



Dear Friends,

As you already know, Covenant Heights cancelled its summer youth camps because of a pending decision regarding our childcare license. Thank you for praying for the camp during this difficult period of waiting. It is with sadness that we share with you that the camp had its license revoked without possibility of reinstatement. While we considered options including the possibility of reorganizing as a new non-profit, there were several things that led us to the conclusion that this would not be possible or prudent. Some of those reasons follow:

1. Any reorganization could not take place under the Covenant Heights name. We would need to cease operating under our current structure and start from scratch.
2. The current staff and board of directors would need to be dismissed and an entirely new staff and board put in place.
3. Scott Shaw, who arrived in February, upon learning that he would not be able to lead the camp forward has resigned. We affirm this decision as necessary so that he can move his family during the summer months. Scott has provided extraordinary leadership in these challenging days, but the context of the work ahead demands a different skill set and Scott's passions and gifts are in summer youth camping.
4. The camp, which has operated on a lean budget for many years, simply does not have the resources needed to endure the costs associated with an extended transition of unknown duration.
5. Operating as a facility that others can rent has never been our core mission, but rather the means to accomplish our core mission. It is also not a financially sustainable option as our main source of income.
6. There are deferred maintenance issues that need attention and we do not have the funds to address these needs.

In addition to these factors, we are grieved to report to you that a serious and unrelated incident of alleged child abuse was reported to us on April 26, 2017. The alleged incident took place in July of 2016 and was just reported to law enforcement authorities. An investigation has been initiated and the camp is cooperating with authorities in every possible way. The accused staff member has been placed on administrative leave. We pray for all persons involved in this investigation.

After prayerful consideration, we find it necessary to conclude the ministry of Covenant Heights as soon as the current agreements are fulfilled. It is our desire to close the camp before we deplete the resources needed to provide transition packages for our dedicated staff. It is also our desire to prevent further deterioration of the facilities that need maintenance and repair beyond our resources.

We are grateful for the many lives that have been impacted through Covenant Heights and the legacy that will continue because of decisions made, and faith nurtured, in this beautiful setting. We are all grieving the loss of a ministry that has meant so much to so many people.

We know that many of you have invested tremendously in this ministry over the years and we are deeply grateful for all that God has accomplished through our partnership.

We will appoint an Executive Director with the professional skill set needed to help us close in a way that honors Christ and all whom we have served. This person's main tasks will be to oversee any current agreements with rental groups, lead and support staff as they transition, assist in the complex closure process, and be the point person for the ongoing investigation and the requirements that ensue. We will make the announcement of the new Executive Director as soon as the employment contract has been finalized.

We ask you to pray and grieve with us during this difficult season, but not as a people who have no hope. Each Board Member trusts fully in the goodness of God and knows that God will continue to use the work of this ministry to influence lives for Jesus Christ both now and in the future. Scott Shaw's resignation was effective May 10, but he has agreed to remain at the camp as Interim Director of Operations so that a smooth transition can occur. If you have questions you may direct them to Scott until the new Executive Director begins on June 19. I will serve as the Executive Director in the interim. During the interim period please know that we are unable to respond to detailed questions about an open investigation, but we will do our best to provide you with as much information as possible.

Thank you for your faithful support. We look forward to new expressions of youth camping ministry that will be re-imagined in the face of this loss.

Blessings,

*Terry Dennett*

Terry Dennett  
Chair, Covenant Heights Board