

CAMP DAVID

Community

Leave it Behind

Helping children grieve

One of God's Secret Places

How a family found
healing at
Camp David



Connections

Providing transportation for Camp David campers and students



Compassion

Teaching children ways to deal with grief and helping them let go



Collaborating

Learn 5 ways Camp David is collaborating to give hope!

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Did you know?



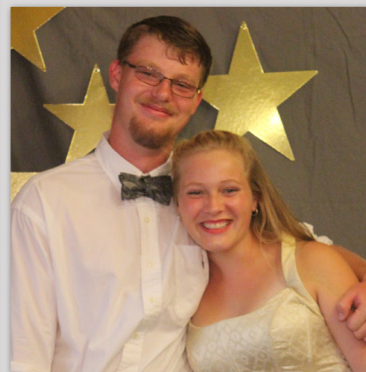
Mentors and students
bake together during our
after-school program! The
students are proud to
share with their families!



Staff appreciate the riding
lawn mower so much they
named it "Rico"- they are
so glad they don't have to
push mow the big field!



Kids LOVE to swing on our
hammocks and do tricks!!



Many sibling groups serve
on our summer camp team-
including Gus & Della!



Every week during summer
camp we have a talent
show, and boy these kids
got talent!!! From singing
to skits to gymnastics!



Our full time team visits
campers in their homes
during the winter months!

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Do you love your neighbor?

Thoughts from
Camp Director Ben Smith

Visit his blog:
campfiretalks.wordpress.com



A young girl in pigtails shyly walks up to a counselor sitting in a circle of chairs. She pauses and then sheepishly asks, "Do you love your neighbor?" "Yes," the counselor pauses, winks, and then hisses out "but I don't love people who are afraid of snakes!!!" The room erupts with squeals of laughter as everyone who is afraid of snakes jumps from their chairs and runs to find another seat. In the commotion the girl in pigtails sits down in a chair just before a counselor reaches it. Everyone is laughing. With all the seats taken, the counselor who is standing in the middle approaches another camper and asks, "Do you love your neighbor?"

"Do you love your neighbor?" is a favorite inside game for campers and staff. But it is also one of the most important questions in life. One day a Lawyer who knew the law's command to "love your neighbor as yourself" was looking for a loop hole. Looking at the command, he quickly determined that he wasn't going to stop loving himself and he couldn't water down the meaning of love. This left just one more phrase: "your neighbor."

So he asks Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" I can only imagine his reasoning. If Jesus says his neighbor was the guy he disliked next door he could simply move. If it was his church congregation he could change churches. He never did like Brother Cain.

Jesus proceeded to tell one of my favorite stories, the story of the Good Samaritan. In the story, a man is mugged and left for dead on a road between Jerusalem and Jericho. He is seen bleeding beside the road by his own priest

and deacon at different times. Both walk on by. Possibly because they feared it would affect their jobs, make them late, or defile them. Or maybe they were afraid they would get robbed too. The fact still remains that they left him there for someone else to care for, or to die.

Then along comes this guy from out of town, of a different religion, ethnicity, and political persuasion, and he looks at him; has compassion on him, and cares for him. He has every excuse in the book at his disposal and they don't even cross his mind. Moved with compassion and sparing no expense to his time and resources, he didn't just give the man money or food. He owned the man's recovery. The Samaritan saved the man's life.

Then Jesus asks the Lawyer, "Who do you think was the neighbor?" The Lawyer replies, "The one who had compassion." All hopes for a loophole are gone. Then Jesus commands him - but not just him, all of us, "Go and do likewise."

Here at Camp David we are blessed to see many people moved with compassion for children of prisoners and their families. In less than a week, college students, retirees, moms, and a pastor will be coming here to camp to be part of the Front Porch after-school program.

For others, the compassion comes out in sponsoring prisoners' families for our weekend retreats, volunteering to lay block for the new shower house, or mentoring children of prisoners. Like the Samaritan, they are going out of their way to be a "neighbor." In this issue we invite you to be moved with compassion for your neighbor.



God's work close to home

Special Projects Connection by: Irene and Myrlen Troutt

Camp David of the Ozarks is a ministry that treasures kids who might otherwise be overlooked or forgotten. Each summer, they have an incredible outreach to the children of men and women who are in prison. Camp David reminds us all to notice and love those that God holds close.

We were touched by that challenge in a personal way when we were asked to drive to St. Robert, a town 40 minutes away, to pick up a child who would attend a week at Camp David. We didn't have a lot of information to help us in our assignment—just the name of the camper and her mother, along with the mom's telephone number. We asked some questions and found out the color of the car they would be driving.

Logistics began to fray when it wasn't the mother who brought the child, but rather the step-father! We had parked our car, walked around the designated parking lot for a while and waited about thirty minutes before calling the camp office. Soon after, a tall military man with a teenage girl approached, but we still couldn't spot one another! It was a funny situation, but at the time seemed frustrating, especially to the girl's step-father.

That incident sparked a change we made to make the process of picking up campers a little more organized. I would call each family on Sunday afternoon to clarify the meeting time, place, parking lot, vehicle and contact person. This made meeting families much more pleasant! Returning children at the end of camp was easy—the

Special Projects Connection



camper could spot their family's car as we arrived at the appointed place.

