

# Tri-State Christian Camp & Retreat Center DeFuniak Springs, FL November 2021

*Isaiah 42:16 "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."*

We look at the Tri-State Christian Camp today and see a labor of love produced by many hands and know the dates of each part of the process and who did the work. But – when did God begin the work of preparation in the people He had chosen to do this ministry and who is He working with through this ministry? This part we will never know – only God knows - but there were many workers who, as young people, had come to know Christ at camp and felt the need to produce a camp in the Panhandle of Florida. And – there were some who had never been to camp as young people, but God worked ahead of time to prepare them. And – in God's timing, it all came together.

It began with the Tri-State Men's Fellowship who realized the need for a camp in this area. The other camps in North Florida, South Georgia, and South Alabama (the Panhandle area) were too far away for the churches and the rental camps were becoming harder to find and to use satisfactorily. Clifton Savoy of the Tallahassee Capital City Church was the President of the Fellowship and they agreed the camp site chosen should not be more than 150 miles from any of the churches involved and the map pinpoint was in the Marianna, Florida, area.

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At this point Mrs. Bill Sisk of the DeFuniak Springs, Florida Concerned Christian Church (Now in 2012, the First Christian Church) offered to give fifteen acres of her land next to the church with the option to buy more land at \$1,000 per acre. We bought 15 acres.

She and her husband traveled past on the railroad paralleling Highway 90. That her now deceased husband would point out the area and say he would like to see a camp there so, she felt led to have the camp on her property. The Fellowship agreed to meet at the Concerned Church to make a decision. All the churches were small and there was little money available, but the site was in the designated area. In the meantime, the First Christian Church of Tallahassee had called a new minister, Johnny Arnold, and this meeting was held on his first weekend in town, so he and his wife, Carolyn, were in attendance. The meeting was held during a rain storm so the only way we could see the property was to ride down the sand road and look out the car windows and all that was evident were deep woods so, when we voted to accept Mr. Sisk's offer and buy twenty more acres, none of us had really seen it.

Clifton Savoy called a meeting at the Concerned Church shortly thereafter with as many as possible to come for a work week with the whole group to come on Friday. He and Cauly Huggins (First Christian Church, Tallahassee, Florida) agreed to go together – Cauly and Lorraine (his wife) in their travel trailer and Clifton with his pup tent. Much to his dismay, only one other person showed up for the work week. Becky Jones (Capital City Church, Tallahassee, Florida) with her pup tent. The Concerned Church had camping hook-ups and allowed us to park there and use their facilities. The first thing the group wanted to do was clear the areas for the survey crew so we could see the land boundaries. God kept them safe as they cut through the underbrush, but they were concerned about how much of the area was wetland and wondered if we should proceed.

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In 1983 the Fellowship secured 30 acres (15 acres are wetlands) of land on which to start a Church Camp. Since then we have purchased 13.7 acres bringing the total to 43.7 acres. Recently the trustees of the camp changed the name to Tri-State Christian Camp and Retreat Center. The camp now has 96 beds in six cabins, 7 motel type rooms in the staff building, a main building that seats over 100, a swimming pool, volleyball court, outdoor basketball court, softball field, a zip line and an eight element challenge course. In 2007 three lots of nearly 4 acres were added, giving us 47+ acres.

The following picture is from 1986 and only the main building was finished. By 1989 in May, the first Women's Retreat was entirely on the Camp. We were able to sleep over 100 women in our original cabins.



### Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Tom Hart · July 25, 2020 ·

Pictures from Summer of 1986. First Christian Church of Tallahassee, Florida. We loaded up our kids younger than first grade and went to Tri-State Christian Camp near DeFuniak Springs, Florida. We had an overnight camping experience for them, called "First Chance Camp".

One of the girls attending, now sends her oldest son to Camp.





## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Tom Hart · July 25, 2020



Ladies Retreat in 1986 at Tri-State Christian Camp near DeFuniak Springs, Florida.





From Left to right:

Sara Pius (one of the early students attending Camp), Cindy Meeks (when in High School helped clear the property and now is Chairman of the Board), Sherry Hart (helped cook for Camp for years), Mildred Brown (she and her husband did the air conditioning installation at Camp), Tom Hart (involved with the Camp from the beginning, past Chairman of the Board), Johnny Arnold (Moved to Tallahassee and was Minister of First Christian Church, first proponent of the Camp, major builder of the facilities and Director for 16 years), Carolyn Arnold (Johnny's wife and great supporter of the Camp), Glenn O'Neal (a Contractor from Bristol, FL who helped build the Camp).



Quilt made primarily from Camp Shirts.

The following pictures give a feeling of the Camp, beginning with the new entrance in 2018.



### Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Tom Hart · July 16, 2020 ·



Marvelous things are happening here. Share with your friends.





## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Randy Chesnut · July 29, 2020 ·



It's been absolutely wonderful having Rotary Youth Camp of North Florida at Tri State Christian Camp for the month of July! This month long camp program is for those with disabilities. There is one week of caregiver training and three weeks of different age group camping.  
Tri State Christian Camp & Removing The Barriers - Turning disabilities into opportunities !

