To all DuBois Center Believers, Advocates, and Visionaries,

“When will things finally get back to normal?” This familiar question has been lingering around for the past year and a half or so. Maybe you have heard these words with your own ears or even spoken them with your own lips.

When health and safety restrictions surrounding COVID 19 struck, the Outdoor Ministries Team, Illinois South Conference leadership, DuBois staff, and volunteers passionately committed to embracing the present challenge as an opportunity to celebrate the mission, ministry and vision of DuBois Center in new ways. Instead of dwelling on the notion of “getting back to normal,” creative juices began flowing as this devoted team brainstormed and designed a plan that enabled the ministry of DuBois Center to emerge even stronger in the midst of this pandemic.

A new question emerged….“How do we live into the present moment with faithfulness and hope that embraces God’s possibilities?”.... The following results were phenomenal!

**Fall Festival Challenge:** Due to Illinois COVID 19 restrictions, it was necessary to cancel the 2020 Fall Festival fundraiser. One of our devoted visionaries presented the idea and seed money for a Fall Festival Challenge in lieu of the in-person event, resulting in generous donations from fellow DuBois supporters totaling $3,541.00.

**DuBois Center Annual Appeal:** Our advocates stepped forward and amazed us again with additional gifts of $10,170.03 in response to our annual appeal.

**Improvements, Upgrades, and Purchases:** Not to steal the thunder in their own detailed annual report to the conference, so much gratitude belongs to the property committee members who have spent countless hours with improvements to the director’s house, DuBois Center office, Rustic cabins, Deer Run cabins, Oak and Hickory Lodges, and barn, just to name a few. New helmets and saddle pads were purchased for the equestrian program, and a new water mat was purchased for the waterfront. Plans are currently in the works to increase the horse herd and to purchase an improved hay elevator.

**Behind the Scenes Summer Camp Preparation:** Countless hours by many individuals were utilized to research, study, plan, and implement safety guidelines, procedures, and protocols to ensure the successful re-opening of summer camp offerings in the midst of a global pandemic. This, in addition to conducting initial interviews with former DuBois staff, helped to give a running start to the new Acting Director of Outdoor Ministry.

**Spring Welcome Back Open House:** On April 25th the Outdoor Ministry Team hosted a Welcome Back to DuBois Center Open House and officially introduced Hayley Elliott as our new Acting Director of Outdoor Ministry. 81 Guests and 22 staff and volunteers enjoyed walking the grounds, visiting the horses, and attending a Blessing of the Bees.

**Summer Camp Success:** Please refer to Hayley’s report to the ISC Conference about welcoming 350+ campers safely and successfully back to DuBos Center this summer, and welcoming Rylee Hodges-Stone to the DuBois Staff as Program Director.

Please join the Outdoor Ministry Team in our excitement as we anticipate all that DuBois Center has to offer, not only in the coming year, but for generations to follow. You are cordially invited to unite with our team as plans are being made to offer an extravagant welcome to those longing to experience this Most Holy gift of God that we hold so dear….DuBois Center.