Camp is just around the corner! Lots of preparations! Our summer leadership was set prior to Christmas break. We had a staff reunion in January followed by leadership staff planning. Cara Krueger, Program Director, has been recruiting summer staff at various universities. Our staff is coming together for the summer and we are excited about the weeks before camp when our staff comes together for training just prior to Session 1. The Lord always provides the best staff for our campers. He is always faithful and never disappointed.

Liz Austin and I have attended several conferences as well as resource fairs displaying Charis Hills Camp exhibits. We are always learning! We’ve been all over Texas as well as Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. If you know of an exhibit opportunity: a resource fair, conference, etc., at a school, church, or through an organization you recommend, we would love for you to share that with us.

Open House
We have Open House May 11th, from 10:00am - 3:00pm. Come take a tour of camp, meet some staff and have some refreshments. This a great way to get your new campers acquainted with Charis Hills.

Share Day
We will have Share Day June 18th, 9:00am - 1:00pm. We are inviting some area professionals and media out to tour the camp and see what happens at Charis Hills. Please, share Charis Hills with your child’s teacher or counselor and invite them to camp. This would be an excellent opportunity for them to see camp in action.

Animal Care & GiddyUp
We are making some changes to our Animal Care as well as Giddyup activities. We are moving the Riding Program up to the new barn. Campers will be transported to this activity via hay ride pulled by our ‘new to us’ 1939 N9 Ford tractor! I think the campers will enjoy this experience. The old barn will be enclosed so that our campers have a larger shaded area to work and play with the animals in the petting zoo. We plan to add even more animals to this activity. Both the animals and campers will enjoy the more shaded areas!
At Charis Hills we are constantly striving to improve our hardware, the physical aspect of camp. We are improving the animal care area to make it more camper friendly and to be able to host more animals of various kinds. We are moving the horseback program to another area and improving the arena and trails. We are establishing team building elements this summer. Those are hardware improvements.

All the hardware in the world won’t help a child without the software to go with it. Our software is awesome. Children come to Charis Hills and have the gospel presented in a way they can understand! We present the gospel to these campers taking out the Christianese used in churches. We present it in a logical and very concrete way so that it is understood.

We use affirmation to change behavior. We tell the camper what they are doing right and build on that to encourage the behaviors that are expected in our society. We help them to learn to make friends, encourage social interaction, promote participation with others, and do all of those things all day. We have the unique advantage at camp of having a camper for 24 hours a day for six full days in a therapy situation. Think what that would cost if you did it by the hour. Camp can change and will change attitudes about other children, about food, about social interaction and more.

Camp exposes these children to the outdoors, to God’s creation! We have built this program so that children learn activities they can use for a lifetime of recreation. We teach archery, crafts, riding, fishing, camping, animal care and much much more. They can find something they like and develop that over a lifetime to get them away from the screens our society has put in front of them.

Learning these things I have mentioned will help every camper in future employment, in life skills, and will help them to understand the most important factor in life... that God created them in this very way, that there are no mistakes, that they have the skills they need to accomplish everything the Lord has for them to do.

And, as an added bonus, you parents get a week to refresh and go do what you want to do!
Volunteers

Charis Hills is so blessed to have volunteers. While we do not use volunteers to work with our campers, we appreciate the men and women who come to help with various projects around camp. God always provides just what we need! We have had several SOWER volunteer couples helping us to get ready for camp. Mike and Janice Kennedy are “regulars” around camp. Janice orders and shops for all the food and supplies for camp. This is a BIG job! Those 18 wheelers don’t show up twice a week without her orders! Mike is another energizer bunny around camp. He makes sure the grounds look nice and is Mr. Fixit when we need him. They both love the campers, counselors and do so much for camp.

There are others who help us prepare for camp camp. Hats off to the Austins!! It is a family affair. Phil often accompanies Liz on trips and helps recruit campers. He also fixes tedious things that require patience. We have a great new website thanks to Monica and her husband Micah is working on our cameras for summer. Thank you Austin Family.

