

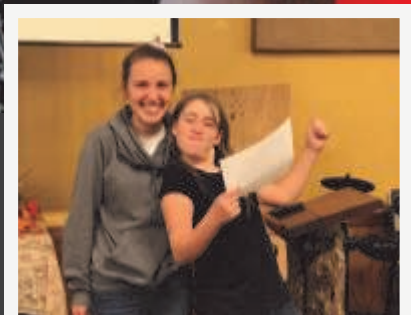
# Camp David Community



PRISONERS' FAMILY RETREATS



International Camp



Afterschool Mentoring Program

## CONTENTS

# You did it, Sponsors!

I want to say a big thanks to everyone who sponsored campers for Summer Camp 2017. We are excited to say they have all been sponsored. You have no idea how much it means to the kids.

Camp is the highlight of these kids' year. I have already had campers asking me how long it is until camp next summer and we haven't even celebrated Christmas!

This summer we had a sailing theme and talked about Living Fearless, making Jesus the Captain of your ship, and sharing our faith with friends. We were blessed to see quite a few of our alumni campers serving as counselors. I will never forget the moment this summer when Jackie (an alumni camper and now a counselor) told me how she had led three children to Christ! Several years ago she was one of our campers we were praying our hearts out for. Around twenty-five percent of our staff this summer were former campers!

This summer our campers also learned about forgiveness and many of our campers were able to forgive people who had caused them tremendous pain. One boy forgave the man who murdered his baby sister. What a joy to see each one walk free from the bitterness that would have otherwise wrecked own lives!

Our 2018 goal is to find 480 sponsors for all of our campers by May 1st. Would you consider sponsoring a prisoners' child to camp?

Because childhood doesn't wait.



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Editor:

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If you have any questions, or wish to donate please contact us at: P.O. Box 1607; Rolla, MO 65402  
573-364-2786







Dear Friends and Supporters,

Fall is one of my favorite times of the year with the smell of smoke on the air and the warm anticipation of the holidays stirring in my heart. As the leaves change color and begin to fall, I am reminded of the changing seasons of our lives as well. We felt the changes in our family more deeply this year.

The first change happened this spring when our oldest daughter Bethany got married to Gus Sims and she left our home to start her own. Laughing together to keep from crying, I walked my beautiful Bethany down the aisle in her lacy white wedding dress. The outdoor chapel we had built together at Camp David was accented with the dogwoods and redbud trees in full bloom. A group of alumni campers/staff helped to set up and later served the reception meal. They too are part of our family. For all but one teen, this wedding was the first wedding they had ever attended.

The second change began this summer when for the first and last time, we ran camp together as a family of eight. Our newest family member is Lexie; a fun-loving, studious 13 year old girl whom we proudly call our daughter (the judge will make it permanent next month!). As a family, we served at camp in different roles from Director and Assistant Director, to Horse Program Director, to Breakfast Cook, Worship Leader, Counselor, Support staff and Junior Support Staff. This summer we were blessed again to hear our children and our alumni campers/staff express their passion for reaching children of prisoners with the love and hope of Jesus Christ.

The next change was the season of goodbyes. Goodbyes to the summer staff, goodbye to our Bethany who left for midwifery school in Idaho with her beloved Gus, and goodbye to our daughter Esther who left for West Africa to be a nanny for six months. This brought a season of prayer as one daughter struggled with intense morning sickness and the other struggles with a lot of joint pain. This season also comes with the exciting new titles of "Papa" and "Nana" for my wife Grace and I.

With all these seasons, I am reminded that childhood doesn't wait. My little girl is now an expecting mother, and our eight year old campers are now counselors and staff. Grace and I want to thank all of you who given to camp or sponsored campers over the years. Because of your compassion, they have become the caring leaders for the next season.

Gratefully,

Benjamin A Smith, CEO Camp David of the Ozarks



# The Best Family Adventure

By: Michelle Williams

This summer I piled my 5 children, ages 13 to 3 years old, in our van and drove 18 hours across the country to serve for a week at Camp David. This camp, birthed in a borrowed Revival tent, we had watched grow as a vision from the Lord to Ben & Grace Smith over 14 years ago.