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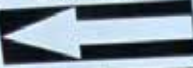


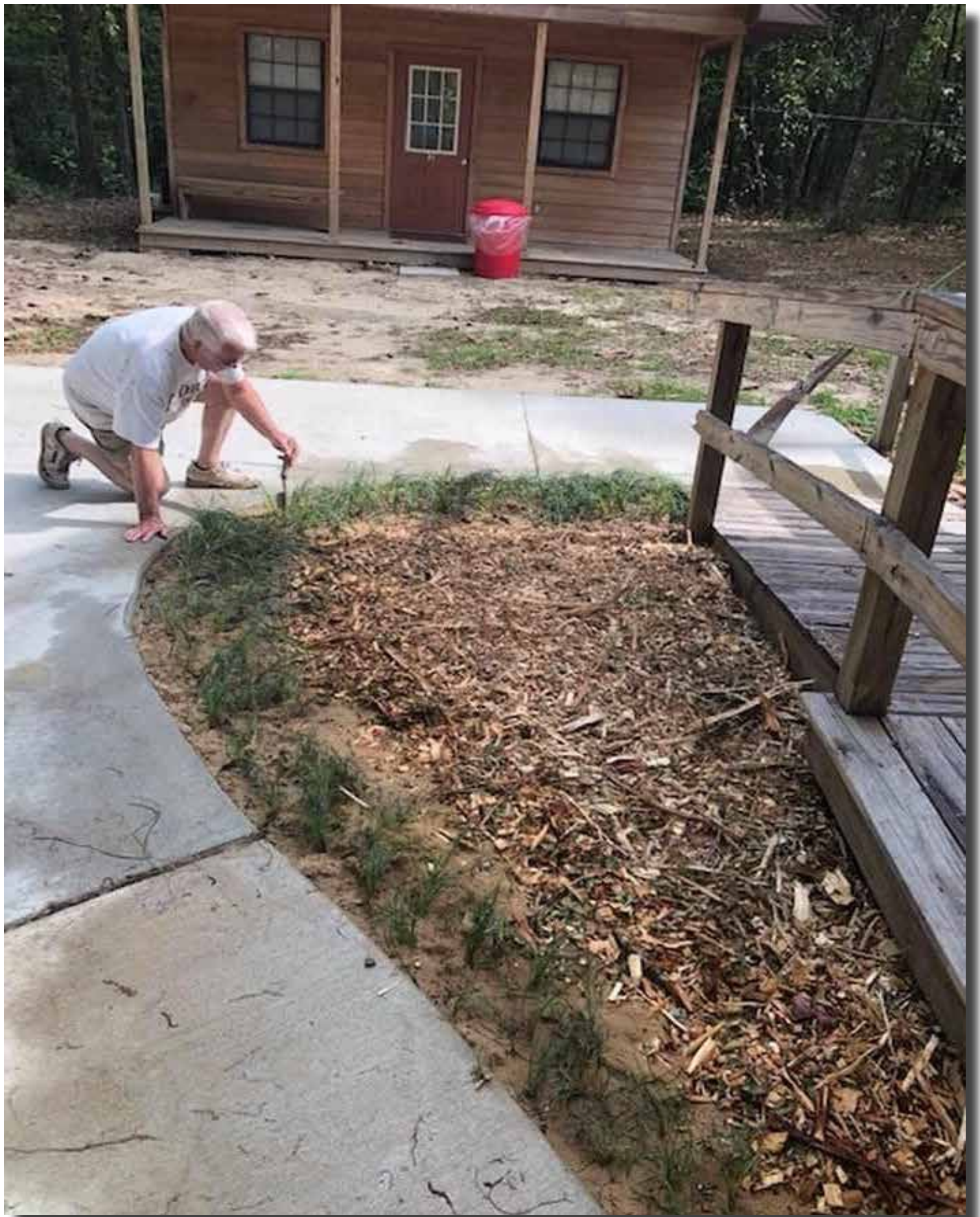
Main Parking lot entrance to the center of Camp. Plenty of parking in a spacious flat parking lot.





Rotary Camp  
Check In









## CABINS

There are 6 cabins that sleep 16 people each with showers and restrooms. Cabins have cypress siding outside and inside, providing easy maintenance. Waterproof mattresses and sturdy wood bunk beds.

