



# Montgomery Center

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## Welcoming All

### Executive Director Report

#### Presbytery of St. Augustine, Stated Meeting

October 3, 2020

*and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Isaiah 58:10-11*

After ten months working as Executive Director at Montgomery, I have to say again that there is nothing better than being in the center of God's perfect will. I am witnessing God's wonderful miracles, despite all the challenges and trials we have been facing. After reading the history of Montgomery that we found stowed away in a box, I realized we are rediscovering the vision that God initially gave to Dr. Montgomery and the Presbytery of St. Augustine for Montgomery. It is very encouraging to see that God is steadfast in His vision for Montgomery.

God's vision for Montgomery is clearly reflected in the Overture for the redemption of Montgomery that was presented to the Presbytery of St. Augustine about two years ago. It says that the efforts to redeem Montgomery, **"as our spiritual asset,"** are to **"pass on the faith to the next generation."** It says that its **"specific strategic goal is to preserve the mission and ministry of Montgomery, enhance and increase its reach for the Gospel."** It also says that our goals are as follows: **Create a culture where everyone is one heart and soul working together for the common good to the glory of God. Thrive and grow in faithfulness in Jesus Christ. Seek and connect with young people in all aspects of our ministry.**

It is a privilege to see God at work, redeeming what has always been in His heart for such a unique place. I am honored to be part of one of the most amazing spiritual assets of the Presbytery of St. Augustine. I am EXTREMELY thankful with God and all the people that have worked with me in this process. I am thankful for the thousands of

dollars that we received in donations, but I am more thankful for all those that have labored with me in cleaning, organizing, restoring and uniting Montgomery.

I am in awe of the support of my husband and our kids; they have sweat with me, laboring at Montgomery, but mostly dealing with my emotions and fatigue. I am super-thankful for all our personal friends that have volunteered their professional services, their time and money; it makes me feel loved and strong. The people from the Presbytery of St. Augustine, including the BOD, bless me beyond words; they have supported me with their knowledge, skills, and experience. I can't name all the people that have been part of this miracle, because they are too many. Thank you!!!

The following is a general summary of Montgomery activities from January to September:

## **Administration**

We established a weekly staff meeting on Tuesdays. In every meeting we recognize good work and improvements. We evaluate the good, bad and ugly of each weekly event. Each department head reports achievements, goals and needs. We plan for new events and all the accommodations needed for each event.

We established our own financial system and reports, setting up QuickBooks and Payroll in collaboration with our treasurer, Alan Cummings, our Director of Operations, Zach Leopold, Presbytery's Financial Secretary, Nancy Brown, and our CPA, Steve Sapp.

We worked with the attorney Frank Williams in writing a new User Agreement. It is approved by the BOD.

We contacted, coordinated and oversaw volunteer groups for all projects, in all areas.

We completed our ACA (American Camp Association) accreditation report and paid our membership for this current year.

We updated and set up Campbrain and our website for all programs and activities in collaboration with the BOD's Interim Secretary, Rebekah Rogers.

We created, and promoted in the community and Presbyterian churches, our sponsorship program.

We worked closely with the BOD and staff on decisions and guidelines for Summer Camp 2020.

We are currently compiling and updating all the documents required by ACA for accreditation with the guidance and advice of Joel Winchip from PCCCA, and Bri Payne, who is part of the accreditation team for ACA. We are also preparing to renew our ACA 2021 membership and compliance, due at the end of October.

Water Tank inspection was done this year by Two-Fold Water Engineering. This has to be done every five years, and we passed our inspection. We also had to fix some other water issues with FDEP, and get signed off on that. These issues dated back to last year, and we were left unaware.

We addressed all the electric violations that were in the Fire Marshal's report from 2019. We also fixed other electric issues to meet safety codes. Some of the main electric panels were replaced, and other panels were fixed and secured.

We are continually working in building our team; we are conducting evaluations, setting up plans to execute short and long terms goals, and improving our communication skills. The Executive Director is taking a leadership class with DCSI (Dynamic Corporate Solutions, Inc.), as part of our team-building plan.

## **Human Resources**

We hired and trained Tess Williams as our Programming Associate for Summer Camp 2020, and Cory Deemer as our Outdoor Education Instructor. This is part of the plan to build up Montgomery's Programming Department. We also hired and trained our summer staff, working closely with Suzi Lemen to prepare letters of hiring for summer staff, and the legal training for summer and all year-round personnel.

