

# OZARK WILDERNESS BOYS CAMP



Issue #8, Spring 2025

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## God With Us

One of the foundational principles that the camp program operates on is this: We do everything with boys, not to them or for them. This concept affects many aspects of everyday life at camp. One example is the two counselors, or Chiefs, who live with the boys in the campsite 24 hours a day, rather than multiple staff doing daily shifts. Even at this early stage of camp development, this principle affects how we lay out and design the camp buildings. However, this idea is not original with camp. It isn't even a new concept.

As with any principle that's effective in relationships, the idea of "With rather than To or For", can be found in God's Word. Think back to Old Testament times. God did many things for his people, the Israelites. Food rained from Heaven. Water gushed from a rock. Enemies were destroyed. The pillar of cloud and fire told them when to move and when to set up camp. Blessing or destruction was done to them as their behavior deserved. Sadly, despite all this direct intervention from God, the Israelites turned their backs on God time after time.

With the coming of Jesus, there was a shift in how God related to His People. Matthew 1:23 says, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us)." Jesus came as a baby and lived with us. Then, after his death and resurrection, He laid the responsibility of advancing His kingdom on our shoulders, promising that the Holy Spirit would be with us. This whole idea of "With rather than to or for" is summed up in the name of Jesus, Immanuel.

This shift, Immanuel-God with us, has many implications for the Christian today. When faced with the difficulty of life in a sin cursed world, human nature tends to do one of two things. Either we try to do it all on our own strength, or we plead with God to intervene and begin to doubt God when He doesn't. To do life with God, means that we do everything within our power to live for God, delighted to be included in the work of the Father, while praying earnestly for God's help, realizing our complete insufficiency.

When someone overcomes severe trials or temptations, is it because of their struggle and self-discipline? Or is it because of God's enabling power? I believe the answer is Yes, Immanuel, God with us. It takes both. If a pastor delivered a powerful message last Sunday, was it because of his many prayers and hours of study? Or was it the moving of the Holy Spirit? Yes, Immanuel, God with us. When a large property is purchased for the purpose of helping boys and families in need, is it because a bunch of rich men just made it happen? Or was it a miracle from God? Yes, Immanuel, God with us.

Which is more amazing, that God would send a check for a \$1,000,000 from nowhere? Or that He would change the hearts of naturally self-righteous, materialistic men to have love, compassion, and generosity towards others? The fact that Jesus came to do life with us is good news indeed! Lord willing, we will be able to share that good news with many boys and families through this camp.

Brandon Bowman, Camp Supervisor

## 2024 Project and Financial Report

Total contributed income for 2024: \$827,097.09

Projects completed in 2024:

- 2,500 tree seedlings planted
- Property improvements and cleanup
- Stone House  $\frac{3}{4}$  renovated
- Buckhorn Cabin placed on full basement
- Shower/Laundry House site prepared, and slab poured

We are very grateful for all the support we received in 2024. We were able to complete most of the projects planned for the year. Thanks to generous donations in materials from multiple suppliers and many energetic volunteers most of the projects were completed well under the budgeted cost.



## 2025 Financial Budget

### Operating Expenses:

General Operating Expense .....	\$423,800.00
Loan Repayment for Original Land Purchase .....	\$100,000.00

### Building Projects for 2025:

Stone House (complete renovation and landscaping) .....	\$40,000.00
Shower/Laundry House .....	\$75,000.00
Kitchen Setup for Stage 1. Chuckwagon .....	\$15,000.00
Office Setup .....	\$10,000.00
Total Funds needed for 2025 .....	\$663,800.00



# The Fisherman

One very windy day in November, when the wind was whipping up whitecaps on our pond, a great blue heron held his post along the shore. With his feathers ruffled and his spear tucked low, he braved the elements. Fishing. It wasn't the kind of day you'd have expected him to have any luck, though you might have wished it on him for his dedication.

