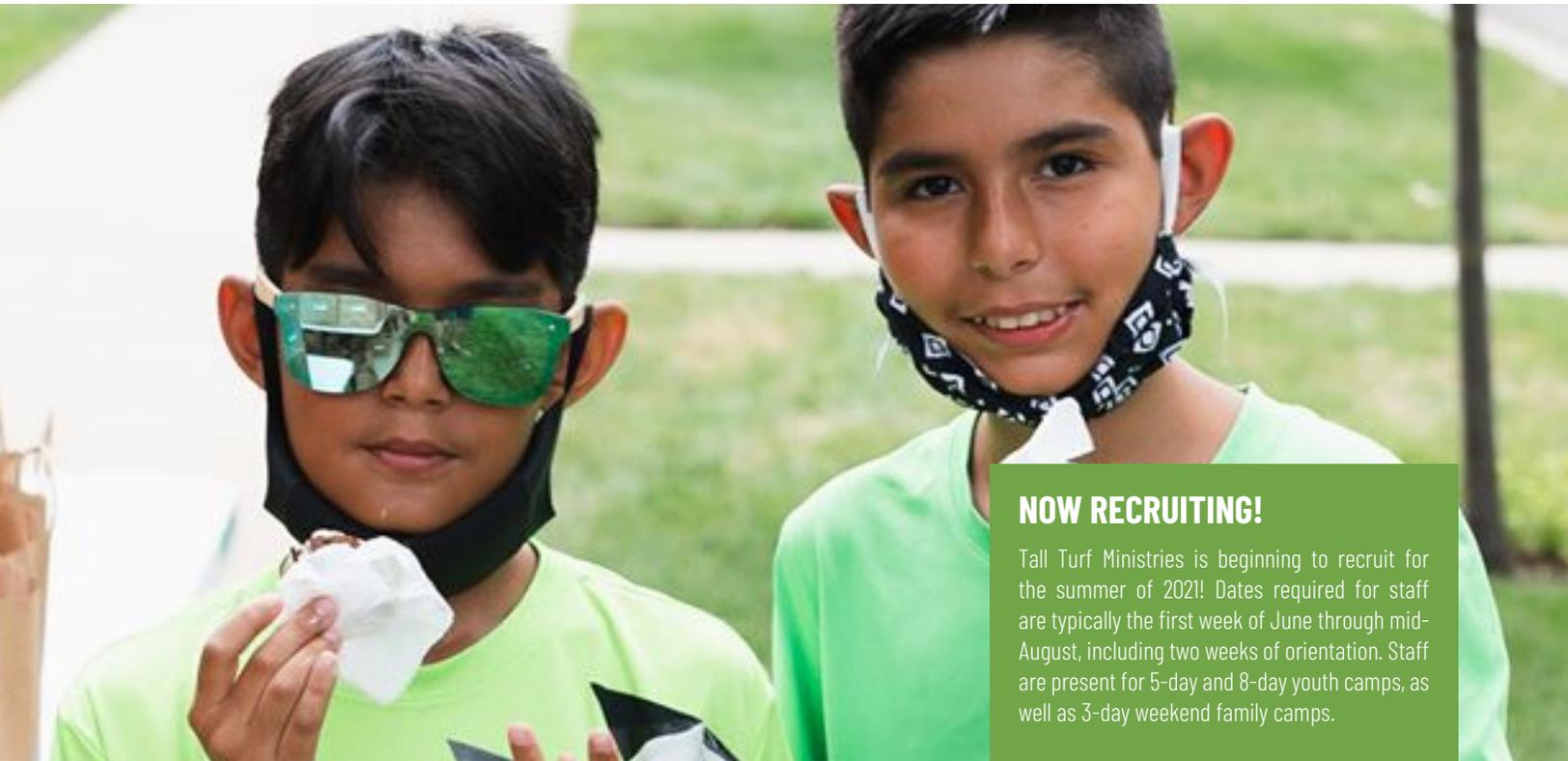




TALL TURF *Today*

SUMMER / FALL
2020
ISSUE



NOW RECRUITING!

Tall Turf Ministries is beginning to recruit for the summer of 2021! Dates required for staff are typically the first week of June through mid-August, including two weeks of orientation. Staff are present for 5-day and 8-day youth camps, as well as 3-day weekend family camps.

Applicants 18 years and older: Applicants for staff positions must love God and working with youth, as well as willing to meet qualifications for the position in which they apply.

Positions include: Program Manager, Head Cook, Waterfront Director, Health Officer, Environmental Education Manager, Camping Specialist, Counselors, Staff Pastor, and mentors for the Leader in Training Program.

Applicants 14–17 years: Summer Leaders in Training Program Applicants must have a passion for growing in their faith and leadership skills. Through the program, they will gain experience working with kids, serving in the kitchen, leading activities, Bible studies and much more! Typically 10 high school students are hired for these positions.

