

## Greetings from the Executive Director and Board of Trustees Chair

Gravatt Camp and Conference Center is fortunately positioned in a place of growth and opportunity as we celebrate our 75th anniversary. It wasn't all that long ago that Gravatt faced a time of uncertainty about its future. We are at a juncture where camp sessions are filling faster than ever before and we are experiencing a year-overyear increase in camper registration. Our year-round programming and overnight conference group business are robust. We recently overhauled our environmental education program with UP Outdoors, and we offer a variety of unique programs that meet curriculum requirements of elementary through high school grades.

Gravatt is addressing larger capital repairs and evaluating our business model, focusing on both large and small things to cumulatively make Gravatt a stronger organization to better serve the needs and interests of campers and conference quests.

It is important to note that as a nonprofit, Gravatt's need is still great. We prioritize keeping camp and conference costs affordable; in fact, we are one of the most affordable overnight camps in the Southeast. Gravatt doesn't always offer the shiniest and newest outdoor amenities, though we continually strive to add new features for our camp and conference annually. Examples include three new high rope elements, the centipedes, the vertical playpen, and giant swing and on the conference side, we have added a large outdoor meeting space.

This year, key capital improvements and repairs began largely in response to the Winter 2023 freeze. As a result, we spent more than \$30,000 on the camp side with an additional \$5,000 on the conference side, in response to the freeze to address a significant amount of damage. However, this provided us the opportunity to make improvements on aging plumbing and continue working on the efficiency of water systems, and we now have updated and accurate utility records. Total repairs and maintenance performed on the Gravatt facilities totaled \$110,000 this year.

Research indicates that post-COVID pandemic children and youth face a multitude of challenges relating to social skills, emotional, and behavioral changes. Now more than ever before, we receive feedback from camper families about the importance of Gravatt to their campers. They value our focus on fostering a positive and inclusive experience for all of our campers in an environment where each camper feels respected, loved, and valued. Gravatt's summer camp program positively impacts the lives of countless children and youth, ultimately helping to transform them into thriving adults. With permission, I share with you a very recent post from a camper's social media page that demonstrates the lifelong impact Gravatt can make on our campers:

"This is a late post but I want to say thank you for this summer and for every summer. I just turned 15 and I'm slowly growing up but I'm becoming the person I want to be. I'm scared for what the future has waiting for me but I know if I think of the love that camp has shown me I will be ready. Thank you gravatt and all the people who shown me love I haven't always been the best but you were still there for me. I will show the world the love you have shown me and someday be the person who I strive to be." - Loudon Smith

As you read the 2023 impact report, we hope you will see the level of commitment among people involved with Gravatt. While some of the names and faces have changed, it is the people-volunteers, interns, summer staff, year-round staff, donors, campers and friends-together, who have very much served as Gravatt's strength and vitality. With YOUR support, Gravatt Camp and Conference Center is the thriving organization that was able to serve nearly 1,300 campers and conference quests in 2023.

Shalom.

**Scott McNeely** 

**Executive Director** 

**Heath Stewart** 

Board of Trustees, Chair

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Gravatt is a sanctuary for the ministry of faith formation, hospitality, leadership development, and environmental stewardship.



**Scott McNeely** Executive Director



**Pat Millette Dining Services** Manager



**Thomas Coleman** Director of Facilities and Environmental Stewardship



**Wendi Spratt** Development Director



**Christine Koutrakos** Director of Marketing and Events



**Danielle Steger** Director of Hospitality



**Evan Mikula Program Director** 



**Emily Smith** Finance Manager



Fletcher Spigner Associate Director I Summer Camp Director



Hayden Ifkovits, Marketing Assistant

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## funding

## Expenses:

**SUMMER CAMP \$474,094** 

**CONFERENCE CENTER \$570,041** 

**ADMINISTRATIVE \$576,791** 

Total \$1,620,926

## Revenue:

Total \$1,611,423







CENTER

## facilities

## Upgrades and infrastructure

As a result of the Christmas freeze of 2022, Gravatt's maintenance and facilities staff focused a lot of time and resources on our water systems. During that winter event, Gravatt experienced damaged plumbing and water system damages in eight different locations primarily on the camp side of the property. However, we turned this into an opportunity to make additional improvements to the dated plumbing and water systems.