Inspired by my oldest daughter, Hannah's continual count down until she would be old enough to serve as Support Staff, we could not wait to arrive at Camp and finally taste and see the flourishing ministry to children of prisoners that the Lord Jesus has created off a dusty back road in MO. My older children had worked hard mowing yards and pulling weeds to fund our week.

With our applications filed, phone interviews done and online training completed, we were ready to hit the ground running. We knew we would need to be ready to be flexible, and ready to give our very best for a purpose much greater than ourselves, or our perceived needs.

My oldest daughter headed to bunk in Staff housing, while the rest of us lodged

together on site. Hannah's days would be full of washing dishes, managing mounds of laundry, cleaning and being available to serve in any area needed. Her work days would be long, but FULL of laughter, near constant joyful singing and staff devotions that stretched and build her up on many lev-

*"...Nothing will ever surpass the immeasurable privilege of holding a child's soul in my hands and being the first to ever cherish it."*

els. I saw her pouring dignity and grace into hurting lives as she dressed as a waitress for the formal dinner and then served that meal with an endless smile. She worked shoulder to shoulder with other teens who grew up at Camp David as campers and were now giving back to the one place that spoke Jesus and healing into their lives.

My two oldest boys pulled weeds, cut lettuce, mulched flower beds and made

cookies for staff meetings while on Green Team. In between chores, they enjoyed supervised camp activities like swimming, archery and horse back riding. I watched my boys learning the art of a gentleman as their Green Team leader nurtured them in putting camper's first in all things. Quick to hold doors for others and content to always be at the back of the line, I saw soul growth in my sons.

My two littlest loved passing out kittens to campers, picking wildflowers to share and spreading ear to ear smiles to anyone and everyone while on the youngest Green Team. Their days were gently led by nurturing teens and grandmas. The fun of camp, craft projects and quiet times filled their days with stability. They joined me whenever they needed a cuddle.

I found my nitch as an "Auntie." I prayer walked countless times. Wrote and wrote and wrote personal letters to every single camper, every single day. Became the "Post-It note" queen writing affirmation and prayers for those serving and work-



ing and growing. Waged Spiritual war while holding weary counselors in my arms as they cried their hearts out from the pressure. The emphasis on prayer changed my own personal life on a deep level.

It was hard to leave camp at the end of our week.....Nothing will ever surpass the immeasurable privilege of holding a child's soul in my hands and being the first to ever cherish it. The thrill of watching a former camper serving as a counselor for the first time. Strongholds broken as we fought on our knees for lives. Screams of jubilation as priceless dear ones went from zero to everything in one week and then rose from the cleansing waters of baptism. Soul satisfaction at watching my legacy as a parent growing in the lives of my own children as the living message of camp seeped into their personal lives.

We drove home exhausted and full of joy. We had served as a family unit from parent to preschooler. We had tasted and seen the realities of modern day miracles as a family unit. Now at home, we have to dance and sing and laugh when we wash dishes. Just like at camp.

We were grateful for a ministry where we could come as a family, live as a family and serve as a family.

Camp David needs YOU. Yes, YOU. Your spouse, your baby, your teens, your kiddos. Camp is about being part of a team greater than any one person. They need your heart to serve as a FAMILY, creating stability for the campers that they themselves could never define, but brings a security to even the most distraught.

One week as a family can change eternity for the life of a camper.

Will YOUR FAMILY join the adventure of serving this next summer?





Going cross the ocean to Uganda , Camp Director Ben Smith wondered if the curriculum he had written for America's children of prisoners would be applicable for children of prisoners in Africa. After working with 120 children of prisoners ages 4 to 18 in Uganda, he became certain it was. They are all struggling with the same questions– Does God hate me? Will I become like my parent? Am I bad for loving mom? Am I bad for hating dad? Is it my fault? Our special way of answering each one of these questions gives children of prisoners wherever they are a new hope!







# Fighting the Good Fight

By: Ben Smith, Camp Director

Our battle for families of prisoners has never been more intense, or the success more encouraging, or our vision more clear.

Our trip to Uganda was a beautiful picture of what God is doing. In February 2017, inspired by others' faith, Grace stepped out and accepted an invitation to run a week of camp for children of prisoners at the Wells of Hope boarding school, in Uganda, Africa.

