



Black Rock Retreat

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*He who forms the mountains, creates the wind,
and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns
dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of
the earth - the LORD God Almighty is his name.*

Amos 4:13

Pathways

News, Information & Fellowship at Black Rock Retreat

Winter 2010

The Difference a Retreat Can Make

Renaldo Rivera's life was changed when he came to Black Rock Retreat as a retreat guest with Covenant Fellowship Church, outside of Philadelphia. Renaldo grew up in Reading, PA dreaming of becoming someone. But then, his father began drinking heavily and his "nice" family started to crumble right before his eyes. Every night the man that he looked up to would fight with his mother and all he wanted to do was get away. In his lonely world he turned to hatred. He hated his parents for being his parents and all they put him through.

At thirteen, he moved to the projects. With his father out of his life, he turned to the streets in search of someone that could give him some understanding of his meaningless life.

At fourteen, he smoked marijuana and for a few minutes escaped from every bit of hurt he had inside. What he didn't realize was the impact this would have on his future. In high school, he became more dependent on the world and drugs. He started drinking and hanging out all night. He had thoughts of suicide. He moved to Massachusetts to try to get a fresh start and ended up moving in with a woman and fathering a son. When the relationship didn't work, he left and started using drugs again and became a full blown addict.

Through a drug recovery program, he visited Covenant Fellowship Church, eventually signing up for a study to learn more about Jesus. The first night of the course Renaldo was a little nervous because he didn't know anyone. Talking about Jesus was all new to him and he was scared to talk to strangers. But he had a lot of questions like, "Why did God allow this stuff to happen to me? Why is there suffering in the world? And why did Jesus die?" In

his study group, he had some great discussions and could relate to a lot of the other folks. He especially felt like the love of God was bonding him with the people in his group when they went on a retreat here at Black Rock. Then, on Friday night, in the Birchwood Meeting Room, Renaldo turned from his sin and gave his life over to God! It was at that moment Renaldo knew that he had finally found what he was searching for all his life. It felt like a mountain of sin was lifted off and he knew he was forgiven.



Two guests from a recent retreat pray together in Birchwood Meeting Room

Today Renaldo feels like a child who is growing up spiritually. The meaninglessness, hopelessness and sadness that he felt for many years have been replaced with peace and joy. Since coming to know Christ, God has blessed him in so many ways! He has been released from the bondage of addiction and sin. Renaldo praises God for sending His Son to die on the cross in his place and thanks God for how he has changed his life! 🍎

Generosity in 2009

"For God so loved the world that He gave . . ." (John 3:16a). Throughout the Bible we are reminded that God is abundantly generous and that giving is of His very nature. We cannot help but take note that giving required a sacrifice and was costly to God.

Yet, we must also see that, though costly, God's giving released a tremendous blessing. Because we are created in the image of God, giving is a part of our essence and we have the opportunity to fellowship with God in this grace of giving. We can be assured that our giving both requires a sacrifice and releases a blessing. Our purpose in giving is not simply to make Black Rock Retreat bigger and better, but to express our confidence that generous giving releases seeds of blessing.

God has inspired many to give during 2009. A young man gave a month of his summer to volunteer his labor for work in our woods. A young couple sponsored a child to attend our summer camp. A staff member walked an extra mile in caring for a guest. Dozens received a blessing from our offer of a free retreat to pastors and ministry leaders. A rider invited many of his friends and family members to sponsor his involvement in our annual bike ride to Rehoboth Beach. A local pastor prays regularly for our Executive Director. These gifts and many more, given in the name of Jesus, affirm our faith that Black Rock Retreat will continue to be a place of refuge for Jesus to touch lives.

Thank you for expanding our culture of giving in 2009. Listen carefully for God's invitations to give during 2010. For more information on donating to Black Rock Retreat, contact Barry Stoner, Development Director at (800) 858-9299 or devdir@blackrockretreat.com



Josh Foley
Summer Camp Director



Sarah Fedchak
Outdoor Education Director

New Faces at Black Rock Retreat

Black Rock Retreat is pleased to announce the appointment of Josh Foley as the Summer Camp Director and Sarah Fedchak as the Outdoor Education Director.

Josh became the Summer Camp Director in December 2009. He is a graduate of Nyack College in New York. Josh has been involved with Black Rock Retreat since 1996 when he first attended Black Rock Retreat as a camper and has since served on the Summer Camp Staff from 2004 to 2009.

Sarah assumed the role of Outdoor Education Director in June 2009. Sarah graduated from Hollins University in Virginia. She comes to us with previous camp experience at several other Christian Camps. She also served as the Aquatics Director at a YMCA in Ohio. Most recently she was a teacher of Outdoor Education at Nature's Classroom in Alabama.

A Summer Camp Reflection



Teen Week Campers participating in an all camp game

The following story was shared by a Black Rock Retreat 2009 Summer Staff member.

During one of the Teen Week sessions I had a group of campers that I thought would be spiritually stagnant. However, by the end of the week, one specific camper, Deron, began to open up and walls were broken down. I became aware that Deron had a lot of issues back in his neighborhood, and he broke down Friday night and let a lot of things off his chest. I sat with him, once again amazed at the work God is always doing in the lives of campers. I encouraged Deron by sharing the end of Revelations, showing him that if he remains in Christ, there is hope ahead. God brings hope and Deron went home with the hope of God in his heart.

