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## History and Vision: Letter from the Founders

For several years, our family and friends hosted a one-day adventure camp for critically ill children and their families at our Mt. Gilead, Ohio, farm. The kids went swimming, fishing, boating and horseback riding, and for just one magical day, they traded the stresses of their diseases for laughter, hope and ordinary childhood fun.

We watched in amazement as their spirits soared with the joy of just being kids. When the one-day events had concluded, we realized that we missed hosting this fantastic day for the kids as much as they missed the down on the farm fun. We looked at the 167 acres next to our farm and realized we could create a special place for medically challenged youth to experience the fun of summer camp.

So, we embarked on an adventure to discover a model of the best possible camp for children with life-threatening illnesses. We came upon the Hole in the Wall Camps, started by the actor Paul Newman, and learned that they are the world's largest family of camps for children with such diseases as cancer, HIV/AIDS, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, kidney disease, heart disease, and a host of other serious illnesses.

We visited many Hole in the Wall Camps and found it truly amazing to see such sights as wheelchair-bound children lifted up onto ropes courses. Witnessing their happiness and joy was truly life changing for us, and it became the driving force behind this ambitious project. Flying Horse Farms, inspired by and modeled after Newman's impressive camps, will be up and running in 2010. We are working with the Association of Hole in the Wall Camps to become the Midwest's first Hole in the Wall Camp.

We are proud to be partnering with all of the Children's Hospitals across Ohio, who will help provide medical staff for the camp, as well as refer to us many of the more than 34,000 children who face serious illnesses. We are equally fortunate to have a board of directors made up of several community-minded members who have joined us in launching this project. Our inaugural board is comprised of passionate, committed individuals who share our dream of making Flying Horse Farms a reality for thousands of sick children and their families. Surely, all of us believe that childhood, especially during the summer, should be a carefree time. Yet for children who are critically ill, the whole year, every year, brings suffering and extraordinary tests of courage and strength.



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We hope that this project can not only bring respite to these children and their families, but also touch the lives of the individuals, volunteers, corporations and staff who will join us in giving the gift of hope, love and laughter. We can only imagine the possibilities.

Sincerely,

*Jenni & David*

Jenni & David Belford, Founders