Suddenly my son reported that it looked like the fisherman was struggling and slipping at the water's edge. What was going on? A moment later he stood on the shore, proudly holding a bass, nearly a foot long, crossway in his bill. Our family gathered at the window.

Now just looking at his catch we thought, "yes, this was a fine trophy, but surely there's no way it would make a realistic meal." We watched.

For a time, the heron put his head down and rested the weight on the ground. Next he worked the fish around until its head was toward his throat and its body and tail hung out lengthwise. Then, he straightened his long kinky neck, pointed his great bill skyward with the fish protruding beyond, and took it down. We groaned at the thought and laughed at the sight as his neck swelled to meet the demand. We cheered as that great bulge slid down and his neck settled back into its usual curve. What a meal! Surely that would last a week.

Over the next several days, when we'd see a heron out there, we'd joke that he's likely still full from his feast. And when in flight, to us he seemed to fly low and heavy, like an overloaded cargo jet.

The next Sunday morning, the pond waters were glassy and still. Our heron stalked ever so carefully along the edge. In one smooth motion, he'd push his leveled spear forward in the lead. Then there was a trailing foot that he'd bring so carefully from the water, and without a ripple, place forward under his body. His body would gravitate to a new balance between feet and spear which, in turn, would curve his neck and instantly prompt another smooth advance of the spear.

As I admired his stealth, I imagined he was thinking, "If I keep this up, I could get a BIG breakfast..." A couple minutes later I glanced out, and to my amazement, there he was, head in the water and struggling to back out. Plowing backward with his wings as well as his gangly legs, he had it in four-wheel drive. He managed to pull out and swing his catch toward the shore where it floundered at his feet before he shoveled it onto dry land.

By that time, my family had joined me at the window, and we marveled at his prize: bigger than the last one. He proudly lifted it from the ground and took a few strained but victorious strides before setting it back down. After a few more attempts to handle his trophy, he flew off to the other side of the pond, leaving it behind. Was he too overwhelmed by its size? Did he have painful memories of swallowing the lesser fish?



My sons and I ran down to the pond, tape-measure in hand, to bring back the report of a 14" bass. My wife, though, thought it a shame that such a fish dinner would go to waste and after seeing her menfolk weren't seizing the opportunity, said she would go retrieve it. To our surprise, when she went to get it, it was gone. I admired her determination and resourcefulness and had to admit that us men were not wise to have brought only a measurement back to the house. Bass fillets do make a tasty meal. And after all, who gets to have lunch provided by a great blue heron?

Albert Stoltzfus, Camp Director

## News and Needs

### **Staff Position:**

We are still in need of a cook to serve in the camp kitchen. This role will include planning and preparing meals, and basic management skills. If you would like to serve in this way or know someone that you would like to recommend for this, please contact us.

### **Pray with us:**

We are hoping to enroll the first boys in late spring of 2025. There are many facets to opening successfully. Please pray that God will bring the necessary things to pass.

### **Camp Open House:**

Please mark your calendar for our Open House planned for September 13, 2025. This will include camp tours, fun activities, and a BBQ dinner on the grounds.

## Staff House Purchase:

We received the opportunity to purchase a neighboring house ½ mile from the main camp property. The house sits on a 20 acre tract with a small pond and will serve as an additional staff house. We are in the process of purchasing the place for \$295,000. If you would like to contribute to this purchase, please earmark your donation (2025 Staff House Purchase).



## Staff Update

Grant Hershberger returned home to Kansas after serving as a maintenance man for more than a year. Thank you, Chief Grant, for sharing your talents with us.

Eric Myers from Oldtown, MD joined us in December to serve as a maintenance man. Welcome, Chief Eric. It's good to have you here.

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### **Camp Contact Info**

[www.ozarkwildernessboyscamp.com](http://www.ozarkwildernessboyscamp.com)

[info@ozarkboyscamp.org](mailto:info@ozarkboyscamp.org)

1158 Madison 9533  
Fredericktown, MO 63645

Send checks to  
LeAlan Fox  
(Treasurer) 11785 St.  
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