Gravatt facility staff, along with assistance from contractors and consultants, installed new plumbing, pipes, and water valves. A consultant assisted Gravatt in locating and inspecting all main water valves and creating a detailed utility map with water pipes and valves of that area. Upgrades were also made to the boys bathhouse plumbing.







Restoring water operations ^



## environmental stewardship

### Environmental Diversity Forestry Management

The Longleaf Pine Savanna is a critically endangered ecosystem. Originally comprising 90 million acres in the American Southeast, it has been decimated down to a mere 3 million acres. A habitat loss of 97%. How lucky are we at Gravatt to have healthy stands of Longleaf Pines. In addition to the Longleaf Pine ecosystem, we are looking into methods to manage our Atlantic White Cedar Ecosystem and our stands of Mixed Hardwood Forests. The Atlantic White Cedar bog is another critically endangered ecosystem that calls Gravatt home. These bog environments are extremely efficient at capturing and storing carbon out of the atmosphere to be recycled into the soil creating a rich peat environment. With the use of prescribed fire and selective cutting, we are trying restore these ecosystems to what they once resembled in order to attract certain animal species that once roamed these environments. We hope our efforts will qualify Gravatt to be a release site for the endangered Red Cockaded Woodpecker through the SC Forestry Commission's Safe Harbor Program.







Every morning out in the woods reveals the beauty of God's creation (top right), Sunset on the mighty Longleaf Pines of Sparkleberry Woods (bottom right), the iconic spiraling bark of the Atlantic White Cedar (side left)

Gravatt Camp & Conference Center

## environmental stewardship

### Forestry Management and Sustainability

Gravatt's Forestry Management Plan is an evolving plan, with a long term goal of maintaining and restoring our 280+ acres to its natural and native habitat and ecosystem. Our Forestry Management plan and techniques also serve as a building block for Gravatt's UP Outdoors curriculum by teaching about what we do to improve our environment.

We have two management plans, one is developed by a private consultant and the other by the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Each plan addresses different goals for our forestry management. Our primary techniques used are prescribed fire and selective thinning of our forests. Other techniques include planting of native plants, discing the forest floor, but fire and thinning have the most impact on reaching our primary goal is to create an environment to promote the existence and health of native species of wildlife. plants, and trees. By using prescribed fire and selective harvesting we create an environment for wildlife and plants to thrive naturally.

### A fresh beginning..... Environmental Education

Environmental Stewardship is a pillar of Gravatt's Mission. Program Director, Evan Mikula uses the land we care for to educate children and young adults through our Gravatt Environmental Education Program. The GEEP program allows students to engage in active learning using all their senses - seeing, touching, feeling, and smelling the world around them.



Checking Wood duck boxes



Prescribed Fire on Sparkleberry Trail



## the great outdoors...

### Gravatt Environmental Education

Program Director, Evan Mikula uses the land we care for to educate children and young adults through our Gravatt Environmental Education Program. The GEEP program allows students to engage in active learning using all their senses - seeing, touching, feeling, and smelling the world around them. With our mission as a guiding frame, we have renewed our fervor and are working to develop the Upland Pine Outdoor and Adventure Center at Gravatt which will be geared toward school groups. UP Outdoors, as it will be called, will incorporate many things familiar at Gravatt along with new curriculum and activities. UP Outdoors will be fully operational and available in the fall of 2024.

Evan Mikula also leads campers to explore the outdoors away from Gravatt. The Gravatt Explorers program is open to campers who are rising 10th graders through rising college freshmen. Gravatt Explorers experience two exciting outdoor excursions: a backpacking trip to Shining Rock Wilderness Area in Pisgah National Forest located near Brevard, NC and a canoe trip down the Broad River in Columbia to make camp at Congaree National Park. This program engages young people in adventures and life lessons while creating lifelong memories.











