



For God's Children
INTERNATIONAL

a personal note

from joel burkum
Executive Director

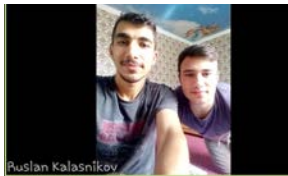
Joel (center) with CGS Facilities Manager Brian Montieth (right) and Trey Felner after sheathing new entryway.

July 6, 2020

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:28, 37/NIV).

Dear Friends,

Early this year when the doors were shut on our summer ministry plans for Romania and Moldova (for the first time in decades), it was disappointing. [And it's looking more and more like Jeremy and I won't be able to get there until the fall at the earliest.] This sad news was compounded when we learned that we would be unable to hold Bible camps here in the States at our Camp of the Good Shepherd (near Louisville, NE). But God has proven over and over again that our "DISappointments" are "HIS appointments." We have learned that when our plans don't succeed, it's not something to despair. God has a plan and a time for accomplishing His will. And through the "shutdown," God has provided us with an abundance of ministry opportunities.



Roma kids sponsored by FGCI take an online English course.



Zina, our newest foster girl, celebrates her 9th birthday at Home of the Good Shepherd.

In the wake of the Coronavirus shutdown, we all have discovered opportunities for catching up with things left undone, and for doing many new things that would have likely gone undone had we not been forced to alter our routines. For example: we have done a lot of one-on-one ministry with our kids (and adults with special needs) in Romania and Moldova via social media, phone calls and texts; we have been able to make friends with our neighbors in need in Moldova and Romania as we have supplied them with food and necessities; we've had concentrated time to better get to know our new foster girl Zina and the rest of the foster children in our Home of the Good Shepherd in Moldova; there have been opportunities to develop leaders and to work with small groups of Roma young people; we have been learning and implementing new ways to be in touch with our FGCI staff, kids and constituents via social media; we have learned how to adapt our programs for "distancing" restrictions; we have had precious, necessary blocks of time for sorting, organizing and planning for the future of our ministry; and, we have been given spring and summer days to do much-needed work at our Camp of the Good Shepherd (Louisville, NE).

Big News! from Camp of the Good Shepherd

Our next ministry update will feature our ministry activity in Romania and Moldova. This ministry update, I want to bring you up to date on some of the great things happening at our Camp of the Good Shepherd.



Through the month of June, CGS Sheep Dog teenage helpers served with CGS Facilities Manager Brian Montieth to do several work projects at camp.

Our first Drive-Thru Rally@theCamp!

Every spring before our camp season begins, we hold a Rally@theCamp! This is a wonderful way to kick off our season by inviting churches, families and friends of CGS to join together in a rally of support. This year, due to the virus, we opted for a Drive-Thru Rally@theCamp! The weather was chilly and wet, but the spirits were great! [I say, "It's always sunny and 74° at Camp of the Good Shepherd...in your heart!"] It was a lot of fun for us, as well as a way for us to connect with several of our campers, friends and supporters. We hope to have another Rally@theCamp! this fall, Lord willing.



Our first Camp of the Good Shepherd Drive-Thru Rally@theCamp! was a lot of fun for all. Watch for details about our next camp rally.

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Completing projects at our campgrounds

Over the past several months we have been able to put energy and time into many important outdoor projects at our Camp of the Good Shepherd which would have been impossible to do during a normal spring and summer of camp. Some of these projects have been waiting for years to be completed.



Sheep Dog teenage helpers transplant a bush.



A concrete ramp and patios are being formed, poured and laid around the dining hall.

Brian Montieth, our CGS Facilities Manager, did a lot of renovation and updating at the camp through the winter months and early spring. He finished cosmetic updates in our kitchen/dining area, and completed the bathroom renovation in our Little Cedars Lodge. This summer, Brian has been leading our volunteers and work teams as they have been completing a good number of projects requiring "many hands."