We became even more involved when we were asked to help on more trips and line up additional drivers. Many from our church, Greentree Christian Church, were enthusiastic to help in this way! We have had around 14 drivers/riders from Greentree, and we are grateful for their service! Our hope is to continue supplying drivers willing to drive for one week (actually two days) picking up children and taking them to camp, and then returning them to their parent at the week's end.

Last year, I came up with an idea to take a sign to make it even easier to identify Camp David's drivers when meeting parents and children for the first time. Our friend, Gary Holcomb, had the signs made up quickly. He has been a big help in making arrangements. In addition to overseeing what I have described, he arranged for large vans and buses to make trips to St. Louis to pick up several children each week. Salem Avenue

Baptist Church has also been very helpful.

Would you consider whether or not God is calling you to this ministry? The camp rule is that besides the driver, there must be an additional adult to ride along. The pick-up points are St. Robert, Lebanon, Jefferson City, and Rolla.

We look forward to helping again this summer and thank God for Camp David. Their ministry is changing the lives of boys and girls who may not be regularly exposed to Jesus' teachings. May God bless America and the work that He gives us to do right close to home!




ABOVE

We are so grateful for the 34 volunteers and 4 churches who provided transportation in summer 2015!

DO YOU DRIVE?

Drivers are needed during summer camp, spring and fall sessions of our after-school program, and for our Family Retreats. Please contact Gary Holcomb if you or your church can help: 573-378-6043



On January 17, 2016, 14 year old Jamyah Luss died after being shot in the back by a fourteen year old boy who had stopped in at her friend's house in St. Louis. Jamyah was a Camp David camper in 2013, and was a close friend to one of our campers who served on staff last summer. Jamyah is survived by her two brothers, also campers, and her grandmother who is raising them because both their parents are in prison.

Many of our campers have experienced loss. Michael struggles with a fear of powerlessness. It made a lot of sense when we learned that his dad was shot to death and left in a drainage ditch. Dakota misses his "Cookie Grandma"; as a young boy he just stopped seeing her; when he asked why, the adults in his life lied. It wasn't until several months later that he learned that she had died. He missed her funeral. Emily and her twin sister were separated when she was young. Her sister died in a house fire.

Leave it behind

by: Director Ben Smith

This summer I was teaching a class with five boys, ages 10-12. We were talking about different life challenges. One of the boys spoke up, "My uncle was killed in a hit and run this year." I asked the others if they had ever lost a family member. It was a somber moment as one by one they spoke up. Three of the five boys had lost a loved one to violence.

Others are abused, scared, and broken. One week this summer by the fire circle, another camper shared his story of being abused by his father. At home, when he first got the courage to tell, no one believed him. Then he was rejected. Camp was the first place he was able to talk about it with ordinary people and feel understood.

Three years ago, after sitting for several minutes beside still another young boy who was crying for a lost family member, I realized that we needed to somehow acknowledge our campers' pain and loss. After some thought and prayer, we were blessed with two creative ideas.

Every Friday we take our campers down a path to our memorial garden.

At first they are all pretty talkative and light. We hand out small pieces of paper. Then we talk about painful experiences in life and how at some point we need to forgive and let it go. It isn't that we don't talk about it again. But that we let go of the anger, resentment, and pain. The hurt no longer defines who we are. We don't carry it any more.

Then I explain that the pieces of paper are for them to write out a painful memory that they would like to forgive and leave behind. I explain how we are going to place all the notes in a hole in the ground, bury them, and place a stone on top. One camper wanted to write something, but feeling afraid, she asked Mama Rose, "Is anyone going to dig these up and read them?" After being assured that we don't do that, she quickly went to writing.

After the memories are laid to rest, we circle up and I lead a prayer. We give all the hurts and pain to God who is both loving and just. In forgiving those who have hurt us, we ask God to restore joy for their sorrow and healing for their pain.

Next I talk about grief and how many have lost loved ones. I explain how we would like to allow them to set a rock on our Memorial rock wall in honor of their loved ones that have passed away. After they have set a rock they write the name of their loved one in our Memorial Book.

I can still remember the first week we did this; a sixteen year boy had seven names to write in the book. Afterward he sat and cried long after everyone left. He later told me that most of them were friends or acquaintances that had died in gang violence. He was grateful for those who had sat with him while he cried. He wasn't alone in his grief.

*"He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."
Revelation 21:4*



At the end of this time we circle up, and some of the kids say who they put a rock down for, and what they meant to them. Then I talk to them about it being alright to cry when we lose someone we love and how our grief gives value to their lives.

We pray and thank God for the part their loved ones played in their lives and ask him to heal the hurt. I also ask God to help each of us be a blessing to others just as their loved ones have been to them. For some of our campers, this was the first kind of closure they were able to have because they weren't able to go to their loved one's funeral.

Watching the campers leave, I see some with tear streaked faces hugging their counselors; others are holding hands and swinging their arms, and a few ride on shoulders or backs. No one is alone. They have a lighter step having left their pain behind. **This is a foretaste of heaven when God will wipe every tear from our eyes.**

SHATTERED



"When my husband was incarcerated I wasn't broken. You can fix broken. I was shattered." This is the statement of a prisoner's wife, years after her husband was incarcerated. Many of our Camp David moms would nod in agreement. Incarceration rocks a women's world to the core.