We are currently working with Suzi Lemen and Alan Cummings to update our policies, procedures, job descriptions, salary structure, housing guidelines, and housing agreements. These documents will be presented to the BOD for approval. We are also creating personnel files and new employee packets with updated forms and required documents. This project will be ready before the end of this year.

## **Finances**

In addition to the financial report presented by our Treasurer, Alan Cummings, we have to say that Montgomery is continually showered by significant and caring donations. We have saved a lot of money by having most of the repair and maintenance work done by volunteers. We also saved money by finding a volunteer camp nurse and camp photographer for Summer Camp 2020. Our service to the community is building up our profile to put us as a priority for grants, which could be our major source of income while affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

## **Summer Camp**

We created the theme and structure for the summer camp curriculum: Overcomers, through the life of Joseph and John 16:33.

We prepared all the activity areas and created the dynamic of the summer program, making sure that our summer program was pointing to our mission/theme.

We communicated the curriculum structure to the Area Coordinator, Rhonda Cummings, and the Youth Pastor from Lake City Presbyterian Church, Johnny Brown;

our summer camp 2020 pastors. They successfully developed and presented the daily lessons to our campers.

We established and maintained our camp canteen system.

We successfully delivered meals, materials and t-shirts, always on time. We took pictures and uploaded them each day, for every camp session, on Smug Mug.

We worked closely with Susan Kohler, the Camp Nurse, in setting up the clinic, medications, procedures and campers' needs.

Our programming team and counselors conducted outstanding activities, camper drop off and closing ceremonies, every session. Campers and their families communicated their happiness and satisfaction with our overall improvements.

We communicated with parents through emails, text messages, phone calls, social media, CampBrain, and website. We met in person with them when needed.

We mentored summer staff, and addressed all their issues and needs as needed.

We ensured that the staff was tested for COVID-19, in coordination with Zach Leopold.

We addressed the COVID-19 situations that we had, in collaboration with the staff, the President of the BOD (Tommy Lane), the Director of the Emerging Pathogens Institute at UF (Dr. Glenn Morris), and a Federal Attorney.

All the staff agreed that it was a great summer camp. The limited number of campers helped us to handle the COVID-19 challenges and keep the cost of the camp low, as we didn't need as much staff as was needed in past years. We feel like champions after being one of the few camps in the nation that had summer camp. We had 116 campers and 22 staff, including full time staff.

## **Programs**

**Drive In Community Prayer:** On April 29 at 10:00 am we had a very successful prayer time with the community. Keystone Mayor, Karen Lake, attended and participated in our program. Six different local churches and many organizations were involved. Twenty-two cars and two motorcycles attended. Five different pastors, including Tommy Lane, led us, praying for hope, strength, mental health, wisdom, healing and redemption. It was transmitted on 100.3 FM.

**Florida Youth Challenge Academy (FLYCA):** After talking with the program director and the coordinator, these teens-at-risk from all over Florida are working on different projects in our property. Cory Deemer is coordinating and overseeing this project. We are also planning Fun and Family Days for them as Community Service.

**Clay and Bradford County Seniors Center:** Senior Citizens from Clay and Bradford Counties will meet at Montgomery from Monday to Friday, Starting on October 5, 2020. It will be a time for fellowship, chair exercise, board games, Bible study, and more.

**Lake Region Kiwanis Club Weekly Meeting:** Montgomery will host Kiwanis weekly breakfast meeting, starting on September 24, 2020.

**Transitional Emergency Shelter:** We are currently giving transitional shelter to a veteran and his family, and to a single mother with her two children. We are able to serve these two families thanks to our partnership with Operation Barnabas and Answers, and the generous donations of our supporters.

**Operation Barnabas Retreat:** We are working on serving veterans in partnership with Operation Barnabas, a local organization that is known and supported by Keystone Community. We will have the first retreat for veterans and their families this October 16-18.

**Men's Outdoor Event:** We will host a weekend of outdoor recreation and fellowship for men of all ages October 23-25. Frank Williams and MPCC Executive Director will travel on October 5-6 to Alabama, to promote this event with the men that were originally planning to attend this retreat.

**Homecoming Dance:** We will host Keystone High School homecoming dance on October 24.

**Camp BOOST (Building On Opportunities to Strengthen Teens):** We are working together with Tina Baker from the Children's Home Society of Florida to create a program that will encourage Teens-at-Risk to stay in school and improve their attendance and their academic performance. The program will offer camp activities and workshops providing self-care, mental health, and nutrition education, as well as CPR certification. It is planned for November 23-25.

