



Tall Turf Today

Fall 2019

Equipping Youth & Families for Lives of Reconciliation in God's World

The CEO's Corner

By Marcus Hargrave, President & CEO

Greetings all. Summer was fantastic! As many of you know, God took His time in making the grounds where Camp Tall Turf exists. There is nothing like seeing diverse groups of individuals eat, play, and worship together. As we move into fall, I am pleased to continue engaging all stakeholders on our efforts to make Tall Turf Ministries (TTM) the best it can be.

Our "Embracing Reconciliation: A Campaign for a Stronger Community" led by Dr. Steve Timmermans and Rev. C.J. Grier continues to open doors and engage supporters. In recognition of 50 years of services, this effort is a comprehensive campaign for program support, capital needs, and endowment. Each year, TTM relies on generous donations and gifts for implementing summer programs at camp and year round programming in Grand Rapids. Those who benefit from our programs are able to only provide a small fraction of the dollars needed to support these programs. We have also made substantial capital improvements including a major overhaul to the Dining Hall and we will soon start paving the road providing better access to Camp throughout the year! To date, we have raised over \$1,300,000 of our \$1,850,000 goal!!

Please mark your calendars for November 7th for our annual Building Bridges banquet. This year our keynote speaker will be a former camper who went on to become an Olympic Gold Medalist and Hall of Fame member. Ms. Cappie Pondexter recently retired from the WNBA and will share her unique experiences and found memories. I hope you to see you there!

Also, one of the key deliverables we have with our programs is leadership development. My interactions with staff, volunteers, and donors have helped me better understand and address the unique challenges facing TTM. Through His Grace and Mercy, we have been blessed to be in a better place financially, but we still have work to do. I humbly ask for your prayers for supporters into our harvest field. Please also consider asking your friends to support TTM. I also ask that you consider making a generous gift to help us as well.

Finally, I thank all of the staff that served this past summer as over 550 youth and families were impacted. I pray God will continue lighting your path as you bring Him glory. Though we have lost some stars, the Son still shines!

Yours in service,
Marcus Hargrave.

Serving Campers in New Ways

By Tammy Aurich, Office Assistant

We are excited to share about a new space that we used with campers this summer at Tall Turf. We have a Sensory Room! The Sensory Room is a place where campers can come when they need a break or a place to help calm down. The room is nature themed with lots of sensory toys, activities, games, coloring pages, and encouraging



words. We offer the kids many choices when they come into the room so that they can decide what will help them. Some of their favorite activities were the water beads, the miniature sandbox, the big turtle pillow, and Bible verse coloring pages.

One day this summer I remember we accompanied a camper as she asked to go the room due to having anxiety. When

we got there she was excited and immediately played with the water beads. After that she colored a picture and then said that she was feeling so much better and wanted to go back with her cabin activities. It was encouraging to see her able to have fun and relax at camp and have a place to go when she needed support. In addition to campers using the sensory room, staff also found it to be a peaceful room where they could unwind and calm their spirits after long days with campers.

Overall it was an exciting and wonderful summer at CTT and having the Sensory Room was a great addition to support campers!



Diving Deep in Reconciliation & Gratitude

By Miriam De Jong

The summer of 2019 saw Tall Turf’s mission of reconciliation lived out in both new and familiar ways. We again were blessed with a diverse group of both campers and staff. In fact, 70% of our staff were people of color. While numbers are significant, what is even more impactful are the relationships and bonds that were formed between campers and staff members.



The power of reconciliation at camp happens through relationships built on a foundation of faith in Christ. It happens as campers interact with staff members of a different background than their own, through helping a new friend on the challenge course, or praying together during cabin devotions at night. They are friendships that have a lifelong impact, something I

have personally experienced. To this day, one of my closest friends, who I consider family, is a fellow staff member who I met when I started at CTT in 2005. For the past 15 years, I have been blessed to serve Tall Turf. My time here has been both transformative and filled with joy. I deeply love the mission of Tall Turf as well as the many incredible relationships that I have been able to build.

God has called me into a new season of ministry this fall, but I am forever grateful for to be part of the Tall Turf

family and for a journey of reconciliation that has just begun. Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving this community!

With deep gratitude,

Miriam De Jong



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 Gifts

Monthly Giving

Provide a Scholarship



\$542,261.58
fiscal year-end goal

\$92,607.46
needed by
December 31

\$449,654.12
raised to date

Equipping Teens for Leadership

By Miriam De Jong

For the second summer, Tall Turf Ministries offered a unique camp session focused on equipping teens to lead within their own communities. This session intentionally lived out two of Tall Turf's core values: leadership development and community partnerships. Several different ministries partnered for a week of empowering teens to develop as young leaders, challenging teens to grow in their faith, and encouraging positive relationships through teambuilding. In addition to Tall Turf, ministries that participated included Madison Square Christian Reformed Church, New City Neighbors, Grand Rapids Initiative for Leaders (GRIL) and the Edge Urban Fellowship. Like Tall Turf, each of these ministries, seeks to equip teens as leaders within their organizations and communities.

During the session, teens participated in daily leadership trainings, Bible study, small group time, and a variety of camp activities. GRIL and Isaiah Jones-Chambliss, an artist from the Edge, lead evening general sessions focused on discovering spiritual gifts and growing in faith. Additionally, teens learned how to facilitate games with youth and cross-cultural



leadership. The significance of the week was reflected through student testimonies on the last day of the session. One teen shared that the cross-cultural training impacted them in this way, "The racial reconciliation training made me realize the power of words." Another teen noted the impact on their faith sharing, "I feel as though I might have faith again." Other students highlighted the impact of the experience stating, "I learned that I am capable of leading. I learned that my voice matters, and I have an important job to do." We're looking forward to seeing God work through these amazing leaders!



Did you know . . .

- Tall Turf hosted 3 Youth Camp sessions, 1 High School Leadership Camp, 1 day camp and 3 Family Camp weekends.
- Tall Turf served over 550 youth and families this summer!
- 39% of our campers identified as African-American, 15% Caucasian, 40% Hispanic, and 6% identified as multi-racial or other.
- Campers this summer came from the Grand Rapids area, Holland, Newaygo, White Cloud, Detroit, MI and Chicago, IL.
- As of 2011, only 4% of the 12,000 camps in the United States had at least 50% minority counselors. Tall Turf has had at least 60% qualified staff of color for the last 12 years. In fact, this past summer 70% of our summer staff members were people of color.
- 48% of our summer staff members were returning staff members.
- 52% of our summer staff members were previously summer campers and/or Leaders in Training.
- 83% of our campers befriended someone from a background that is different from their own.
- 78% of our campers reported that they felt better about themselves as a result of their time at camp.
- 87% of our campers indicated they experienced God's love while at camp.



SAVE THE DATE!

What: Building Bridges Banquet

When: November 7

Where: The Bluff

Guest Speaker: Olympic Gold Medalist Ms. Cappie Pondexter

RSVP at (616) 452-7906 or email

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