In one fell blow she may lose her income provider, handy man, confidant, and best friend. The family may also lose their social standing, their residence, schools, family support system and dreams for the future. To top it all off their hero has been declared a "villain". The loss is staggering.

In a last ditch effort to protect what remains, the incarceration becomes the family secret as each member suffers alone- too afraid to talk. But the pain is still there. Suppressed, it may come out in anger and depression, or isolation and unhealthy coping skills.

This is the story of many of our camper's families. So how do we fix shattered? We don't and we can't. But I firmly believe that God can and does. I say this because I have seen it happen again and again in our Camp David families' lives.

They come shattered and broken. For many, camp is the first place they have felt safe to share their pain. For the first time, a freckled boy felt safe to tell friends the story of his abusive father, letting the secret out and knowing that his new friends cared. In a circle of chairs and sofas, a mother released her bottled

up pain in sobs as her new found friends (with similar stories) held her hand and listened with tear streaked faces.

At camp we talk about the loss and grieve. We talk about forgiveness and a God who loves them and who still has a purpose for their lives. Over time, many of them come to faith in God. Then something amazing happens. They begin reaching out and helping others.

When our Camp David families begin to serve others, their joy multiplies. From helping to host Family Retreats, to helping in the kitchen, to managing stations for our Christmas Open House- these women are moving past their shattered dreams and are shining. Last summer twenty former campers served on staff and got their hands dirty washing dishes, but they did it with a smile. In December of 2015, three of our Camp David families hosted Angel Tree Christmas parties at their churches and helped give Christmas gifts to over 200 children on behalf of their parent in prison.

On February 11, 2016 three of our Camp David moms joined the Board of Directors for Camp David of the Ozarks. We are pleased to have them on the board because of their heart for the mission of the Camp David ministry and because of what they have already done for families of prisoners.

God is taking the pieces of our shattered lives and creating a beautiful stained glass window.

How BIG is the problem?
The Sentencing Project states: *10 million children have experienced parental incarceration. That is a lot children from a lot of American families.*





*One of God's
secret places*

One of God's Secret Places

by: Mercedes Rhodes, Camp David Board Member

CAMP DAVID
FAMILY

I am a registered nurse. My husband was a fireman. We will be married 12 years this year. We have two beautiful daughters that we love dearly. Our life sounded pretty great on paper...before his incarceration two years ago. We were both young adults building a family. We had a plan for our lives; once he became Captain, I was going to go back to school. Then this happened.



I remember it like yesterday. I remember being in the court room and hearing the sentence as my heart sank. I got sick to my stomach and remember running to the bathroom crying to God and asking Him, "What I was going to tell my girls? What was I supposed to do?" My husband wasn't coming home. Their dad wasn't coming home. The questions keep coming. "What about my house bills? What am I going to tell people?" Looking in the mirror (as I tried hard to stop the tears) I kept asking God, "What am I supposed to do?" In my spirit I felt God's presence telling me to STAND. So I finally mustered up some strength to go out and face my pastor and some family members, and to go home.

Going home that day was the hardest thing for me because I had to face my children. I had to tell them that the man that they adored and loved was not coming home. I was so hurt and upset because I know what it feels like to have a dad incarcerated, and now here I am 28 years later having the same conversation with my oldest daughter. We had a conversation about jail before I told her the news. I was surprised at how much she knew about incarceration. After our long talk about jail, I ended with, "What if I told you that your dad was in jail?" She looked at me with this puzzled look. There was about 30 seconds of silence that felt like an eternity, and then she said, "Well Mom, God forgives us of our sins so we must forgive dad. When can I see him?" Wow! I fought back the tears and thought, "That was such a mature answer for an eight year old!" From that moment, I knew I had to do everything

that I could to make my family work.

As time went on, people started finding out about our situation. More losses occurred. We now grieved not just over a broken home, but we were now grieving over being outcast-ed, losing friends and family relationships. It was a mess. My oldest daughter began to shut down. I recognized that withdrawn, sad spirit that internalized everything. She went from happy to sad to mad all in a matter of minutes and she couldn't explain it. When I would try to talk with her and comfort her, she would shut down. Little did she know that I knew exactly how she felt because I was her once. She was a happy kid before this, and now she was hurting, and I couldn't fix it. I was so sad too. I started looking up resources for help in this situation and I found nothing in my area.

With a broken heart and a broken spirit I kept trusting God and believing that he was going to make a way for us to go through this. I then received a letter from Camp David of the Ozarks inviting my daughter to a week of camp. I started to pray and do research about it. I asked our family counselor about her going, and he highly recommended that she should go. This would be her first trip without either of her parents for that long period of time. I was so skeptical about letting her go, knowing all that she was going through. I wanted to be there to comfort her in case she had a breakdown. I wanted to just shield her and protect her from everything because she had already experienced enough. I prayed and asked God if I was doing the right thing and to settle my spirit. He did.

One of God's Secret Places

The day came for her to leave for camp. As we arrived at the pickup spot to take the campers to camp, we saw young girls running happily, embracing each other as if they couldn't wait to catch up. We got out of the car and stood quietly waiting for directions to load the bus. While waiting, we were greeted by another camper who had been to camp previously, and she greeted my daughter and said, "Is this your first time? If it is, don't worry; it is fun!" At that moment I knew it was God telling me that she was going to be ok.

