



Montgomery Center

Welcoming All

Executive Director Report
Presbytery of St. Augustine - Winter 2021 Stated Meeting.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous

but the Lord delivers him out of them all. Daniel 34:19(NIV)

February 6, 2021

OVERCOMERS 2020

This year was filled with evidence of God's mercy and grace for Montgomery and its vision. It is true that there is still a lot to do, but after surviving the challenges of COVID-19, we feel like champions. We are very thankful for the support of each individual, church, and organization that donated money, time, professional services, and skills, helping us not only to pay our bills, but also to pay our aged payables. We have to say that God's hand is on Montgomery, and He has done just as Colossians 1:13 says; "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son". We are filled with hope and great expectancy. This year we have been able to see the Montgomery redeemed in many ways, and in the eyes of many. We have seen great improvements, even under the terrible challenges of COVID-19. We believe that God will continue leading us in the way of success, for His glory and the service of many.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

One of the highlights of the year, in fulfilling our mission, was the testimony of one man that attended the Men's Outdoor Event. He said, "my turning point to be open to God was the Men's Event." One parent gave another testimony; she said that Summer Camp saved her child's life, who was in depression. These two testimonies, among many others that we heard, are evidence of God working in and through us. Montgomery is a treasure!!!

REDEEMING OUR REPUTATION

The last four months, after the Stated Meeting in October 2020, have been very busy at Montgomery. We had small groups/users, visitors, and volunteers. The highlight of this time is the joy of witnessing unity and love in serving God and others. We continued improvements in every aspect of the camp, while Montgomery's name is constantly mentioned in the local community and in different churches. We received beautiful letters of recommendation from community leaders, public recognition for our hard work and good service, and made "The Lake Region Monitor" news paper three times!

HUMAN RESOURCE PROJECT

We accomplished one of the most needed administrative projects in Montgomery; Job Descriptions, Employee Handbook, Performance Review Forms, Healthcare Policy, and Housing Agreements for the employees that live on campus, thanks to the support and help of HR Professional Suzi Lemen, Treasurer Alan Cummings, and Board Member and Realtor Roger Martin.

REDEEMING OUR PROPERTY

We participated actively in all the events that took place at Montgomery, and in most of the community events as well. We were able to speak to the different groups about our vision and needs, which motivated people to get involved in our redemption plan.

We contacted “The Mission Continues”; an organization with 300 veterans, men and women that volunteer for Non-Profit organizations. They committed to work different projects in our property and bring about \$1,500.00 per project. They came on January 23, 2021, painted the interior of Williams Lodge, and donated the floor for the Lodge. Their meals were paid by “Wounded Warriors”, another veteran’s organization. Frank Boundurant, a local retired Pastor, is donating and installing a wheelchair ramp for the same Lodge. The paint for Williams Lodge was donated by Paint Craft Store (Jacksonville). The Mission Continues is considering a donation to replace Williams Lodge exterior railing.

Kiwanis Club not only appointed me as an Honorary Member, but they also committed to make Williams Lodge their ongoing community project, since we are serving the community in many different ways.

BUSINESS PARTNERS

We are working with Kimberly Morgan, Director of Tourism & Film Development from Clay County Board of County Commissioners, to put Montgomery on the map. She is also contacting us with other community leaders that could work in partnership with us. Our goal is to meet the lodging needs of future tourist community projects.

We are working with Kelly Mosley from Clay County School’s Career and Technological Academies. We discussed about the programs that can be implemented in Montgomery, with the opportunity to benefit Montgomery and the school programs. I was offered a position on their Advisory Board.

We are working with Maria Hitt, Keystone Heights Airport Manager, to find the best way to offer lodging, food and outdoor experiences to pilots in training, and the visitors that participate in all the events that the airport hosts throughout the year.

We are talking with the coordinator for a popular Gainesville area festival about the possibility of bringing the festival to Montgomery. Keystone Mayor, Karen Lake, and Maria Hitt, Keystone Heights Airport Manager, are very enthusiastic about this project.

