

IRONWOOD SPRINGS CHRISTIAN RANCH

impact

PROGRAM GUIDE

SHARING
THE LOVE OF CHRIST
THROUGH
TRANSFORMATIONAL
EXPERIENCES

Honoring God
Loving People

BECOME AN
AMBASSADOR

Give your time, talent, and
treasure to make a difference

BENEFITS OF FAMILY CAMP

Bringing Families Together
Through the Camp Experience

IRONWOOD SPRINGS CHRISTIAN RANCH

ABOUT US

Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch is a faith-based, non-profit 501(c)(3) camp and retreat center that provides a variety of programs for individuals and families with cognitive and/or physical disabilities and for military families. Ironwood Springs also provides opportunities for groups to hold their own retreat/camp events using all the ranch has to offer including lodging, meeting spaces, food service, and activities. Seasonal stand-alone activities are also available for individuals or groups to enjoy such as snow tubing and horse trail rides. The camp was founded in 1976 and is located on 120 wooded acres along the Root River in southeastern Minnesota, just 15 minutes south of Rochester. Its accessible campus, facilities, and activities, fosters an inclusive environment for individuals and families to enjoy time together and grow their faith regardless of their abilities.

OUR PURPOSE

To Honor God and Love People.

OUR VISION

For ALL people to live joyful, purpose-filled lives that glorify God.

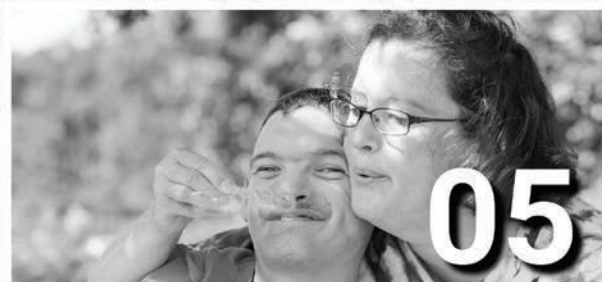
OUR MISSION

We exist to share the love of Christ through transformational experiences in an accepting community.

M I R A C L E S H A P P E N



TABLE OF



Programs	4
ConnectAbilities	5
Operation Welcome Home	6
National Wheelchair Sports Camp	7
Equine Programs	9
Transformational Experiences	13
Ranch Activities	15
Strengthening the Family	19
Retreats with Impact	21
Story of Ironwood	23
Become an Ambassador	26
Gospel Message	27

WHAT'S INSIDE:

This program guide provides an overview of all that Ironwood Springs has to offer in programs and facilities, informational articles, along with information about the history and legacy of the ranch. Testimonials are included throughout the guide to see how God has worked through Ironwood Springs to impact so many. You can find more information and register for programs and activities on ironwoodsprings.com.



Ironwood Springs

CHRISTIAN RANCH



PROGRAMS

»»» **OPERATION WELCOME HOME (MILITARY)**
FAMILY RETREATS
FAMILIES OF THE FALLEN
MARRIAGE RETREAT
VETERAN'S TURKEY HUNT

BREAKING BARRIERS
CONNECTABILITIES COGNITIVE PROGRAM
NATIONAL WHEELCHAIR SPORTS CAMP

EQUINE
YOUTH HORSE CAMPS
MOTHER & DAUGHTER EQUESTRIAN RETREAT
WOMEN'S EQUESTRIAN RETREAT

PROGRAM TESTIMONIAL

Ironwood Springs will always be a special place for us. Every time we attend a retreat we leave with full hearts. To be in a non judgmental environment with families like ours and experience activities we may not other be able to do is life changing. The staff and volunteers are absolutely incredible too!



Connect Abilities

Cognitive Program

Ironwood Springs offers year-round retreats and day camps to provide enrichment and respite for individuals and families with cognitive disabilities and other special needs. Our family events are designed to benefit all members of the family and allow the whole family to enjoy activities together. Families arrive with some anticipation or maybe apprehension but leave with smiles, new friends and fond memories.

FLEXIBLE SENSORY-BASED EXPERIENCES

We offer two night retreats and day camps with families rotating through a variety of seasonally-appropriate activities. We know this is a new experience for kids and families so day camps provide an easier entry point for families to experience our program. Each event has a flexible schedule where families can choose between a wide selection of activities, deciding which activities they want to experience. We also provide sensory spaces to manage various sensory needs, whether it is for calming and relaxing or to be stimulating and engaging. Sensory backpacks full of several sensory support tools are also provided to allow for regulation to occur anywhere while on site.

Although our program is geared to provide respite and recreational experiences for families, each retreat also provides essential workshops or table discussions specifically designed to support and encourage families with the daily challenges that comes with supporting a family member with special needs. Another vital component of our program is connecting families to resources, but more importantly, building a community of support for families who can often feel isolated from others.

LODGING & MEALS

Guests attending our overnight events will stay in our 27-private room Miracle Lodge. Each room has a private bathroom and linens/towels are provided. Each room also includes a refrigerator and microwave. Meals and snacks are provided during each event. Our chef will work to provide a variety of options as we know food choices can be stressful. Menus will be sent out to guests ahead of time and food sensitivities can be specified during registration.

CAMP HIGHLIGHTS

Ironwood Springs has a rich set of activities that are used for our events such as arts and crafts, swimming, zip lining, equine-based activities, minigolf, STEM family challenges, and a variety of indoor/outdoor games. Winter activities also include snow tubing and sleigh rides. Of course, no camp is complete without fellowship around the campfire enjoying smores!

REGISTRATION | MORE INFORMATION

To register for an experience, go to ironwoodsprings.com, under "PROGRAMS", sign in to your existing account, or create a new account. You can access your account at any time. You will be able to access and update family information, registration information, complete forms, make payments, and more.

