

NATIONAL PROGRAMS

Expansion Efforts Gain Momentum Under New Leadership



Sam loved his weekend at Jill's House Lake Arrowhead. His confident smile says it all.

When we opened our doors in 2010, no one could have guessed that we'd reach full capacity by 2012. If we've learned anything in the past five years, it's that overnight respite is a great solution to some of the greatest needs of families raising children with disabilities.

By God's grace, we've served over 500 families and provided nearly 500,000 hours of respite. But there's still so much work to be done. It's estimated that there are 2.8 million families in the U.S. raising two or more children with a disability. These families need rest, and we're committed to give it to them through Jill's House Weekend Adventures (formerly known as Oxygen 3).

The program is similar to the weekend respite program at Jill's House. Parents still get two nights of respite, but, instead of staying at Jill's House, their children stay in cabins at rented Christian camps. Jill's House guests enjoy traditional outdoor activities, like a high ropes course, archery and canoeing, and their parents get the break they need. The weekend is organized and supervised by Jill's House staff with the support of a local volunteer team.

These programs are not just effective. They're also portable and cost-effective. We currently offer Jill's House Weekend Adventures in Virginia, Maryland, Texas, California and Indiana and are constantly working to expand the program, so that every family in America raising a child with a disability will have respite within reach.

Toby Rowe, a new addition to the Jill's House team, is steering this nationwide movement. In each location, he works with churches, childcare providers and supporters to provide weekend respite to families in their area. "This is one of the best parts of my job," said Toby. "I get to connect a variety of people and then watch them accomplish something as a team they could never imagine doing on their own."

Toby also leads the effort to bring Jill's House programs to new locations. His goal is to establish Weekend Adventures within driving distance of every family raising a child with special needs. "In a God-honoring way, I want Jill's House to become a household name for families in the disability community," said Toby.



Toby Rowe, our Vice President of National Programs.

Before he came to Jill's House, Toby worked for an organization called Group Mission Trip, for which he helped plan hundreds of mission trips for church groups across the country. Before that, he was a youth pastor for 15 years. We are incredibly grateful for Toby and for the experience and vision he brings to our National Programs.

Toby grew up outside Philadelphia and now lives in Colorado with his wife, Pam. They have four kids, and when Toby isn't working, he loves spending time with his family. "My kids are my favorite people to hang out with, and I'm not just saying that because I'm a parent. From soccer tournaments to orthodontist appointments, it's just fun being together."

What can you expect from Toby and his team this year? They will launch Weekend Adventures in new locations and train local staff and volunteer teams to provide excellent care to children with special needs. And, of course, they'll continue to provide Weekend Adventures for the incredible kids and loving families we serve.

"2015 is going to be a great year for National Programs," said Toby. "I'm thrilled and thankful for this opportunity to serve our families and their very special children."

For more information about Jill's House Weekend Adventures, visit jillshouse.org/weekendadventures or email toby.rowe@jillshouse.org.