Upon my daughter's return I saw a whole different child who was no longer withdrawn. It was pointed out by our family counselor that she now acknowledged that her dad was in prison. It was the first time in a year that she actually said the words "prison, jail and incarceration." It was a breakthrough for her. When she described camp she said, "Mom! It was like we were all instant best friends and family; we were all in this together. I felt safe to talk, and if I got sad I didn't have to say why because they understood. We understood each other."

Later I got a chance to experience Camp David for myself. I was invited to a Family Retreat, which I saw as another opportunity for my daughter to reconnect with friends since the first visit had made such an impact on her. When we arrived at the camp there was a large group of people cheering and welcoming us in with hugs and lots of love. My daughter ran off and fit right in with her friends from summer camp, but I had a wall up. Nobody had embraced me like that who knew what I was going through. There was such a sweet and loving spirit at the camp, but I didn't know how to trust.

The first night I struggled so hard trying to figure out why these people were so nice and loving towards us. I had been so used to being treated like a criminal based on my husband's situation. The next morning they pampered us with breakfast in bed, and then we went to a session together. During my journal time the Lord spoke to me and said, "You are at the right place at the right time.

Stop running." At that time I realized that I had been running and fighting on my own for two years, with no one who understood and no one to talk to. I could never let my guard down. I felt like I always had to defend our family, and through this I grew a thick skin. I forgot about me and my feelings. I never let anyone in close because of

the fear of them finding out and then going through the process of being judged again. I never talked about me and felt I couldn't be vulnerable at this time.

As I looked up from my journal and began to scan the room, tears came when I realized the Lord had sent me help. I was no longer by myself. All of these women were in the same boat as me. And as the tears began to flow I looked to my right, and there was Mama Rose (Assistant Director, Grace Smith) with a tissue and open arms. My experience at Camp David was me experiencing one of God's secret places. God had to take me out of the big city with all the noise and tuck me away at one of His safe houses to help heal the hurt. Psalms 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." My daughter was right - it really is a safe place that embraced us with love and compassion, like family.

Would you consider sponsoring a family for a Family Retreat?

Psalms 31:20
"In the secret place of Your presence You hide them from the plots and conspiracies of man. You keep them secretly in a shelter (pavilion) from the strife of tongues."



WHY WE SUPPORT CAMP DAVID



Here's the Holmes Family in 2012:

L-R: Rebecca, Amanda, Bob, Joanne, Sophia, Olivia, and Kevin Schmidt (Joanne's nephew)

"Get more bang for your buck!" That's exactly how we feel about the Camp David ministry. If you're looking for a Christian organization that knows how to stretch every penny it receives and that also makes an enormous impact on families, Camp David of the Ozarks is the place to donate!

Our family became involved in Camp David's ministry over seven years ago. We have served as Cooks, Handymen, Counselors, Aunties, Craft Assistants, Table Captains, Green Team members, Make-up artists, MC's, and Board Members. Literally, there is something at Camp David for everyone to contribute no matter your age or ability level. We have witnessed first-hand how our gifts of time and money have changed lives and have led many children to a deeper relationship with Christ Jesus and to a knowledge that they have value and worth.

God has not forgotten these prisoners' kids and their families and neither has Camp David. Camp David's campers no longer need gangs to feel that they belong. **Giving to Camp David makes a huge difference!"**

-Bob and Joanne Holmes-

JOIN THE
TEAM

As an international missionary and straight-A college student, Camp David of the Ozarks has become high on my list of life-changing experiences. I've compiled a list of why you should consider being a counselor at Camp David of the Ozarks!

First of all, there is a definite impact on you. As I talked to various counselors about their experiences, they all said that camp changed them.

For one, you learn conflict resolution and people skills, which help your career and relationships with those around you. You also build character and gain patience as you work with some difficult children. Furthermore, Camp David is a wonderful activity to have on a college or job resume.

In my own experience as I applied for jobs, I was recently asked if I could handle multiple weeks with low sleep, living in community with other people, and being responsible for those coming into my care. It was such a relief to be able to answer, with confidence, that I knew I could handle it because I lived that way

Life Changing

by: Victoria Bledsoe

Join our team this summer!
Fill out an application online:
campdavidozarks.org

during my summer at Camp David.

All this is aside from the spiritual impact you gain. Counselors are forced to depend on God for strength and patience, energy and sleep, in ways many of us have never encountered before. As you wrestle with questions from campers about God's love and other stories of the Bible, you are forced to answer these questions for yourself as well.

Camp David's mission is not only to develop leaders, but to also give love and hope to children of the incarcerated. These children are the ones we are there for and can directly impact as counselors. While there are benefits to being a counselor, I want to share why the time and stress commitment is completely worth it. **These kids need you.** Half of the children of incarcerated parents, according to a study done by Wheaton College in 2007, are under ten years old. One in five children of the incarcerated will be anxious or depressed, and one in three will be aggressive or disruptive. Camp David brings these kids hope. I talked to one former camper, who is now on staff, and he says

that without camp and his experience here, he probably wouldn't be alive today. I was told another story by a former counselor who loved seeing the long term change in kids year after year. There was a camper who in his first week of camp would often get upset about things, was often disobedient and very expressive in his anger and frustration. Later that week this camper was baptized, and the counselor could see a change in his heart, although some of the bad behavior still popped up. However, a few years later he stands out as one of the most responsible, friendly, and helpful campers.