FLEXIBLE PAYMENT | AFFORDABILITY OPTIONS

These events are offered at a price that is below our actual cost to put on the events through our generous donors. Families are provided flexible payment options including scheduled payment plans, options to use waivers, and potential scholarships. We urge families to work with their social workers to secure funding for camps.

OPERATION WELCOME HOME PROGRAMS



Operation Welcome Home retreats are provided out of gratitude and to help active and veteran military members and their families with the challenges of military service. These retreats are all-inclusive including private lodging in our beautiful 27-room Miracle lodge, delicious meals, faith devotions and chapels, and fun activities.

FAMILY RETREATS

These family retreats are held throughout the year to strengthen family connections through spending time together enjoying fun activities. Families also find strength in being part of a community of others who understand their challenges. Another goal of these retreats is to provide helpful resources that can help families when they return home.

FAMILIES OF THE FALLEN

These weekend retreats are provided to families who have lost a family member as a result of their sacrificial military service to our country. These experiences provide a time for families to share and work through their grief with other families who understand their pain along with grief counselors, military chaplains, and Ironwood staff and volunteers. Families are also given the opportunities to enjoy activities together.

MARRIAGE RETREAT

The marriage retreat is a time for husbands and wives to have time together to focus on their marriage with a balance of faith-based marriage teachings along with rest and relaxation. Some time is spent also enjoying community with other military couples who understand the stresses of family military life.

VETERAN'S TURKEY HUNT

This retreat is for veterans who have become disabled as a result of their sacrificial service to our country. This special hunt at Ironwood and surrounding farms gives veterans with disabilities the chance to enjoy the outdoors while hunting for wild turkey in late April. It also provides impactful fellowship with other veteran hunters throughout the event.

Each year gives us the opportunity to serve those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom and for keeping us "One Nation Under God". These experiences are free for all attending. All funding for these retreats are provided by generous donations from businesses, organizations, and individuals.



GOING STRONG

Since 1986



Ironwood Springs
CHRISTIAN RANCH

NATIONAL WHEELCHAIR SPORTS CAMP

STEWARTVILLE

Est. 1986

MINNESOTA

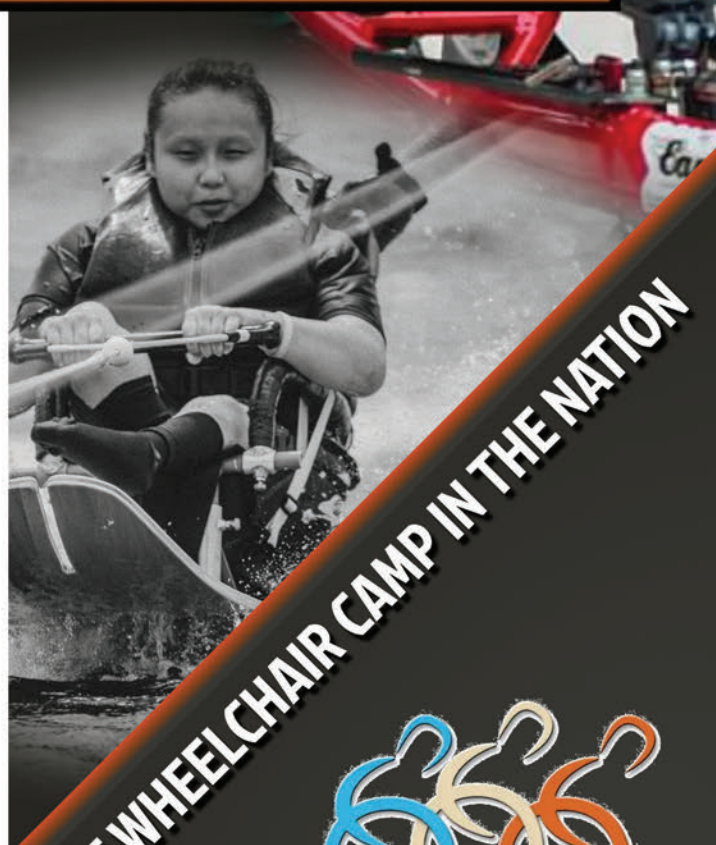
Anything is Possible

Ironwood invites youth and adults with physical challenges of all levels to participate in a variety of sport-themed activities at this exciting camp!

Encouraged to look beyond their disability, campers are coached and mentored by world-class Paralympic athletes in a supportive and inspiring team environment. Campers are amazed by doing the things they felt never possible, while building relationships with others who face similar challenges. From zip lining to horseback riding, people at the National Sports Wheelchair Camp get to try it all and show, that they really can do anything.



ironwoodsprings.com



LARGEST WHEELCHAIR CAMP IN THE NATION



Giving Accessibility and Inclusivity to All Sport Experiences

Going strong since 1986, the National Wheelchair Sports Camp (NWSC) introduces people of all ages to a wide variety of sports and recreation activities while helping to improve strength and endurance. All activities are geared toward improving self-esteem and confidence in the campers. An added benefit of the camp is that it allows participants to meet others with similar life challenges, to be mentored by compassionate and understanding people, as well as build essential life skills and experience independence, teamwork and fun!

NWSC GOALS

- Provide a week of camp that might be the BEST week of your life
- Provide a team of positive speakers, staff, volunteers and guests
- Make lasting relationships
- Be inspired in body, soul and spirit

This 5 night, 6 day camp has a jam-packed schedule of all-inclusive, exciting activities!

LODGING

Campers stay in fully accessible hotel-style rooms in the Miracle Lodge with towels/linens provided. Each room also has a refrigerator and microwave. Rooms are shared with other campers.

MEALS

Delicious meals are provided throughout the week with a full salad bar available for lunches and dinners. Snacks are provided during evening activities. Our kitchen staff works to accommodate dietary needs, which can be specified during registration.

