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Proposal for Master Planning Services for Gracefield Christian Camp & Retreat Centre

Submitted by Run River Enterprises



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Gracefield, Quebec

The mission of GCCRC is to invite all people to experience the loving presence of the living God in creation, in Christ, and in Christian community.

Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre is dedicated to helping all people experience spiritual discovery, growth, and renewal.

It is a community that nurtures a deeper love of Christ, provides comfort and support, builds leadership, develops meaningful relationships, and practices stewardship of the environment.

Introduction

We believe that the central question of any faith-based planning process is: “What is God calling us to do in and through this ministry at this time?” The plans that are developed are a means of responding to what we understand that call to be.

In particular, with strategic decisions regarding the course of a camp or retreat center ministry, the perception and grasp of God’s call for the ministry must issue in specific plans for missional viability, financial feasibility, program initiatives, organizational structure, the development of donors and volunteers, and property.

We believe in the work of a planning team, and that collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking are essential to a healthy process.

We believe it is necessary for any planning process to contain the seeds and source of its implementation.

About Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning guides a group in thoroughly examining its current and past operation, evaluating its effectiveness in light of its mission, setting significant goals for the future, and developing specific plans to achieve those goals. A strategic plan allows an organization to accomplish more than it otherwise would, to optimize the use of its current resources, make operational decisions which lead to strategic ends, and increase future resources.

A master planning process is a comprehensive process through which an integrated strategic future is drafted, tested, and refined, in the areas of:

- Mission and Identity;
- Program & Marketing;
- Administration, Operations, and Governance;
- Site Design, Features, and Facilities.

Specifically, strategic planning seeks to address the following questions:

- 1) What is the mission of the organization and what are the particular activities, events, and services (the program) through which that mission is realized?
- 2) How is the program designed, planned and evaluated?
- 3) How are persons invited and empowered to become involved in the organization, as participants, donors, and volunteers, and as leaders?
- 4) How can the structures and systems (financial, personnel, accountability) of the organization align the resources of the organization in order to accomplish the mission?
- 5) What site features and facilities are necessary to support the vision for ministry?

Scope of Services

We offer a four stage process for your consideration:

1) Discovery and Analysis

An initial planning team retreat forms the group into a working team, reviews the process, and grounds the work of the team in prayer, Bible study, and the mission of Gracefield Centre.

In this stage, a “360° inquiry,” is initiated, and takes into consideration the mission, vision, and values of the organization, the perspective of current participants in the ministry, staff,

volunteers, and other leaders. Industry standards and benchmarks are applied to the ministry. Perspectives can be gathered via survey, interviews, and focus groups.

We complete a GIS (Geographical Information Systems), and statistical analysis of guest and camper data and financial information. Such an analysis typically includes comparison of camper and guest data with demographic (census) statistics and Presbytery records. Trends in data are used to isolate specific areas of growth and/or decline. A cost analysis provides a basis for evaluating fees.

We include a thorough examination of the structure, systems, and processes which currently support the ministry. While capability and sufficiency of systems does not itself produce a viable future, the lack of such systems can detract from and deter viability, and so is an essential area of inquiry. Particular attention is paid to the strength of the Board, since this is nearly always a crucial element in the organization's ability to accomplish its vision.

2) Review and Focus

The second planning team retreat focuses on defining the critical issues, which include the pivotal questions, challenges, and opportunities for the future of the ministry. Critical issues are often in the areas of new or expanded program initiatives, essential marketing efforts, long term viability, strategic alignment of resources, staffing patterns, appropriate forms and means of governance, and construction or renovation of facilities. These represent both the matters which must be resolved as the ministry moves forward, and the areas of potential expansion or redirection in programs and services.

3) Preliminary Concepts

At the third planning team retreat, proposed concepts for the preferred future of the ministry are presented, discussed, and refined. These include plans for:

- **Mission and Identity** – what is the purpose of the ministry and what is the nature of the faith community that gives Gracefield Centre its character and causes it to thrive?
- **Program** – what are the principal experiences and services that will reliably accomplish the mission of the ministry? This includes programs and events which are sponsored by the ministry, groups that are hosted, and partnerships in ministry.
- **Marketing** – which strategies and initiatives will most likely drive a fiscally sound and missionally viable future? What are the particular goals for participation that will fulfill the mission, and the specific approaches that will meet the goals?
- **Operations (including staffing, finances, and governance)** – what are the structures, systems, and resources that will be needed to insure fiscal viability, and that can guide and shepherd the proposed vision? Particular attention is paid to organizational structures that will increase capacity, and increase the likelihood of sustained viability.

