

Central Hills offering special experience for summer 2021 staffers

*By Tony Martin
Associate Editor*



Thrash

Central Hills Baptist Retreat (CHBR) in the woods near Kosciusko has been serving the camping needs of Mississippi Baptists and others since 1979. Every year, hundreds of lives are touched through the ministries taking place at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board facility.

A big part of the lifeblood of the camp is the summer staffers. This year, the need is great. CHBR Camp Manager Shane Thrash says, “Last year, we didn’t have a single camp at Central Hills because of COVID. That hurt us because of the loss of income from camping, but it also hurt us in continuity of staff.

“Last summer, I would’ve had 25-plus returning staffers. So much of what we do is based on returning staff. We’ll usually have half returning, and we’ll recruit the other half. Since we’ve had a year off and so many staffers eligible to return have graduated, I don’t have those staffers to help do my recruiting. We have only about eight or nine staffers who are planning on coming back, so we’re almost starting brand new.

Thrash typically travels to several of the Baptist Student Unions (BSU) on staff recruiting trips, but since the pandemic his travel has been limited and many BSUs are only meeting on a limited basis.

“There are some BSUs still meeting,” Thrash says. “I have two or three lined up now, but usually I have 10 or 12 to visit. I’ll set up a table, speak and share, and talk about camp opportunities. The two big BSU meetings they usually have in the spring and fall were cancelled. That’s where the BSUs get together and where I can get the word out. I’d get a former staffer to meet me there and we’d recruit together.”

Central Hills has a full schedule planned for summer 2021. “We have everything from the special needs camp to the coed kids’ camps, youth camps, Lad-Dad Weekend, and more. We’re moving forward just like we would in a normal year,” Thrash points out.

In order for a student to be considered for CHBC summer staff, he/she can visit <https://www.mbc.org/business-services/encampments/central-hills-baptist-retreat/>, where they can find a staff application to download. There is also more information available on Central Hill’s Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/centralhillsbaptistretreat/>.

“They can contact me at (662) 289-9730, or e-mail me at sthrash@mbcb.org,” Thrash says.

Thrash prefers to have his staff in place each year by the end of March. “This is a paid position, of course. We train staffers for all our activities and counseling. They might have the opportunity to be trained as a lifeguard, as a ropes course facilitator, or to work at our horse barn.”



Rhodes

Former staffers offer glowing testimonies about their summer experiences. Many have chosen to surrender to vocational ministry.

“Words cannot express how much this place means to me,” says Hunter Rhodes of Meridian. “It has brought me so many memories and people in my life that have shown me so much love and the potential I had in me whenever I felt I wasn’t worthy to be in this position.

“God put me in this place to see that my own thoughts were holding me back. I encourage anyone wanting to try something like this do it.”



Watson

Rachael Watson of Gautier says, “If you are looking for a great place to serve over the summer, check out this place. Not only will you get to share the Gospel with little ones, you will also be blessed to make great friendships there as well.

The ministries of Central Hills Baptist Retreat are supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. For more information on the Cooperative Program, visit <https://www.mcbcb.org/what-is-cp/>.