## impact







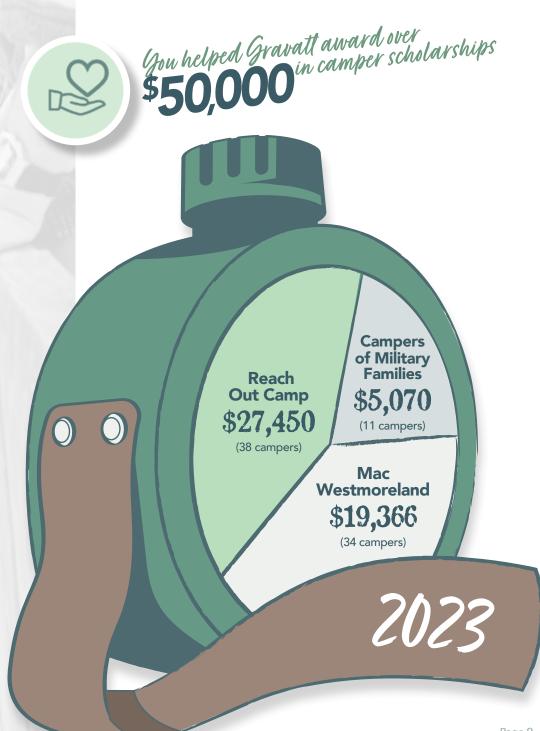






### Newsweek

In July 2024, Newsweek recognized Camp Gravatt as one of America's Best Summer Camps. Gravatt was listed as one of the top 300 U.S. overnight summer camps. Each camp was ranked based on a survey of 30,000 parents conducted in 2023 and 2024 and nearly 700,000 social media reviews on Google and Facebook.



## summer camp



### Gravatt is special because...

"Everyone at camp Gravatt makes you feel like you are meant to be there no matter who you are. When you are at camp it almost feels like you are in a different world." - **Caroline 5.** 

"Camp Gravatt is special to me because it's my place to go home to. It makes me happy and challenges me to be the best version of myself." - **Darby M.** 

"The people at Gravatt are genuine, fun people. They are excited to be at camp and excited to create the most enjoyable experience for you. The relationships you make at Gravatt, camper and staff alike, are the realest and deepest connections you will make in your life. Other places focus a lot on knick knacks and activities, whereas Gravatt emphasizes the importance of building friendships between others at camp and building a relationship with God." - Nan D.

"Our staff takes our jobs more seriously than any other camp staff and we genuinely care about making a difference in children's lives."- **Lee S.** 

"My favorite memory of Gravatt...

One of my favorite memories is Eucharist in the lake. Eucharist is already one of my favorite parts of camp and bringing it to the lake made it even better. The sun was shining down on us, songs were accompanied by the splashing sounds of water, and the kids were having so much fun. It was such a beautiful moment."

- Megan M.











## conference A year round retreat center for meetings, lodging, community building, worship, recreation, relaxation, and dining



Reflecting back on the highlights of our 2023 conference bookings, it's evident that we've maintained a trajectory of growth and success, building upon the foundation laid in previous years.

Throughout the year, our facilities buzzed with activity as we welcomed a total of 72 conference groups, providing a haven for guests to gather, connect, and learn. Our dedication to culinary excellence shone through as we served over 10,000 meals, ensuring that each guest's palate was delighted and their dietary needs were met throughout their stay. Gravatt Conference Center provided invaluable opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and strategic planning. These retreats exemplify our commitment to supporting our guests in achieving their organizational goals and fostering meaningful connections.

With each event and program, we reaffirm our position as a premier destination for conferences, retreats, and transformative experiences.



Local Women's Retreat at Gravatt



Delicious meals are prepared and served in Stewart Dining Hall. ^



Gravatt Camp & Conference Center

## conference by the numbers

72
conference groups



vestry retreats



programming groups



total guests



10,452 meals served



nights stayed

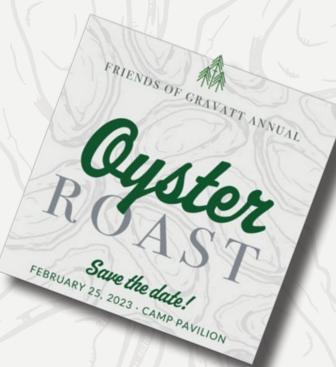
Trinity Cathedral Women's Retreat"We held the 2023 Trinity Cathedral Women's Retreat at Gravatt last March. It was amazing. The staff anticipated our needs. They were flexible as we made changes on the fly. They went above and beyond to make sure that everything about our stay was excellent. The food was healthy and delicious. The beds were so comfortable that people remarked how well they slept. Gravatt staff provides five star hospitality."

- Elizabeth Moosbrugger

## EVENTS So many ways to connect, relax, and enjoy friends and family at Gravatt

### **Oyster Roast**

Gravatt's Oyster Roast is our annual donor appreciation event. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are able to invest more in Gravatt's infrastructure and provide our campers and guests with the best experiences possible. In addition to oysters and homemade chili, we added some new offerings for the evening. Everyone young and old found something to enjoy. It was a perfect night to show our appreciation to Thank you!











