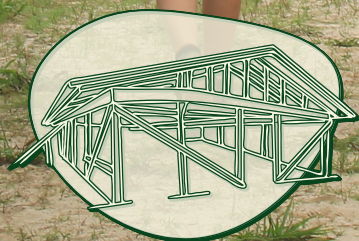


GOOD THINGS

a rafters project magazine



RAFTERSPROJECT

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Interim Director, Morgan Ohrmundt

In February, Ty Ford announced his resignation from Camp Deer Run. We are so grateful for the 17+ years he served this ministry with passion, vision, and strength. No quick summary could do justice to all of Ty's contributions to Camp Deer Run over the years, but we know that his impact on hundreds of Summer Staff members, and in turn, thousands of campers, speaks for itself. Thank you Ty!

As the Board discerns the next steps for the leadership of Camp Deer Run, we are excited to announce that Morgan Ohrmundt, our Director of Internal Operations, will be serving as Interim Executive Director.

Morgan has been a member of the full-time staff at Camp since 2021 and has worked closely with Ty, the full-time staff, the Board of Directors, and our Summer Staff for many years. We are confident that she will steward the program well until the Board reaches long-term decisions for the structure and leadership of Camp.

Note from Morgan

Hey Everyone!

If you don't know me, my name is Morgan Ohrmundt! Camp Deer Run has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. My parents, Mark and Melissa Taylor, met here in the 90s. I also met my husband, Jared, when we worked on Summer Staff together. This ministry is so important to both of us, and we feel so blessed to be raising our own children (Lena - 3 and Andie - 6 mos.) around Camp now.

I am honored and so excited to be able to serve Camp in this role. I am committed to serve this mission to the best of my ability to continue the amazing work that God is doing at Deer Run. The full-time staff and Summer Staff are hard at work prepping for summer, and we're confident that it will be a great one!

I can't wait to see you all out here soon!





Kids never cease to amaze me. My 3-year-old daughter, Mallie, has been singing “Every Praise” every day for the past two weeks. As luck would have it, this past Wednesday we sang that song during our devotional time at church.

I looked over at her while we were singing and she was fiddling with some little toy in her hand, just singing along like it was nothing. Seeing that made me smile and brought me back to Hymn Time at Camp.

Like many Deer Runners, Hymn Time was always my favorite part of the day. There was something special about everyone gathering under the rafters of the Rec Hall, looking out over God’s creation, and singing praises to Him.



The thing that always made my heart smile the most was seeing a 9 or 10 year old kid who didn't know any of the songs at worship on the first night, start singing along by day three or four.

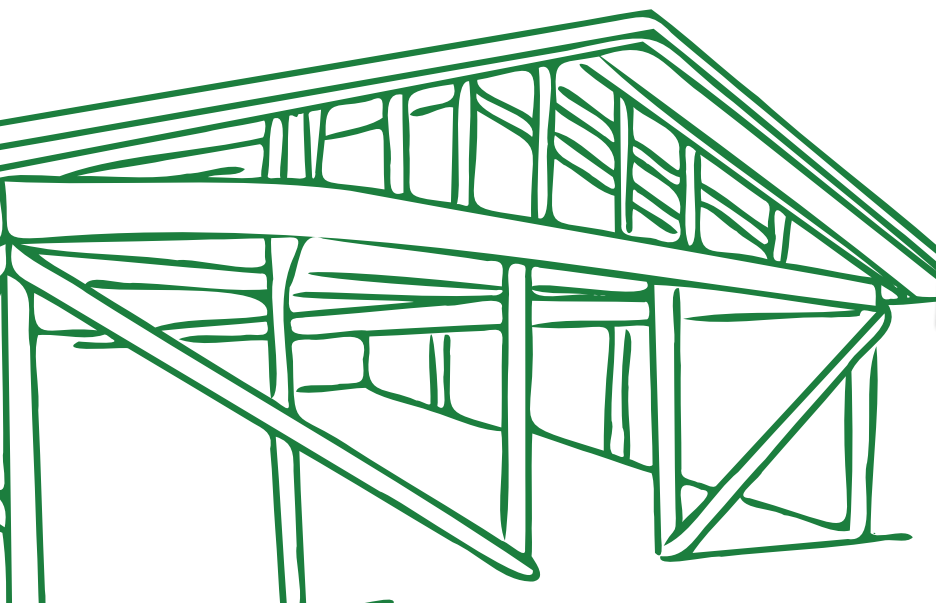
Moments like that remind me of something simple but important: praise doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes the purest worship is simply lifting our voices to God because He is worthy.