**Breakfast with Santa:** Kiwanis Club is planning and sponsoring this event for Keystone Elementary School. The date is to be determined on a Saturday in December.

**Montgomery's Winter Camp:** A camp for 2nd-12th grade youth on December 26-29. Overcomers celebrating Christmas and the end of 2020. Part of our program includes Breakfast with Santa!

**Homeschool Co-op, "The Wilderness Scholars":** We are planning an Open House with Page Walwik for the end of October.

**Project Sanctuary:** Operation Barnabas is connecting us with Project Sanctuary US in Colorado. They have conferences across the country and Montgomery has been considered as a location for their conference in Florida.

**Kiwanis Rummage Sale:** We will be the only food vendors for this community event. We will also provide activities for kids. This event is postponed.

**Dad and Daughter Dance:** Planning this event for April 2021

**Mom and Daughter Tea Party:** Planning this event for May 2021

**Aftercare Program:** We are planning to develop an aftercare program for 110 low-income students from Keystone Elementary School. We would offer this service after Christmas break. We will apply for grants and donations to be able to execute this plan. The grant that used to pay this service, was cancelled due to COVID-19.

**Take Montgomery Camp with You:** We will go to churches, schools, and Community Events with camp activities. We are developing this program with our Outdoor Education Instructor, Cory Deemer.

**Farm to Table Experience:** We are developing diverse food programs in and outside of camp with our Culinary Director.

## **Property and Equipment**

In the process of making an accurate evaluation of the condition and needs of the property, we met with highly recommended companies and individuals. We walked through every area of the camp with them, and took pictures and notes for our records. We were advised of the need for a professional approach to all the repairs and new construction on Montgomery's property, in order to be in compliance and meet all the safety codes. Many of the professional consulting and labor was done at no cost to us.

We worked closely with Paul Emery, our volunteer Contractor with a level four license, in creating project orders, purchasing materials and scheduling volunteer groups to execute the projects. He processed all permits needed. Paul was approved by the board to oversee all Montgomery remodeling and restoration projects, as well as purchase products needed with Executive approval. Paul volunteers his time here in between his mission work in other countries.

Below are the projects that have been completed:

- The scouts from Memorial Presbyterian Church repaired the main fire pit, built a new lifeguard stand, and painted Emerald Lake's bath house exterior.
- First Presbyterian Church, Fernandina Beach painted the swings and monkey bars, demolished old playground elements and deck, removed furniture from Sugar Pine, removed carpet from Redbud, and started painting the walls of the small bath house by the RV field.
- Challenge Course restoration: High and low ropes, bouldering wall and climbing wall are totally restored.
- Dining hall, fireplace room, lobby and offices are totally remodeled.
- The Road is paved. Al Tidball, Civil Engineer, donated his professional services and retained the permit for our road.

- We cleaned and arranged the lobby, reception and all the offices. Most of the furniture and decor for the lobby, reception and clinic were donated by Silver Springs Presbyterian Church.
- All the AC units were evaluated and serviced.
- We replaced the AC units in the kitchen and Williams Lodge. We also replaced four PTACs in cabins and Inn Rooms.
- Men from McIntosh Presbyterian Church built the dumpster and the water pump fence. They also restored the bench and balance board by the office.
- Riverside Presbyterian Day School raised \$4,000 that was invested in Farm to Table gardening.
- Main Building Garden: Lydia Ficquette beautified the entrance of the main building and office, designing and planting a garden.
- The RV bath house is totally restored.
- Redbud is totally restored. The floor was installed by volunteers from Keystone Heights and Operation Barnabas. The decor was donated by Silver Springs Shore Presbyterian Church.
- Gate: We worked with Paul Emery, and Pastor Troy Stephens from Keystone Community Church, in getting our entrance gate donated.
- The Inn Rooms: the redecoration of all the rooms is almost complete through "The God's Fixer Upper Project". This fabulous job was done by volunteers and donors from Silver Springs Shore Presbyterian Church, McIntosh Presbyterian Church, St.Giles Presbyterian Church, Montgomery staff, and Williams' family and friends.
- The labyrinth is restored and refreshed.
- Golf Cart, Gator and Lawnmowers: Repaired thanks to donation from Robert Browning and Tommy Lane

