

TRASH TO TREASURE

Come see the manger at
the camp Christmas
festival

Read the story below of how the camp trash area has been transformed to be the focal point of the beautiful Christmas story.

Dec. 6-8
5:00 - 8:00 PM

For several years, the camp had trash containers (dumpsters) behind our commercial kitchen. In 2019, we decided to build a cinder block wall around the containers so that it will look more acceptable, and the trash could be contained to this area.



We drew a basic plan and enlisted the help of some volunteers to help with the wall. Benny Williams (74 yrs old at the time) had many years of experience with laying block both for career as well as for mission trips in other countries. He agreed to oversee the project if we could give him some help. Benny, along with Carl Smith (81 yrs old at the time), and some of our staff guys went to work and built the “dumpster wall” in February of 2019.

We used it as intended until the end of summer of 2021. That summer, the trash became a real problem with overflowing and scheduling pick-ups, not to mention the increase in the undesirable flies, and pests. As long as it is contained, the dumpsters don't look bad, but when it becomes a problem, it's a REAL problem. We hesitated to make a change because:



1. That's where we have always had our trash.
2. That is why we built the wall just 3 years before.
3. What else are we going to do with a blank 3 sided block wall in a random place?

In the Fall of 2021, we relocated the trash containers to a remote place on camp that is out of sight for our guests. It is a little inconvenient to take out the trash, but it has removed the source of our trash problem. It was a good move. For 2 summers we have ignored the empty 3 sided wall between the kitchen and the pool. We didn't want to take it down because of the work that went into building it, but we could not come up with a use for it.... until the Fall of 2023.



In October of 2023, we enlisted volunteer help from Bill Griffin who welded a frame for a roof. The wall is approximately 22' long and 5' high, so its is an odd shaped structure. This roof frame was accomplished with volunteer labor and mostly scrap metal in a 2 day project. The structure will be finished out with tin on the roof and siding on the upper portion of the wall. The inside will be painted and decorated to resemble a humble farm stable.

The dumpster wall will now be the beautiful finale' of our drive through Nativity scene at the annual Christmas Festival complete with hay, animal figurines, stars and an angel. What was originally built to cover and contain trash, will now be the most important part of the nativity. Following Christmas, the structure will be completely enclosed to serve as a much-needed storage place for festival decorations from year to year. [Click HERE](#) to see a gallery of more pics of before and after.

There are so many things about this story that reminds me of how God works in our lives. "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." Proverbs 16:9

Was it a mistake to build the dumpster wall in 2019 because it became only a temporary solution? Was it a mistake to ask Benny, Carl and the others to put in the work for something that was only used for it's original purpose for 3 years? At that time, we felt like the wall around the trash was the answer to our problems and we were making an improvement that would last. We THOUGHT we were making a good sound decision. Sometimes we make decisions that we feel



are right at the time, but God has another purpose or plan — even if a lot of work, money, and time went into the original plan. If we try our best and it doesn't work out as we had planned, I think sometimes the best thing to do is take a step back and wait. Just because we cannot think of a solution at the time does not mean that God doesn't have a solution. If we trust His plan and His timing, then it is always perfect, even if we aren't around to see the result.

When we think of the place where Jesus was born, we hold it in reverence as a holy place, but in fact it was originally built to be a stable for animals. Sometimes God uses the most ordinary and unlikely circumstances or plans (a dumpster wall) to change into the most beautiful place with the most holy purpose (the manger scene). There is not a person or a circumstance that is too ordinary, too filthy or unholy that He cannot change for His glory and good.

The Manger and You

Historically speaking, every farm had a barn that the livestock would come to in the evenings. In the center of this barn would be a manger or a feed trough. No matter where the livestock spent their days, they knew when it was time to come home and eat of something more than grass. They knew the manger would have something that would nourish their bodies. Whenever Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to register for the census, they needed a place to give birth to Jesus. Imagine how insulting it would be to place a newborn baby in a feed trough! The symbolism of that gesture has transformed the lives of millions of people since that time. Jesus was placed in a manger, made for livestock to be nourished, whenever, He was the true nourishment of our soul. Just like the livestock had returned there every night to eat and feel safe, Jesus has made a place for us to come to Him whenever we need a safe place. Are you struggling with something today? Do you feel lost, without hope, maybe you are just worn out? We want to encourage you to come to Jesus and bring it all to Him! Maybe it's the first time you have done this or maybe it's something you do daily but know that He wants you to return to Him! Maybe, you don't know what to say, Jesus knows what you need, He is the safe place that you can return to when you need some spiritual nourishment!

For a better understanding of Gods plan for your life, [Click Here!](#)

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