GRANT AWARD

In November we saw one of the latest financial miracles that allowed us to accomplish the ultimate goal for 2020 and close the year financially even - we got approved for \$35,000 from the Cares Act Grant!!! We were initially approved for \$40,000, but we received a notification of the state approval for \$35,000. The same day that we received that notification, we received a \$5,000 donation in our mail. God is faithful!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach was one of our main goals for 2020, which we successfully accomplished. December was a very active month; most of our work was community outreach, in partnership with many local organizations and churches. We were able to be part of the Holiday Helpers Steering Committee. Over 170 low-income children, more than 70 families, and about 182 seniors received presents, appliances, meals and food assistance. Montgomery was the main center of distribution. I was one of the volunteers in charge of purchasing toys, shoes, clothes and other items for 45 of the 170 children.

Our Breakfast with Santa became a community project. Kiwanis Club, Keystone Heights Mayor, and other organizations are motivated to support this annual program, and make it a big community event for Christmas 2021.

HOLIDAY FUNDRAISERS

It was great to see our staff working as a team in our Thanksgiving and Christmas fundraiser. We enjoyed delivering pies, cakes and coffee, as it allowed us to meet new people and churches from the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

WINTER CAMP

Having Winter Camp without compromising the health and safety of the staff and 15 campers was a great way to close one of the most challenging years in our world. We were able to hear many testimonies from our staff and campers regarding the impact Montgomery had on them this year.

OUR 2021 THEME

Summer and Winter Camp 2020 set the tone and theme for this new year - "**Champions 2021**". After the 2020 camp experience, we know that God is leading us to encourage others to trust Him, through Romans 8:31 ("What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"), and the stories of King David and Deborah.

THE FUTURE

We are contacting different Hispanic Churches in south Florida. Some of their pastors are coming to Montgomery to talk about the possibility of bringing their retreats to Montgomery. Our first visitor might bring a four-day youth retreat for 200 campers this summer.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

I finished the Leadership Level I that Suzi Lemen donated to us. The class helped me to get out of the emergency mode, due to the critical issues that I found in Montgomery when I

took the job. It helped me to reconsider the focus on my leadership, and I am making adjustments to shift from tasks completion to empowering the employees in each department. I am currently attending the Leadership Level II class, and the Director of Operations, Zach Leopold, is attending Leadership Level I. The Culinary Director, Jared Lane will attend the Leadership Level I Class in spring. All these classes were donated by Suzi Lemen to help us improve our team dynamic and performance.

OUR GOALS/OBJECTIVES PRESENTED TO THE BOARD

After an intense and challenging year, I presented to the Board a few basic goals. Many of these goals are the result of observation, experience, and advice from many leaders of the Presbytery, Board members, and friends and family members, each with specific professional knowledge.

- Redeem our relationship with every church and ministry in the Presbytery of St. Augustine. I want to meet and work closely with the Presbytery of St. Augustine Ministry and Mission Coordinator, Holly Dillon. I am sure that her advice and guidance will help us work in harmonious unity with the Presbytery.
- Meet with the session of each church in The Presbytery of St. Augustine to present our improvements, goals, programs, and opportunities. Reinforcing their trust in Montgomery, ask time to speak to the congregation, and recruit 56 ‘Montgomery Champions’. Together we can save Montgomery and become a very successful ministry of the Presbytery!
- Connect, visit, and work with the Central Florida Presbytery, and other churches in Central/South Florida. Jimmy Steele is helping me coordinate a meeting with Chery Carson- Associate Presbytery Exec. In Central Florida Presbytery. She is interested in coming up and meeting with me, touring the camp, and staying overnight. I am also waiting for confirmation for the meeting with a few Pastors from South Florida. They want to come to Montgomery and discuss the possibility of serving 2,000 Hispanic Churches from South Florida.
- Strengthen our mission by meeting and working with the Youth Leaders from the Presbytery. Jimmy Steele has taken the initiative to bring them to Montgomery and talk about ways and programs for mutual help and support. Jimmy contacted Brian Mitchell, Youth Leader at Lakewood Pres. He is interested in serving as a volunteer chaplain/worship leader over the summer. Montgomery needs to prioritize the children and youth from the Presbytery of St. Augustine.
- Reconnect with Pastors and Program Staff from the Presbytery. Holly Dillon Inglis suggested a free overnight time for Pastors and Program Staff. Time for church staff to come enjoy the facilities and relax. She said she would be happy to help in this.
- Apply for Lilly Grant before March 1st. Jimmy Steele introduced me to Susie Watson Burns, Director of Church Relations at Montreat Conference Center. I want to have access to the application that Montreat presented, and follow their lead, as they were awarded close to a million dollars on 2020.
- Restructure our fee schedule for all our services, and create new packages and ongoing fundraisers. Jimmy Steele already started to evaluate our current fee schedule; he is also researching and comparing our fees with other camps. Our goal