During camp this spring and summer, Grace planned, our team prayed and the dream became a reality. We brought many trip challenges to God in prayer, problems beyond the needs of camp. We had never taken a week of camp overseas before and there was a lot to put together. God answered our prayers and supplied sponsors for 128 back packs, funds for an extra 1,000 lbs of luggage, and 11 team members. Our team included a camper's mom, an alumni camper, nine former staff members, and two camp grandparents. Each person played an important role in the camp.

We arrived in Uganda late at night on September 22nd. The next day, Ellen Suubbi (CEO) and her staff shared about Wells of Hope and their dream. We were excited to see that they shared the same love for God and heart for families of prisoners. In Uganda, without Wells of Hope, these children of prisoners receive no education and are at high risk for human trafficking, child labor, and human sacrifice (criminal but on the rise).

The week of camp was amazing. We enjoyed watching the awe and excitement of children painting crafts for their very first time. We danced with 120 children and sang our hearts out to Jesus with just an African drum to keep rhythm in the night. And we hugged children crying for pains they had no words to express.

Campers and counselors enjoyed a shaving cream battle, an 'Everyone's Birthday Party,' shooting slingshots, learning about God's creation, Team Building initiatives, devotions, field games, character awards, and so much more.

It was beautiful to see the children find new joy and peace as we talked about questions regarding incarceration and grief. These children's parents are serving sentences ranging from 15 years to the death penalty. Two team members shared their stories of having incarcerated loved ones, and several of the campers appreciated talking with them about it afterwards.

The last day of camp, we baptized 68 campers in a small blow-up pool that we brought. The young people included several children who were choosing to leave their families' religion to follow Christ. Sitting around a campfire the last night, we listened as the campers and Ugandan staff expressed how valuable the week was for them.

Camp David Uganda was a success! Looking forward, we are asking God to connect us with more camps, churches, and individuals around the world with a heart for families of prisoners and a desire to minister to those in their communities. Would you pray with us?



# I Am Loved

By: Lukas Hogshooter

What's a normal life? Is there such thing?  
I couldn't believe it if I tried.  
If there was, I'd be a different being.  
But alas, for me it has died.  
Oh why can't you see past all my scars?  
My mother lies down in shame.  
My father reaches from prison bars.  
Could I be the one to blame?  
What hope do I have? Maybe a pill?  
A picture on the internet?  
Do I have worth? I'm so empty still.  
Trapped in pain like it's a net.  
How can I trust anyone but myself?  
And even I mess things up.  
Is God a joke, some words on a shelf?  
Or does His hate fill my cup?  
Oh, that I may have all the reasons.  
Can anyone help me out?  
I could make it through all these seasons.  
And have no reason to doubt.  
Ring, ring, "Who's that? What are you selling?"  
Mom says as she answers the phone.  
"Where's this? How much would I be paying?"  
She says with an interested tone.  
"Do you want to camp in the summer?"  
She turns around and says to me.  
"Sure, I've never been to camp before.  
I wonder how fun it will be?"  
So to camp I go to check things out.  
Maybe I can have some fun,  
And find out what this is all about,  
I can also get some sun.  
But there's something about these people.  
Why do they seem to love me?  
And pray for me at the wooden steeple?  
How can this love even be?  
They say that it's the love of Jesus,  
And that he died to save me,  
And that he gives salvation to us,  
And from sin we are set free.  
That's not all, I have a Father,  
He looks after me from above,  
And He is good, like no other,  
He is as gentle as a dove.  
Now I see the truth past all the lies,  
I know I am loved and cared for,  
And I don't have to fear the goodbyes,  
Nor the unknown behind the door.  
I now can love others as camp did,  
For in love I now abide.  
So thank you all and go Camp David!  
For the Lord is on your side!