PCA/PARENT CAN ATTEND

There are options for campers to have a PCA or parent attend camp to help them with their personal care needs. Housing options for PCAs or parents are dependent on space and also the care needs of the camper. Our goal is to maximize the number of spaces available for campers.

CAMP HIGHLIGHTS

- Zip lining
- Horseback riding
- Pickleball
- Softball
- Archery
- Shooting
- Road racing
- Basketball
- Obstacle course
- Water skiing
- Canoeing/ Kayaking
- Mini golf
- Laser tag
- Dodgeball



EQUINE PROGRAMS



Ironwood offers a variety of Equine programs to fit the needs of individuals, groups, and families!



Youth Horse Camps

Campers get firsthand experience with riding western style, outdoor scenic trail riding, grooming, saddling, and FUN. Designed to serve beginning, intermediate, and advanced riders.

Women's Equestrian Retreat

Horse trail rides, wagon ride to a chuckwagon style meal, massage and reflection time, bible/devotion time, confidence building and more!

Mother & Daughter Equestrian Retreat

Providing a unique experience for mothers and daughters to spend time together, connecting with each other, God, and with horses! Must be eight years of age or older.

Scenic Trail Rides

Step away from the hustle and bustle of the busy day and reduce the noise on one of Ironwood's scenic trail rides!

Wagon Rides

Book a scenic wagon ride for your vacation or family reunion or just a fun day activity.

Lessons

Learning and fine tuning your communication with an equine partner from the ground up!

Sleigh Rides

'Tis the season for winter fun! Book a cozy sleigh ride for your company's winter party, your family Christmas or see our calendar for individual bookings every Saturday (December-February).

Troop Badge Work

Complete your troop badge work using Ironwood's wonderful horses and the knowledge of our dedicated staff.

Adaptive Rides

Experience horseback riding which provides a sense of independence and freedom that defies any disability.



Ironwood Springs
Equestrian Programs

YOUTH HORSE CAMPS



Our horse day camps are age and skill level appropriate to move campers through equine skill levels from beginner to advanced. Riders are evaluated through a series of checklists to ensure they are ready to move to the next level. Camps run from 9am-4pm and include faith lessons around the campfire, trail riding, daily lunch including a bandana lunch at our chuckwagon, and fun Ironwood activities. Day camps end with a camper demonstration program for families at 2:30pm on Friday.

BEGINNER HORSE DAY CAMP | AGES 8-12

Campers will learn the basics about horses including how horses think and what horses can teach us. Having fun and being safe while leading, saddling, and riding a horse.

INTERMEDIATE HORSE DAY CAMP | AGES 10-16

Campers will build on the skills learned in beginner camp including topics such as balance, feet placement, leads and loping, bareback riding, and learning jumping basics.

ADVANCED HORSE DAY CAMP | AGES 12-18

Campers will build on the skills learned in intermediate camp along with learning how God created horses so they can learn more about themselves. Through groundwork and riding, campers will learn how feel, timing, and balance play an important role in our communication with horses and people.

OVERNIGHT HORSE CAMP | AGES 10-18

This 2-night, 3 day camp offers an overnight horse camp experience for intermediate and advanced riders. Campers will enjoy working with horses throughout the day while enjoying other camp experiences and faith activities in the evenings and also developing deeper relationships.

HORSEMANSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Daily equine related devotions
- Outdoor scenic trail rides
- Riding techniques
- Hands-on horse activities
- Grooming
- Saddling
- Horseless interactive learning
- Creative riding skills: safety on the trail, how to deal with potential hazards, loping on the trail, riding bridleless
- Horsemanship concepts on and off the saddle
- Bandana lunch at the chuckwagon



Visit ironwoodsprings.com for more information and to register.

MOTHER & DAUGHTER Equestrian Retreat



Building Stronger Connections

This retreat provides a unique horse-centric experience for mothers and daughters to spend quality time together while building a stronger connection with each other, with God, and with horses. Many other fun activities are also included in this special retreat.

RETREAT SPECIFICS

- Daughter must be at least 8 years old to participate.
- No prior horse experience is required.
- All meals are provided during your stay along with special treats.
- Each family will stay in their own private room at Miracle Lodge. All linens/towels are provided.
- Attendees should wear appropriate clothing for the barn and for riding horses.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Time working with horses
- Horse care
- Team building
- Chuckwagon meal
- Campfire
- Large group and family devotion time
- Zip lining
- Shooting range



For more information and to register, visit ironwoodsprings.com



WOMEN'S EQUESTRIAN RETREAT

TRANSFORMATIVE RETREATS
FOR WOMEN SEEKING GOD'S PRESENCE



A special weekend to fine tune your horse skills, learn a new skill or ride for the first time. If you have a love for horses and want a casual, yet refreshing, weekend join us in learning how God wants you to flourish!

This experience includes horse trail rides, a wagon ride to a chuckwagon style meal, massage and reflection time, bible/devotion time, confidence building groundwork and riding techniques, coffee/tea/snack bar (yes, there's chocolate), campfire and chatting, music and fun! This is a rain or shine retreat as we have a beautiful 100x200 indoor arena too! Lodging is in our picturesque Miracle Lodge featuring 27 private, hotel-style rooms. You will be sharing a room with another individual but there is an option to be in an individual room for an additional fee.

Participants have the option of riding one of the horses at Ironwood Springs or bringing their own horse (we provide the stall).

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER, VISIT IRONWOODSPRINGS.COM.

