



**Cross
Trails
Ministry**

Camp Chrysalis & Ebert Ranch Camp
Summer Camps * Retreats * Off-Site Adventures

TRAIL POST

November 2023



“I hoped that he would make new friends, try new things, and learn to think a little more deeply about God and faith.”

A Big Yes!

We ask camper parents to complete an evaluation form at the end of their camper’s week. It encourages them to talk with their camper about their experience and then pass along their joys and any areas to improve. As a part of it we ask them to share their expectations for the camp week. Here are a few:

“Expected camper to have religious education combined with adventure and make great memories.”

“To meet new friends, have a fun filled time, enjoy her time away from home and get to know God in a kid friendly atmosphere with other young adults/children.”

“To have a good time with peers in a fun and safe environment. To get off of screens for a week.”

“To grow in their love of God and the outdoors and make new friends Have fun & learn more about God & serving others.”

“Safe, supervised opportunity to try new things, meet other kids, experience some independence.”

“That he experience nature, make new friends, and build stronger friendships with current friends in a safe environment.”

“To further her understanding of fellowship and faith in a fun setting.”

This summer, when we compiled the camper parent evaluations submitted, 100% of the parents said that their expectations were met! While there is always room for improvement, we are so excited that in the big picture of meeting big expectations, we received a strong “yes!”

IN THIS ISSUE

A Big Yes!

New Programs at Ebert Ranch

Discover Faith 365!

Summer 2024 Staff Applications Now Open!

Beautiful Buildings

The Pond is Coming!

Share Your Campfire Story!

Beyond Sunday

Celebrating Anniversaries While Looking Forward with Gratitude

Save the Dates

New Programs at Ebert Ranch

A NEWSWEEK
TOP CAMP



“What Does This Mean? Confirmation Camp” - New Two Summer Rotation for current Confirmation Students

What Does this Mean?! Confirmation Camp is designed for churches who want their current confirmation students to really focus on the small catechism in fun and interactive ways. After introducing it last year, we have divided the curriculum into a two-year rotation at Ebert Ranch Camp. This summer, campers will explore the Ten Commandments and the Sacraments in creative, staff-led Bible study, worship and activities. Adult leaders will have an hour each day to meet with their youth and connect the teaching to their church. Beyond the teaching times, campers will still get to choose from many camp activities like horseback riding, outdoor cooking, the ropes course and more!

**Trail Bosses – New “Trails”
for Campers in Grades 4-6**
Trail Bosses get to know God and form lasting friendships as they experience an amazing introduction to Ebert Ranch Camp! All Trail Bosses will have an opportunity to ride a horse, learn to work together on the low ropes course, and sleep out one night. But new this year, they will also get to choose two “trails”, which are two areas to focus on during the week to develop new skills! This summer’s trails are the horse trail, the outdoor skills trail, the craft trail and the ranch sports trail.

Discover Faith 365!

In Summer 2024, Cross Trails campers will discover faith is an adventure, 365 days a year! As we travel through the seasons of the church year in a single week, they will discover that God loves and empowers them all year long!

There are overnight programs for campers who have completed grades K-11 as well as for families. Campers coming on their own or with a friend can register beginning January 3rd, as can Family Campers, Grandparent Campers and Women’s Big R Campers. Churches bringing groups of three or more to a youth camp program can fill out a group reservation form to reserve space in their selected program now.

Day Camps in your congregation can also be reserved. These can be submitted now and will be processed beginning December 1st.

Don’t let the cost keep anyone from attending camp! We have financial aid “camperships” available for all overnight summer programs. Just fill out a simple form and request it!



Summer 2024 Staff Applications Now Open!

At Cross Trails Ministry, we value the growth of our summer staff just as much as our campers. As a staff member, you get to join the camp community and gain valuable leadership experience while living out your faith every day! You will go through an intensive training and then be put directly into a leadership position. Spend a fun and faith-filled summer leading and serving others while also having a job where you get to swim, ride horses, shoot archery, wear goofy costumes, hike, create crafts and more! Be ready for a faith adventure in a community like no other!

We are looking for counselors, ropes coordinators, wranglers, arts and crafts leaders and more.



Those who supervise campers must be college age. We also have camphand support positions available for young leaders who have completed grade 11. All must commit to training plus 4-8 weeks of summer camp.

Visit crosstrails.campbrainstaff.com to find out more! Applications opened November 1.

Beautiful Buildings

GIVEN WITH A LEGACY OF FAITH IN MIND!

In 2016, Cross Trails Ministry was able to complete the construction of the Peace-Zion Chapel at Ebert Ranch Camp. The majority of the funds for this project were given through the closing of two San Antonio churches – Peace and Zion Lutheran. While these two churches closed, their legacy lives on as the space that they funded has since been used by over 5000 people.