- **Site and Facilities** – this includes the design of base and development maps, and concepts for proposed new structures and significant renovation or improvement projects.

4) **Final Plan**

At the concluding planning team retreat, detailed plans are finalized, including specific implementation directives and timelines. Projects are both prioritized and sequenced. Special attention is paid to project dependencies, in which one component of the plan may be contingent, fully or in part, upon another element of the plan. Plans are generally developed in 3–5 year windows, with the greatest specificity in the near future regarding program, marketing, funding, staffing, and governance.

The Final Report is organized as an electronic draft for review by members of the planning team, edited, and then prepared as a bound and printed report. Additional materials are prepared as determined by the content of the plan and the process for sharing the plan.

Timetable and Process

This timetable is offered as a sample only. Sometimes organizations have particular deadlines or milestones that are critical to a process. This can be adjusted to meet any timetable requirements that Gracefield Centre has.

- **Late Winter 2016**
 - Groundwork - data received for analysis
 - Planning team and dates identified
 - Initial interviews and conversations
 - Planning Retreat One
 - **March 11, 12, 2016**
 - Review of mission
 - Study initial observations from data analysis
 - Seek God's Word for the future
- **Spring 2016**
 - Planning Retreat Two **May 27th, 28th, 2016**
 - Review and assess the ministry including the collation and interpretation of data, systems, facilities, site features and design
 - Consider new populations the ministry may be called to serve
 - Engage in creative thinking regarding program, marketing, operations, and facilities
 - Identification of "Critical Issues" for the future

Note: Generally, it is helpful for the process to span a summer, which allows the consultants time to be onsite during the summer program, and additional time to test emerging ideas and concepts.

- Early Fall 2016
 - Planning Retreat Three **August 12th, 13th 2016**
 - Receive and review preliminary concepts
 - Test and clarify fundamental assumptions
 - Gather additional feedback beyond the planning team as necessary
- Fall 2016
 - Planning Retreat Four **October 14th, 15th 2016**
 - Receive and refine final concepts
 - Develop execution timetable and implementation instruments
 - Preparation of Final Report

Results and Deliverables

1. Final Report, bound and in full color, including:
 - a. “Keys to the Future” – an Executive Summary;
 - b. Full narrative of each component of the plan: program, marketing, operations, site & facilities.
 - c. Business Plan, including long range financial plans and the necessary data systems for tracking and implementation;
 - d. Site maps and facility concepts for proposed site, facilities and features;
 - e. Gantt chart and other implementation tools, with timeframes and benchmarks.
2. Large format maps and graphics; any necessary presentation formats of information.
3. Any tools or instruments developed in the course of the process needed for execution of the plan. Often that includes tools such as cost analysis spread sheet, long range financial plan, Return-On-Investment calculations for projects, and marketing strategy resources.
4. All files in electronic format for future reproduction.

References

These references represent recent projects which were similar in nature to the proposed Gracefield Centre process.

Jim Bates, Director of Development
Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake
17567 Hubbell Avenue
Detroit, MI 48235
Phone: 313.341.8969

We completed a Master Planning process for Camp Westminster, and have continued to offer follow-up support to the camp in fulfilling that plan, particularly in the area of funding and donor development.

Rev. Dr. J.F. Lacia
Assistant to the Bishop / Director of Connectional Ministries
West Virginia Annual Conference
900 Washington Street
East Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: 304.344.8331

We completed working with the WV Annual Conference on a Master Plan for their camp and retreat ministry. We also provided interim executive leadership for the Spring Heights Camp and Retreat Center.

Mr. David Gill, Executive Director
Ferncliff Camp and Retreat Center
1720 Ferncliff Road
Little Rock, AR 72223
Phone: 501.821.3063

David is the Executive Director of Ferncliff, for which we completed a Master Planning process.