For more information about positions for summer 2021, please visit www.tallturf.org and/or contact Kristi Ayers, Program Director, at kristina@tallturf.org to receive regular updates on the hiring process, as well as information about certification and training opportunities.

CEO *Corner*

My hope is this newsletter finds you and yours healthy, safe, and an overall blessed environment. During these troubling times, it is always good to know that God is in control and better days are ahead!

Since 1969, we have impacted the lives of over 10,000 youth and families. We uniquely understand the importance of camp ministry and the services we provide. Considering the uncertainties currently surrounding us, and the Governor's Executive Order, Tall Turf Ministries (TTM) suspended the 2020 onsite summer camp program in lieu of offsite alternatives. This was done with health initiatives held to the highest degree.

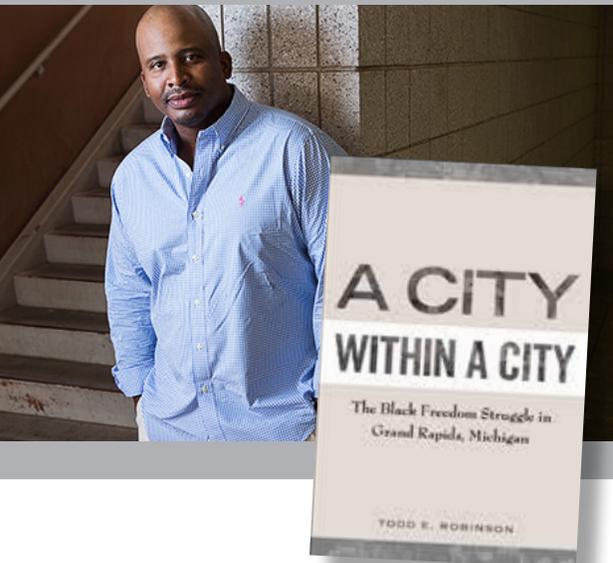
We started this process with prayer asking how God will be glorified during this process. Tall Turf Ministries worked with partners in our community that helped live out our mission. Our "Camp to Go" program was birthed and includes morning and evening devotions, arts and crafts, outside activities, and other camp experiences. Though it pained us to make this change, we remain committed to equipping youth and families for lives of reconciliation in God's world for our 52nd year in service. In moving forward, we will soon share information about new programs focused on addressing reconciliation for churches, organizations, and businesses as requested by our stakeholders and in alignment with our strategic plan.

BOOK STUDY

A City Within A City: The Black Freedom Struggle in Grand Rapids, Michigan

Each week for six weeks, the Tall Turf Ministries summer staff explored a chapter of the book by historian Todd Robinson, "A City within a City." The book explores various facets of the racialized landscape of the Grand Rapids community and associated activism throughout the twentieth century. Issues discussed included access to housing, geography, youth, job opportunity, school integration and managerial racism, as well as the roles of northern conservatives and politicians that created a "city within a city."

As the Black Lives Matter movement continues to grow across the nation, it is important to reflect on the inequalities that have been present in our city throughout our city's history. This book was an important tool for the summer staff to gain perspective and awareness of injustice.



Tall Turf Ministries has partnered with Barnabas Foundation to offer you tax-wise charitable gifts and will planning from a distinctly Christian worldview. Barnabas Foundation will help multiply the impact of your giving in ways that honor God, provide for your family and further the important mission of Tall Turf Ministries.

Since 1976, Barnabas Foundation has helped thousands of generous Christians give most effectively to the churches and ministries close their hearts. They will help you...

- Understand the giving options available to you, in a way that is clear and easy to comprehend.
- Review your will to help ensure it reflects your family and charitable goals.
- Give stock, real estate, business interests, commodities or other non-cash gifts while reducing your taxes.
- Make gifts that pay your family income for life.
- Establish a donor-advised fund to streamline and simplify your giving.

We welcome the opportunity to address any questions or comments.



Introducing: OUR NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Kristi Ayers joined the Tall Turf Ministries team as the Director of Programs in November 2019. Kristi's previous experience includes creating talent pipelines with the Workforce Intelligence Network, 4-H Youth Development program coordination at Michigan State University (MSU), facilitation of pre-college programming MSU's GEAR UP and TRiO programs, management of USDA household food distribution programs, and working with youth

in residential programs at globally diverse boarding schools in Ohio. She has also been a Diabetes Prevention Lifestyle Coach for the National Kidney Foundation. Her camp experience comes from 4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp, 4-H Exploration Days, and directing day camps at Andrews Osborne Academy. Kristi lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She is an alumnus of the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, as well as a master's degree recipient from the Department of MSU Human Development and Family Studies. She can be contacted at kristina@tallturf.org or 616-452-7906.



