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Photo by Scott Fisher

USAFA cadets pack Hartley Holmes Lodge at a weekend retreat this year.



Ministry news, events, and resources
to keep you informed and...

CONNECTED

MARCH 2022

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**OCF's mission is to engage military leaders
in Biblical fellowship and growth to equip
them for Christlike service at the intersection
of faith, family, and profession.**

Spring Canyon celebrates 60 years of OCF ministry

BY KAREN FLIEDNER
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

For countless men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces, Spring Canyon Conference Center has long been a “home away from home,” a stable, welcoming place providing them a brief respite from their demanding military lives. Through outdoor activities and biblically based teaching, OCF’s oldest affiliated conference center—which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year—has refreshed, equipped, and encouraged countless singles, couples, families, and friends of the military.

According to Spring Canyon’s Director of Operations Todd Plotner, “the ‘official’ week of celebrating the 60th anniversary will be Summer Celebration Week 5 (2-9 July).” Saturday, 2 July, is the date of the actual

celebration. For that day, “we are trying to line up a series of guest speakers from Spring Canyon’s history who can speak to the legacy of this great ministry,” said Todd.

Summer Celebration Week 4 (25 June–2 July) “will likely also include a guest speaker or multiple speakers from Spring Canyon’s history.”

“Every week of summer will include at least some recognition of the 60th anniversary and will include all our summer programs—Summer Celebration, Rocky Mountain High, and Father-Teen Adventure,” he added.

Some of the tentative ideas and activities being discussed include dedicating facilities, a formal naming of the Guide Quarters, retro games from the 1960s, and an anniversary cake

Story continues inside



Registration for Summer 2022 is now open.
Start your **adventure** today! **Sign up online.**

GET MORE INFORMATION AT SPRINGCANYON.ORG/RMH

during the summer retreat weeks to recognize guest birthdays and anniversaries.

A life-giving legacy

Much like its namesake spring that continuously pours out life-sustaining water that flows through the heart of the camp, the heart of Spring Canyon’s mission is to offer and help its guests drink deeply from the life-giving water that is Jesus Christ (John 4:14).

COL Gwynn Vaughan, USA (Ret.), is among the first of countless people whose lives have been indelibly impacted by ministry efforts at Spring Canyon. A West Point cadet at the time, seeking “adventure and spiritual encouragement,” Vaughan first visited the conference center with his parents, siblings, and a couple of West Point classmates during its inaugural summer season in 1962.

“Spring Canyon was special because we got away to a gorgeous landscape of streams, lakes, mountains, and forests that made us realize the beauty of God’s creation. There we could refresh our walk with God,” said Gwynn, who recalls staying in “Pioneer Lodge in a sleeping bag” and climbing “the Hook,” the prominent lower peak of Mt. Princeton that towers above the camp.

Fast forward to present day and the “Welcome Home” sign at the entrance of Spring Canyon still has a way of making one feel like their presence at Spring Canyon is cherished before they even check in. Such was the sentiment of 2d Lt Esther Moats, USAF, when she was driving into Spring Canyon for the first time.

“The beauty is truly breathtaking,” said Esther. “I remember taking in the scenery and being so excited about the opportunity to spend time in God’s creation, away from my normal daily stressors, surrounded by fellow brothers and sisters in arms and in Christ.”

The inspiration for a ministry-owned conference center was birthed out of the then-Officers’ Christian Union’s retreat programs already taking place in the late 1950s nationally and in other locations such as conferences in Germany—or on



Summer Celebration 2022 at Spring Canyon

This is our 60th summer! We’ve got a fresh lineup of adventure & activities to celebrate 60 years of God’s goodness. Join us as we look forward to 60 more years of life-changing ministry at Spring Canyon. We invite singles, couples, and families to sign up for a week of spiritual encouragement, meaningful conversations, and memories that last a lifetime. **Make this summer your best ever!**

Week 1 (4-11 June): Homeschooling Week with Wesley Dickinson, “Home Education and the Classical Model”

Week 2 (11-18 June): Dr. Berkley Baker, “Purpose-Filled Living”

Week 3 (18-25 June): 3A: Lt Col Leemon Baird, USAF (Ret.), “All for Christ”
3B: Anchor Points, hosted by Col Hous and Tami Waring, USAF (Ret.)

