

September 8, 2020

Dear Friends and Partners in Ministry,

It is with great joy and great sadness that I announce my resignation as the Director of Outdoor Ministries, effective December 1, 2020. This decision has been percolating for the last 12-18 months. I turn 65 at the end of October and it's time for new adventures and new challenges, as well as a little less stress and responsibility. I love working at DuBois Center and enjoy living at camp, but the last months have taken their toll. I am looking forward to spending quality time with friends and family, traveling and working on my bucket list - all with good safety precautions in place.

It has been a blessing and an honor to serve with you and to serve on your behalf. Thank you all so much for your support of the ministry of DuBois Center and my efforts. Over the past ten years, I have had the opportunity to work with, to be in community with, so many amazing people - our campers, guests and students, their families, our donors, and all the incredible staff and volunteers. I am sad that I won't see one more Mother-Daughter Retreat, one more Summer Camp season or one more Father-Son Retreat. It's been a rough year for all of us - but I will leave with so many great memories.

Despite the pandemic, there is still much to celebrate! DuBois Center truly is sacred ground - a place to be cherished. It is a wonderful space where people of all ages grow in their faith, live and work together in Christian community, learn about respect - respect for themselves and for others, and show God's love by truly caring for all of creation. Together, we have been good stewards of the programs, grounds and facilities. The number of committed volunteers has grown significantly, and their efforts can be seen in every facet of life at DuBois Center. We have solid partnerships with Hoyleton Youth & Family Services and the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. With the support of donors and volunteers, we have made a huge dent in the deferred maintenance list - the docks, the spillway, the tractor, the upgrades in Hickory Lodge... the list goes on.

While there is much to celebrate, there are also many challenges to be addressed. In my opinion, to move boldly through this decade, even more committed volunteers are needed. Capacity needs to be addressed; this is a critical piece for financial viability. Despite the work on deferred maintenance, there is still much more to be done. New partnerships need to be developed. And last, but not least, to advance and sustain these efforts, an effective staffing and support structure needs to be put into place. I have given my best effort, now it is time for fresh eyes and new energy at DuBois Center.

I wish all of you the very best as your ministry continues in this conference, your local church, at DuBois Center and with your neighbors - near and far. I close with two of my favorite quotes which encompass my hopes for you and the Illinois South Conference.

*"We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can only fly embracing one another."* Unknown

*"Look Up, and Laugh, and Love and Lift."* adapted from Howard Walter

May God Bless and Keep You and Yours, Shirley Asmussen