Our volunteers Frank Williams, Greg Walwik, Dustin Rodgers, Jim Simmons, Greg Armagost, and Mark White did the following work in the two weeks before Summer Camp:

- All Cabin decks restored, except cabin 11
- Little Crystal deck re-built
- Emerald Lake decks restored
- Tree house deck demolition
- Forest and trails cleared
- Cleared the weeds from the beach and Emerald Lake
- Boat Ramp partially repaired

The McIntosh Presbyterian Church blessed us greatly by having their mission trip at Montgomery. They not only completed many projects, but also gave us the opportunity to allow their young people to experience some camp activities. There were a total of 24 volunteers, and MPC paid for lodging and food. Below are the projects that they accomplished.

- Restored 12 benches
- Fixed the Boat Ramp
- Leveled the access to the boat deck
- Cleared the beach and the road to the beach

- Cleaned the Outpost's roof, gutters and front yard
- Pressure cleaned the fire pit, and removed the debris around it
- Made several repairs in the Lake house, and cleaned its backyard
- Dumped over 4,000 pounds of debris that was accumulated around the property and in two trailers
- Continued the tree house (by the parking lot) renovation
- Started the repairs in cabin 7
- Evaluated the condition of the overlook/outdoor chapel

## **Work In Progress**

- Redemption plan: looking for volunteers to do Williams Lodge floor, Outlook Chapel, tree house by the parking lot, and deck in Cabin 11
- Tree house by Emerald Lake will be restored by the Rodgers family from McIntosh Presbyterian Church.
- Cleaning, organizing, and redecorating Gregory Lodge and Cabins
- Planning and creating a system to adapt the cabins for families' retreat, based on Operation Sanctuary suggestions.
- Making Cabin 10 a family Cabin.
- New/Retro Logo: The BOD has approved one of Montgomery's old logos to become our new image.
- Camp Online Store: Soon we will offer different products with our logo, that can be purchased online

## **Marketing and Communication**

Rebekah Rodgers volunteered to work with us on our Website and Camp Brain. She has worked tireless hours and she has done a fabulous job in collaboration with our staff.

Maria Victoria Ramirez, owner of ReEnvision Harmony created post cards for Montgomery as a whole, and the God's Fixer Upper project.

Tess Williams created the brochure for our summer camp 2020, sent to all the Presbyterian Churches in the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

We are constantly promoting our programs and projects through social media and community outreach.

We created and distributed donation request letters.

We are regularly working with Marigrace Doran on communications to the Presbytery of St. Augustine. She has been a huge help on all of our digital platforms, and catching problems.

We are designing and ordering Banners for events outside of our property.

## **Networking**

We are actively involved with the community through meetings, phone calls, emails and community events. We are in active partnerships with the following Organizations:



Keystone SafetyNet Alliance  
Lake Region Kiwanis Club (Our Executive Director became a member of this club)  
School District  
Operation Barnabas  
Answers  
Senior Champions Fellowship Hall, INC  
FLYCA (Florida Youth ChalleNGe Academy)

### **Fundraising:**

We applied for all grants and emergency financial resources offered due to COVID-19. We were approved for two different funds through SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan and Emergency Advance Grants, but we were allowed to receive only one (PPP). To receive the Emergency Advance Grant we had to apply for the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan, as it was apart of the application.

The Clay Electric Foundation; Operation Roundup approved \$12,000 for Williams Lodge kitchen (\$8,500) and Camp BOOST (\$3,500).

Clay Cares Act Grant: they ran out of funds, but we are still on a waiting list.

We received the Whole Kids Foundation Bee Grant of a free bee hive, money for equipment, and teaching tools. Bees were donated by Riverside Presbyterian Day School.

Seniors are applying for different grants with Montgomery as the recipient

Donation Envelopes: Some of our users have left small donations in the envelopes that we leave in all our buildings.

Retro T-shirts: We are selling all the t-shirts left over from past camps.

Thanksgiving Pie & Coffee

Christmas Cake Sale & Coffee

Montgomery Campaign: We have seen God's faithfulness through the constant donations from our Presbyterian Family. Those donations are evidence that it is God's will to keep Montgomery alive. It is for that reason that we will continue promoting this campaign. We know that as God's family, we can keep Montgomery afloat as we increase our programming and revenue stream to become financially sustainable. . COVID-19 didn't destroy us, because we are meant to continue our ministry through our life-changing programs.

Blessings!  
Monica Williams  
Executive Director