By counseling these kids, you're helping to break the cycle of incarceration, bringing the children to their greatest potential, and enabling them to discover the love and glory of Christ our Lord.

If you are even slightly interested in becoming a counselor, I urge you to make contact and reach out to the people at Camp David. The little nudge you feel could be God pointing you to where He wants you to be for a season, just as it was for me a year ago.

John, a previous counselor and Counselor Coach, says he thinks he earned his job in the Navy with help from his experience at Camp David. It not only showed volunteerism (institutions love this), but the skills he developed at camp stood out as he interacted with people well and continued to be joyful.

Alumni counselor, Jerusha, shared an experience from her work in which a coworker asked her how she was remaining so positive in the midst of the chaos during her 12 hour overnight shift at the Neuro Trauma floor of a hospital. Her immediate thought was, "Eh, *this is nothing compared to camp!*" Camp had prepared her for the stress of her job, and for being responsible for other people.

Unearthing Character

The red barn at camp had just had an overhaul that morning, and the area surrounding it had been organized. But as Director Ben crunched along the gravel road past the building, he frowned. That pile of branches had been assigned to a 14 year old on staff, and he had left the task unfinished. While it was hard for me to pull the boy away from his free time, the lesson needed to be taught, and the work needed to be done. I was pleased how quickly he jumped up and finished the job. Goal complete!

That evening as I was walking past the front porch of Ft. Turley, this same young man approached me in tears and distraught. He shared with me that he felt like he was failing and couldn't figure out why. I would have liked to just encourage him and write it off as a tired emotion after a long day, but instead I asked questions and tried to help him process what was happening. Under the porch lights, swatting at pesky insects, we chatted about goals, follow-through, and commitment. He thought it through and decided that he needed to apply himself and finish things to the best of his ability before moving on or becoming distracted. He headed off to bed with great goals, but the week ended without having a lot of chance to practice.

A few weeks later, he returned as staff. Everything started normally, but I quickly realized this wasn't the same boy. He was thorough, motivated, and diligent! God had used those circumstances and goals to change him. He had truly become trustworthy and

excellent in his work.

Conflict is never easy and rarely simple. Yet working through conflict in a healthy way and maintaining respect and compassion for others are high priorities when you work as a team for long hours during summer camp. A certain staffer was really frustrated with someone in leadership above him, and as he was preparing to move on to another week of service, I decided to challenge him. I could tell

he was annoyed, and I felt that this would really hinder him serving well that next week. Offering to help him confront his "aggravator" was part of my challenge, but he politely declined and approached them alone. He respectfully and honestly discussed

the issue with the leader in question and was able to share his frustrations with them. What a step on the road to maturity to not only be able to do conflict well, but to be able to approach a boss and work through it! Now he is better equipped to handle future relationships with respect and compassion!

In my role as Staff Ministries Leader, I have the privilege of watching Christian community shape young leaders. As my wife and I intentionally take time to invest in these American teenagers who could be self-absorbed, they blow us away with their energy, willingness to learn, and desire to serve. I have no doubt whatsoever that they are ready to advance God's Kingdom and are willing to sacrifice to see it happen!



Josiah Faber
Staff Ministries Director



Making an Impact

At 8:15 my alarm goes off, and I roll out of bed. I have 15 minutes to get ready before my day is supposed to start. I walk out of my room and into the office, greeted by an enthusiastic "GOOD MORNING SUNSHINE!" from our secretary. Me not being a morning person, I just smile and nod. Starting my day, I realize I have been an intern for three months already. The thought shocks me; it's going by way too fast.

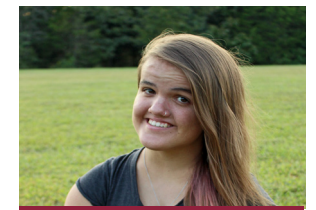
Every day something different is going on, and today is not a normal Friday! We have been planning and talking about this event for weeks. The excitement has built up! The director, Ben, comes in to say we are leaving at 2:30 pm. What are we doing you ask? It is the weekend that is filled with Angel Tree Christmas parties! As I help get things prepared for traveling to St. Louis, I look at the back of our camp van and see it filled with toys for the children! A smile comes to my face and a thought goes through my mind, "I get to be a part of bringing smiles to children's faces!" Ben, his daughter Esther and I pile into the van and head off. We chat about who might be there, what games we will play with the kids and who will be sharing the gospel with them. Being able to minister to kids again fills our hearts with such joy! After arriving at the church, we start unloading the gifts and setting up. Comments of "I can't wait for them to get here!" fill the air as we patiently wait for families to arrive.

Each family that shows up is welcomed with a big, "HI GUYS! IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU!" They smile at us and sign in. The kids run to the cookie table, and after grabbing their cookies they sit down at the table quietly. We ask them, "Who is ready for Christmas?" One little girl with small braids and cookie crumbs on her face can hardly sit in her chair as she raises her hand!