## EVENTS So many ways to connect, relax, and enjoy friends and family at Gravatt



There was a full house for the 13th annual Christmas Military

A Family Christmas Retreat

Retreat! Fun was had by all. This retreat would not be possible without generous sponsors and those who prepare delicious meals and baked Christmas treats. The presenting sponsor, The Aiken-Augusta Wounded Warrior Charity Golf Classic generously supports this event each year.

Also supporting the weekend was Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC, TriAugusta Triathlon Club, Women of Woodside, and Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund. The following organizations, churches, and families prepared meals for the military families: Church of the Ridge- Kathie Stallworth, 70's Group- Donna Trapp, Brian and Ginger Phillips / 90's Alum, St. Augustine of Canterbury- James Denny, The Mikulas. Homemade treats from generous bakers kept the Christmas Treat Table overflowing. throughout the Retreat.









EVENTS So many ways to connect, relax, and enjoy friends and family at Gravatt



It was a beautiful night at Gravatt for Under the Tent 2023 nearly 175 people gathered at Gravatt for fellowship. Guests enjoyed perfect weather, delectable food, craft cocktails with support from generous hosts and sponsors, dessert bakers, artists and volunteers all made for a truly memorable evening. Highlights from the evening included Bishop Richards' words about the importance of camp in today's world. He also announced the Diocese's gift challenge match for Under the Tent 2023. Together with the gift match and other support, Gravatt raised just over \$55,000. for Under the Tent 2023 to support 2023 summer camp scholarships and three new elements for Gravatt's high ropes course.







## ce e brate Proud of our past, excited for our future

### Looking forward to our 75th anniversary!

Gravatt Camp and Conference Center is approaching our 75th anniversary in 2024. The Gravatt staff is making plans to commemorate this milestone anniversary.

There will be a variety of opportunities for Gravatt alumni, current staff, campers, and supporters to get involved and celebrate Gravatt. Please contact Christine at christine@campgravatt.org for more information.







## alumni

### Alumni Weekend 2023

This summer Gravatt hosted our first Alumni Weekend for former summer staff members. We had past staff present from the summer of 1971 to this past year and from Ohio to Florida to Montana to DC and all in between. Old friends spent the weekend catching up - some had 40 years of catching up. The voices singing, sound of laughter, a familiar blessing, smell of a crackling campfire, and hugs will not soon be forgotten. There was a tight Shalom circle filled with old staff members, many who were strangers - yet knew each other so well, and even a Gravatt birthday where everyone in the room stood up to sing the familiar song.



## alumni spotlights



Hallie remains connected to **Gravatt while living several** states away. Most recently she attended both the **Alumni Weekend and Under** the Tent. Hallie also assisted as a volunteer during Under the Tent.

as I am. In a world that can be loud with chaos and challenge, Gravatt is a refuge - a place all at once guiet with the peace of God and bursting with laughter across this field. Camp Gravatt is a place of unconditional love, the closest we can get to on this side of heaven.

And that's the thing - whether a camper or a staffer comes here for a summer or seven. Gravatt makes its mark of love. And we are a family. These people have stood by me when I took my vows, held me up when I lost my mama, and have reminded me every day that the purpose of this life is to love. I have seen how every child or person who walks this holy ground feels it. What grows here is everlasting.

I am so grateful to be a part of this place - to walk in the footsteps of those who came before with respect and to celebrate with awe the stewardship of the next generations. Gravatt gave me the courage to find my own leadership style, to apply for a life-changing scholarship at Appalachian State (Go 'Neers!), to travel abroad and know that I could

Hallie Carde was a camper, junior counselor, and permanent staff member from 1999 -2012.

When I turn down Camp Gravatt Rd., roll the windows down, and take a deep breath, I realize that I am home. Maybe it's the smell of southern pines or the echoes of memories that flood my spirit, but more than that it's the safety of being known, being seen, coming into this place exactly

> Thane owns a custom woodworking shop in Ohio and is designing some new interpretive and building signs for Gravatt

Our first night, after we had the chance to catch up

with old friends, meet new ones - we gathered for a campfire. A campfire at Gravatt! I felt like a kid again - watching goofy skits, singing familiar songs, staring at the fire. It brought back so many memories. It felt good, it felt exciting, but it also felt calm.