“When our homes and our lives are filled with praise, the next generation will learn to sing along.”

But there's another lesson in those moments too. Those Camp kids learned those songs because they were surrounded by people singing them. In the same way, Mallie sings that song because she hears it at church and at home. It is a reminder to me as a parent, and really to all of us, that the example we set matters. When our homes and our lives are filled with praise, the next generation will learn to sing along.

Psalm 150:6 says, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.”

And as I listened to my little three-year-old sing that song without a care in the world, I couldn't help but smile at the thought that that verse includes her too.



New Camp Safety Legislation

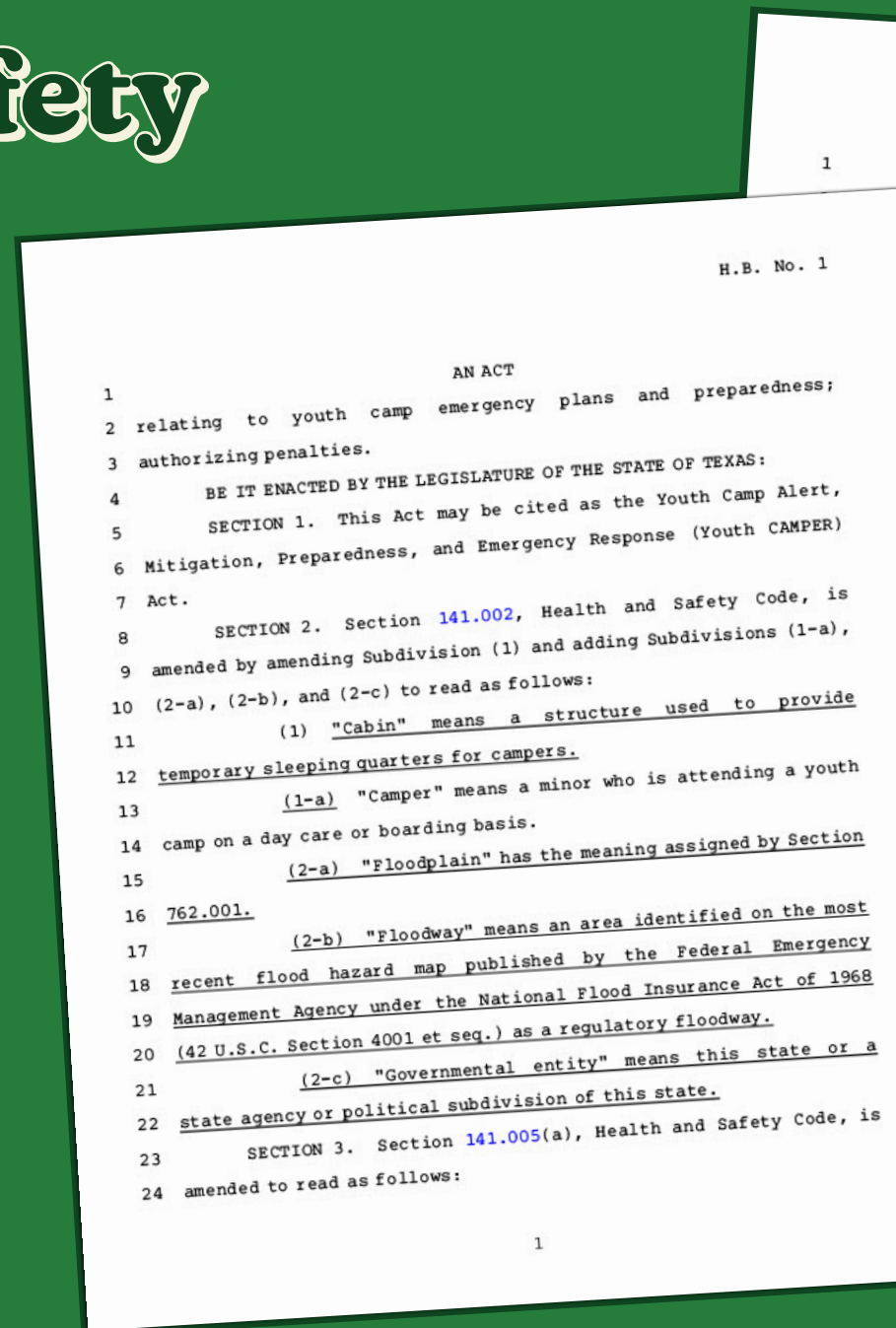
On the morning of July 4th, 2025, campers and Staff at Camp Deer Run were wrapping up 4th session. Parents were arriving to reunite with their children after two weeks apart. But these reunions were a little more meaningful than usual. Parents hugged their kids a little tighter and held on a little longer.

