

# Highlight on Business

## Paradise in the Sky

Neatly tucked away on a scenic hill just west of Mount Vernon is a unique getaway, which is one of the best-kept secrets in the area, geared toward providing outdoor activities to empower and motivate challenged youth. It also provides a day-camp outing for groups and families. Affordable, educational activities in a safe, clean and inviting environment opens opportunities where youth of all diversities and challenges learn and practice leadership skills and focus on ethical decision making. Through creative day-camp programs at Paradise In the Sky, Youth Motivational Services Inc., youth can unlock their potential for future success.

Operated by Rich Stephens and Paula Kyle Stephens, Paradise In the Sky is located in Mount Vernon, and became a 501(c)3 organization in June 2013. Rolling hills and beautiful wooded areas with hiking and quad-runner trails provide the perfect picturesque setting year-round for visitors.

Author and keynote speaker Paula still travels as a speaker/trainer for the foster care and adoption systems and wanted to continue to provide a place to help children in challenged situations.

"Bringing the youth and families to me here at Paradise is an amazing experience and a wonderful balance for me where it is a natural and healthy setting," said Paula. "This is for everybody. We started out with challenged youth. And then it went to youth groups and families, and then it went to youth, families and groups of all kinds."

Numerous activities are offered for building social skills as well as fun games for down time. Various groups and troops

come to Paradise In the Sky for educational, outdoor class sessions around a campfire or in a horse corral. Lessons are taught on horseback riding, and safety measures when riding or working with horses.

There are opportunities for riding the resident horses on the grounds, and participants are given copies of photos of their time spent with the horses as keepsakes. Paula is working on acquiring funds to purchase an equine team of four horses to have available for group rides through the wooded area. Proceeds from the photo donations will go toward purchase of the horses.

Groups from the Escape Zone periodically schedule outings at Paradise In the Sky for a time of positive, motivational sessions with the horses and staff. Other groups visiting have been Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Wounded Warriors, Knox Learning Center and others. It's also been a popular destination for family outings, class reunions and couples retreats.

A rustic-style cabin is located near the front entrance where group classes take place. Couples retreats also take place here. Visitors can relax on the large cabin deck and enjoy the pristine view of the grounds and nearby pond. Outdoor camping will also be opening this year. Groups can also rent the cabin for staff retreats.

A 14-foot-deep fishing pond near the cabin allows the opportunity to test your angling skills. Visitors will have the chance to catch one of the catfish stocked in this spring-fed pond.

While many local groups have taken advantage of offerings at Paradise In the Sky, visitors have come from all over Ohio — and

even as far away as Canada. Being a non-profit organization, donations are taken for outings at Paradise In the Sky, and all proceeds go back to maintaining and improving the facilities and programs.

Local residents Matt Starr and Aaron Moreland have written a screenplay for a movie about Paula and her experience, including her time as a motivational speaker, and have brought Paradise In the Sky into the movie.

"It's a retreat. It's for people who don't have the means or the ways of bonding, whether it's a family or it's teaching kids social skills," said Paula. "It's a camaraderie builder."

For more information, call 740-501-1193 or go to [www.paradiseinthesky9580.com](http://www.paradiseinthesky9580.com)

*Paradise  
in the Sky*

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