

# Calvary Cares, Alton Middle School to finish new outdoor classroom

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*“Class(room) In Session...Even On Saturday”*

Nails will be flying, decking and shingles installed, and fresh mulch flooring wheel barrowed in place as volunteers from Calvary Cares – Outreach Arm of Calvary Baptist Church, Alton Middle School Faculty, the community at-large, and students all converge to finish the new outdoor classroom building being constructed this Saturday (August 6) between 9:00 a.m. and Noon at Rock Spring Park.

According to Chaplain Marc Lane, Calvary Cares coordinator, “It has been all I could do to hold back my tears until Saturday.” Lane added, “Everyone has been so excited to see this project finished, and to know that it will be done in time for use by the Middle School students and faculty this fall is just awesome.” Sig Utgaard, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher remarked, “My colleagues and I have just been amazed at the generosity of the Calvary Cares program and our community.” He continued, “Something like this outdoor classroom was on our ‘bucket list’, but we never realized that it would actually become a reality...and so quickly!”

Support posts, concrete stabilizing, and roof trusses have been in place at the project for a couple of weeks due to concerns about weather. Chaplain Marc said, “We just wanted to make sure that the project could be completed this Saturday as we had planned.” He added, “We didn’t want rain to throw us off our schedule...and we were fortunate that we got the structure up when we did.” Greg Gelzinnis, Rock Spring 2020 Chairman, remarked, “Our hats are off to the Calvary Cares program for catching this vision with us and we are so very hopeful that other churches and members of the Faith Community will join us in the revitalization efforts of the park.” He added, “Rock Spring has so much potential and with the momentum that has been generated by the waterfall, new sidewalks, brush clean-up, new ball diamond, Vintage Base Ball Team, and the recently announced new home of the Pietown Gospel Music Festival, there are many opportunities for people to get involved.”

Members of the community that would like to help with the finishing touches on the Outdoor Classroom may show up ready to work at Rock Spring Park this Saturday at 9:00 a.m. Everyone will meet at the Tennis Court Parking Lot near the main entrance. Please dress appropriately for working with brush and construction materials. Light hand tools will be provided.

In the shadow of the outdoor classroom, another community collaboration project (and Illinois American Water Grant recipient) is also nearing completion – the Bio Swale. This project featured volunteer work by the Lewis & Clark Community College Restorative Ecology Department, Youth Build, & the Sierra Club. Utgaard mentioned, “Our plan within the grant is to add a butterfly garden and additional traditional plants within the Bio Swale zone.”

Anyone wishing to join in on the efforts of Rock Spring 2020 are invited to join them at one of their regularly scheduled meetings – the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Main Street UMC; 1400 Main Street; Alton, IL 62002.