THROUGH THE CAMP EXPERIENCE

Our program surveys from participants regularly state that their experiences were life-changing due to their experience at camp. At Ironwood Springs, this is a key part of our mission statement, to provide transformational experiences. In other words, we want to make an impact on those who come to camp. We believe this is how our staff, volunteers, and donors reflect and share the love of Christ. Transformational experiences can be defined as, “experiences that fundamentally challenge a person’s assumptions and preconceptions, as well as their beliefs and values, affecting how they understand themselves, others, and the world”. Essentially, it is an experience that can change your outlook on life, that helps stretch your view. It’s one where you grow.

In the Bible, transformation means “change or renewal from a life that no longer conforms to the ways of the world to one that pleases God” (Romans 12:2). This is accomplished by the renewing of our minds, an inward spiritual transformation that will manifest itself in outward actions. Scripture presents the transformed life in Christ as demonstrated through our “bearing fruit in every good work [and] growing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10). Moreover, evidence of transformation within us is seen in the way we increasingly reflect the likeness and glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). In short, transformed lives begin with the Gospel message of Christ.

As Ironwood Springs has grown, so has its ability to identify ways to positively impact their audiences through life-changing experiences. One example is in serving individuals and families who are challenged by disabilities. We provide accessible experiences and create an environment where everyone’s abilities are valued, which powerfully demonstrates Ironwood’s purpose of “Honoring God and Loving People”. In the book of Psalms, David writes in chapter 139 verses 13 and 14: “for it was You who created my inward parts; You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I will praise You because I have been fearfully and wonderfully made”. Embracing God’s Word and this message, Ironwood Springs puts no limits on those we serve who live with a disability, physical or cognitive. We believe all are made in God’s image and have value. We are broad in our scope, serving across ages, across the spectrum of autism and across all developmental or physical disabilities, allowing God to transform the lives of the families we serve.

Through creating adaptive avenues for all to participate in featured activities like zip lining, horse-back riding, and archery, the ranch promotes a new level of inclusion, allowing people living with disabilities to do things they never imagined they could do. In essence, these experiences move people out of their comfort zone, allowing them to grow and to see themselves being able to do and achieve so much more than they expected.

“This experience was life changing. The amount of kindness, togetherness, and love displayed was the highlight of our experience.”



"Ironwood Springs will always be a special place for us. Every time we attend a retreat we leave with full hearts. To be in a non-judgmental environment with families like ours and experience activities we may not otherwise be able to do is life changing."



Another example of programs transforming those we serve, is by truly understanding the sacrifice veterans or active duty service military members and their families have made for our country. Ironwood Springs established Operation Welcome Home to honor such sacrifices, at no cost. We create meaningful experiences that leave military families feeling overwhelmed with appreciation and gratitude, along with a renewed strength and togetherness as a family. We work to be the bridge that connects military families to the resources and community they miss, especially with the nature of military service in Minnesota being part of the Reserves or National Guard. It is a different experience than full-time military experience where the families are naturally part of a military community.



"Being at Ironwood rejuvenates our entire family and although we ran from activity to activity from morning to night, we left on Sunday feeling well rested and at peace. Being at Ironwood and making new friends who have stories similar to our own, comforting them and finding comfort in their journeys and accomplishments has led us to a path of renewed strength and faith."

This display of Christ's love is exhibited not only by Ironwood's staff, but is fully embraced and portrayed by the countless volunteers and donors who dedicate their time, talents, and treasure to those we serve. How can you not be transformed when you see such unselfish giving from a community willing to go the extra mile to meet a need and support families in such meaningful ways! Being part of a sharing and caring community and seeing the impact on lives is transformational in itself.

"This camp has changed me forever. I am still amazed by the incredible experience I had as a volunteer. I've never experienced a more empowering and encouraging place on earth where all are welcome and invited to shine and thrive in their own element. I feel so honored and blessed to have been a part of such a wonderful camp."

We understand that everything we do, even the slightest thing, can have a ripple effect that positively emanates into the lives of many. Sharing the love of Christ holds the power to transform, which then ripples out in ever-expanding circles that positively impacts those we serve and others around them.

"Sharing the love of Christ holds the power to transform..."



RANCH ACTIVITIES

Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch provides a variety of activities for our guests to enjoy during their stay. With 120 acres of beautiful ranch grounds to utilize and accessibility as our goal, we work to provide exciting experiences that connect, inspire, and engage families that will provide impactful moments and memories that will last a lifetime. Some activities are generally available to guests staying at Ironwood Springs while other ones require scheduling and Ironwood staffing. For more information regarding all the activities we offer, please go to ironwoodsprings.com/activities and design your next Ironwood experience!

ADAPTIVE & NON-ADAPTIVE ZIP LINING

Come experience soaring in a whole new way with one of the favorite activities at Ironwood. We also offer a rare-experience for individuals with cognitive or physical challenges on our special adaptive zip line. Both of our zip lines provide a 400 foot ride across the Root River ending in the middle of the woods. It is a seasonal activity from spring through fall.

ARCHERY & BB GUNS

Take your turn at shooting targets, balloons, or other fun objects at these two ranges. We have compound bows to fit kids through adults and also have adaptive archery equipment.

RECREATION CENTER

Our newly remodeled gym provides an array of accessible, indoor activities such as basketball, volleyball, pickle ball, shuffleboard, floor hockey, laser tag, dodge ball, bouldering wall, and other indoor games.

LASER TAG

People of all ages can experience our laser tag games either indoors with laser lights and fog or outdoors among the trees. Up to 24 people can play at once either in team or individual-based games.

BOULDERING WALL

Practice rock climbing on our indoor bouldering wall. No harnesses are required because this wall is shorter and is more for horizontal versus vertical movement. Safety mats are provided.

PICKLE BALL

A fun, adaptive sport that combines many elements of tennis, badminton, and ping pong. We have nets and equipment for both indoor and outdoor pickleball. The rules are simple and the game is easy to learn, but can develop into quick, fast-paced games for experienced players.