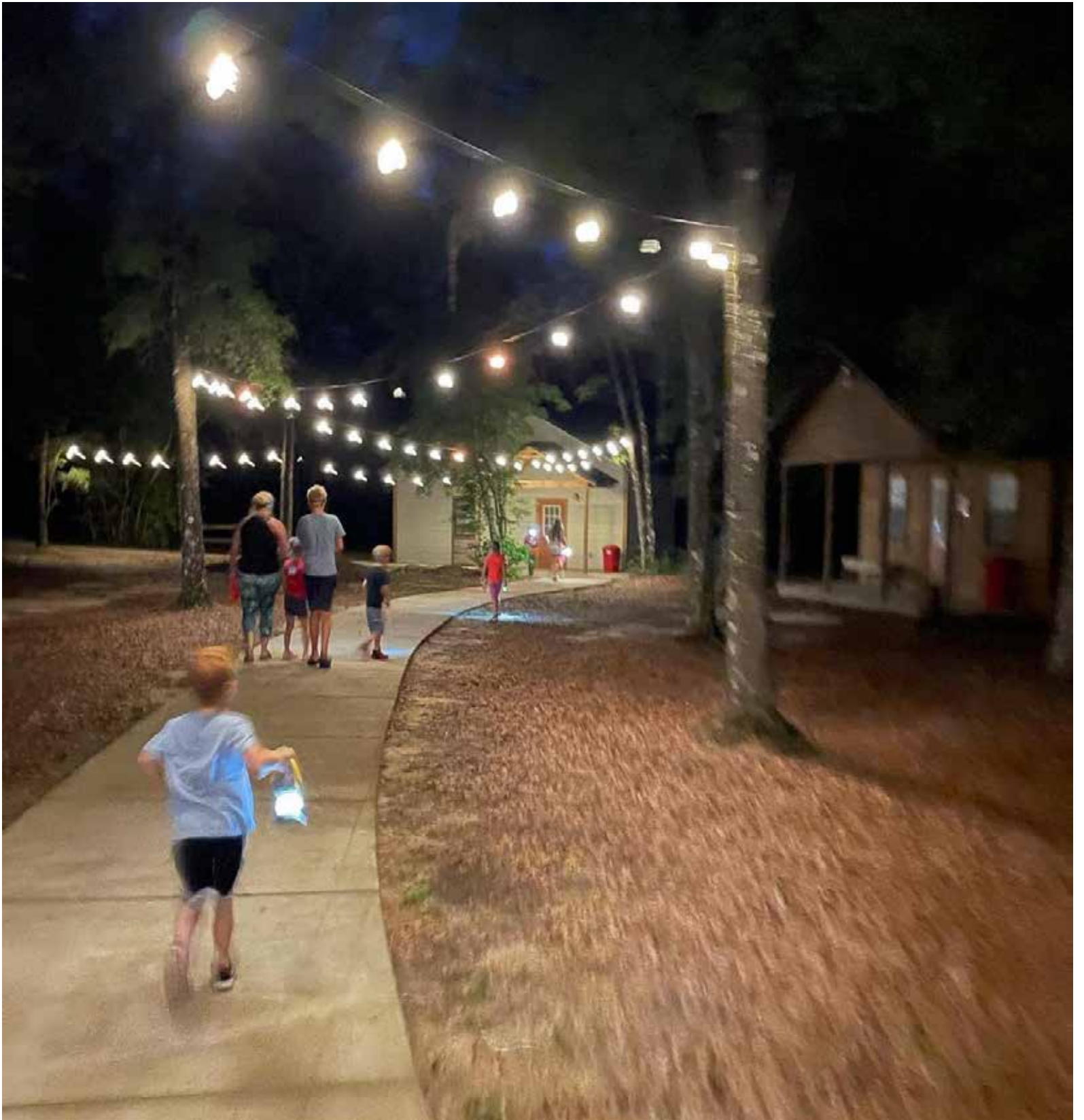












All of the buildings are connected with wide sidewalks, including the Pool.



A cabin with some of the decoration for the Rotary Camp.