Every single staff member I met - current or alumni - you can see it in their face and hear it when they talk, Gravatt is home. Gravatt is who they are. This place and these experiences will never leave them. All of this is still so important to me - these many years later. It is a feeling that is difficult to put

make friends in any stranger, to choose a career with passion and purpose, and to know when it's time to go home again. Gravatt grew me a beautiful foundation of leadership and communication - my journey and my voice are now strong because Gravatt called me to be true to myself, as it does for all of us. Even though the miles stand long between us now, keep this everlasting circle close to my heart and travel back as often as I can. Until the next time - shalom.

Thane Lorbach camper and staff member in the 1970s and 1980s

> I came back to Gravatt for Alumni Weekend. There were not any other staff members from my exact era. but that didn't really matter. There were a few familiar faces in a very familiar place. Whether it has been 15 years since I've been here or just a short

period of time, this place has always felt like home.

Donna is a loyal donor, and can be frequently seen at Gravatt assisting with an event or even volunteering

as a host for a conference group"

into words - but it's there. Almost 50 years later, I get excited to see this red dirt again. I hope that I have many more opportunities to sit at that campfire, hear those songs, see old and new friends, hear Father Byrd say Shalom.

It's heaven. It's home. It's Gravatt.

### Donna Lawhon Trapp life long supporter of Gravatt

My first time at Gravatt was in 1958 when my father served as a Spiritual Director during summer camp for the first time. I was not quite 2 years old. And I don't think there has been a year since that I haven't set foot on Gravatt property for one reason or another. I served on summer camp staff from 1972 - 1977 as a CIT, counselor, Arts and Crafts Director, and



I was lucky enough to serve on summer camp staff again in 2001 as the Lay Chaplain. That summer proved to be what I already knew we are doing something really right down

here. Because I saw

my campers during

people that had been

the 1970's who were now parents and bringing their kids to camp. We all have created a legacy that crosses generations. Let's keep that legacy alive at this very special place that we call Gravatt.

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# Gravatt Alumni, Your stories, Your impact

There are a multitude of ways to support Gravatt whether you are a new summer staff alumni or worked on staff decades ago. You may live far or near, there is always a way to get involved and support Gravatt.

Below are a few testimonials from two of our generous supporters.

To learn more about ways you can support Gravatt, contact Wendi Spratt at <a href="wendi@campgravatt.org">wendi@campgravatt.org</a>

### Volunteer Impact

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Gravatt. Whether new friends of Gravatt or those with several decades connection to Gravatt, they all help Gravatt tremendously.

Nurse Anna at Junior High 2 Camper Check-In with Molly Mazoue

Volunteers help in advisory roles for facility projects, helping prepare and serve meals for our community outreach events, serving as a host for our year-round conference groups, Volunteer Sundays, and there are a multitude of ways volunteers can assist Gravatt.

Anna Sturm reconnected with Camp Gravatt this past summer as the Junior High Two camp nurse

Anna Sturm, a physician's assistant - PA-C Trauma and Acute Care Surgery, in the Seattle area and a former camper and permanent staff member, returned to Gravatt after 30 years. Anna and her son

Owen traveled from Washington state so he could attend Junior High 2 as a first time camper while Anna generously donated her skills to serve as the camp nurse for 10 days. Caring for 250+ campers and staff during an exceptionally hot week made for a very busy week.

Anna said, "Gravatt taught me about service to others. I spent my summers here as a young adult working in the service of others, came to love it, and chose it as my life's work. When I decided to return to Gravatt, I wanted to do so in the spirit of service. Using my talents to minister to campers and staff as a volunteer was a gift to Gravatt, but also a gift to my soul."

Want to learn more about ways you can volunteer with Gravatt? Want to schedule a group work day? Please contact <a href="mailto:scott@campgravatt.org">scott@campgravatt.org</a>



Sam Robinson, Gravatt Summer Staff alumni

## Giving back

"In my mind there is no better cause to contribute to. I don't think there is a dollar amount I could donate that would equate to the personal value I've been given from Gravatt."