Week 4 (25 June-2 July): Lt Gen Bruce Fister, USAF (Ret.), “Welcome Home”

Week 5 (2-9 July): Col Scott Fisher, USAF (Ret.), “Declare His Mighty Acts”

Week 6 (9-16 July): Pastor Greg St. Cyr, “Victory in the Valley, Courage in the Cave”

Week 7 (16-23 July): Pastor Keith Peck, “Daniel: Engaging a Polarized, Hostile Culture”

Week 8 (23-30 July): Mike Chupp, MD, CEO of the Christian Medical and Dental Association, “Connecting to the Father with a 5G Heart”

View all our adventures at springcanyon.org/summer-celebration

canoe trips.

Cleo Buxton, OCF’s first executive director, who shared Jesus Christ as a speaker at seminars or while paddling rivers with cadets and midshipmen in a canoe, envisioned a ministry-owned retreat facility for leadership training and “building up the believer, [and] evangelizing the nonbeliever.”

OCF leaders became aware in 1960 of the availability of Spring Canyon—a few cabins and a simple main lodge on a 100-plus-acre parcel—outside of Buena Vista, Colo. The Rocky Mountain Association for Christian Training (ROACT) was formed to purchase the property (and later sold the property to OCF in 1988) and gave OCU first-rights use of the property. Two years later, with Christ-based OCU retreats at Spring Canyon made available to the military community, word quickly spread.

“I made plans to visit there,” said Kit

Vaughan, who had attended the first International OCU Conference in Germany at the invitation of COL Granville Sharpe, USA, and his wife who had also led the teen to Christ. “Mrs. Sharpe wrote me that her husband was speaking at Spring Canyon. If it was anything like the international conference, it would be amazing. I was not disappointed.”

“Louisa Buxton did all of the cooking. After dinner, we took turns doing the dishes. Buck (Cleo) led the programs. He would read all of us a chapter from *Jungle Doctor* (about a medical missionary’s adventures in Africa),” said Kit. “When Gwynn and I had our own family, we read *Jungle Doctor* to our children before bed time.”

‘Vacation with a purpose’

Spring Canyon’s sanctuary status—considered “our Bethel” by the

Vaughans—also became regarded as a home to many in the ever-transient military community. Kim and Kari Ann Hawthorne are one such military couple. Serving now as the director couple at Spring Canyon, they know and have tasted first-hand what the ministry has made available to other peers in uniform for six decades.

“As we moved around the world for 28 years, Spring Canyon became our home away from home in what was sometimes a turbulent journey,” said Kim. “We have watched our family grow up, grow closer together, and grow closer to God at ‘The Canyon.’”

The Hawthornes enjoy a deeply rooted family heritage there, starting in 1969 when Kari Ann attended Spring Canyon with her parents, COL Don and Karen Martin, USAR (Ret.), whose longtime service in OCF includes a stint at Spring Canyon. Kim first visited Spring Canyon as USAFA cadet in 1982, and later met and married Kari Ann there. Their children, Ki, Erin, and Amy Grace, served on staff at the center and later followed their parents’ footsteps by marrying their respective spouses there as well.

For the Hawthornes, with their profound family heritage flowing out of Spring Canyon’s ministry efforts, the enormity of shepherding the center during its 60th anniversary is particularly poignant.

“It’s an honor and a sacred trust to be the ‘Keepers of the Spring’ as we celebrate the 60-year legacy of God’s work through this ministry,” said Kim. “We are thankful to follow in the footsteps of giants and for the opportunity to continue to serve the generations who follow.”

The programs and activities of Spring Canyon are also intended to help support OCF’s goal of equipping those who attend—and “have experienced God’s presence and tasted of His living water”—to serve God as Christlike leaders. Hence, Kim calls time spent at Spring Canyon as “a vacation with a purpose.”

It was at Spring Canyon’s Rocky Mountain High (RMH) program that Esther Moats came to understand what “vacation with a purpose” can mean.

“Going to RMH as a newly commissioned lieutenant really helped confirm my calling to serve in the profession of arms, while encouraging me in faith,” said Esther, who has been at the retreat center three times.

“The most significant experience I had there was when I attended the OCF Leading Women’s Conference last fall. I remember for the first time ever being surrounded by godly women who understood a struggle I had been trying to navigate for the past five years (as a cadet and as a female officer),” she said. “Being surrounded by eager young female cadets who want to honor God in their lives and future military careers, along with experienced female officers who have honored God in their lives and military careers, was so inspiring!”

Said Kim, “Throughout the years, we’ve experienced a ‘vacation with a purpose,’ and have reconnected in the Rockies with friends, family, and most importantly with God. Like our family, you likely have been blessed by this ministry! During this season of celebration, we encourage you to share your experiences at Spring Canyon with the next generation. We are confident that adventure awaits!”