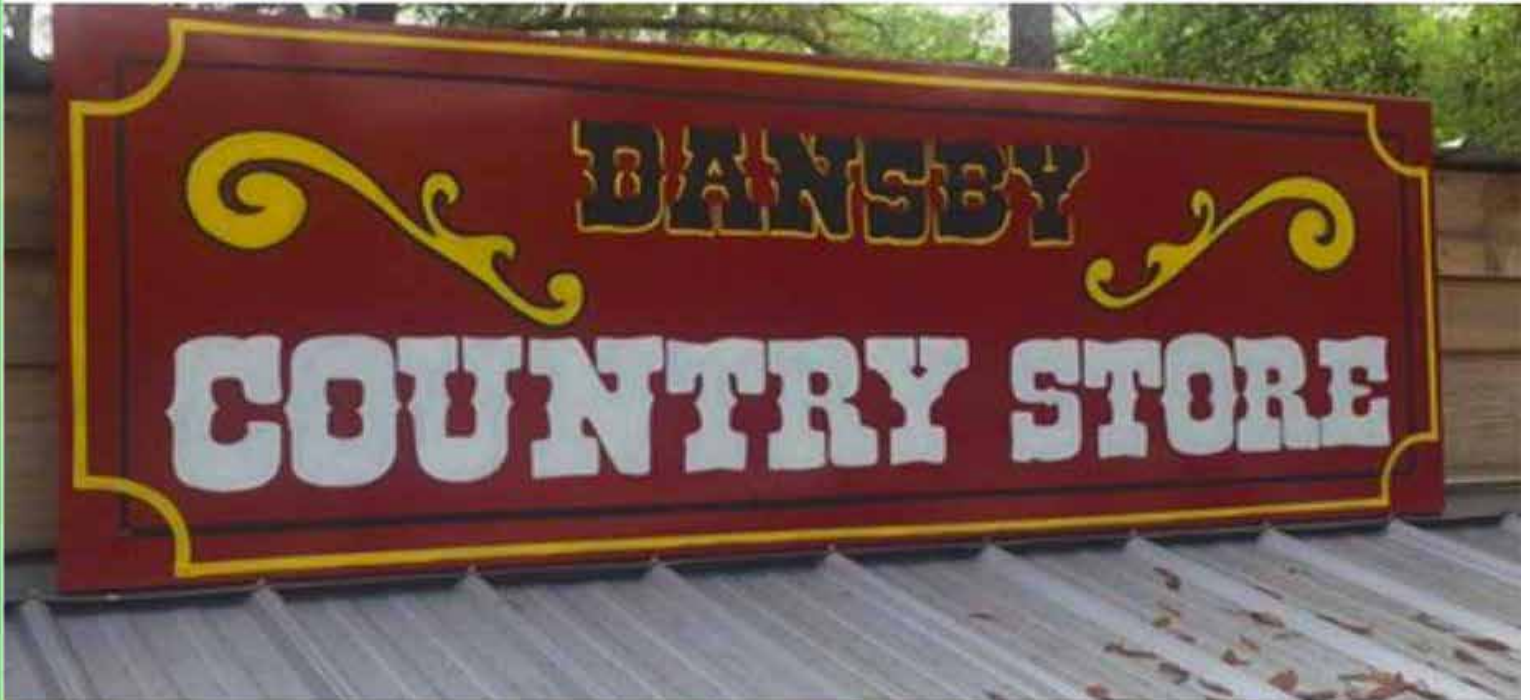
Beautiful Courtyard in front of the Dining Hall.





