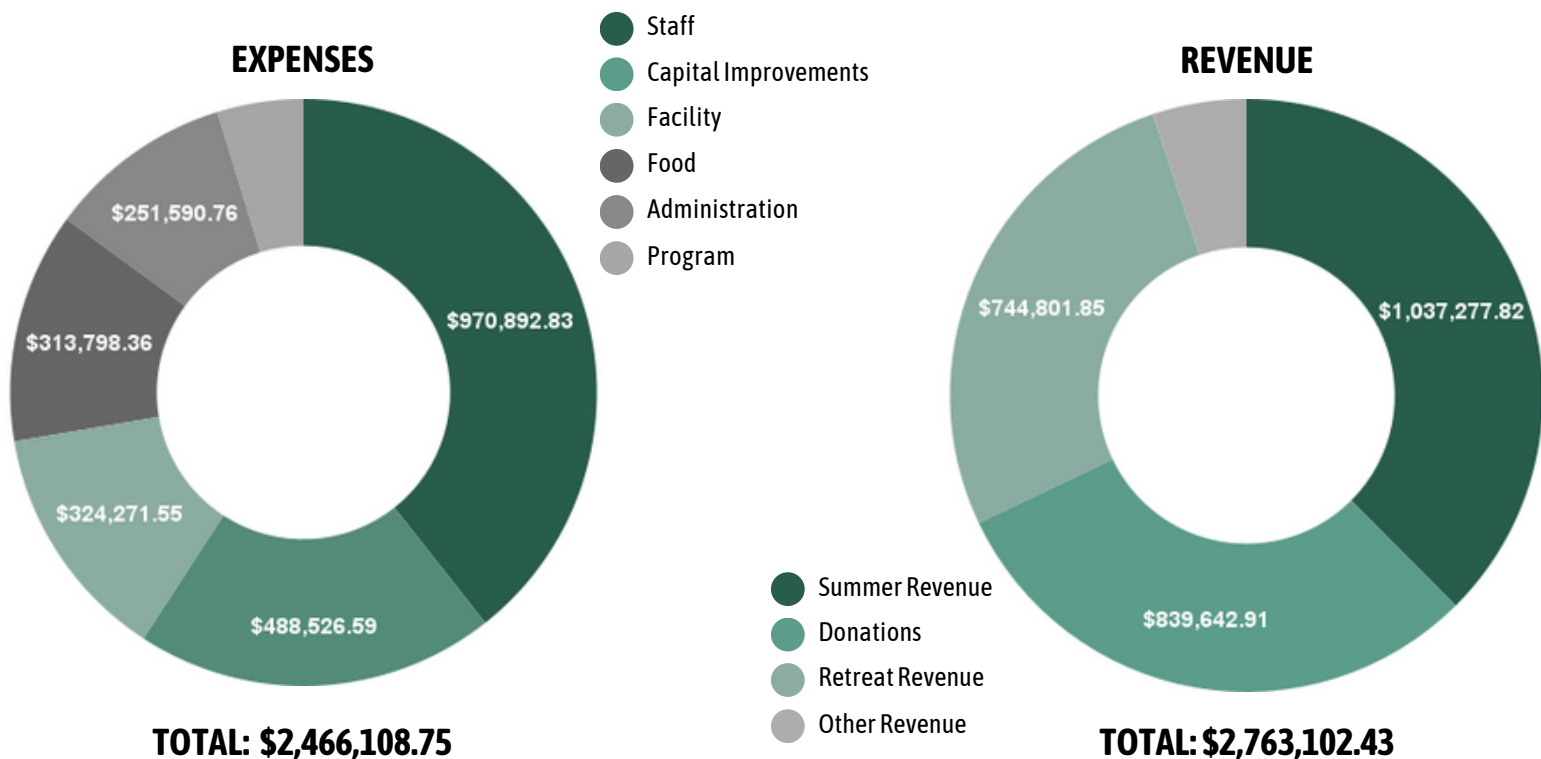
It's a tangible way for us to gauge where our students are at, and a tool for adult leaders to use in determining how to best mentor their individual students. Be praying for each of those commitments, that God will continue to help them work out those choices, even now, months removed from their decision.

This coming winter, Whiteout is growing again. In response to turning away churches on our waitlist, Whiteout is growing from two weekends to four. Amazingly, each of these four weekends is already sold out, with a growing waitlist once again! We are not sure what this means for the future, other than it is clear that God is using Whiteout to meet a need in our part of the country. Be praying for us this coming February as we once again serve students and leaders at these retreats. Students will be given those same five F.O.C.U.S. options this year. Please pray that God would clearly direct their hearts, give their adult leaders wisdom to help them, and supply students with the strength to commit to them upon returning home!





# FINANCIAL REPORT



## BUILDING MONADNOCK



The 2nd phase of the Something New Campaign was the planned construction for the new Family Lodge. We broke ground on the project this Fall, and expect construction of our newest building, which we are calling Monadnock, to be completed for the 2024 Summer. It includes four rooms to be used for Family Camp and year-round retreat guests, as well as a basement lounge and storage area. We are grateful for all those who have supported the project with their donations, time and service. We look forward to opening the doors to our newest building soon!



### Fundraising Update:

Estimated Cost - \$750,000

Raised to Date - \$632,000

Still to Raise - \$118,000

# THE HANSEN FAMILY STORY

Eric and Katie Hansen, along with their three daughters (Ellie, 16, Lia, 14 and Claire, 13) joined the Spofford staff for the 2023 summer. Katie had grown up coming to Spofford and worked on staff in high school and college, but this was her family's first time experiencing a summer at Spofford.

Eric and Katie served as the directors of our day camp program, Voyagers. Ellie worked on staff in childcare and Lia and Claire helped in a variety of areas. What a joy it was to get to know the Hansen family and see their giftedness be used to bless both our summer staff and the kids from our local community who attended day camp. We have asked Eric to share a little bit about their family's experience at Spofford in 2023, which only happened because God closed the doors of plans they were pursuing, and opened new ones they did not know were there. Here is the Hansen family's story in Eric's words:

*Like almost everything else in the last three years, the summer of 2023 did not go according to plan. "Our plan" had us relocating our family to Kijabe, Kenya to serve at Rift Valley Academy, to experience a different culture and serve the children of local missionaries. Ironically, Katie's passion for serving at RVA was ignited at Spofford, where two dear families had themselves served. We experienced God's words in Proverbs 16:9, "A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps."*

*Our plans to move to Kijabe were disrupted, and the Lord providentially directed us to Spofford for the summer. Although we did not experience African culture or minister to missionaries' families, our family did experience the Spofford culture and we were privileged to teach the Gospel to children of local families by leading the Voyagers Program.*

*There is much about our last three years that puzzles me and for which answers are not yet apparent. But as I reflect on our summer, I'm struck by how Spofford's mission to **know, follow and rest**, rang true in our lives. While we certainly worked hard, the lasting imprint of the summer was not the ministry we gave nearly as much as the ministry we received. Camp reminded us that God's promises are just as true, and our Anchor just as sure, especially when the path forward is hard to discern.*

*Camp leadership modeled for us Jesus' love and care. Camp introduced us to new friends – and reconnected us with old ones – who encouraged, challenged and enriched our lives. The 2023 summer did not materialize like we had planned, but we were given the gift of resting in the confidence of knowing and following the One whose schedule never gets thrown off course and whose love never changes.*







THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT







# **CAMP SPOFFORD**

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