The Spring Canyon experience, from taking part “across the spectrum of incredible ministry at SC through RMH, FTA, and various retreats,” is something Col Scott Fisher, USAF (Ret.), OCF’s executive director deeply desires for others as the center marches into its next 60 years of ministry.

“My prayer is simply that an ever-increasing number of service members and their families will experience Spring Canyon as a place of refuge where they are encouraged, equipped, and emboldened to live out the life to which God has called them with obedience and passion,” said Scott.

“I’m thankful that 60 years ago, Cleo and Louisa Buxton were willing to sacrifice so much so we could have this beautiful ‘Bethel’ to come to for refreshment and inspiration,” said Kit. “I wish they were here to see how much the military folks love and appreciate what they did for us.” 🙏



SUMMER R&R LINEUP AT WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

Get up-to-date information by typing this URL into your browser:

bit.ly/wss-summer-2022
(case sensitive)

R&R #1 (10-17 June)

Maj Tim & Kim Tormey, USMC (Ret.)

R&R #2 (17-24 June)

Lt Gen Loren Reno, USAF (Ret.)

R&R #3 (24 June-1 July)

Pastor Keith Peck

R&R #4 (1-8 July)

CH(COL) Marc Gauthier, USA (Ret.)

R&R #5 (8-15 July)

Pastor LTC Jeff Toomer, USA (Ret.)

R&R #6 (15-22 July)

Pastor Chris Plekenpol, former CPT (USA)

R&R #7 (22-29 July)

Lt Col Del Tackett, USAF (Ret.)

R&R #8 (29 July-5 August)

COL Ric Schumacher, USA (Ret.)

NEW! (5-7 August)

Christian Military Leadership Seminar, with CH(COL) Tim Mallard, USA

Camp Caleb & Allegheny Outback!
Be sure to check out the WSS website (link above) for information about our youth adventure camps, too!

Summary of Fall 2021 OCF Council Meeting

This past October, 15 regular and special Council members convened at Spring Canyon Conference Center for the regularly scheduled Fall Council Meeting. Though met with unexpected but beautiful snow, all were excited to be meeting at Spring Canyon for the first time since 2019. As with every OCF Council meeting, Rob Crespo kicked off the first morning with a Pray, Discover, Obey session—a time devoted to seeking the Lord's guidance.

Ministry directors were afforded an opportunity to provide the Council an update on their specific ministry and share praises and prayer requests. These interactions were enjoyed by all, and it was invaluable for the Council to hear firsthand accounts of God's goodness and blessings through OCF's laborers.

In addition to various administrative tasks, the Council was elated to have approved the latest OCF Bylaws, and a revision of the Council Governance Manual was briefed as in-progress. OCF Executive Director Scott Fisher received Council approval of his FY23 Priorities, which he briefed and identified alignment with the Strategic Framework 2.0.

As with many Council meetings, the opportunity to honor individuals who have selflessly served the Lord is a high point. At this meeting, the Council took time to thank and honor Director of Finance Dave Osborn, who shepherded OCF's finances with both excellence and integrity. Ric Schumacher and Scott Fisher later took time to honor Greg and Lucy Lane, who served for nearly 20 years with tremendous impact doing OCF ministry, most recently as OCF's ROTC Ministry staff couple.

Thank you to all who prayed over the Fall OCF Council Meeting!

—LCDR James Rader, USCG,
OCF Council Secretary

SPRING COUNCIL NEWS

OCF Council's spring meeting will take place 7-9 April at OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center. OCF members are invited to attend. For additional information, contact Tori McDaniel at torimcdaniel@ocfusa.org or 800-424-1984.

OCF Ministry News

WSS raising \$850,000 for Harrison House renovations

By God's grace and the extraordinary generosity of donors, the OCF Council approved upcoming renovations at White Sulphur Springs to the Harrison House facility, the construction of a centralized maintenance building, and the addition of a bathhouse at Camp Caleb Basecamp.

All three projects, projected to be completed before summer 2023 programs begin, will meet a steadily increasing demand for a home base where generations of military-affiliated individuals can gather and be equipped for their walk with Christ.

Donors have already given approximately \$5 million toward these expansion efforts, leaving a gap of \$850,000 to be raised across the WSS/OCF community before renovations and construction are completed. To learn more about and support this effort to sustain another 40 years of ministry, visit whitesulphursprings.org/renovations.



New Regional Coordinators: Steve and Miriam Shambach

COL Steve and Miriam Shambach, USA (Ret.), longtime OCF members active in many areas of ministry, recently agreed to serve OCF as the Mountain Central Regional Coordinator couple starting 1 August. The Mountain Central Region includes Colorado, Utah, Montana, the Dakotas, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas,

New Mexico, Arizona (less Yuma), and Fort Bliss, Texas.