**Randy Chesnut**

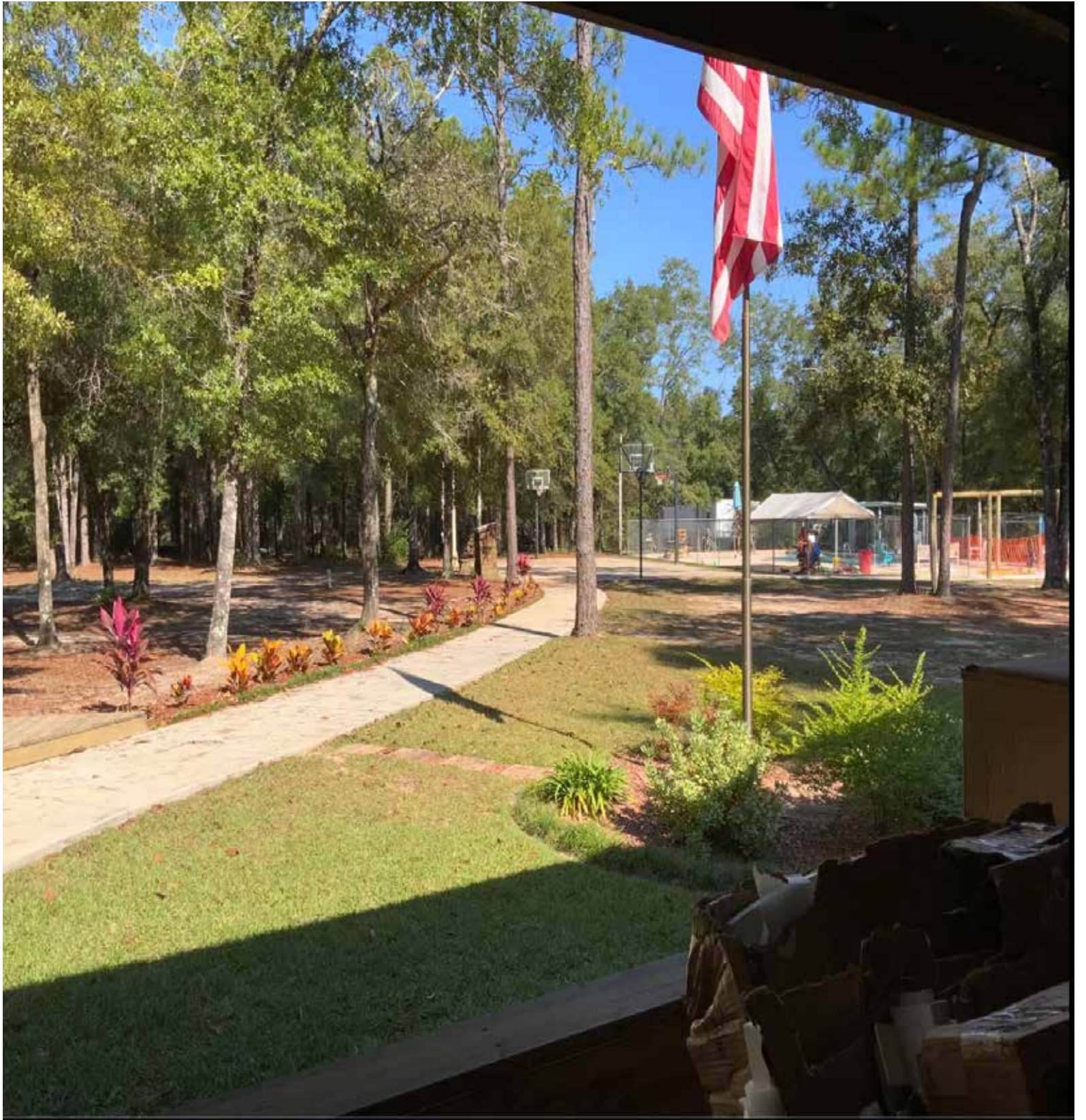
8 hrs · 🌐





The Country Store snack shop.



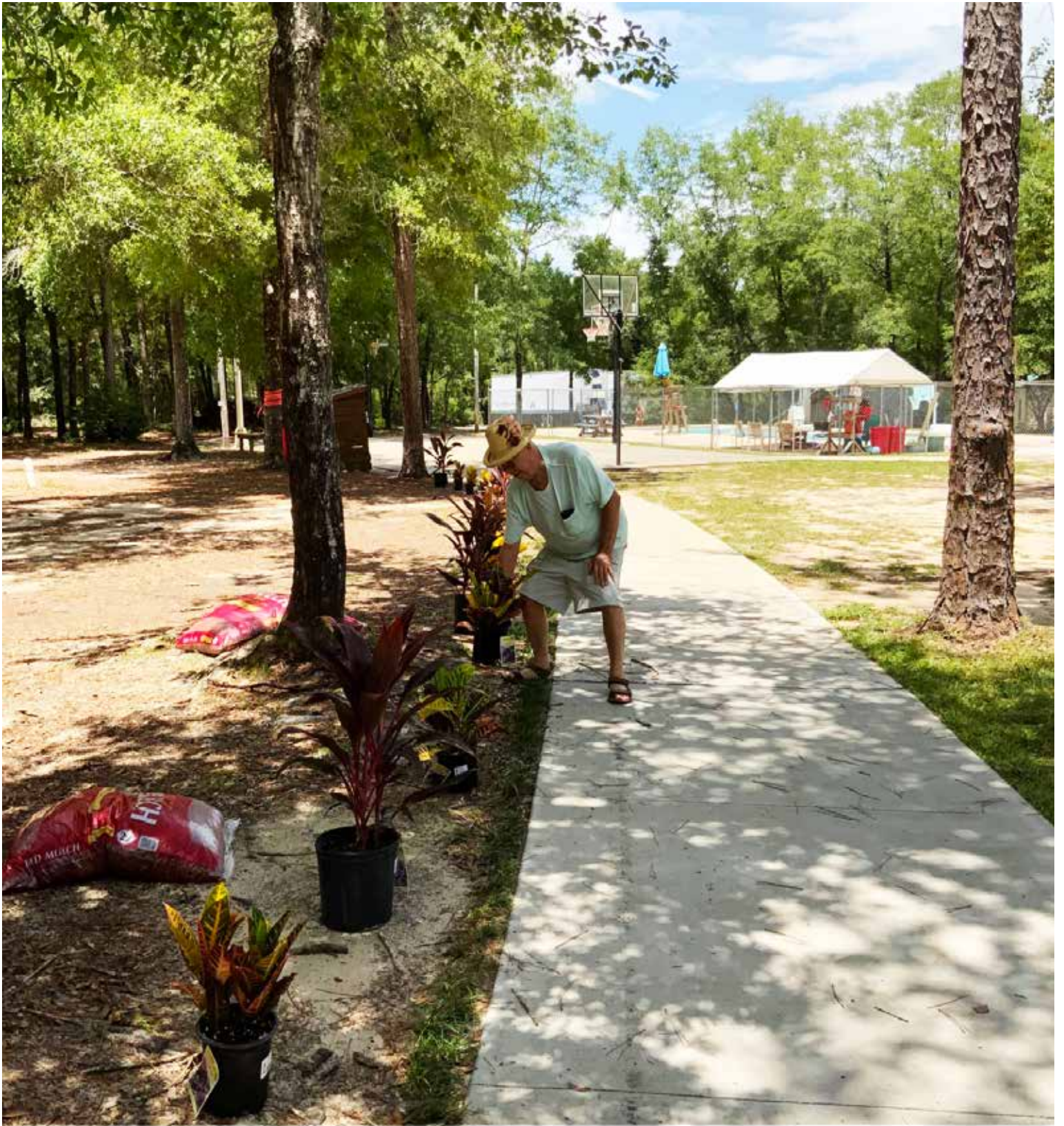




Main sidewalk from the Dining Hall to the Pool.