About Run River

Run River Enterprises was launched in November, 1997 and provides consultant services to organizations which are pursuing strategic initiatives including Strategic Ministry Plans, Master Plans, Capital Campaigns, and Organizational Development. The mission of Run River Enterprises is to provide churches, camps, retreat centers, and other organizations with spiritually based services in areas of strategic endeavor and business proficiency.

Run River Enterprises has worked successfully with a wide array of projects with over 140 camps and retreat/conference ministries across the country. The principal consultants are a husband and wife team, both ordained in the United Methodist Church.

Principal Consultants

Pamela J Harris

Rev. Dr. Harris served as the Director of Camps, Conferences and Retreat Ministries for the former North Central New York Conference (of the United Methodist Church) for five and a half years. She is an ordained elder originally from the Peninsula-Delaware Conference where she served as pastor of local United Methodist Churches in three appointments. She is a Certified Conference Center Professional, and currently serves as the President of IACCA and a member of the faculty for their certification program. Pam restored the Drayton Retreat Center for Peninsula-Delaware Conference, and led in the strategic planning for building renovation and expansion at Aldersgate and Casowasco in former North Central New York Conference.

Garrie F. Stevens

Rev. Stevens was appointed for six years as the Conference Council Director (Program Executive) of the North Central New York Conference (of the United Methodist Church). He was the District Superintendent of the Ontario District for five years. He is an ordained elder in the North Central New York Conference where he has served six churches. He has consulted with churches in the Ontario District and throughout the conference in strategic planning and building.

Together, Pam and Garrie developed a model for group spiritual discernment, which is published in the book, “Seeking and Doing God’s Will — Spiritual Discernment for the Community of Faith,” (Discipleship Resources, 1998).

Pam and Garrie are active in the International Association of Conference Center Administrators, Christian Camp and Conference Center Association, UM Camp and Retreat Ministry Association, Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association, and other denominational associations. They lead workshops and programs across the country in strategic planning, fundraising, marketing, fiscal viability for camp and retreat centers, and visionary leadership.

Associate Consultants

Elise Bates Russell

Ms. Bates Russell is a lifelong camper and camp staff member. She has earned a master’s degree in architecture from the University of Michigan, and a B.A. in Art History from The College of Wooster in Ohio.

Currently, Elise is the Executive Director of Johnsonburg Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center in northwestern New Jersey. She is active in the American Camp Association, and serves as president of the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association. She is passionate about creating sustainable designs for camp and retreat center structures, and developing spiritual leadership through camp.

Gary Batty

Mr. Batty has served as the Executive Director of Stronghold Camp & Conference Center, Oregon, IL, and as the VP for Operations and Program of Mo-Ranch Assembly, Hunt TX. His education and training include: a B.S. in Business Administration from Bradley University, Peoria, IL, Whole Systems Change Theory from NTL Institute of Behavioral Sciences, Bethel, ME, the Leadership Excellence Course at Disney Institute, Orlando, FL, and the Fund Raising Course at Indiana School of Philanthropy, Bloomington, IN.

Gary has been a member of the PCCCA since 1984 serving as President (1986-89). Gary has been a member of PCCCA Consultants Network since 1997 working with numerous camps and conference centers in strategic planning processes, issues related to organization and governance, and the development of sound business practices.

Closing

We bring nearly 100 years of combined experience as pastors, camp & retreat center directors, and executive leadership to our work as consultants. We both understand the challenges facing congregations and judicatories, and remain committed to the ways in which God works through camp and retreat experiences. We believe our services are unique in three ways:

1. A process deeply rooted in our identity and mission as God's people;
2. Thorough and in-depth data analysis; and,
3. Detailed plans for implementation.

It would be a privilege to work with Gracefield Centre in the development of a Master Plan. We are fervently committed to the ministry of camps and retreats, and believe strongly in the indispensable nature of these ministries in the life of the church. We believe that God calls us and our ministries to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that our vision for the future must be in response to that call. Our personal commitment to this work stems from our affirmation that:

*Camp embodies the essential nature of the Church,
as a Sacramental community,
Able to bring persons into relationship with God,
Strengthen that relationship, and
Send persons into the world in witness and service.*

We look forward to the possibility of serving Gracefield Centre in this way. If you have questions about this proposal, or changes you would like considered, please do not hesitate to ask.

God's peace,



Garrie Stevens and Pam Harris