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## Miracle Mountain lassoes another successful year of summer camp

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**SPRING CREEK TOWNSHIP** — More than 1,200 campers visited a local ranch

over seven weeks of summer camp this year.

Miracle Mountain Ranch — a western-themed retreat center and camp located at 101 Rodeo Dr., Spring Creek — hosted 1,205 campers this

summer between June 25 and Aug. 11, which was an increase from the previous year.

"That's up from 1,185 last year. We had kids fly in from all over the United States. It was great to see more growth in the summer camp," said Miracle Mountain Ranch Marketing Director Donnie Rosie, a former MMR camper who now resides at the ranch with his wife, Tonya, and their four children, George, Cole, Grant and Karis.

Over 250 of the ranchers came on full or partial scholarships as the ranch was able to raise \$73,000 toward the payment of those scholarships through the help of local businesses and three annual fundraising events.

"We gave scholarships to more kids than we did last year," Rosie said. "I think that's an all-time record for raising support for kids to go to camp."

LECOM, Corry Federal Credit Union and Rossbacher Insurance, along with a number of other businesses and organizations, assisted MMR with its scholarship fund to help send more kids to summer camp.

"Those are the three stand-outs," Rosie said. "They've been really amazing and help lead the way and set an example for others. LECOM helped sponsor kids out of

downtown Erie, and they got to interact with a lot of different kids."

Rosie said the summer campers ventured out on 1,680 trail rides, consumed 100 doughboys, played innumerable rounds of Octaball — a modified version of dodgeball — and ran seven rounds of the Great Banana Relay, which is a massive campwide relay race all around Miracle Mountain Ranch.

"Octaball is definitely one of the most popular games at the ranch," Rosie added.

MMR is a nonprofit, non-denominational organization, and all of its programs are Christian-based. Year in and year out, the more than 600-acre ranch offers various summer camps such as Adventure, Horse and Wilderness camps.

The Adventure camps are comprised of a little bit of everything and include the widely popular Wild West Camp. There is a variety of Horse camps and the Wilderness camps focus on camping in the woods. This was the second year some of the Wilderness campers took a canoe trip down the Allegheny River.

"I'm most intrigued by the Wilderness camp called 'Absolute Bearing' where they went down the Allegheny," Rosie said. "It

takes advantage of local resources."

All of the camps have a strong emphasis on spirituality and the love of God. Rosie said the summer staff enjoys sharing the gospel with kids in the summer camps.

"They have heard the Gospel in 35 chapels and in countless other situations throughout their stay, and many have come to salvation in Jesus," he added. "We do a service every single day that they're here, and that's different than a lot of other camps."

To see highlight video from MMR's seven weeks of summer camps this year, visit <https://vimeo.com/228420014>.

The ranch raises money to help pay for campers' scholarships through three events each year — a 5K in the spring on Memorial Day, a golf scramble at North Hills in the summer and an Apex Run in the fall. This year's Apex Run will be held on Saturday, Oct. 14, at the ranch.

"The scholarship fund starts over and getting ready for next year is always a challenge," Rosie explained. "But the camps impact new lives on a yearly basis, and I'm so thankful for all the volunteers and staff."

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Donnie Rosie/contributed photos

Above, a camper climbs a rock wall at Miracle Mountain Ranch, 101 Rodeo Dr., Spring Creek, during one of the ranch's seven weeks of summer camp this year. Below, MMR campers and staff members gather for a group photo.

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In addition to the summer camps, the ranch provides retreat programs and a School of Discipleship program to people of all ages. Students in the discipleship program work as

staff at the summer camps as part of their course of study.

"It's a culmination of about 11 months of work," Rosie said. "I'm really excited for their graduation."

About 35 students will be graduating from the ranch's college-level discipleship program during a ceremony at Edinboro University today. Rosie said people are coming from all over the

United States and the world to attend the graduation ceremony, which will feature a student from Germany and many others who hail from outside Pennsylvania.



Donnie Rosie/contributed photo

About 35 students will graduate from MMR's School of Discipleship program during a graduation ceremony at Edinboro University today. The graduation is the culmination of almost a year of work in the apprenticeship program.