Nice pavers to the back door of the Country Store.







A group from near Jacksonville, renting the Camp and the day after the plants were placed, they had planned to have a work day. They planted the plants for Summer and spread the red mulch.



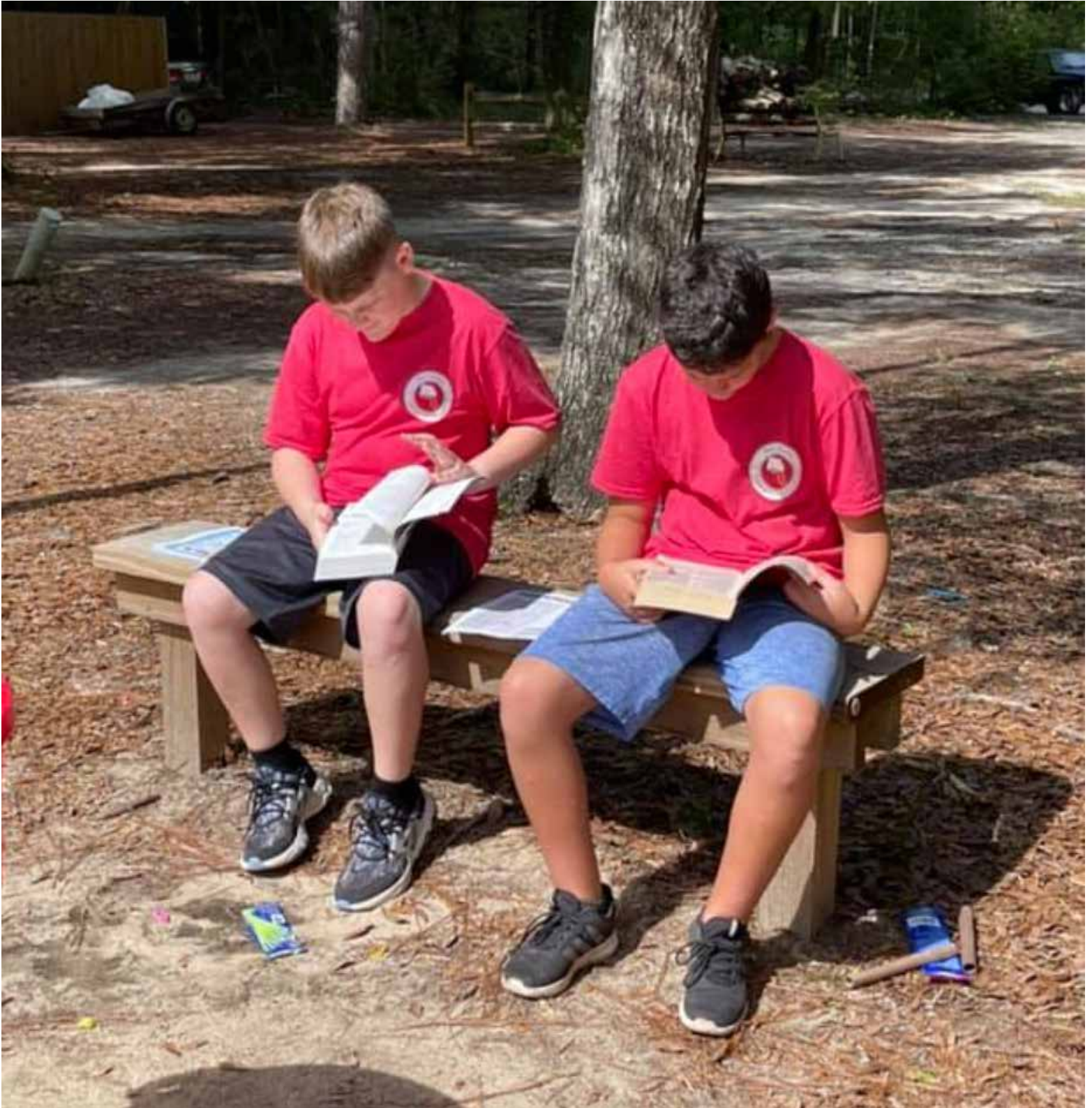












Campers in their shirts, studying.

**MAIN BUILDING**

main building with a capacity of 118. This building also has a modern kitchen and flagstone fireplace.





Front of the Dining Hall facing the wetlands, that some time in the future will probably be a spring fed lake, after the trees have been sold and someone pays the Camp for the peat Moss.



Campers assembled for their indoor group session.







Recent Ladies Retreat.



The Dining Hall is rented for many local events.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18  
19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28  
29 30



One of the many groups that rent the Camp.



All the buildings are connected with wide sidewalks and new LED Lights for great nighttime lighting.



One of the 3 men's dorms is now remodeled for Handicapped Access.