As we start the program I sit in the back of the group, watching everything. The kids

are seated watching some of the leaders act out the Christmas story. Watching and listening they didn't move, except for the little ones who had the wiggles. The leader mentioned that Jesus came and died for our sins and then asked them if they would like to ask Jesus to come into their hearts. Every single one of those hands flew up in the air without a second thought. Esther and I took a group of them to share the gospel. Their eyes filled with curiosity and amazement as they heard about what Jesus had done for us. We asked if they were ready to pray and they all nodded with eagerness! I listened, with tears in my eyes, as they accepted Christ in their hearts. As those small voices said, "Amen," I look up to see every one of those sweet kids with a smile across their face.

This is why I am an intern. This is why I chose to take a year of my life to serve at camp. This is a ministry that continues to help kids and share Jesus with them, even on the "off" season of camp. You get to witness kids coming to Christ and you will also have your life changed in ways you didn't think could happen. I highly recommend being an intern, no doubt about it!



Cybill Moore
IMPACT Intern



Behind the Lens



Faith Ruebke
Media Manager

These roles allowed me to have more interaction with the campers, which I truly appreciated.

But my favorite part of the week was Friday around noon, standing on stage with my wonderful photographers, handing out photo albums to each camper, and then standing back and watching them look over and enjoy all our hard work. Hearing their exclamations were music to our ears: "I didn't know they saw me make that shot!" "Hey look, it's me and my counselor together!" "Look how big that fish was I caught!" "I look beautiful in my dress!" "Wait till I show mom when I get home!" I also got to play with a green screen this summer, and I would put the edited photos into a slideshow for the campers to enjoy. It was such fun to hear the laughs and applause as campers and counselors

Summer, what a crazy, hectic time! If you're in camp ministry that is, which was the case for me this past summer of 2015. Media Manager was the title, photos and albums the game. Capturing over 200 campers' memories and adventures during their time at camp, collecting them all into an individual, personalized six page photo album for them to take home with them. Daunting? Yes! Impossible? Of course not!

Working in the Camp Office during the summer was a new experience for me, but nonetheless exciting and rewarding. As the Media Manager, I got the feeling of being the Camp's surveillance system, as well as the Camp's insurance up-holder on their Fun Policy. Did everyone get to ride a horse? Did everyone enjoy field games? Did everyone catch a fish or get their picture taken in their princess dress? I also learned campers' names and faces better than

anyone, so when I broke from work for meal times, chapel or activities I was involved in, I was able to greet each by name. For them and their identity, seeing that someone knows their name is huge! Even if they don't always recognize your name, they see your blue leadership shirt, and they feel safe and loved.

Our theme this past summer was, "Superheroes," and I got to play a few extra roles as Marvel's Black Widow for our Thursday adventure, as well as a ninja for skits! I also had the role of "Rascal Raccoon" who is responsible for making sure campers keep their housing clean. I enjoyed hearing campers guess who "Rascal" was (my identity was a secret until the last night!), and I loved getting notes from campers as "Rascal" whom they were trying to 'bribe' (and I loved them for it!).



watched each other fly through the air or overcome evil with good. As the slideshow ends with the last notes of the Mission Impossible theme song, my work for the week is accomplished.

This summer I learned just how many words a single picture is worth. I was also blessed to work with some truly gifted photographers; you've been enjoying their skills and artwork throughout this magazine. Without them, my job would've been truly impossible and not nearly as much fun!

Just Among Friends

When I was introduced to Camp David I had no idea of the way that it would impact our lives. I thought that it would be a program in which kids would do a couple of activities, be shuffled around for a few days and sent home. Thank God I was wrong!!! Camp David is so much more than summer camp...it has been a blessing in our lives. I watched my children go to camp and come home with a new found happiness and hope that had been lost when their father went to prison. He represented love, fun and happiness to them, and it was heartbreaking to watch that joy leave them when he left. It was even more heartbreaking to realize that I couldn't "kiss" away that pain.

Through Camp David, God blessed them with relationships and a platform on which they could talk about how THEY felt about what was going on. A much needed conversation was started, and they knew that all hope was not lost. They were reminded of the love of Christ, and this new experience was a testament of that love. God knew what they needed even when their mother did not, and God met those needs.

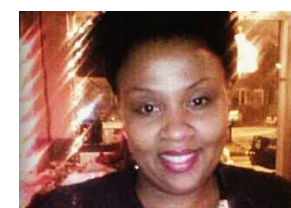
I thought that seeing my kids' healing process begin would be all I needed to begin my process. Again, God knew what was needed even when I did not.

I attended a Family Retreat at Camp David solely because I wanted to see the amazing place where my kids were going. I didn't go with the expectation that I would leave with anything special. I thought that I would hang out with my kids, pet some horses and that would be it. If

anything, this would be a bonding moment to share with my daughters because I was NOT going to allow strangers into my business. God's plan was different. I met some beautiful, amazing and strong women that weekend. We had the opportunity to laugh, cry and relax among friends. We were served breakfast in bed and made to feel special. At a time in my life when I felt the most alone, I found some people that could understand my journey. Being a self proclaimed "strong" woman, I had never given thought to the importance of being around people who understood this experience. I shed those feelings of guilt and shame that I'd been carrying around through this process, and I realized that this was something that I could use to make me stronger and not allow it to tear me down. I have never been a shy or quiet person, and finally, I wasn't shy or quiet about my partner being incarcerated.