Matt Vinyard, former camper and summer staff member, came to volunteer with various projects. Matt is a recent Texas Tech University graduate. Thank you Matt for tilling up the new riding area!

Your Help is Needed!

Charis Hills is attempting to build another home on camp property. We have a couple who have volunteered to work full time at camp in maintenance and office work but we need a place for them to live! We are asking foundations for help through grants we’ve applied for! We need help from you as well.

Our year round, full time staff is very small. Having 2 more volunteer staff members would help us tremendously. Charis Hills has been functioning with four and a half full-time people. We would love to do more for our chosen population of children, but we need more time. These volunteers would help us to achieve some of these goals.

* We would love to offer programs for young adults on the spectrum. A young adult camp or a travel camp!

* We want to help create programs for churches around the country! So many families are not being welcomed in church!

* We want to raise funds for scholarships to attend this camp! Our camp is not overly priced for what we offer but we know it is expensive and that keeps many children from attending.

These things are doable, but not without time and simply put, not without help in the ongoing aspects of running the physical part of camp, managing the maintenance, ordering supplies and food, helping with the organizational aspects of the office, and other things most don’t think about, it won’t happen.

People often ask what we do in the “off” season. Let me tell you, there is no “off” season. We are either preparing to run camp, trying to raise funding for operations, performing operations, or in camp. We truly need the help these two volunteers offer. If you can help, or know of someone looking to help a worthy cause, please consider this opportunity!
Activities are a great part of camp. They are important because that is what draws the child to camp. At Charis Hills we look at activities a little differently. We love to have fun with our campers, however there is also an understanding that there’s so much more to each activity than just the activity itself.

We model our activities in a way that the campers can not only learn the skill from each activity but also can develop positive character traits and social skills through the activity. For instance, in archery, campers learn to shoot a bow and arrow, but they also learn how to persevere, encourage their fellow campers, and practice self-control. They must demonstrate responsibility. Camping teaches important skills such as building a fire, pitching a tent, and learning to navigate in the wilderness. However, campers also gain independence, learn about teamwork and comradery, and gain a sense of self-confidence from doing something themselves. In riflery, campers learn to safely handle and shoot a .22 single bolt action rifle, while they also learn self-discipline, responsibility, control, and again perseverance.

Activities at Charis Hills are aimed to lead campers towards life-long hobbies that they can do long after they have outgrown camp. These activities can be a healthy outlet for them to express themselves and/or activities to enjoy with others. Activities are fun but they are also transformative and lead campers to discover things about themselves. Most importantly, the campers get to see that they are capable of doing the same things that their peers often do.

We have 26 different activities for campers to choose from ranging from animal care, sports, water activities, and nature crafts to fine arts and performing arts. There is an activity for every camper to find success in their participation.

Nova and Just for Fun continue to be very popular activities that are requested. They are also the ones that new parents have the most questions about. Nova is academic in nature, always hands on FUN! We have built rockets, done countless experiments, made Chinese crafts and learned about the Civil War and the Chisholm Trail. Just For Fun is just that! Every day is different in JFF. This activity is held in the afternoon after swimming and often involves water, water balloons, launching something, fun games, music and more! Our Leadership Team is cooking up some new plans for these activities.

Wish List:
We have an Amazon Wish List:
Link: smile.amazon.com/hz/wish-list/lS/NKSE4UQJNO999?&sort=default

Support Charis Hills through your Amazon purchases by signing up for Smile.Amazon. Amazon will donate 0.05% of purchases made to the charity of your choice.

Registration is Open!
Session 1 June 9 - 15
Session 2 June 16 - 22
Session 3 June 23 - 29
Session 4 June 30 - July 6
Session 5 July 7 - 13
Session 6 July 14 - 20
Session 7 July 21 - 27
Session 8 July 28 - Aug 3