



MAHAFFEY CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

of The Western PA District of The Christian and Missionary Alliance
"A Christian Center for Spiritual Growth"

A Recap of REPLENISH 2024

There's no better way to kick off a new year than to gather with others and worship the Lord. On January 12-14, we were blessed to do just that at Mahaffey Camp. REPLENISH '24 was a whirlwind of excitement and spiritual growth that has made an eternal difference for many teens.

In 2023, we hosted our largest number to date for this retreat - 140 - and felt that we had likely reached the top of our expected attendance. But in 2024, with most of our youth groups eager to return and bring even more students, plus the addition of new groups, we ended up breaking our record yet again. We hosted nearly 170 attendees this weekend, plus all of the camp staff and volunteers that it takes to run such a large scale event. Housing was filled to the maximum, and every winterized camp building was in use for the many activities that took place.

Throughout the weekend, I witnessed teens teeming with anticipation for worship times. One of the most prevalent comments on the evaluation forms was that worship / service time was the favorite part of the weekend. The presence of the Holy Spirit was so palpable during our gatherings, drawing the youth in and stirring passion in their hearts. During our final service together, it was clear that the desire to worship lingered after the final songs, so the worship team continued to lead us through multiple impromptu songs. We had to keep pushing back lunch time, but the teens were so eager to praise God that we chose to remain in that space for as long as we could.

During Saturday evening service, our speaker, Joel Repic, invited students to consider whether God was calling them to pray for others. A dozen or so students knelt at the altar, lifting prayers for their friends, their schools, their churches, the world. And on Sunday morning, Pastor Joel spoke of the broadness of ministry, telling how it is not only pastors and missionaries who are called to spread the Gospel, but others too. When he asked whether any of the teens were feeling God's calling on their lives to bring His Good News to others, about 40 teens (plus some youth leaders) came forward and were anointed in the preparation to do God's work in the world.

Matt Kough, youth pastor at the Chippewa Alliance Church, remarked, "My students said that they have never felt that close to God before." Another youth leader shared, "God was there. Many of the teens were moved. The worship was absolutely fulfilling. I am so glad you all host this yearly. My soul needs it."

And still another leader shared the impact of the weekend on his own faith: "A youth leader from the Curwensville Alliance came over and prayed over me and I realized that I have not wasted my life and that the Lord is still using me. The lies and threats from the devil went away and I felt peace. I know that I have made mistakes but I'm still learning not to let the enemy pull me down in those and keep my eyes to the Lord and be happy with what God has done so far in my life."



Joshua Sykes, youth leader at the Clearfield Alliance Church, shared some moving stories from his group: "This was one of the best retreats our group has ever been to. Holy Spirit was moving through everyone - whether they knew it was Him, or not. We had several youth, who don't show much emotion in front of others, openly crying during prayer and discussion - knowing that something was different. We had a young lady share that three people in our group prayed for her and she felt loved. One of our young men responded to the call to be a prayer warrior - going upfront and interceding with others over everyone there. And one of our older girls shared with loving tears that she loves seeing the younger ones growing in their faith. REPLENISH 2024 was a very fruitful weekend for students and leaders."

Beyond the services, there were times of connection as well. With a mix of athletic and creative outlets, we did our best to offer activities for all to enjoy. Late nights were filled with laughter over board games, energetic games of 9 Square, and relaxation with a cup of hot chocolate. On Saturday, teens got to choose two different breakout seminars to attend, giving opportunity to dig deeper into some specific topics. Saturday afternoon brought lots of activity, from an adorable snowman craft to a game of flickerball to thrilling sled rides down the gaga pit hill - those teens sure don't mind the cold! Team games on Saturday spurred lots of

memory-making too, with a tarp flip challenge and a newspaper fashion show . . . you really had to be there to understand that one.

The purpose of REPLENISH is apparent in its name: we hope that all teens (and leaders) who come spend a weekend at camp are replenished in their faith journeys. In the middle of the school year, REPLENISH is a bright spark of hope for our teens. It's an opportunity for camp friends to be reunited, reminiscing about fond memories from the summer. It's also an opportunity for teens who have never been to camp before to experience it for the first time - and many of those teens choose to return in the summer for a weeklong version of the excitement they felt at REPLENISH.

As I planned for this year's retreat, and later watched it take place, one thought that continually surfaced in my mind was of God's timing and provision. Throughout my years serving at camp, I've been blessed to witness the timeline of the Children's Ministry Building unfold. The vision for this building was merely kindling during my childhood. The dream began to materialize during my early years of working here. I watched as the cement foundation was poured in faith, praying along with everyone else that the funding would come in to put up the rest of it. I was there to take pictures of the interior as the structure was erected, as the mezzanine was carpeted, as the bathrooms were installed. I have watched this building develop from a vision to a tangible reality - and provide for expansion in our ministries beyond anything we could have imagined.

When the Lord brought the idea for REPLENISH to my mind in 2013, the Children's Ministry Building was only a shell of a structure, unheated and without restrooms. But even in that first year, we were able to bundle up the teens and let them play games in the building. Without it, we wouldn't have had a spot for recreation, and would have hosted a much less appealing retreat.



As the building has been transformed, the REPLENISH ministry has grown in direct correlation. We've outgrown the times when our services could be hosted in the Dining Hall - the Children's Building now provides this location. We've also been able to include seminars because of the addition of spaces like the Mezzanine meeting room and the heated Bookstore.

There's no doubt in my mind that God knew the potential of the Children's Ministry Building, and directed us to construct it when the timing was right. It's not just REPLENISH that has benefitted from this building's construction. We've been able to develop a year-long homeschooling program in this space, with some of our events reaching attendances of 60-70 students. We've been able to use it for recreation during retreats like Men's Link and our new Young Adult Retreat. It's given us the additional space needed to add more sports camps and special interest camps to our summer youth camp program. And it's provided the sheltered spot we needed to accommodate our growing children's ministry at Family Camp - a ministry that has increased so much in recent years that we're now pursuing the addition of a pavilion onto the building, to provide room for crafts and games.

When we poured the cement for the foundation, did we know what God had in store? No. But God knew. He saw the relationships that would be built in this building. He saw the children who would hear Jesus' name for the first time in there. He saw the teens who would pour out their hearts in worship there. He knew all along, and He asked us to trust Him in pursuit.



I'm so blessed to have seen the unfolding of this piece of history, and I know that God's not done working here yet. REPLENISH 2024 was an incredible experience that won't soon be forgotten by those who were there to take part. And yet it's only one of the many events on our grounds that God has used for His glory.

As 2024 continues to unfurl, I hope that you're as excited as I am to see what God has in store. One thing we realized at REPLENISH is that God is once again making a direction clear - we are in need of additional housing, if we want to continue growing in programs like REPLENISH. God-willing, with the construction of the mini-lodge, we'll be able to open the door for even more teens to come experience this life-changing event in the future.

I am so thankful to be part of a community that shares in this vision. One of the most remarkable things about the Children's Ministry Building is that it has been built debt-free. To me, this proves that our Mahaffey Camp family not only sees the importance of God's work here, but is willing to step out in faith alongside us, providing the funds for these dreams to become reality. I'm here to report that the faithful giving has borne much fruit. After REPLENISH '24, I'm ready to move boldly through this year, knowing that God has plans beyond our imagination.

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