When invited to serve as a Host

Mom at a Family Retreat, I jumped at the opportunity. I'd experienced, first hand, how something as simple as breakfast in bed could change your perspective on the intentions of people when they say they are there to help. I was honored to be a part of a team of people that, even without experiencing the pain of having a loved one incarcerated, possessed the desire to want to serve those that knew this heartache. As a Host Mom, I watched a group of women of different backgrounds and race who shared a common thread, experience something that they may or may not even have known they needed. Through prayer, understanding and love, I watched shame and guilt fall off women. I watched healing processes begin, and I saw hope found. Who knew that a meeting of "strangers" could be so powerful?



Tiffany Brown
CDO Board Member



The Dream Continues

Let me introduce myself: My name is Micah. I'm from the Springfield, Missouri area where my dad is the pastor of a small church. I grew up surrounded by many siblings, and have always loved working with children and young adults. In 2014, I came to Camp David as a Senior Boys counselor, and I quickly fell in love with the ministry here. A few months later I joined the team as an intern, and a year later, in 2015, I stepped into the role as Mentor Program Director.

The Mentoring Program has been around since 2011, and it was started with a dream of continuing to show Christ's love to our campers during the 51 weeks between camps. It has been a fight to make that dream a reality since. One obstacle is location as we have only been able to reach local families around Rolla. We have hardly had any traction in St. Louis where many of our campers live.

In spite of all these barriers, we are determined to do whatever it takes to overcome in this part of camp-- Why? Because we know each of our children could be just one caring adult away from being a success story. We know that each time we are able to match a mentor and mentee, God is using us to create an everlasting impact on everyone involved. We know that if we are committed to pushing through, we will see the fruit of deep, lasting relationships in the lives of families of prisoners!

My vision for the Mentor Program is to create an anchor point in St Louis in the next year, from which we can expand across the entire city. My goal is to have a mentor for every camper within 50 miles of camp, and to discover a few dedicated individuals who can be part of leading our ministry team for a few hours each week!



Micah Burks
Mentor Program Director

Trevor and Bradley met weekly for a year. Trevor was an upper-classman at MS&T, and would pick up Brad at his home in Rolla and simply spend an hour or two "hanging out" with him. Some of their favorite activities were playing soccer and tag in the park, or on colder days playing video games or watching a movie together. After they'd been meeting for a year, Bradley's family moved an hour away, so sadly, this match has ended.

Bradley's mother said: "I feel like it was definitely a positive thing for [Bradley], and I would love it if you could find him a mentor here!"

Bradley himself shared: "I told [my mentor] about some stuff about my family-- he told me that I would get through it because God is going to be with me the whole time, and I felt good when I heard that and I felt him being by my side."

Trevor's view on the match: "I feel like being a mentor has had a big impact on my life. Not only am I able to take time out of the school week to hang out and eat pizza with Brad, I'm also able to share what wisdom I have with him and watch him grow. My favorite thing about being a mentor is just being a friend and giving encouragement to those who need it."

Memories for a lifetime

My name is Denise Mathews, and I have been a mentor at the Front Porch After-School Program for the past two semesters. I am currently attending Missouri S&T, and I heard about the Front Porch Program at Camp David through Christian Campus Fellowship. Since I had been a camp counselor at a different camp for several years, I thought I knew what I was getting myself into when I decided to volunteer as a mentor in the program. Boy, was I wrong! The Front Porch Program is so much more than what I anticipated. I am able to work one-on-one every week with my mentee as we learn more about God together. Every week we have a new and exciting group activity where we can have fun hanging out together. Then we have a lesson and after the lesson we get a chance to talk about what the lesson

means in each of our lives.

I have the same mentee as I did the first semester, and I've witnessed this young lady coming out of her shell, overcoming her fears, and laughing so hard she falls out of her chair. Once or twice during the Front Porch Program, the mentors and mentees get to work with the horses in the Camp David stable. One time we were learning about facing our fears, and while the mentors held

the horses, the mentees helped the horses slowly overcome their fear of rustling plastic bags. However, on that day I got to help and encourage my mentee to face her fear of being very close to a



Denise Mathews
Front Porch Mentor



large, mean-looking horse. Right as our time ended that day, this young lady reached out and petted the horse without getting scared and turning away. It is through experiences like this that I feel as though I am making an impact in this young lady's life through our time spent together each week in the Front Porch Program. Even though the purpose of the Front Porch program is to provide these kids with a positive role model, I have learned so much myself. The memories I've made so far with my mentee will last a lifetime and I can't wait for the next semester of the Front Porch Program.

Sponsors are needed for the students in our Mentoring Programs! Please fill out the Response Form and sponsor a student!

Collaborating for Hope!

by: Ben Smith, Camp Director

God has been opening some wonderful opportunities for Camp David to collaborate with others in reaching families of prisoners in their communities. I would like to share five ways we are collaborating with others.

First of all in December 2015, **Camp David helped host three Angel Tree Christmas parties** in cooperation with five churches and Child Evangelism Fellowship. At these parties we shared about the first Christmas Story and God's greatest gift. More than a dozen children trusted Christ. We also gave gifts to 200 children of prisoners on behalf of their incarcerated parent. Thanks to a generous donation of toys from our local Walmart Distribution Center, we were also able to give the caregivers the opportunity to pick out a gift that they too could wrap and give to the children on Christmas day. We are very grateful to three of our Camp David moms, Mercedes, Tiffany, and Ton'yelle, who helped us find churches and host the parties.