# Why We Support Camp David

Dear Camp David Supporters,

Please know that I'm praying for you and this ministry, knowing that what is done at camp David is a reflection of the heart of God. I've been so blessed to be able to send my children to serve for the past 2 summers and words can't fully express the growth I've seen in them. It is my goal and heart's desire that my children live lives serving something bigger than themselves. The Word of God teaches that we should love the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind and love our neighbor as ourselves, and this is what Camp David is all about. It is a shining example of how we are to love with action! My teens look forward to the summer, not because school is out and it's time for vacation, but because they can serve with the family of God! They can reach out to "the least of these"! They can obey the commands of their Creator which calls them to something greater! My heart is so filled with thankfulness for this ministry and the Camp Directors. They have so encouraged my children in working for the Kingdom. I have seen them grow in confidence, faith and compassion. They are reaching out in our community and sharing the Gospel. Camp has given them a vision for their lives and the tools to move forward.

Keep trusting the Lord to meet the needs of the Camp. My children will never forget seeing God provide at the very moment they were praying. Keep creating a family environment for your campers and staff. My children have a family even if not by birth! Keep providing a safe place to talk about the hurts in life and the healing which the Gospel brings! My children have embraced being broken and beautiful in light of the Directors and staff hearing their stories and struggles, and continuing to meet it with the grace of God in Christ! Keep obeying the call of scripture and reaching out to the lost, for it is a cause worth serving and much bigger than any of us!

Yours gratefully,  
Jamie Hogshooter





### Meet our IMPACT Interns: Lukas, Will & Kenny!

These young men have been an incredible blessing to our team this fall from recruiting staff, running our After-school Program and other events, to maintaining the camp facility. Community is built as we study God's word together, spend time in prayer, and enjoy fellowship around the Directors' family dinner table.

## Camp David 2017

This year the Camp David ministry...

- Trained the new Director for Camp David of Southern Indiana
- Lunched our first International Camp, Camp David Uganda
- 30 former campers and children of prisoners served on staff
- 98 children followed Christ in baptism
- 54 staff and young adults in the TYRO Leadership program
- Lead camps for 294 children of prisoners
- Lead two retreats for Families of Prisoners
- Continues to run their After-school and Mentoring Programs
- Discipled 3 interns in our IMPACT Intern Program

**To God be the glory, great things He has done!!!**

## Someone Worth Following

By: Suzanna Jacobson , Executive Director at Christian Formation Ministries

One of my favorite stories of the Bible is the calling of the disciples. When Jesus walked up to the fisherman, to the tax collectors, and to the various men that made that first twelve; all Jesus had to say was "Follow me" and they went. This was always a surprise to me. Did they not doubt? Was there a vetting process? Was it in an instant or was it over a couple of days? I didn't really understand this until I had a "Follow Me" moment of my very own. It is my story of how I can into the Camp David ministry.

It was just a few short years ago when I met Ben and Grace Smith for the first time at a prison ministry conference in Indianapolis, IN. During the conference when we shared about personal visions, Ben shared his dream of a Camp David campus in every state in America. It was an instant "Follow Me" moment. I knew in that moment God was calling me and my family to start the very next Camp David campus.

This past summer, my family had the privilege to be staff and serve the campers of Camp David of the Ozarks. During our training, we witnessed God doing many amazing things, in both the campers and the staff's lives. My husband and I both had a chance to be counselors during camp and had front row seats to how important and impactful the camp experience is for children of prisoners. There is nothing out there like the Camp David mission and it is a ministry worthy of replication.

It is such an honor to be trusted with the Camp David name and I am pleased to announce we will be launching Camp David of Southern Indiana in July 2018. We have been blessed with a readymade camp here in New Albany, IN to use while we seek out and build our permanent location in the years to come.

The power in the call to "follow" is not so much in taking a leap of faith but rather in taking the next obvious step. Not everyone is going to be called to start their own camp but I believe there are many who are called to serve in their own way. I would challenge anyone to take a day, a week, or dare I say a summer; and see where Jesus calls you. When Jesus said, "Follow Me" he led us to camp. I pray we get to see you there.



Meet the Jacobson Family!  
Jon & Suzanna with their loves:  
Zoie, Jack-Jack, and Danny. So  
excited to reach a new goal on  
our Dream Board for new  
Camp David campuses to be  
birthed!!





Camp Directors Ben, Grace, and Suzanna facilitated the TYRO trainings with 54 students.

