

## BRIARWOOD HISTORY

(2003 to 2011)

Briarwood history up to 2003 is included in the Strategic Plan prepared by Kaleidoscope that year and is included at Attachment 8 of the Master Site Plan Project Initiation Package.

In 2003, Bishop Kanouse gathered a group of leaders and pastors to discuss whether Briarwood should continue. The consensus was to continue.

Kaleidoscope was brought in to help direct the Board and to create a Strategic Plan.

In the fall of 2003, Pr. Bill Irons resigned as Executive Director, and Board members served as director.

Due to continuing expense over-runs, the contract for food service was discontinued and Norman Isa hired as Chef in early 2004.

After Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in August 2005, many of the evacuees were housed at Briarwood for several months starting in early September. Stephanie Varnum served as the initial Briarwood Evacuee Assistance Center (BEAC) coordinator and was followed by Henry Howe. Briarwood hosted 105 evacuees during the Hurricane Katrina and Rita disasters. The last of the evacuees left Briarwood in early 2006. A cadre of volunteers was recruited to help with their care and resettlement. Since that time, Briarwood has been designated as an official American Red Cross Disaster Site.

Jean Oswald was hired in February 2006 to visit congregations and promote Briarwood as a recipient of benevolence. In October of that year, Pastor Mike Purcell was hired as Executive Director. The new, 12-bed Oak Grove Cabin was constructed in 2006.

In 2007, a contract was signed with the Lewisville Independent School District to provide an environmental and outdoor education program for fifth graders from September through March. That program is ongoing and remains a significant

source of revenue. A petting zoo was added to the camp, which has since been discontinued.

The financial situation of the Briarwood became even more difficult, and Pastor Purcell was let go in October of 2007. Board member, Henry Howe, assumed the role of Interim Director.

On May 1, 2008, Pastor Rob Moore was brought on as Executive Director, Jon Thompson was hired as Programs/Facilities Director, and Matt Baumhardt was hired as Operations Manager. The new Executive Director was given the task of improving the image of Briarwood throughout the Mission Territory.

Summer camp has grown by 10% in 2009 and 18% in 2010. Also during that time the retreat business has increased considerably. There are often three, four, or five groups on site in a given weekend. Weekday retreats have also increased, as have retreats from non-Lutheran groups. Most of the staff now lives on-site, enabling them to give better service to guests and campers. Briarwood also saves salary expense by housing to most of the staff.

Briarwood experienced major flooding in the spring of 2007 and property damage was sustained in the Shalom Center, to several of the cabins, and to the roads and culverts. A Disaster Loan was obtained from the Small Business Administration (SBA) to cover the cost of repairs.

In 2009 the three remaining original Oak Grove cabins were torn down to the foundation and brick walls and were rebuilt. The cabins were upgraded to include two full bathrooms, one of which is ADA compliant, a common room, and two 4 bed-sleeping areas. The new cabins were equipped with a high efficiency heat pump, a tankless hot water heater, and central air conditioning. An additional slab was added to the rear of each building to accommodate the larger bathrooms, a storage room, and a mechanical room.

During the past three years a number of other program and facility improvements have been made: pergola and an elevated walkway between Quail Run and the Shalom Center were added in May 2008 as Boy Scout Eagle projects. A remodel/spruce up of Meadows complex including an ADA compliant bathroom was

completed in the fall of 2008. During the school year the Meadows complex is used for the LISD Outdoor Education learning center. Additional parking was added and the labyrinth completed in March 2009.

Enhancements to the summer camping program have included adding the canoeing program in summer of 2009, upgrades to the archery range in fall 2009, prayer garden behind the fireside room in December 2009, biking program for summer 2010, improved Riverbend Chapel in June 2010, security gate in July 2010, and including an off-site ropes course.

Ongoing facilities improvements have included significant roof repair done to interior and exterior of Quail run lodge in late 2010 through early 2011 and the addition of a new mobile home for staff housing in spring of 2011.

In 2010 the two mortgages and the SBA loans were consolidated under a new mortgage with the Mission Investment Fund, resulting in a better rate and lower payments. The first Briarwood Gala, held in May 2010, was a financial success. The financial picture is improving, but ongoing contributions are still needed to provide the camping programs and to upgrade and maintain the existing facilities. The Executive Director has been charged with the primary responsibility of developing funding from congregations and individuals.

The Board of Directors, who had for many years provided direct administrative direction of the camp, has been able to transition toward becoming a governance board with the Executive director and staff assuming the day-to-day administration and financial control.

After extended reflection and Bible study, the leaders and congregations of NT-NL are refocusing on mission through congregations and what we can do better together - Grow Leaders for DiscipleLife. As Briarwood is already well known as a site for our youth and children to grow in faith and leadership, it was determined that Briarwood could be the ideal site for the DiscipleLife Center for Mission for Lutherans of all ages.

So, The DiscipleLife Alive! initiative has begun within the NT-NL Mission Territory to raise \$3,000,000 for mission. One half the money raised (\$1,500,000) would be

committed to the DiscipleLife Center for Mission at Briarwood. With those monies a new office building would be built for offices for the Bishop's staff and NT-NL leadership for mission, and for the Briarwood staff. Also envisioned would be a remodeled Quail Run Lodge expanded into a large conference center and chapel with new handicapped accessible bathrooms and kitchen, and an added wing that would include a second conference area that could be divided into 1, 2, or 3 smaller conference rooms. All these new and remodeled buildings would be equipped for teleconferencing and up to date electronic videoconferencing, etc.

Briarwood is contracting with Open Air Design, a Boulder, CO, architectural firm to prepare a Master Site Plan to guide the development over the next five to ten years and to identify the camp's needs during that time.