

Light the Match: A Campaign for Significant Growth at John Knox Ranch

Background on John Knox Ranch

John Knox Ranch is a summer camp and retreat center owned and operated by Mission Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (USA), located one hour south of Austin and one hour north of San Antonio. At John Knox Ranch, we foster experiences of Christian community in the beauty of God's creation.

During the summer we offer resident camp for students entering grades 2 - 12 and day camp for kids ages 4 - 8. Campers enjoy swimming, archery, rappelling, rock climbing, arts and crafts, nature discovery, ropes challenge course, Bible study and spiritual formation, canoeing, sharing homemade family-style meals, overnight campouts, and more. Attending camp at JKR helps children and youth develop social and interpersonal skills, a sense of self, and an understanding of our place in and



responsibility for this amazing planet. **JKR is a place where all are welcome; where identity is formed through self-awareness and service, where differences are celebrated;** where children grow into counselors, counselors become leaders, and leaders bring patience, inclusion, and servant leadership to their professions and communities.

John Knox Ranch is located on 300 acres in the beautiful Texas Hill Country. The natural beauty of the Ranch includes Blanco River front, an artesian spring named Blue Hole which is the head waters for Carpers Creek, grass savannahs, and hardwood forests. Year-round we offer cabin rentals, team-building activities, retreat hosting, church officer training, family reunions, and weddings.

John Knox Ranch is a place where love, acceptance, grace, and FUN flow freely. All are welcome.

"We love JKR. We feel that it has everything that a summer camp should offer. The staff does an amazing job every year to help my child grow on their faith journey."

Kayla, Camper Mom

LIGHT THE MATCH: A Campaign for Significant Growth

Ignited by a pledge from an anonymous donor to match all donations in 2020 up to \$800,000.

The donor is a former JKR camper and the memories and impact those summer camp sessions had on his/her life is the motivating factor for this pledge challenge.

This will enable us to do 3 key things:

- 1) **Renovate and rebuild John Knox Ranch to better meet the needs of our community.** We are still working to fully recover from the devastating 2015 flood of the Blanco River. In addition, many facilities built over 20 years ago need to be renovated or repaired after years of heavy use and love.
- 2) **Replenish our Camp Scholarship Fund.** In 2019 we awarded \$51,109 in scholarships enabling 154 campers to attend. In 2020 our goal is to raise \$60,000 and serve 175 campers. We are committed to making sure that all campers who want to attend have a place at John Knox Ranch regardless of any challenge standing in their way.
- 3) **Plan for and vision the future of camp ministry at John Knox Ranch.** JKR has enjoyed over 50 years of wonderful, rich ministry and now it is important for us to build on that success and plan for the future. Funds raised will allow us to spend time developing tools such as a strategic plan, a master plan, and a business plan to help guide us, ensuring we are being the most efficient stewards of the land and resources of our churches and Mission Presbytery. We will work with outside camp ministry professionals to help answer questions like What is God calling us to do? How can JKR reach its full potential as part of the ministry of Mission Presbytery and beyond? In addition, part of the monies raised will be used to establish a JKR operational reserve fund and help support Mission Presbytery's on-going ministry to youth and young adult leadership development.

We have momentum, a plan for the future, and a great team. Join us for this generous fundraising campaign.

"They loved everything – the other campers, their counselors, swimming, the food.... I pray that John Knox Ranch is able to remain available for generations to come. God bless you all."



Sandra, Camper Grandmother

Key Growth Initiatives

Renovate and Rebuild

We are still feeling the effects of the devastating 2015 flood of the Blanco River. The Dining Hall was priority for recovery and that has been rebuilt. However, we have not rebuilt the 2 cabins lost as well as the dining hall bathroom building. Renovations may also include new outdoor furniture at each cabin, rebuilding Lookout Point, replacing rotting siding on our duplex cabins, among other needs.

We will make new additions to camp like a composting toilet on our nature preserve for hikers and overnight campers, a new zip line element through the Cypress tree canopy and over the creek, and new stairs and handrail to our gorgeous outdoor chapel on the hill. We will also develop new programs like single day camps, weekend family camps, and redesign our school field trip program.



Summer Camp Scholarship Fund

Transformative camp experiences are not reserved only for those who can afford it. Each year, JKR welcomes children and youth to summer camp who need financial assistance in order to attend camp. The JKR Summer Camp Scholarship Fund helps ensure that all kids have a place at camp. Together with our donors, in 2019 we awarded \$51,109 in scholarships enabling 154 campers to attend. In 2020 our goal is to raise \$60,000 and serve 175 campers.

We are committed to making sure that all campers who want to attend have a place at John Knox Ranch regardless of any challenge standing in their way.

Plan and Vision the Future at John Knox Ranch

Nonprofit best practices recommend establishing a rainy-day fund of 3-6 months of expenses to help see an organization through hard times. We will establish our reserve fund to ensure the long-term financial stability of camp ministry in Mission Presbytery.

One of the pillars of our program is youth and young adult leadership development. A portion of the funds raised will go to Mission Presbytery to support and enhance youth and young adult leadership development across Mission Presbytery.

This is an exciting time at JKR. We have momentum, a great team, and an abundance of excitement and passion. What we need is a road map, a strategic plan for the next 5 years of our ministry. Camp and conference ministry consultants will work with the JKR Committee, Mission Presbytery leaders, and JKR staff to develop a strategic plan for the ministry of John Knox Ranch.

How You Can Help

- Prayerfully consider a financial gift. Light the Match by making a donation. Visit our website to learn more. www.johnknoxranch.org. Or, donate by check to John Knox Ranch, 1661 John Knox Rd. Fischer, TX 78623
- Donate your time and talents. Contact JKR to see how you can volunteer with the campaign.
- Spread the news. Consider who in your life would benefit from an invitation to join in this ministry. Talk to them about the success of our current work and how this campaign will greatly extend our impact. Share your JKR story.



"I think that all of the staff at JKR goes above and beyond to make the camp experience the best it can possibly be for the campers and

I'm incredibly grateful to everyone for taking such good care of my children and making memories with them."

Cathy, Camper Mom