is to work with the financial committee and the Director of Operations and have it ready for the Board meeting on February.

- **Human Resources:** Continue working with Suzi Lemen and our treasurer on best practices for our staff. Have each department present their specific goals and objectives. Improve our weekly staff meeting with the only purpose of developing strategies to accomplish short and long term goals. Have weekly meetings with each employee to receive their reports, and discuss the best way to support them and facilitate their projects. Improve and re-structure housekeeping and maintenance departments. Present my Annual Performance Review to the Board.
- **Finances:** Work with the Director of Operations and our Treasurer in challenging each Presbyterian Church to send at least five (5) children to our summer camp to have 258 campers this year. Promote our sponsorship program. Bring at least three (3) new corporate conferences, as COVID 19 restrictions would allow us. Develop and establish our lodging service for tourist, especial groups, and local events. Continue searching for donations and grants. Strengthen our fundraisers and create new ones in partnership with the Presbytery, and local organizations, churches and clubs. Prepare for the audit. Plan and establish an online and in-house store.
- **Programs:** Work with the Outdoor Education Instructor to complete our annual accreditation report. Work on the ACA accreditation requirements, and establish a system to file the documents and reports for our next accreditation visit on 2023. Establish and promote our CPR and Lifeguard program. Strengthen Summer and Winter Camp, especially the spiritual aspect of it (Devotion/vespers and worship). Create programs for youth, men, and women in partnership with the Presbytery of St. Augustine. Develop our out of campus programs. Have the At-Risk Camp in the spring. Plan an incentive dinner and silent auction with our donors and volunteers. Plan and promote a Mental Health First Aid Certification training with Kaitlin Ackley. Plan a second Men's Outdoor Event. Complete the 2021 summer camp written proposal, create marketing, and hire needed staff. Continue improving our outdoor activity areas.
- **Property and Equipment:** Continue our Redemption Plan and God's Fixer Upper Projects. Work with the Director of Maintenance, and the Volunteer Contractor (Paul Emery), to complete the Williams Lodge project. Work with the Electric Company (Aaron Vurgason) to complete the installation of the front gate - he is donating his labor. Restore ten (10) cabins through our God's Fixer Upper Program; three families from winter camp showed interest in joining this project (Ayers, Martin, and St. Johns). Make Cabin 10 a family cabin with Internet service (Aaron Vurgason is donating the internet for that cabin). Plan with the Mission Continues our next project, the Outdoor Chapel and Live Oak.
- **Culinary Department:** Work with our Culinary Director based on the goals and proposal that he would present for 2021. We already spoke about a fundraiser for Valentines Day, which was suggested by Suzi Lemen (Giant Heart shaped Cookie). Create new revenue avenues as; ongoing Picnic basket, Sunday Church Lunch, mobile BBQ, farmers market, pre-cooked meals for guests, bakery for restaurants, etc. Determine the steps and budget to move forward with "Farm to Table" project. Plan and develop Jared's idea to write and sell a "Presbytery of St. Augustine

Recipe/Cook Book”. This book would include recipes from Montgomery, each church and ministry from the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

- **FUNDRAISER AND PROMOTION:** Work with all our departments on strengthening our current fundraisers, and creating new ones. Meet and work with Conrad Sharps on new fundraisers and promotion possibilities, since this is part of his background.
- **Marketing and Communications:** We really need to improve/redeem our marketing strategy. We need a better website design and develop our brand. I reached out to three marketing companies and I will present their marketing proposals to the Board.

Blessings!

Monica Williams
Executive Director