Cross Trails Ministry needs capital gifts for site and building improvements, in addition to the gifts that we receive to fund our operation. Soon you will be seeing the new master site plans that have been approved by our Board of Directors.

As we continue to increase our year-round ministry opportunities for youth, adults and families, we know that the buildings and condition of our sites can either enhance or take away from the experience of the thousands who attend.

As we move forward in completing site improvements, we want always want to keep the following in mind. At Camp Chrysalis and Ebert Ranch Camp:

- We seek to provide places where people encounter God and strengthen relationships.
- We seek to maintain and add program elements that enhance the experience of our campers and retreaters.
- We seek to ensure that our sites are welcoming and provide simple comfort to all ages, year round.
- We seek to improve accessibility while maintaining a rustic site character.
- We seek to provide a variety of indoor and outdoor gathering spaces for play, study, dining, worship and learning.
- We seek to care for the beauty of the sites and make design changes that are environmentally practical.

It is exciting to be getting ready to move into the next phase of improvements. We are hoping to add more housing to Camp Chrysalis as well as a new Dining Hall and program options. At Ebert Ranch we are hoping to add more program options as well as two new cabins designed to provide simple comfort for youth and families, year-round!

More will be shared soon, but in the meantime, we give thanks for the legacy of those who came before.

The Pond is Coming!

The board of directors has approved beginning construction of the swimming and fishing pond at Ebert Ranch Camp! Special thanks goes to all of the donors who stepped up to match the anonymous donor who gave a \$50,000 challenge gift last fall. Additional funds have continued to come in, and the proceeds from our Fall Festival were also designated for the pond, so we hope to begin construction in the new year.

You can still give to this fund as we are hoping to fund stocking it with fish, some landscaping for a worship site and adding water play activities. Designate your gift to the pond fund to help meet these goals!

Share Your Campfire Story!

Do you have a “campfire story” to share? What has been the impact of summer camp or retreating on you?

Write us a letter and send it to our office at Camp Chrysalis or via email at Info@crosstrails.org.



Beyond Sunday

NEW SPRING FAMILY
RETREAT OPPORTUNITY

Do you ever feel like your schedule is so packed that you can't make time for faith beyond Sunday? Get away for the weekend to connect with family and friends, and we'll equip you with faith practices and traditions to take home.

Our Family Retreats have become popular options for all who want to step away from their everyday together and have faith filled fun! Families, Singles and Couples are invited to join us April 19-21 for the Family and Friends Spring Retreat at Camp Chrysalis.

Enjoy making memories through interactive faith-building worship and Bible study, as well as your choice of camp activities for all ages! Families will have in their own air-conditioned cabin with a private restroom and shared central gathering room. Go to our webpage to register. Financial aid is available!



Celebrating Anniversaries While Looking Forward with Gratitude



Cross Trails Ministry turned 25 years old in 2023! Ebert Ranch Camp turned 40!

We are so grateful for the work of those who came before us who envisioned this ministry.

We are grateful for those who continue to provide vision and support to this ministry as it moves into the future.

We are grateful to be able to offer beautiful places of gathering for thousands each year to enjoy. We are grateful to offer opportunities for people to step away from their everyday to grow, learn, play and be strengthened in relationships as they encounter God in new ways.

We are grateful to be able to send people out with the call to "God in Peace and Serve the Lord", and to hear them reply over and over..."Thanks be to God..And We Will!"

Save the Dates

GIVING TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 28, 2023

We are celebrating 25 years as Cross Trails Ministry and 40 years as Ebert Ranch Camp! Help us raise funds for many more years to come!

Join us on Giving Tuesday as we have fun raising funds! This year's goal is to celebrate our milestones by having a minimum of 25 new recurring donors and 40 one time gifts of \$40 or more that will help us raise \$8000!

We hope you will join us at CTMGivingTues23.givesmart.com and Facebook Live for a fun day of giving and raising funds for camp!

Thirty percent of our budget is from donations and you can help us by participating in this year's event.

Stay tuned to our social media for more information.

GIFT OF FAITH GALA

MARCH 2, 2024

Cross Trails relies on our Gift of Faith Gala to refill our campership fund and keep summer camp and Cross Trails retreats affordable for all. It is also a lot of fun! Save the date and consider becoming a sponsor donating an auction item or experience.

Thanks to our Gift of Faith Gala and dedicated donors who help us keep camp affordable for all, Cross Trails gave \$32,250 in discounts and \$15,953 in camperships last summer. Additional funds will be given for Cross Trails Retreats in the coming months. Thank you!