From the early 2000s through 2020, Sam spent his summers under the pine trees of Camp Gravatt. After many years as a camper, Sam served

on staff in multiple roles including counselor, environmental educator, and assistant camp director. As someone who has always had an affinity for the outdoors, Gravatt served as a vital space for Sam to explore nature while making lifelong friendships. As the environmental educator, he strove to use Gravatt's native biodiversity to highlight the importance of conservation and sustainability. Sam is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Natural Resources where his research focuses on how habitat restoration affects reptile and amphibian populations. After years of studying how rare species need healthy ecosystems, he has come to realize that people, just like wildlife, need environments such as Gravatt to provide us community and faith.

## additions

### Ireland Room (Cole Lodge) Deck (below)

Here at Gravatt we provide places to gather. The Advent Mission Team from the Episcopal Church of the Advent, Spartanburg created a brand new spot! This team constructed a deck behind the Ireland Room in Cole Lodge which is a wonderful outdoor space to relax, meet, read, or catch up with old friends.

We are grateful this hard working group has chosen Gravatt as their mission.





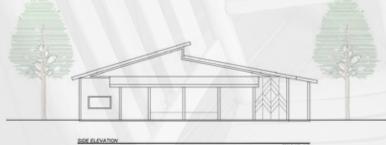
The Advent Mission Team from the Episcopal Church of the Advent, Spartanburg

## additions

### New Camp Pavilion

It has been more than 20 years since Gravatt has undertaken a project the scale of the camp pavilion. During that time, much has changed with the design, bidding and permitting process which has led to a longer timeline for this project than originally planned. Having expanded the current camp pavilion twice, the picture below shows how full the space can get during camp session. Because the pavilion also serves as an emergency shelter during Gravatt's summer camp sessions and the primary gathering space for evening activities requiring lighting and electricity, construction timing is critical to ensure the project is complete for the start of the new camp session. In some cases original plans need to be adapted to accommodate larger infrastructure requirements. The new pavilion will also provide additional space for year-round groups, a camp mailroom, restrooms, and a much needed Gravatt store.

Thank you to the generous architect services of Clint Burdett of B Design for the new pavilion concept and plans. The general contractor will be announced very soon and donor opportunities will be unveiled. To learn more about how to support the new camp pavilion, contact Wendi Spratt at <a href="wendi@campgravatt.org">wendi@campgravatt.org</a> or 803.586.1004.



E ELEVATION SOLE I

Architectural drawings by B Design LLC, Irmo, SC





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# Annual Giving

These are exciting times in the pines at Gravatt. We are in a time of transformation, expansion of programmatic offerings, and serving more campers and conference guests than ever before. This growth would not be possible without your support - all gifts, no matter their size or source, collectively, are positively impacting Gravatt. Examples of your reach include the campers served through scholarships, new elements added to our challenge and high ropes course, and additional amenities offered on our conference side.



## Scholarship Support

Donations made to the annual fund support the Westmoreland Scholarship Fund with the goal of bringing the opportunity of camp to as many youth as possible.



## Scheduled Giving

Creating and maintaining a personal giving plan is a vital way to support the mission of Gravatt. Our automatic monthly, quarterly, and annual donors provide critical resources for programs, specials projects, and general operation. Consider joining the ranks of our sustaining Gravatt supporters by choosing to give automatically through bank draft, credit card, or echeck. Scheduled donations are an easy way to make a big impact on Gravatt.



## Leaving a Legacy

This type of giving does not need to be complex and people do not need to have a lot of wealth to make a planned gift, or also referred to as, legacy gift. It provides a way for people to be remembered and leaves a legacy of goodwill, service, and sustainability for places such as Gravatt Camp and Conference Center and other organizations or causes that may have positively impacted them or their loved ones. By making a planned gift, you are likely able to give a larger gift than during your lifetime and there is also the potential for Gravatt to apply financial planning investment strategies with your donation.

### Planned Giving

Whether you are creating your first will or making changes to a current estate plan, working with a professional ensures your will or trust legally provides for your beneficiaries in the manner you direct. Communicating with Gravatt staff to let them know your intentions to support Gravatt can ensure your gift is applied based on your wishes and creates the biggest impact from your support. Gravatt Camp and Conference Center can work with you to ensure your donations will be fulfilled while strategically benefiting Gravatt to achieve your long-term philanthropic goals. Gravatt Camp and Conference Center is a nonprofit, tax exempt charitable organization (tax identification number 57-1115861 under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

### SUPPORT GRAVATT

Requests for information or questions may be directed to Wendi Spratt,
Development Director at wendi@
campgravatt.org or 803.586.1004.





### **GRAVATT CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER**

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