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The Wildest Expo Ever Celebrating 15 Year in East Tennessee!

East Tennessee Expo PLUS

Well, it's hard to believe that Leanne and I stepped out in faith following God's call and started Access-Life just over 15 years ago in April of 2010. God has done so many amazing things in our lives and through the ministry since that time and it was so exciting to celebrate our 15th annual Expo in East Tennessee this past June 28th.

The first Expo in East Tennessee was the second one we ever did and while we were greener than grass, God was faithful and led the way each year helping us share His Love and Gospel with individuals and families living with disabilities in such a variety of ways.

Normally our Expos are like a day of camp crammed into 4 hours where we give out boat rides, do bank fishing, help folks kayak, do arts and crafts, play games with prizes, have archery and airsoft stations as well as animals on site and of course feed everybody lunch. This format has always been a winner as so many individuals and families that live with disabilities get the opportunity to not only do things that they may never have had a chance to do before but we layer Jesus in throughout the activities with Bibles in the goodie bags, a prayer and care station as well as doing a gospel bracelet craft.



However, this year to celebrate 15 years of God's blessings and Expos in East Tennessee we wanted to go above and beyond and treat our participants to something that most people have never had the opportunity to do. So, after some research and networking we connected with the wonderful people at Briarwood wild animal Ranch and partnered with them to do the wildest Expo ever. ☺ That's right, as all of our outreaches are completely free, we treated our participants and even volunteers to an interactive drive-thru the Briarwood Wildlife Ranch where they have the opportunity to feed, touch and even get a little licked on by a wide variety of large, hungry but friendly animals including buffalo, zebras, ostriches, elk, deer just to mention a few.



The lay out and logistics were much different than our typical Expos but we had a great group of volunteers that flexed and helped to make it another God blessed success. While we had a great registration team checking people in as they drove up, the demand was so great that the cars went all the way back to highway 160 which is about 2 miles from the entrance at times. The participants stayed in their vehicle the entire time for safety and ease so after they were checked in they were given a bucket of animal food and a much needed bag of hand wipes before having an opportunity to have their photo taken and drive through the park. Once they had experienced God's great outdoors in a new and up close way, they then exited and were given a free 15th anniversary Access-Life t-shirt and goody backpack followed by a bagged lunch and water for the road.



We saw so many smiles of excitement and anticipation on the way in and smiles of joy and gratitude on the way out, we know that God was working as only He can touching the hearts of people in ways that only He knows they need. This was definitely a one-time venue change to celebrate this milestone but it was amazing to see God still working and not only in the hearts and minds of His people to do great things but permeating the atmosphere with His presence so that His joy abounded in so many lives that day.

Overall, it was a sweet day of God reminding me of the fact that my precious Leanne's Life Legacy continues to grow as she and I discovered this wonderful piece of heaven on earth on one our exploratory trips nearly eight years ago. Now God has turned it into the site of an Access-Life outreach blessing individuals and families living with disabilities all in Jesus' pure and powerful name. I am always amazed at how He constantly goes before us clearing our way, bring good to our lives and blessing others along the way. Thank you Lord for the great day. AMEN. ☺