

Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center provides an atmosphere of peaceful, quiet and sacred space in a natural setting. Lindenwood offers individuals and groups an environment for faith development, personal growth, team building and artistic endeavors. We do this with a welcoming presence to all we serve.

*...for nothing will be impossible for God.*

Luke 1: 37



## Sharing Hope: Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center

**A** 60-hour work week. Ten unanswered emails. No milk in the fridge. Last-minute costume for the school play. Broken relationships. Dad in the nursing home with a broken hip. Memories of trauma. Teenager out way past her curfew. Thesis deadline. Cravings. Highs. Crashes.

Life can be full of demands, worries, and draining relationships. As our days become cluttered with tasks and to-dos, anger and resentment build, and we forget that the Lord is working in our lives, bringing us to the end he has in store for us.

**People come to Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center to restore and renew their sense of hope and to share it with others. They come to listen for the voice of God in their lives.**

"There is a man in his 50s who participates every year in one of our 12-step retreat programs," says Christopher Thelen, director. "He is a recovering alcoholic. He shows up in ripped jeans and a plaid shirt. But this year, on the last day of the retreat, he told me that he just didn't want to leave. His experience was so powerful that he didn't want to leave."

The skinny, balding man reminds Christopher

of the apostles Peter, James, and John who witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mt. Tabor; filled with hope, promise, and mystery, they did not want to leave the mountain top.

"I told him it was time to go. He had to share the sense of hope and God's love that he felt at Lindenwood with other people," says Christopher.

Retreats and conferences at Lindenwood are for people who thirst for an encounter with God. Our hectic lifestyles make it easy to feel lost, and it is important to make time for prayer, reflection, contemplation, and rest. An average of 9,000 people come to Lindenwood every year for day and overnight programs.

Moved by the depth of their experiences, Lindenwood retreat participants frequently contribute to the Gift of the Spirit Scholarship Fund as a way to "pay it forward" to guests who cannot afford programs and accommodations. Since 2008, the scholarship fund has grown to more than \$15,000. Similarly, the Lindenwood staff works diligently within the constrained budgets of groups and organizations.

For example, Indiana University Northwest approached Lindenwood about housing two medical students gaining field experience while

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servicing the poor in both Starke and Marshall Counties. Our willingness to stay within the limited budget not only helped the medical students, but also indirectly contributed to the overall health and well-being of our underserved neighbors.

Lindenwood serves the entire Christian community of Catholic, Protestant, and other faith denominations. One model for this collaborative work is the Visitation Ministry training program. This 12-week program prepares candidates from Christian faith communities to be the embodiment of Christ's care and compassion for those older adults who are home alone, grieving, suffering loss, and without a support system.

Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center is a training ground for the future leaders of our Catholic faith. For example, young adults in their mid-20s from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend worked for 10 weeks with the director of Lindenwood to create a custom retreat to engage their peers in a life of faith. The young leaders

discerned their own spiritual passions and shared that hope and fire with others. The leadership team was transformed through preparing and facilitating the experience for young friends in the Diocese.

"One young woman was fired up about sacred art," says Christopher. "Others enjoyed playing praise and worship music. Another person led discussions about Fr. Robert Barron's Catholicism video series. It was amazing to witness the leaders' self-discovery and how they shared their excitement with other young people."