## STAFF BUILDING

Our staff building has a well appointed apartment and 6 motel-type rooms. This building also has 2 restrooms with showers to be used by RV and tent camping area.











The Camp Board in front of the new Director's 4 bedroom House.



The group from Indiana who pressure washed the Director's House and sprayed sealer on it in 2020.

The two bedroom cottage that was built many years ago by a young couple who now help out at the Camp.











## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Tom Hart · October 6 ·



We have a large four bedroom Director's Home and a two bedroom Cottage, where the Camp Director used to live.

The Cottage has been recently renovated. The photo is of the Kitchen area.











Tiki Hut that will provide shade at one end of the Pool.





## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Randy Chesnut · May 17 ·



Tri State Christian Camp / Removing The Barriers Tri-State Initiative put on a paddle challenge at Lakefest to raise money for those with disabilities.

We are so thankful for our sponsors and for a great day.

Five teams competed for the title of Big Kahuna .

Congratulations to the high school Key Club for first place in the first annual "Big Kahuna Challenge" and for the sponsorship of the Defuniak Springs Kiwanis Club.













The



Two 500' Ziiip Lines.









## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Randy Chesnut · July 18, 2020 ·



First week of 2020 Rotary Youth Camp.  
A camp program for those with disabilities!  
Campers had a great week.  
Science  
Art... [See more](#)





Special Hay Wagen that Randy built.







We have two Big Kahuna Canoes.



## **Are you prepared?**

It's not a matter of if a disaster will strike, but when. Are you and your family prepared? Is your neighborhood prepared? How about your Church? Too often we have the thought or attitude that someone else will help or we are not qualified to do what needs to be done. Helping His Hands wants to change that, come join us and others from around the country for a week long training.





“Helping Hands” first came to our Camp when the Hurricane hit Panama City and used our Camp for their workers to live while in Florida.

They now use our Camp as a training center for one week a year. These photos are from 2020.















“Helping Hands” Ministry Group from 2020.



## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Randy Chesnut · March 13 ·



Had a wonderful "Men's Advance" weekend.

All our speakers were great!

Jim Book from Kissimmee Christian Church Bill Redmon with Removing The Barriers Mayor Bob Campbell from Defuniak Springs and local preacher John Dixon from First Christian Church of Defuniak Springs.

Between preaching and teaching sessions on Saturday we got the guys out for fellowship and some friendly competition!











De Funiak Springs "Lake Fest" in 2019.











## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Tom Hart · July 12, 2020



Seven Families from Logotee, Indiana volunteered at Tri-State Christin Camp near DeFuniak Springs, Florida for a week in early June (They liked it so much that are planning on coming back again next year).

They pressure washed 7 of our cypress clad buildings and stained 8 of our buildings.

They also comleted many other construction projects around the Camp.













## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Randy Chesnut · November 3 at 6:44 PM ·



Beginning to cut doors in the 53' semi trailers for our new maintenance shop area each door will have a storage item in it. The process is to get out of the old maintenance shop and make it into a classroom for summer camp programs.







## Tri-State Christian Camp

Published by Randy Chesnut · October 19 at 11:00 PM ·



Finishing the land clearing to erect our new shelter at the maintenance shop area. Everything has been delivered to the site. Now we need some volunteers to erect the roof.



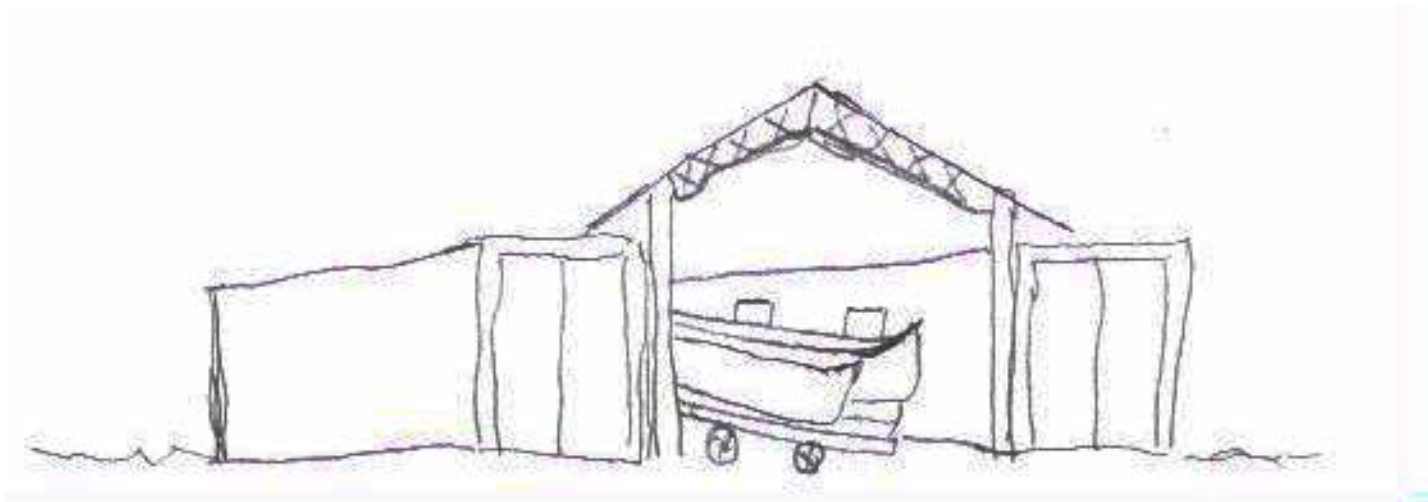
Site for the new Workshop.