New "front door" for CGS

In June, Brian and our CGS Summer Intern Anna Kraft led Sheep Dog Work Days at camp each Monday and Tuesday. [CGS Sheep Dogs are teenage volunteers who help Brian with the custodial/daily maintenance duties of our annual summer Bible camps.] Since camps weren't in session this June, our Sheep Dogs have cleaned out rooms, organized storage areas, done lawn and grounds work, helped with landscaping, mowed the grass (a continual maintenance effort on our 17-acre facility) and assisted us with construction. There is great joy in seeing these young people gain work experience and learn some leadership skills.



One of the projects I've been working to complete for several years is our entryway arch/canopy. This is our camp's "front door," so we want it to be welcoming and attractive. Finally, we have been able to complete the canopy construction that will serve as our entry to Camp of the Good Shepherd. All that remains to do at this writing is to shingle the canopy and put our name and logo across the top. Exciting!

I'd like to thank our good friend Trey Felner (and his wife Liz) for all of the help he has provided for us at CGS this summer. Each summer for the past several years, Trey has helped me at Junior Camp and given lots of hours to do work projects around the campgrounds. This year, Trey gave us a full month-PLUS to work on several buildings and grounds projects! I praise God for Trey and so appreciate his sacrificial giving to help us make CGS a wonderful setting for our Bible camps programs. I also thank Trey's dad, Frank Felner, who has also given days upon days of time on construction projects at camp.

Special fundraiser for CGS Bobcat!



This Bobcat 863 skid steer is being purchased by CGS at a bargain price.

This spring, Nebraska Christian College announced that they would be closing their doors. We are grateful to the college for donating paper products and food items to our camp. They also offered us great prices on some of the campus items they were selling: furniture, tools, equipment and their used Bobcat 863 skid steer. They gave us a terrific price on the Bobcat, but we are still raising money to pay for it (\$6,500). This fantastic piece of equipment is in use nearly every day at camp. If you would be interested in helping us with the purchase of the Bobcat 863, we'd appreciate your designated gift toward this purchase. We have made the Bobcat 863 purchase our CGS Summer Giving Project for 2020. [The timing is perfect for us to have this machine.] If you choose to make a gift to help us buy the Bobcat 863 Skid Steer, please indicate that when you make your gift to Camp of the Good Shepherd or FGCI.

New lawn mower is a blessing

Thanks to our great supporters, by this spring we had raised enough funds in designated gifts to allow us to purchase a brand new zero-turn Hustler mower. Thanks to all of you who contributed to that purchase!

When pressure is a good thing

The CGS water supply system has been a bane to us ever since we took ownership of the camp facilities in 2006. I am SO delighted to inform you that most of our water supply "issues" have now been taken care of—and at a very inexpensive price! We have always struggled to have adequate pressure for our dorms. One of our FGCI board members (Harry Arrick) recently came to camp to help us with some plumbing work. While he was here, Brian and I showed him our water pressure problem. Harry made a simple suggestion for how to quickly "solve" our pressure problem. When we were done with the plumbing, the water pressure had tripled! Now we have higher water pressure in our dorms, and no holding tanks or pumps to worry about. Thank you, Harry. And, Praise God!

I do hope that all of you have a chance to come out and see all the wonderful changes taking place at Camp of the Good Shepherd. We are so looking forward to our camp reopening as soon as possible. [It is now available for use all year!] Please keep us in prayer as we continue to make upgrades to our camp facilities, such as landscaping, concrete work, bathroom renovations, construction of rooms, installation of new doors and a large window in the chapel, etc., etc.... We want to make CGS a place where God is glorified and where everyone is "having fun learning about Jesus!"

We at FGCI have been blessed with a dedicated group of generous, faithful supporters. I thank God and each one of you, our wonderful supporters, for the consistency in giving you have demonstrated through these Coronavirus times. You are a tremendous blessing to the children and adults we serve. May God bless you.

Love in Jesus,

Joel Burkum

brother joel



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