In January, **Camp David hosted its first Extended Family for Kids leader workshop**. Extended Family for Kids is a 10 lesson program for children affected by incarceration that is designed to be used in schools. Laure Clemons, the creator of the curriculum, ran two of our staff and one other volunteer though the six hour training. We are excited that two people from our local community are planning to start leading Extended Family for kids in the Rolla Schools this year.

Camp David has also provided four churches with support group curriculum. This curriculum from Mercy Heart (called Between the Walls) empowers churches to start support groups for families affected by incarceration in their communities. On March 10, 2016, Mercedes hosted



the first Support Group for women affected by incarceration in St Louis!

February 20th - March 4th of 2016, **Camp David captured 16+ hours of training for our on-line counselor training**. Part of this project is in collaboration with Tracy Guppy from Sagrada Bible Scholarship Camp, our sister camp that helped us start 12 years ago. The online training will be used to train summer camp counselors, and are offered as part of our training for new Angel Tree start-up camps.

In July, Camp David's camp launch, Camp Kadesh in Ozone, AR, will run its second Angel Tree summer camp. This summer we will be providing training resources but the camp will be run by New Life Ranch and Pine Crest Camp staff.

What a joy it is to work together with so many wonderful people and ministries in reaching families of prisoners with the love and hope of Christ! To each of you who helped make this possible I want to say thanks.

If you, your church, or group would like to do something to help families of prisoners in your community, please give us a call: 573-364-2786. We would love to give you the resources to help make that a reality.



William's Story

by: Ben Smith, Camp Director

When William was just a toddler, his father committed a crime and was sentenced to prison. William felt alone. When driving past parks or watching TV, William would see boys with their dads playing ball together, laughing, or just hanging out. William's heart ached for the day his dad would get out and they would be together. Finally his dad returned home, and they were together at last! But things didn't go as he had dreamed. His dad and mom got into violent fights, and William would lie awake and afraid in his bed. Instead of doing things together, his dad would take off with his friends and leave William behind. Then came the day that his dad was arrested again. William was crushed. His dad's actions left him feeling worthless and wondering what was wrong with him. Why didn't his dad want to hang out with him?

Then when William was 10 years old, he was invited to Camp David of the Ozarks. William had never been to camp before. It was both scary and exciting. At camp his counselors wanted to hang out with him. They did everything together: football, fishing, chicken fights, and capture the flag. His counselors made William feel special. That summer was the medieval theme, and William was proud to be knighted, "Sir William the Faithful." William's sense of significance soared.

Each summer after that William came back to camp. Camp is where William learned about God and trusted Christ, and camp is where William was baptized.

But things still weren't ok at home; William had a hard time because his family moved a lot. Just when he was starting to make friends, they would move again, and this made school difficult as well. To deal with the pain William learned to stuff his feelings. Then one day some older boys included him in their group. It was great to belong, but they also got him into trouble. One day they were caught stealing by a salesperson. When security arrived, William was scared. "Would he go to jail?" he wondered. In the end, William was banned from the shopping mall for a year.

When William was fourteen he got invited to Camp David's Timothy Training Camp. This was a special training for campers who show the potential to serve on staff. His two friends came as well. That week his friends got into trouble for stealing, and they also laughed off everything that was being taught at camp. William would laugh too, trying to fit

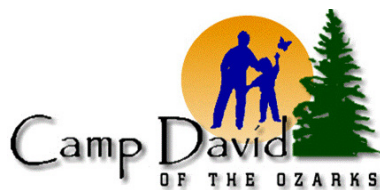
in with them. The last day William went for his evaluation. His leaders pointed out several things he did well, but also talked to him about how he followed his friends. When they told him that he wasn't accepted to serve on staff that summer, he was devastated. At that moment, William decided that he was done letting his friends get him into trouble. The next summer, to William's delight, he was invited back to the Timothy Training Camp. This time he graduated and achieved his dream of serving on staff! The last couple of weeks of camp that summer, William worked behind the scenes washing dishes, serving meals, and mopping floors. William loved being able to give other kids the same special experience he remembered as a camper.

Since then William has served three summers in different roles. He was Support Staff, then Counselor, and finally as the Summer Games Leader. As a counselor, William loved being able to share his story with the boys, then watch them open up and share their stories as well. One of the hardest things for William his first summer on staff was the 30 minutes of required daily devotions time. But his growth in his relationship with God has also been the most rewarding part of his experience. He has grown to have a confidence that God has everything in control and that he is going to use even the bad things in his life for something good. At camp he can see that God already has. William has also made a lot of friends over the years at camp. He says, "My camp friends know me and don't judge me because of my past, and they also encourage me in my walk with God."

This May, William is graduating from High School. Sadly, this is something his old friends never did. In the fall, William will be going to Ozarks Technical College where he hopes to graduate as a paramedic.

Not only has camp changed William's life but it has changed his family as well. In 2015 his younger brother served on staff at Camp David. Justin is a hard worker like his brother. Their two younger sisters are not far behind. William's changed life has given his brother and sisters a role model to follow. William is a servant leader and I look forward to seeing what God does in this next season of his life.





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