Supplies to build the shed roof between the two Trailers which will house the supplies.



A sample of how the Maintenance facility might look.







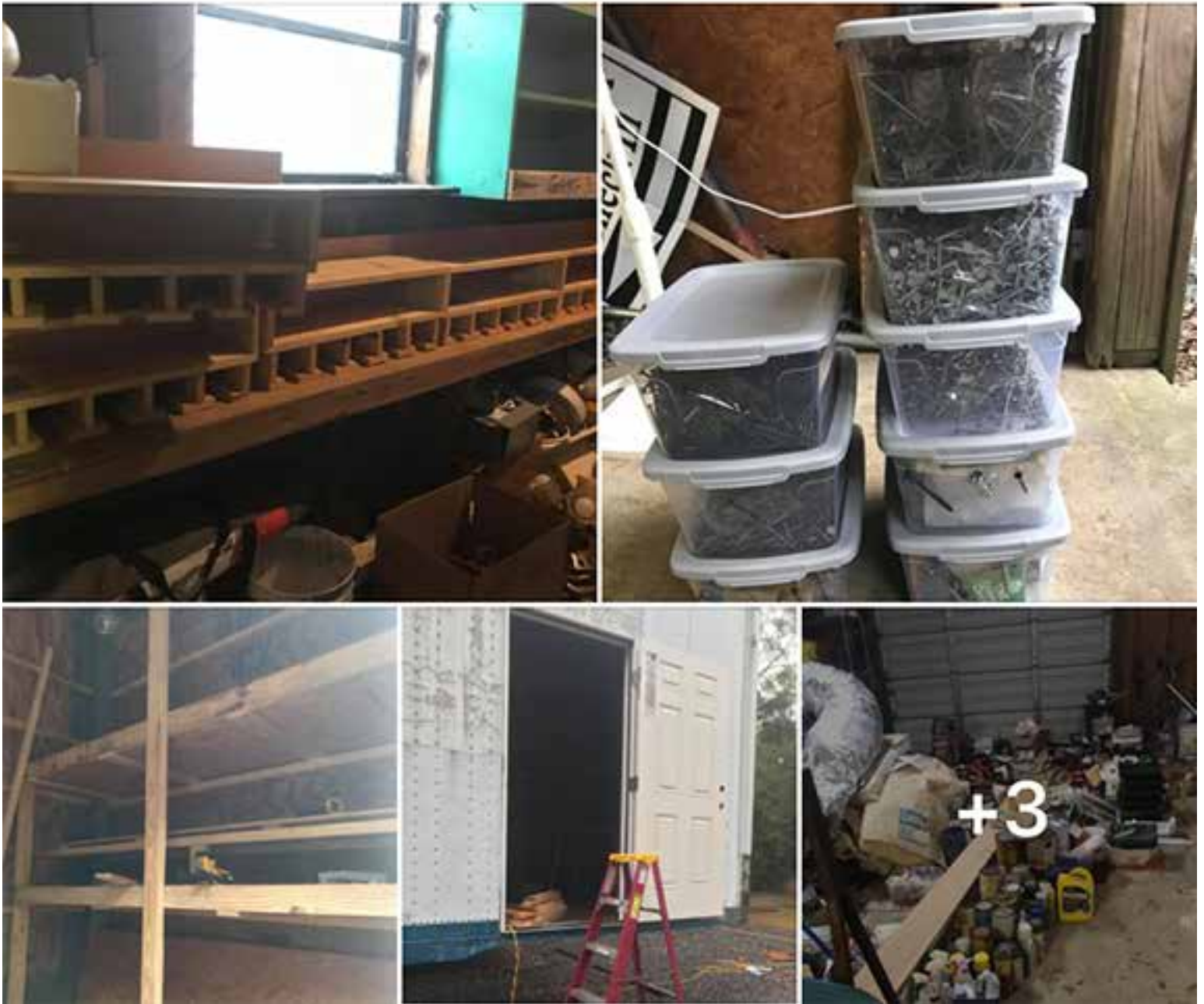


**Tom Hart**

November 13 at 11:36 AM · 🌐



Work I did to organize nails and other loose items for the new Workshop at Tri-State Christian Camp near DeFuniak Springs, FL. I did this last Thursday.



Five (5) shelves and racks for battery operated devices. The shelves are for the chrges and the racks are for the tools.

Randy will use those he needs and share the others.























