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Dear Kirkmont Supporter,

2018 has been a year of tackling key priorities for Kirkmont Center.

Last year we wrote about how far Kirkmont Center has come as a nonprofit that has continued to honor its heritage, about how Kirkmont Center is becoming a regional camp gaining a national reputation, and we listed our expectations for the future. In FY 2017-18 we have concentrated on priorities that will enable us to achieve our expectations.

Throughout FY17-18 a priority has been to hire a full-time Executive Director. Annual revenues have hovered around \$400,000, which is considered the level that justifies a full-time Executive Director. To move forward Kirkmont needs to make this critical hire. The search committee conducted a national search for more than six months with a thorough review of twenty candidates. At this writing the search is in the final stages.

Three part-time directors have served Kirkmont the past ten years. They maintained the culture, developed a master plan, provided a safe place for each of us to practice being the person we want to be, and addressed priorities for aging buildings and infrastructure. They invested more than \$600,000 in the property while maintaining low costs for campers, retreats, and schools. We are grateful for the service of part-time directors, staff, and volunteers over the past ten years. We are grateful for your support of their efforts.

Because we are operating with volunteer leadership and limited staff, the transition initially will require additional giving. At this writing 17 Individuals have given \$35,000 to assure the leadership transition. *These lead givers now invite congregations, groups, and individuals to support this very significant transition as well as other priorities.*

There is an annual top priority—the experience of summer campers, their parents, summer staff, and volunteers. The foundation for Kirkmont’s future is to continue to provide summer camps that are worthy of Kirkmont’s heritage and of being named a Summer Camp that Changes the World by the Center for Faith and Service. 2018 was a great year for summer camps. Two clues were when nurses reported that they caught up on their reading and when the incident folder was thin and boring.

One of the most moving experiences of the summer was during a week when a group of youth from College Hill Community Church in Dayton and youth from their Colombian partners blended with youth at the weekly summer camp. As the week progressed the Christian Ed volunteer, an ordained pastor in Columbus, invited all to joint vespers. The bilingual worship and singing was a deep experience for all. After vespers everyone walked to the labyrinth where candles were set to mark the path.

You can experience summer camp by going to the *Kirkmont Center* Facebook page to watch 2018 camp videos.

There is room for improvement. We have been in discussions about how to improve the experience of the summer staff. The training, tasks, friendships, and spiritual development provide them a summer to remember. We also want to continuously improve communications with parents.

Another priority has been to determine the lines between human enjoyment of Kirkmont’s natural setting and our role as stewards of creation. We can deal with weather. Kirkmont will never become a theme park. Kirkmont is not a suburban lawn. Kirkmont is a place to learn that mole hills and tunnels are part of the wonder of our ecosystem.

In the spring we discovered a nest carved by Pileated Woodpeckers into one of the three poles of the Giant Swing. This was not a nest of twigs. It was *carved*. After discussion with the appropriate authorities, we decided not to seek an exemption under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Instead we waited to repair the damage until the young birds had fledged. Then we spent two thousand dollars to make the Giant Swing safe.

We engaged with the Ohio bat monitoring project to assist in monitoring bat roosts. Volunteers and staff joined in slow drives on backroads of Logan and Hardin counties with equipment to record bats in late-night flight. Although bats are very helpful in keeping down the mosquito population, there is a health and safety downside having bats roost near humans. Volunteers have contributed or built bat houses that are being placed strategically throughout the camp at a safe distance from the lodges.

Such activities are called Citizen Science, part of Kirkmont's plan. Citizen Science engages multigenerational teams in collecting data and formulating questions that can be used by researchers. Campers in the science track of the 2018 PYC Camp made a list of potential Citizen Science projects. If you are interested in starting or participating in a Citizen Science study at Kirkmont, please call or email the Kirkmont Center office.

More highlights.

- Thanks in part to contributions of \$6300 in response to the Longest Day campaign on June 21, there will be no increase in camp fees in 2019.
- Thanks to a grant of more than \$13,000, we fulfilled a promise to improve handicapped ingress and egress from Croft House.
- We are looking forward to the total eclipse that will pass over Kirkmont Center in April, 2020. How shall we celebrate?

Because of your contributions totaling \$194,000, Kirkmont had an excellent year. You helped fix more problems, improved camper and guest experiences, created more Kirkmont stories, and prepared for the first full-time Executive Director in ten years.

We depend on your continued support to increase the capacity of Kirkmont to serve.

Thank you for understanding and supporting the mission of Kirkmont Center.

Peace,



Buzz Reed

for the Board of Trustees, Staff, Summer Staff, and Volunteers