

Bar-T Mountainside

Joe and Nancy Richardson are the owners of Bar-T a large children's programs provider that serves Montgomery and Frederick Counties in Maryland. Thomas Edward Barton founded the Bar-T Ranch summer camp in 1961, in 1984 Joe and Nancy purchased the camp and 2010 marked the 50 year of bringing joy to children. Over the years the programming and activities have adapted and improved with the help and influence of ACA. In 1988 bar-T opened it's first school based after school program in Goshen Elementary School in Gaithersburg and now operates programs in 28 schools serving 1700 children.



Five years ago Bar-T opened it's largest summer camp location in Urbana, Maryland called Mountainside. Mountainside is 115 acres of pure fun and natural beauty complete with high and low ropes courses, swimming pool, sports fields, street hockey and basketball courts, all nestled on working farmland. This picturesque farm with mature forest and 10 acres of wetlands presented the Richardson's with more than a place to run a summer camp, it is ideally suited to maintain and teach environmental stewardship.



Since then Bar-T has partnered with a number of local, state and national organizations to secure grant funds and services to further the environmental efforts at Mountainside. To date they have partnered with such organizations as the United States Department of Agriculture, The Maryland Farm Services Agency, The Maryland Department of Public Works, The EPA, The Monocacy Catoclin Watershed Alliance, Maryland Energy Administration, Ducks Unlimited, and The Potomac Conservancy. Through these partnerships they have received a number of grants exceeding \$400,000

and established numerous significant environmental projects onsite. These projects include a ten kilowatt wind turbine, a ten kilowatt solar array, wetlands conservation area, amphibian breeding project composting toilets, rain gardens and a 4000 tree riparian buffer to help decrease erosion.

In just the past 2 years Bar-T Mountainside has emerged as a champion off Environmental Stewardship and renewable energy in the Washington DC metropolitan area having been nominated for an ECO award by SmartCEO magazine.



What is most notable, is that the majority of the grants have been written by our partners with minimal expense to Bar-T. These organizations are looking for credible land owners to supply grant money for environmental projects. Summer camps and ACA accredited camps in particular provide the perfect setting for these projects.

Anyone would think that these are very ambitious projects but for Bar-T and the Richardson's it's only the beginning.

Ask someone what they think a living building is and they may describe something out of a horror movie that eats the neighbor's car. Ask Joe Richardson, and as a smile crosses his face, he will give you a very different answer. Within the next 2 years we will construct one of the most advanced, self-sustainable buildings in the country. Far beyond Platinum Leed Certification, The Living Building Challenge truly needs to become how buildings are designed and constructed in the future. Complete with a greenhouse, the building will purify water, powered completely by energy produced on site, harvest the wind the rain the sun become a haven for children, adults and the elderly and compost virtually all the waste it produces. In many respects this cutting edge technology will take us back to a time when buildings were built to function in harmony with nature.

Going Green has been a much discussed topic in the past few years but little has been done on the local level. It has become an over used phrase with little meaning. If you see a wind turbine or solar array in a book it is a very different experience then seeing it in person. You have to see it, touch it, smell it and taste it...that is the best way to learn! When you combine renewable technology with the natural setting that Mountainside features you have something truly special. Nothing beats seeing kids looking for salamanders in the wetlands area, or to see firsthand how a windmill works, because it's not virtual reality, it's reality!



The living building is our next giant leap in showing kids, adults and the camp industry what is possible with environmental technology and architecture.

~Joe Richardson