"This is a wonderful first step toward the main effort of our upcoming 5-year strategic framework of increasing our shepherding of our local leaders stationed around the world," said Scott Fisher, OCF Executive Director.

Steve commissioned as Infantry from USMA in 1974, and served 30 years active duty before moving into other jobs such as at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Plans and Programs and the Center for Character and Leadership Development.

The Shambachs, who have three children and one grandchild, also serve on the Spring Canyon Advisory Council.



David Punt hired as OCF Director of Finance/CFO

OCF Executive Director Scott Fisher recently announced to staff that "God has brought an amazing new couple into our OCF family—David and Lori Punt." David started 1 December as OCF's new Director of Finance/Chief Financial Officer.

The Punts "both have a huge heart for the Lord and a strong desire to have an impact in His kingdom work," said Scott. "David has a wealth of experience both in ministry and the corporate world."

An ordained pastor who previously served both as an executive pastor and a youth pastor, he started as a CPA and auditor for



LISTEN

TRENDING EPISODES OF THE OCF CROSSPOINT PODCAST

SEASON 2, EPISODE 15

ENS Nelson Chiaravallotti, USN, on perseverance and leadership lessons.

SEASON 2, EPISODE 8

LT Hannah Johnson, USN, on her struggles with spiritual perfectionism.

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Join our team on staff: Check out our current list of job opportunities and share with others. Just visit ocfusa.org/job-openings



ATTEND

AT WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

March 18-20: OCF Leading Women

April 14-17: Resurrection Retreat

> whitesulphursprings.org/events

AT SPRING CANYON

March 19-26: Spring Break

Service & Adventure Week

May 6-8: Chaplains' Family Conference

> springcanyon.org/events

PricewaterhouseCoopers before moving into ministry, which included roles as the CFO of a Christian university, a controller with World Vision, the director of finance at Saddleback Church in California, and serving as a certified treasury professional with Evangelical Christian Credit Union.

The Punts have two children, Jonathan and Emma.

David fills the role vacated by Dave Osborn, who resigned from his Director of Finance role “due to personal circumstances,” said Scott. “It is with joy we reflect upon how the Lord used Dave O. to grow and align OCF during his tenure.”

Scott expressed appreciation for Dave’s “utmost diligence, attention to detail, and integrity.”



Paul and Janee Homan selected as OCF USAFA field staff couple

Longtime ministry team members and leaders for USAFA OCF, Lt Col Paul and Janee Homan, USAF, will start on 5 August as the newest USAFA OCF staff couple. They step into the role Steve and Rita Wade retired from in 2020.

During the gap between the Wades’ exit and the Homans’ onboarding, Col PK and Lindsey Carlton, USAF (Ret.), and Cindy and Lt Col Paul VanderWeide, ANG (Ret.), have served as OCF staff leaders.

The Homans, both USAFA graduates, are serving as one of the USAFA OCF ministry team couples. Paul served as the OCF cadet in charge while at USAFA,

where he now serves as a professor. They also both served on the ministry team during an earlier assignment. Janee separated from the Air Force after her initial commitment. The couple have four children.

“This is a wonderful answer to more than two years of prayer for many of us, and we are excited to see how the Lord will lead,” said Scott Fisher, OCF Executive Director. “Both Paul and Janee have been extremely active leading in OCF from cadets through their current assignment.”

He added, “It is truly incredible to see the fruit of leaders such as PK and Lindsey Carlton, and Cindy and Paul VanderWeide, who so faithfully served at this strategic location.”

Fort Knox summer help needed

OCF members are invited to participate in a ministry opportunity as Bible study leaders at this summer’s Cadet Summer Training (CST), 26 May-17 August, at Fort Knox, Ky. As many as 10,000 Army ROTC cadets and 5,000 cadre attend CST, the Army’s largest annual training event conducted in a single location.

Along with the Navigators, Valor, chaplains, who play a large role in coordinating this CST ministry, and other ministry partners, OCF conducts Sunday and Wednesday evening Bible studies.

While the greatest need for additional Bible study leaders is during the 26 June-20 July summer surge, OCFers are encouraged to join in whenever available. Last summer more than 3,200 cadets and cadre attended the Bible studies, with hundreds requesting follow-on military training linkups or information for joining Bible studies on their campus. Thirty prayed to receive Christ.

Contact Bob Deckard for additional information: rwdeckard@gmail.com, or 317-997-6623. 📧