SLIP & SLIDE

This is a great family activity for those long days of summer. Beat the heat by soaring down our uniquely designed slip and slide (with a fully accessible option). Available only in the summer months.

ANIMAL FARM

Ironwood's accessible animal farm features a wide variety of animals and birds. Animals include goats, sheep, miniature horses, pigs, rabbits, and our resident camel, Clyde. Birds include chickens, ducks, and a turkey. The farm has both indoor and outdoor animal viewing and interactive areas including our Ole Red Barn. We have plans to continue improving our animal farm with education and sensory experiences.

HORSE DRAWN WAGON RIDES

Take a wagon ride through the beautiful woods and along the Root River at Ironwood. Our horse wagon can seat 16-20 people while our tractor-drawn wagons can hold 20-40 people.

ROCKETRY

Start your flight journey by launching paper or Estes model rockets. Ironwood has everything you need to learn more about the science behind rocketry and it is a great way to get the family working together on an engaging project that will be sure to be a blast! 15 people per hour session.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Through our robust arts and crafts program, we spark imagination for children and adults alike through creativity and discovery as guests participate in a variety of seasonally-themed activities.

CHUCKWAGON EXPERIENCE

Our chuckwagon experience is nestled in the backwoods of Ironwood along the banks of the Root River. This outdoor location is fully accessible and includes an outdoor kitchen, a log stage, and several campfire spots. Our kitchen team can provide a delicious meal to go with your outdoor experience. Groups can include tractor drawn wagon rides to bring their guests to and from the chuckwagon.





SNOW TUBING

Enjoy winter by experiencing an exciting ride down one of our three thrilling hills. A rope pull brings you back up the hill. We provide the snow tubes for you. Warm up in our beautiful chalet where you can bring and enjoy food and hot drinks of your choice. We provide the hot water and cups! Outdoor games and campfires are also available while tubing.

Regular sessions are scheduled on weekends. Weekday/weeknight sessions can be made by request. Individuals and smaller groups can see open sessions and purchase tickets on ironwoodsprings.com. Larger groups (more than 20) can call to reserve private or shared tubing times. See ironwoodsprings.com for more details.

SLING SHOT

The sling shot range is a perfect way to work on your hand-eye coordination, and enjoy a fun-filled family experience! We have wrist rocket sling shots and safety glasses.

MINI-GOLF

Our 12-hole miniature golf course provides a fun adventure for the entire family. The course features an original, whimsical design with a ranch feel, complete with a broom windmill. The most special feature of this course is that it is fully accessible, so everyone can enjoy the adventure!

WINTER SLEIGH RIDES

Over the river and through the woods...that is the memorable experience you get on our one-hour, horse drawn sleigh rides. Call to book a private sleigh ride for 16-20 people for your organization or family. We also offer scheduled, shared rides on Saturdays where you can ride the sleigh without having a large group. We also offer a 2 person cozy cutter sleigh ride. You can add a campfire, hot cocoa/cider and smores option to your ride. You can call our arena to book the private rides or purchase tickets for shared rides on ironwoodsprings.com.



CHALLENGE COURSE

The challenge course is a perfect activity for any type of group for team building. It is a great way to teach teamwork, trust, and life skills in a powerful hands-on approach. The purpose is to increase participants' self-confidence, mutual support within a group, and a gentle reminder about valuing others' contributions. We promote safety with this activity requiring certified trained Ironwood Staff to walk the group through the exercises. We have a total of 17 low element challenges.

FAMILY STEM CHALLENGES

Our family STEM challenges (Science Technology Engineering and Math) allows families to explore a problem that they will work together to solve using materials in a hands-on and open-ended way. The advantage to STEM activities is that people of all development skill levels and of varying ages come together in a creative way, have fun, and see their results of their teamwork!

GAGA BALL

Like dodge ball, but inside an octagon pit and throwing the ball is not allowed. Wheel, run, and jump your way in being the last person left in the pit. It is a fast paced group game for all ages. Our pit is unique in that it has an accessible gate.

HORSESHOES

A great game that is personally challenging and is a lot of fun! The goal is to improve one's performance and to celebrate time together in our accessible horseshoe pit.

LAWN GAMES

A variety of lawn games, including bocce ball and bean bag toss, are available.

DISC GOLF

Players of all ages and walks of life can immerse themselves in the game on our 9-hole disc golf course while taking in the natural beauty of the ranch (whether it be for recreation or for competition). Equipment can be checked out at our beautiful Miracle Lodge.



CAMPFIRE FUN!

Ironwood offers a number of camp fire spaces for large groups to enjoy the experience together.

FISHING

Fishing off the banks of the Root River is an enjoyable experience as you reel in smallmouth bass, carp and redhorse. Be sure to pack your fishing license, pole, tackle box, and bait!

OUTDOOR COURTS

Our outdoor tennis and basketball courts provide a place to enjoy a game of tennis or a game of horse.

SWIMMING

Our outdoor pool is equipped with a water slide and has an accessible chair lift and ramp. It is open to guests from Memorial weekend through Labor Day.

HIKING & SNOWSHOE TRAILS

Miles of trails are available for you to explore on the north side of the Root River. In addition, a well-marked 4k trail (for running/walking) for guests to enjoy.

SCAVENGER HUNTS

Scavenger hunts are a great way to explore Ironwood! Seasonal and age appropriate hunts are available for guests visiting Ironwood.

ICE SKATING

Enjoy skating on the Root River! Ironwood has a limited number of skates to check out. Guests are encouraged to bring their own. Ice skating is dependent on the condition of the ice on the river.

BROOM BALL

One of Ironwood's more popular winter activities, try your brooming skills on our broom court or on the frozen Root River! Equipment is provided.



STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY

Families are pulled in many different directions today with work, school, sports, and other activities, while also being distracted by the addictive nature of today's electronic world. This can leave family members disconnected from each other and also results from families being isolated from others in the community. For the families we serve (families challenged with disabilities or military family life), there are additional challenges that put stress on family life, including finances, care needs for someone with a disability, or the difficulties of military deployment.

To help meet the needs of families for family resiliency and increased community, Ironwood Springs focuses many of its programs on the whole family, especially, but not exclusively on families with disabilities or military families. While programs for individuals with special needs are important, there is a lot of benefit for the individual with special needs if there is health in the whole family.

Families are uniquely created by God (Genesis 1:27-28) to be a place where our faith is most lived out in intimate relationships which reflects the relationship we are to have with God. For this reason, our family camps have a faith focus, with yearly themes that come from God's Word. Our family camps include opportunities for family devotion times along with chapel services.

TESTIMONIAL

"We simply don't have time to enjoy together as a family. So many moves and changes and busy schedules. It was absolutely amazing that we could just show up some place and have everything taken care of. We really cannot thank you enough for providing this for military families. Money is tight, stress is high. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts."



TESTIMONIAL

"After camp, we decided we needed to start going to church again because I finally conceded that I could not do this life or raise these kids without God and the help of the church."



BENEFITS OF FAMILY CAMP AT IRONWOOD SPRINGS

- Get away from the stresses of everyday life and slow down, enjoying the beauty of God's creation.
- All of your needs such as meals and entertainment are taken care of so you have more time to spend enjoying your time together.
- No excuses are necessary; Be part of an understanding community, where you can build long-lasting relationships, and where you can share resources and ideas.
- Barriers that you may normally face in everyday life are removed.
- Spend dedicated time together, without distractions, enjoying activities that everyone in the family can enjoy, regardless of their abilities.
- Design your own experience through a flexible schedule that fits your family's needs for rest, relaxation, and fun.
- Strengthen or begin your relationships with Jesus and work on your faith as a family.

With all these incredible benefits of family camp, you can see why our focus in our camp and retreat programs is on the family!

TESTIMONIAL

"We truly needed this opportunity to reconnect with family and be so well cared for."



RETREATS WITH IMPACT

Design your special event!

Are you in need of a place to hold your group retreat? Consider Ironwood Springs as your next retreat destination. We specialize in planning retreats for groups of all kinds: schools, businesses, faith-based organizations, churches, and families that are looking to spend time purposefully together at our inspiring and picturesque location. We have amazing facilities, dining, and activities that will more than meet the needs of your group and if you need accessibility, even better. Our facilities also include audio/visual options to meet your group meeting needs.

Our group packages are customizable to best accommodate your unique needs for cost and types of lodging, food, and activities. We have an array of lodging options including our premier Miracle Lodge retreat center to 4-season cabins and dorms to campground sites. Our experienced staff is ready to work with your retreat team to provide whatever level of assistance you need in planning your event.

*Come experience the magic
of Ironwood Springs!*

BUILT FOR IMPACT
Every retreat is designed based on your unique needs, and goals.

**ONE OF A KIND
VENUE**
Unique venue, activities, and various meeting space options

**COMPETITIVE
PRICING**
Our focus is to ensure the best pricing possible.

**EXPERTLY
CURATED**
Our team draws on years of expertise to plan the perfect event for you.



RETREAT SERVICES AT IRONWOOD SPRINGS

Far removed from the noise of a busy world, Ironwood Springs' 120 acres is fully accessible, and the ideal setting for retreats, meetings and team building opportunities. Our staff will team up with you to ensure your time is as rewarding as it is unforgettable, and can customize accommodations for your specified group needs. Ironwood Springs is the ideal setting for your group to relax, recharge and reconnect.

LODGING

From our accessible, hotel-style Miracle Lodge, to our four season, climate controlled cabins and dorms, we have lodging to fit your budget and needs.



ACTIVITIES

Have fun and create memories while at Ironwood Springs! We provide a number of activities for you to book while planning your next retreat or event.

TESTIMONIAL

"It was great to be able to connect with other families. The staff was great, the activities and amenities were awesome!"



MEETING SPACE

Ironwood has a wide selection of indoor and outdoor meeting space to fit your needs.

DINING

Enjoy a delicious food experience during your time at Ironwood. A fresh salad bar paired with a main dish guarantees you will not leave hungry! Other menu options also available, including an authentic chuck-wagon experience!





Ironwood Springs...Years of God's Faithfulness and Miracles

Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch is a camp and retreat center located on 120 beautiful, wooded acres along the Root River in southeast Minnesota. Based on the life experiences of our founder, Bob Bardwell, a paraplegic since 1973, Ironwood Springs has a mission to serve individuals and families challenged by disabilities along with military families. Our working horse ranch also provides, horsemanship and faith-based programs and therapeutic opportunities.

Ironwood Springs has a variety of accommodations for your adult, youth or family retreats. Our lodge and premium retreat center, Miracle Lodge, includes 27 private rooms with baths and hotel amenities. We also have bunkhouse style lodging in cabins and dormitories and a campground. We are open year-round with seasonal activities in the winter such as snow-tubing, horse-drawn sleigh rides and horse trail rides, zip line and a heated pool in the summer. Custom designed menus and great food are available to make your retreat special, whether it is in our log dining hall or at our beautiful outdoor chuckwagon location. We provide per-person package rates that include lodging, meeting space(s), and meals.

Designed for Accessibility

Our campus is designed for accessibility from our retreat center to the paved trails. Activities at Ironwood Springs are uniquely designed for everyone, regardless of ability:

- Zip line built specifically for people with physical disabilities
- A fully accessible mini golf course
- Camp games such as gaga ball and carpet ball
- Adaptive horseback riding
- Trails built for wheelchair access
- Adaptive pool
- Cowboy chuckwagon experience, located in the deep-woods of Ironwood.