Introducing: OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

I am excited to be the newest member of the Tall Turf Board of Directors. I was born and raised on the Southeast side of Grand Rapids. I attended and attend (when there isn't a global pandemic) First Christian Reformed Church. I attended Oakdale Christian, Grand Rapids Christian, Calvin College, and Indiana University Maurer School of Law. I currently practice law

with Miller Johnson. I love outdoor pursuits, including biking, hiking, canoeing, camping, swimming, sailing, and many more. God put the cause of racial reconciliation on my heart through the people of and my experiences at Oakdale, First Church, and on the Southeast-side. I was seeking a chance to serve an organization like Tall Turf when I was connected with Marcus through a colleague. Mark N. Greidanus, Attorney at Law, MILLER JOHNSON



A New Experience: **CAMP-TO-GO**

From Lydia Kuypenhoven

As a parent, board member and past staff for Tall Turf Ministries I entered the summer with anxiety and sadness feeling the loss of the overnight summer camp experience on many levels. I was excited to hear about Camp-To-Go and my kids anxiously awaited the first pick up wondering just what those bags contained! Our first month of summer

From Kristi Ayers

City Camp has typically brought young people together for a week of singing, skits, bible lessons and activities. The relationship between Neland Avenue Church and Tall Turf Ministries continues to reach young leaders in our community, although it does not look the same as it has in the past few years. This summer, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tall Turf Ministries and Neland collaborated to provide four drive-through distributions of materials for youth ages 8-13. Each distribution served 125 children in Grand Rapids, and

was busy creating and discovering. Lava lamps, friendship bracelets, bird feeders, homemade bouncy balls, ojo de dios, card games, painting—my kids have experimented, created, been frustrated, learned new skills, had fun & grown in their faith—almost sounds like they went to camp! I know that nothing can truly replace

an additional 25 youth in Hesperia, totaling 525 kits in the communities. The Tall Turf Ministries staff curated kits that included science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) curriculum and supplies, as well as devotions for each activity. Each kit included the materials needed to create these experiments and crafts, as well as instructions, puzzles and recipes. Online content, including videos, are also available at www.tallturf.org. Partners such as New City Neighbors, Cherry Health, Kent County Head Start and the

the life changing experience of overnight camp, I am so thankful for Tall Turf rising to the unique challenges we are facing, continuing partnerships and serving our community the best way they can! My girls each have a shelf in their room dedicated to their Camp-To-Go bags and they can't wait to fill those up the rest of the summer.

United Dairy Industry of Michigan provided content and materials for the kits, too. Neland staff purchased snack items from local businesses owned by people of color to include in each kit, as well as provided items such as homemade facemasks and water bottles. They also provided a volunteer photographer to capture the first distribution. We look forward to continuing our productive relationship with the Neland Avenue Church to provide youth development activities and equip youth and families for lives of reconciliation.

In this non-traditional camp year, Tall Turf Ministries summer staff are performing tasks that not only advance our mission in a socially-distanced fashion for our youth, but also help reflect on how the Tall Turf mission has made an impact on our community's leaders. The stories will be housed on the Tall Turf Ministries website and captions may be used to portray Tall Turf Ministries to future stakeholders.

Some notable captions include:

"I became a leader in training, which gave me the spark to teach children. Right now I'm studying elementary education at Jackson State University." -*Arion Parks*

"I learned leadership skills as second cook. I was in charge of the kitchen when Mrs. Tyson (the long-time head cook at Camp Tall Turf) wasn't there. I picked up valuable communication skills just by working with people." -*Suki Brasser*

"I started thinking about what changes I needed to make in my life to work for systemic, sustainable change in our community." -*Denise Fase*

"My experience at Tall Turf brought me to a level of comfort in multicultural settings that I don't think I would have otherwise" -*Pastor Joel DelMoor*

If you are a previous staff person, we would love to collect your story! Interviews are performed via ZOOM or phone. Please reach out to Kristi Ayers, Program Director at kristina@tallturf.org for more information.

HOW CAN YOU PARTNER?

Pray

That Tall Turf Ministries will continue to make an impact for eternity in the lives of our campers and their families.

Increase

Your current or past giving to help us meet our critical needs.

Encourage

Your friends, family, coworkers, and anyone else you believe would be interested in supporting us.

Supporting

- Year-end gift
- Monthly giving
- Provide a Camp Scholarship
- Support a Camp project
- Refer us to a friend

We want to thank our Board of Directors, volunteers, and donors to the "Embracing Reconciliation: The Campaign for a Stronger Community". Through His Grace and Mercy, we surpassed our goal of \$1,850,000 which provided much needed camp enhancements. We encourage visiting our Facebook page to see all the new equipment!

Thank You!

Board of Trustees

- Lydia Kuyvenhoven, Chairperson
- Ed Postma, Vice Chairperson
- Tim Verstrate, Treasurer
- Steven Timmermans, Ph.D., Secretary
- Angela Nelson
- Arthur Treadwell
- Mark Greidanus

Tall Turf Ministries Staff

- Kristi Ayers, Director of Programs
- David Brasser, Site Manager
- Jim Brasser, Site Manager Emeritus
- Nicole Cheeks, Business Manager
- Marcus Hargrave, President & CEO



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