# I AM A TYRO

By: Ben Smith, Camp Director



When Kate first came to camp she was quiet and hid behind her long brown hair. As she grew older, she added dark makeup to her cloak. Kate learned this skill at places like the denominational camp where she was identified as the "girl with a father in prison" and shunned by the other children. Being invisible, protected Kate from the shame. When Kate first came to Camp David, she was shocked to find that everyone was in the same situation and she felt accepted- not alone. A few years later, in 2016, Kate was invited to our Timothy Staff Training week. We were excited when Kate graduated from the training, and returned to serve as staff.

This summer, Kate came to our staff training with new excitement. The training included the new 20+ hour TYRO Leadership Training from the Ridge Project. Kate took the training seriously, and when she was challenged to fast something special for the week, Kate chose to fast makeup and even put her hair back. During the intense training, Kate also wrote a five page auto biography and told her story to her group of girls. The love and support she received was amazing. Kate no longer felt the need to hide. A fun loving, outgoing girl emerged. Throughout the summer she continued to put her hair back and often skipped the makeup as she served in various roles on staff. One of Kate's dreams is to become part of our Leadership Team at Camp David- and with the new leadership we are watching develop in her, we wouldn't be surprised if she leads one of our new camp plants in a few years. As Kate continues to grow, I am so grateful to each of you who helped make changes like this possible.



10 years ago this counselor was one of our young campers and now she is serving on our team and giving hope to other girls!

## TYRO PLEDGE

I am a Tyro.  
I am a person of Honor,  
Integrity, and Promise.  
I pursue all righteousness.  
I love my family.  
I will not put my family in  
harm's way.  
There is nothing that will keep  
me from doing the right thing.  
I am an Ambassador of hope  
and a person of Discipline.  
I am a person worth following.  
I am a Tyro.

This is the pledge that students declared together at each class!





# My Childhood Didn't Wait

By: Kenny Mescall, Staff Leader

My name is Kenny Mescall, and I am one of the privileged people to be apart of the After-school Mentoring Program at Camp David of the Ozarks that is helping children of prisoners. A lot of things have really hit home with me while being a mentor, but specifically my very first day stands out the most.

My mentee and I hit it off great from our very first conversation. He was a shorter, 10 year old boy with glasses that spoke his mind openly. As we hung out and got to know each other he told me everything from his favorite superhero, to what he wants to be when he is older. By the end of the day though, we were talking about his home life, and some of the things he has had to go through growing up. Then I shared with him some of the things I had to go through growing up and told him what it lead to because I didn't deal with it or have Jesus in my life. So before he left we prayed together, and I asked God to give him strength because of the bullies he experiences almost on a daily basis. He prayed for my little brother who is in prison right now, and asked God to give him peace because He is in control. It astounded me that this child understood that even though a situation can be broken, messy, ugly, and undesirable, that God is still in control.

I'm usually not a emotional person in life, but when it comes to these kids it literally hurts my heart because of the burden I have for them. In my own personal experiences in life, I've had to overcome a lot of walls I put up and pains from my

past. So when I get to spend time with my mentee it reminds me of how it's at this age my walls began to come up, and wrong decisions came as a result. I can't help but think how different my life could have been if I just had one Godly Christian man in my life who invested his free time in me while I was growing up. I don't mean church on Sundays either, but really going out of his way to hangout and talk to me about life. Because of that, and the love of Jesus Christ, there is no other place I would rather be on Mondays and Tuesdays than here at Camp David investing in these children's lives...Because childhood doesn't wait.



Isaiah 61:3

"Our God has sent me to comfort all those who are sad. I will put beautiful crowns on their heads in place of ashes. I will anoint them with olive oil to give them joy instead of sorrow. I will give them a spirit of praise in place of a spirit of sadness. The Lord himself will plant them in the land. That will show how glorious HE is."

# From Despair to Dancing!

By: Ben Smith, Camp Director



In 2015, Pearl received an invitation that likely saved her life. It was an invitation to Camp David's Fall Retreat for families of prisoners. Her grandson Ray, whom she is guardian for, had gone to Camp David that summer and it had really impacted him. Pearl knew the weekend retreat would be good for Ray, so she signed them up. What she didn't know was how good it would be for her! Pearl's life was a tragic story that included years of severe abuse through two wrecked marriages. The unthinkable trauma, followed by trips to the emergency room and mental anguish, left Pearl on disability with very little reason to hope. Pearl was weary, depressed and suicidal.