Seeing Beyond Limitations

Our desire is that each person, regardless of the challenge, can live a joyful, purpose-filled life that glorifies God. Our legacy, based on the life and testimony of Bob Bardwell, is for people to see their challenge as something that will not limit their ability to have purpose.

What's in a Name?

Our name, Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch, has four key elements. Ironwood is a type of tree that was common to the ranch when it was founded. The Ironwood tree is a strong and durable tree, representing something that endures a long time. Springs refers to the large natural spring along the river in the center of the ranch. In the book, *Trails of a Paintbrush*, Nicholas Brewer describes pioneer life in the late 1800s in the area where Ironwood Springs sits. Near the end of his book, himself now 71 years old, he describes returning back to his birthplace and making his way to the bubbling springs to get a drink of the cool water. He describes the experience as he sat there listening to the gurgling of the spring, "To me it seemed as if it alone remained as an everlasting requiem for all that had passed and gone". We want Ironwood Springs to be a place of reflection and refreshment. Christian means Jesus is at the center of everything we do. Ranch is fitting because we have always been a working horse ranch and horses are a key element of our programs.

There's Something About This Place

We hear this often from people that come to Ironwood Springs. It speaks of the beauty and peace of a place where people slow down and quiet the noise in their life. It is also about those who work and volunteer at Ironwood Springs. It is a place where everyone feels welcome and accepted for who they are, regardless of their challenges or abilities.

Bob Bardwell, Founder of Ironwood Springs

Bob was injured in 1973 in a heavy construction accident, which left him as a T12 paraplegic. Bob's faith in Jesus kept him going and, his vision of starting a youth camp ranch never wavered. Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch opened in 1976 and has been growing ever since. Bob is a builder at heart and has used his gifts to grow the campus of Ironwood Springs to twenty-one buildings to serve the ministry. Bob's vision and determination were key to building its premiere retreat center, Miracle Lodge, which took nine years to complete in 2009.

Bob raced in over one hundred wheelchair marathons across the nation, winning many national events. Through his relationships with other national and international wheelchair athletes, Bob founded the National Wheelchair Sports Camp at Ironwood Springs, the largest wheelchair sports camp of its kind, which continues going strong after 36 years. As a motivational speaker and inspirational author for the past 30 years, Bob has inspired thousands of people nationwide. His messages include: "It's not what happens to you, it's what you do about it" and "Don't be a victim, be a victor".

Bob's family has always been very important to him. He has been married to his wife Jode for over 30 years and they have four daughters and four grandkids.

"It's not what happens to you, it's what you do about it."





MIRACLES HAPPEN

The Story of the Miracle Lodge

There are many miracle stories that have happened in the history of Ironwood Springs. A miracle is something that only seems to be explained by supernatural means, in other words by the hand of God. It all started with Bob Bardwell and the miracle of God saving him through a tragic accident. By all intents and purposes, he should not have lived. But God had a plan. He uses tragedies in our lives for good. Through Bob's faith and determination, the National Wheelchair Sports Camp (NWSC) was started in 1986 and this led Ironwood Springs on the path to its Breaking Barriers disability programs.

But from that first camp in 1986, Bob could see that traditional camp housing was not ideal for people with physical disabilities. He assured those first attendees that "someday, Lord willing, we would have a facility where anyone, regardless of their disability, could come and enjoy themselves." Thirteen years later, it was decided that it was time to get to the "starting line" for the Miracle Lodge, a one-of-a-kind, all-accessible, hotel-style lodge to house wheelchair camps. Bob came across this verse in 2000, which became the vision for how this overwhelming task would be accomplished:

"Be strong and courageous and get to work. Don't be frightened by the size of the task, for the Lord my God is with you; He will not forsake you. He will see to it that everything is finished correctly."

1 Chronicles 28:20

The slogan that Bob used for this project was: Big Dream, Big God, Big Community. The process of building the Miracle Lodge took a total of 9 years of planning and construction, and throughout that time, God and the community both came through big time! Here are some of the amazing facts:

- 1. Over 40,000 volunteer hours logged.**
- 2. Over 900 individuals donated to the project.**
- 3. Over 100 local and 40 non-local companies donated labor and materials to the project.**
- 4. 180 semi-trucks hauled materials from Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, New Jersey, Texas, Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Montana, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Vancouver-British Columbia.**
- 5. 5,500 meals were served to the men and women who worked on the lodge.**
- 6. The entire 33,500 square feet of the facility is heated and cooled using water from the Ironwood springs.**
- 7. The entire \$5-million-dollar facility was built for approximately for half the amount due to the donated time and materials.**

In all, Bob documented 31 miracle stories during the making of the Miracle Lodge. One of Bob's mantras is 'If God is in your dream, no request is too extreme'. That certainly rang true in the story of the lodge.

When the Miracle Lodge was completed, John Morris, Bob's pastor and military chaplain, approached Bob with the idea of using the lodge for a family retreat program for military families. From that conversation, our Operation Welcome Home military program was born and over 1500 military families have stayed there free of charge since 2009. Today, the Miracle Lodge is the home of the majority of programs at Ironwood Springs and hosts many outside groups throughout the year. We know it is a place where God will continue to work His miracles in the lives of those we serve.

BECOME AN AMBASSADOR!

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us."

— 2 Corinthians 5:20

An ambassador is a person who represents, speaks, or advertises for a particular organization, group, or brand. If you contribute your time, talent, or treasure to Ironwood Springs, you are an ambassador for Ironwood, but more importantly, you are an ambassador for Christ. Our mission is to "share the love of Christ through transformational experiences in an accepting community." Your support of Ironwood Springs is a vital part of our mission to share the love of Christ. Second Corinthians 5:20 elevates this role as an ambassador even further: "as though God is making his appeal through us". It doesn't get any clearer than that.