Pray with us as we anticipate the 2010 Summer Camp season and the spiritual opportunities it will bring!

"From a friend of Black Rock Retreat"

The Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage Conference with Mark Gungor will be held on February 18 and 19, 2010 at 7pm each evening at Lancaster Mennonite School Fine Arts Center. Mark is an honest, hard-hitting, hilarious speaker that takes a different approach to marriage conferences. He takes the approach of not being threatening to men. He will explain practical issues in a way that will have you laughing. In his words, "The key to a successful marriage is not finding the right person. The key to a successful marriage is doing the right things. If you do the right things you'll succeed . . . if you don't, you'll fail. It's that simple."

For more information or to register go to www.laughyourway.com or call 717-615-1917.

Are you on Facebook? Black Rock Retreat has started a fan page on Facebook so that we can keep people informed of what is happening here. If you are on

Facebook, please become a "fan" of Black Rock Retreat and invite all of your friends to be "fans" as well. To see our fan page, go to www.facebook.com/blackrockretreat (You don't even need a Facebook account to see our page).



2010 SUMMER CAMP



New friends having fun

Since it's already time to start thinking about summer vacation plans, why not include a week of summer camp at Black Rock Retreat for your children in your plans for this year! Our summer camp program offers a week of fun, making new friends, enjoying exciting activities and most importantly growing closer to God! Our summer camp program is geared for children entering grades 2-12. Each week is designated for a specific age group of campers who sleep in comfortable dormitory style housing staffed by our well trained summer camp counselors. Delicious food, evening worship times, cabin activities and spectacular "crazy camp games" round out each week!

For more information, or to register, check us out online at www.blackrockretreat.com/summercamp. Registration forms are available online and can be printed off and mailed in. Or call us at 800-858-9299 and we'll answer any questions you may have. Camp sponsorships are available for those who need assistance in affording the cost of camp. ●

Join Our Summer Camp Team!



Are you looking for more than just a summer job? Are you looking for a challenge where you can share the Lord with kids while growing in your walk with the Lord? Then consider a summer at Black Rock Retreat.

Black Rock Retreat is currently seeking to hire motivated, Christian young people to serve the Lord by becoming a member of the summer camp staff. A variety of paid positions are available. Staff are expected to live on our property for the entire ten week experience. For more information please visit our website at www.blackrockretreat.com/summerstaff



The Recently Renovated Rocky Mount Overlook

View from the New!

One of the most beautiful spots on the property, Rocky Mount Overlook, recently received a desperately needed renovation! This new shelter, nestled in the woods overlooking the scenic Octoraro Creek is a place where people can spend time enjoying nature, fellowshiping together with friends or spending

some quality alone time with the Lord.

The next time you visit Black Rock Retreat, please don't miss visiting this peaceful and scenic area on our property. We believe the Lord will meet you there! ●

Seedlings

What's Comin' up at Black Rock Retreat

Senior High Winter Retreat

February 12-14, 2010

Senior High Winter Retreat is a fun filled weekend for anyone in high school. For more information or to register please call the number listed below or visit www.blackrockretreat.com/wintercamp



Summer Camp Open House

April 13, 2010

Black Rock Retreat will be hosting a Summer Camp Open House the evening of April 13, 2010 for potential campers in 1st through 5th grades and their parents. This is a great opportunity to come and see what Black Rock Retreat Summer Camp is all about! Call and make your reservation soon.

Black Rock Retreat Open House

June 6, 2010

You're invited to an afternoon of fun, food, fellowship and swimming at Black Rock Retreat to kick off the summer season. This will be our 3rd year hosting this event and hope that you can join us this year! Mark your calendars now. More information will be available closer to the event date.

Call Black Rock Retreat at (800)858-9299 for more information on any of these events.

From The Executive Director

God is good! He is good all the time! Many of you have sung this praise by yourself, with others, at church, school, camp and many other places. We at Black Rock are continuing to sing praises as we recognize the awesomeness of God. I am amazed at what God has done for us in sacrificing His one and only Son to be the Savior of all who turn to Him, confess their sins and commit to a life of walking with Him. I am also so grateful for how He is directing the ministry in so many ways and that he has allowed me the opportunity to serve him here at Black Rock Retreat.

In this issue you have been briefly introduced to two new faces in our program department at Black Rock Retreat. I am pleased to have Sarah Fedchak here to run the Outdoor Education Program. Since June, she has demonstrated an enthusiasm for the ministry that is very contagious. Josh Foley has also accepted the Summer Camp Director position and joined us in December. With Josh's many years of involvement at Black Rock Retreat he brings a passion not only for Summer Camp, but also a passion for the Black Rock Ministry as a whole.

A mother wrote recently expressing her sincere appreciation for reaching out to "hard to deal with children". Her three foster children came to camp this past summer for the first time, through the Philadelphia Youth Services Program and the generosity of many of you who contribute to our Camper Sponsorship Program. Although the children were reluctant to come the foster mother said that all three can't wait to come back and she gives Black Rock Retreat a "10" rating. We continue to pray that God will send to us those children that He wants to experience His love through the staff as they share the Gospel message through word and deed.

I would also like to ask for your prayers as the staff works together over the next few months in evaluating all our programs and facilities to see what God may have in store for the future of Black Rock Retreat Ministries. I want to thank you for your continued support. May God richly bless you in all ways as we look forward to your continuing partnership with us in the future. ☀ —John W. Shertzer, Executive Director