When her bus ride arrived at Camp David, Pearl was greeted with cheers and warm smiles; she felt like celebrity. That weekend, for the first time in a very long time, others cared for Pearl. They served her breakfast in bed, and even gave her a pedicure. More importantly, these loving people were caring for her heart. With these loving moms, Pearl laughed and cried tears she never cried before. For the first time in a long time Pearl had real hope.

Pearl has returned each year since. Pearl says,

*"Because we can't afford vacations, the mom's retreat is like our trip to 'Disney' each year!"*

Pearl and her grandson are now involved in a local church, and Pearl is getting help to overcome the trauma of her past. During a song in the Talent show at this past Family Retreat, Pearl grabbed my wife Grace's hand and pulled her out of her seat and they started dancing. Later Pearl picked out a song and led all the younger moms in a dance which brought lots of joy to their children. The entire retreat, Pearl was taking the role of "Cheerleader" for the group of women- she remembered being so weighed down when she first came and she wanted to be a voice of hope to the younger moms. By the end of the retreat, several camp staff that have known Pearl for the past years, noted that she looked like she was at least ten years younger- her face was more youthful, and she had the energy and enthusiasm of someone much younger.

Because of people like you Pearl's life has been turned from hopeless despair to joyful dancing!!



Fall 2017 Camp David Moms



# Incarceration Affects Children Across the World

By: William Robinson, Mentor Program Leader

"Hi, my name is William Robinson and I was blessed to be a part of an awesome team that went to Uganda, Africa from September 21 to October 1, 2017. This was my first time traveling internationally and flying in a plane. Upon being told about this trip, I wasn't sure that I would even be able to come up with the funds or have the time to go. But after working at camp for the summer and praying to God, I was really feeling that I needed to go. Not only to grow in my faith, but to also help serve kids who are going through similar situations as myself. I've been part of Camp David for 10 years, first as a camper because my dad was in prison, and now I am on full-time staff at Camp David. Since the trip to Uganda was to give hope to children of prisoners, I knew we would have something in common. So I decided to start raising money for the trip. I was blessed by generous donations, and I was given the opportunity to match a grant of \$1,000 which would cover most of the expenses. When it was cutting it close to needing the money turned in, God provided the rest of the funds for me to go!

I can definitely say this was a eye opening experience and also a life changing one! We started the trip in St. Louis, MO which is where I took my first plane ride ever! This was an exciting feeling and was kinda scary at first. We took several more flights into different airports to get to our destination. Then we finally arrived in Uganda and we had a very warm welcome by Wells of Hope, as if we were family that went on vacation!

As we worked to run a week of camp for 120 kids, I got to know more of the different staff members and their life stories. It was tough listening to the lives they have to live. But they are very hopeful and they have a passion for God. One of the Ugandan teens that I got to know was Peter. Peter was so curious and asked a ton of questions not only about America, but about me and my culture. He had no idea there are kids in America who have a parent in prison. Peter has big dreams and he is a huge inspiration to the other kids at Wells Of Hope.

One of the blessing moments for me was when we handed out birthday gifts during the birthday party. For over 10 minutes all the girls, and some of the guys, were singing and praising God for the gifts! This showed me that they really adore God and all that he does for them. The children gave me an African name, and mine is "Tumwebaze," which means "Let's thank God!"

This trip taught me a lot about one of the different cultures we have in our world. It also showed me that no matter where you go, there are children being affected by having an incarcerated parent. It showed me how to connect with them on a more personal level. I can proudly say that by the end of this trip I had a bigger appreciation for all the things I do have, and for having a ministry like Camp David which is giving hope."







God shares His heart for the nations:  
 "The Lord has anointed me to announce  
 good news to poor people. He has sent  
 me to comfort those whose hearts have  
 been broken. He has sent me to an-  
 nounce freedom for those who have been  
 captured. He wants me to set prisoners  
 free from their dark cells...In the same  
 way, the Lord and King will make godli-  
 ness grow. And all the nations will praise  
 him." Isaiah 61: 1,11







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Give hope