Your role as an Ironwood Springs ambassador includes encouraging others to participate in our mission. Here are some ideas:

- **Keep your eyes and ears open for those who could be impacted by our programs and invite or sponsor them to attend an event.**
- **Invite others to volunteer.**
- **Invite someone out for a tour, especially during one of our program events. You can coordinate a tour through our office.**
- **Invite others to give a donation.**
- **Purchase tickets or a sponsorship to our Miracles Happen Gala and invite others to attend with you.**
- **Follow us on Facebook and Like/Comment/Share stories/events that we post on Facebook.**
- **Sign up to be a Community Ambassador for Ironwood Springs. In this role, you can help distribute materials to businesses, churches, and organizations in southeast Minnesota communities to increase awareness of our impactful programs and promote financial giving.**

You can become an ambassador for Ironwood Springs through donating or volunteering. Our programs for disabilities and military are provided at low or no cost to participants due to the financial challenges faced by these communities. Volunteering and donations make this possible.



TESTIMONIAL

"This camp has changed me forever. I am still amazed by the incredible experience I had as a volunteer. I've never experienced a more empowering and encouraging place on earth where all are welcome and invited to shine and thrive in their own element. I feel so honored and blessed to have been a part of such a wonderful camp."

ON MISSION

SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST

God so **LOVED YOU**
that He gave His
One and Only
Son Jesus so that
you would have
HOPE and PEACE
and have a
RELATIONSHIP
with Him **FOREVER**.
You can accept
His **FREE GIFT**
today.

We want everyone who comes to Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch to know this simple message of the gospel. He loves you so much that He sent His son, Jesus Christ, to live in human form and to die on the cross for you so that you can be in a right relationship with Him, a Holy God. This is a gift of grace from God, that He freely gives if we accept it. What does He ask of us? To repent of our sins and to believe and have faith in Jesus as our Savior. If we do this, He promises to send us a helper in the Holy Spirit to help us to grow to be more like Jesus in his love, grace, and humility and to help us in our daily life.

OUR NEED FOR A SAVIOR

God created man and woman in His image to live in relationship with Him forever in His perfect creation (Genesis 2:7-25). Unfortunately, the man and woman chose to disobey God, which is called sin (missing the mark). This caused sin to enter the world and God's relationship with humankind from that point forward was impacted as He is a holy God (Genesis 3). But God, who is omnipotent (all powerful), had a plan to redeem His relationship with us through His Son Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15). The Old Testament is a testament to God's faithfulness through many stories of people turning to God and then falling away from Him, showing that our own human efforts are not enough. It points to our need for a savior and of a savior that was to come (Isaiah 9:6, 53:5) to provide the way we can be restored to God.

THE GOOD NEWS

The New Testament is the good news of this savior, Jesus Christ who came to earth, lived a perfect life, died on the cross to pay the penalty of our sin, and was resurrected to show His power over death. Our response is to believe and have faith in Christ as our Savior. We cannot work our way to be saved.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8-9.

If you would like to accept this gift, you simply need to pray something like this: "God, I know I am a sinner who is in need of you in my life. I believe that Jesus died to forgive me for my sin. I want to spend my life following Him. Amen."

LIVING THE GOSPEL DAILY

The gospel is not just a message of a one-time salvation but a message to be lived daily. When we accept Jesus as our savior, our identity is in Him (as a savior who loves us so much) and not in ourselves and our achievements or failures and not in what others think of us. He gives us strength when we are weak, hope when life seems hopeless, and peace when life seems stressful and chaotic. Much of the New Testament teaches us of how this good news should impact how we live and in how all we do should be to the glory of God!

OUR TRUE HOPE

The New Testament ends with the best news of all. Christ will return one day to restore all of creation and all who follow Him will be with Him forever. That is where our true hope lies. We pray that through your time at Ironwood Springs, either through us or through experiencing time in His beautiful creation, you will hear God speaking to you, drawing you closer.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." Revelation 3:20

IRONWOOD CONTACTS

Tracy Bashore – Executive Director
Bob Bardwell – Founder; Director Emeritus
Matthew Van Dixon – Program Director
Jode Bardwell – Financial Director
Kate Robinson – Retreat & Office Manager
BJ Stoppelmoor – Equine Director
Dan Ostergard – Facilities Lead
Jennifer Van Dixon – Facilities Manager
Craig Rasmussen – Food Service Director

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 507-533-4315
Email: office@ironwoodsprings.com
Impact Program Guide
Published by Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch
Edited by the Ironwood Staff
Layout by Matthew Van Dixon
Photography by Pam Dose & Ironwood Staff
Follow us on:



BUILDING COMMUNITY

We have a Big Dream! To provide as much opportunity as possible for individuals and families challenged with disabilities, autism, or military service to experience God's peace, love, and hope through Ironwood Springs.

Our ability to do that relies on the community relationships we develop and nurture. Working with others in the faith community has been very positive for us in advancing the Gospel and meeting the needs of those we serve.

We have seen first-hand the impact of combining resources and deep knowledge of other organizations with long legacies of transformative impact. By working with other organizations like the Chris Norton Foundation and the SPED Homeschool Family Homeschool program, we can expand our potential to grow by leaps and bounds and can steer Ironwood Springs in many positive directions, ultimately providing more meaningful program opportunities. The impact we have accomplished together inspire and moves us forward.

Making connections in the greater community gives us the chance to advance our mission in new and exciting ways! We invite you to continue the journey with us as we advance the work of Ironwood Springs!