What the campers didn't know yet was that the night before, as they slept, camps in the Texas Hill Country were devastated by historic flooding. When they were waking up for their last morning of Camp, their parents were waking up to news stories about entire cabins of children washed away by flood waters in the middle of the night. As they drove to pick up their campers, they were hearing story after story of parents who showed up to pick up their own campers, only to find out that their child was missing.

That morning was heartbreaking for anyone who was following the situation, but especially for parents whose own children were away at Camp, and for us at Camp, grappling with the thoughts of "what if that was us?"

As time has passed, the grief over the children lost in those floods has not. **However, our responsibility to our campers and families at Camp Deer Run is not fear, but preparation, planning, and action.**

In September, the Texas State Legislature voted to pass two bills



that directly address the topics of child safety at summer camps: House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 1. According to a press release on [texas.gov](https://www.texas.gov): "House Bill 1, the Youth Camp Alert, Mitigation, Preparedness, and Emergency Response (Youth CAMPER) Act, requires youth camps to adopt and annually update emergency plans, train staff, orient campers, notify

AN ACT

ing to campground and youth camp safety.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the Heaven's 27 Camp Act.

SECTION 2. Section 141.002, Health and Safety Code, is amended by amending Subdivision (1) and adding Subdivisions (1-a), (2-b), and (2-c) to read as follows:

(1) "Cabin" means a structure used to provide sleeping quarters for campers.

(1-a) "Camper" means a minor who is attending a youth day care or boarding basis.

(2-a) "Floodplain" has the meaning assigned by Section

(2-b) "Floodway" means an area identified on the most recent hazard map published by the Federal Emergency Agency under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (Section 4001 et seq.) as a regulatory floodway.

(2-c) "Governmental entity" means this state or a political subdivision of this state.

SECTION 3. Section 141.005(a), Health and Safety Code, is amended as follows:

person holding a license issued under this chapter

exceptions), requires annual emergency training and planning, creates an online registry of licensed youth camps, and extends safety standards to campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks."

CHANGES FOR CAMP DEER RUN

This new legislation creates several new safety requirements for summer camps, including restrictions on buildings in FEMA flood plains, required fiber-optic internet and a backup satellite internet system, a public address system in the main campground, emergency evacuation plans and lighting along all evacuation routes, and significantly increased licensing and renewal fees.

These changes are presenting significant challenges to many Christian camps. Some simply don't have access to fiber-optic internet service. Some can't afford the new license renewal fees. The changes are good, but the cost is heavy. Our cost to meet these new requirements has already surpassed \$30,000.

At any other time in Camp Deer Run's history, this would be an extreme challenge financially. By God's grace, and through the generosity of the Rafter's Project, we have been able to cover these unexpected expenses without impacting our programs or turning our budget upside down.

This is one of the clearest examples yet of the impact of The Rafter's Project. Without your faithful, dependable contributions, these changes would have had Camp on the verge of a financial emergency. But because of The Rafter's Project, we have been able to take the changes in stride and approach them as an investment in the safety of our campers rather than a financial disaster. It is not an exaggeration to say that all of you are directly responsible for these safety improvements.

So, we thank you. Our campers and their parents thank you. You are making a difference.

parents of floodplain risks with signed acknowledgment, and share plans with local emergency services. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is authorized to enforce compliance through inspections, complaint investigations, and license suspension or denial. Senate Bill 1, known as the Heaven's 27 Camp Safety Act, prohibits DSHS from licensing youth camps with cabins in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-designated floodplains (with limited

meet the program directors



Get to know our 2026 Program Directors, Baylor Cain and Ren Pollard! This summer will be both Baylor and Ren's fourth summer on the Camp Deer Run Staff. Baylor served as Program Director last summer, and this will be Ren's first summer as Program Director!

Tell us about yourself outside of Camp.

Baylor: My name is Baylor Cain, I'm the youngest of four kids and a current Junior at Texas A&M from Burleson, Texas. I am a communication major and currently have an internship working social media for the University. I am a campus tour guide, member of the Brotherhood of Aggie Mentors, Aggies for Christ and volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Ren: My name is Ren Pollard. I am a third-year student in the School of Nursing at Abilene Christian University. I hope to one day work with kids. Outside of school, I am the oldest of three girls. My family is very close, and we love doing all kinds of outdoor activities together, such as hunting, fishing, skiing, sports, and horseback riding. I love community, fellowship, and having a good laugh with the people I love.

How did you first end up at Deer Run, and what made you keep coming back?

B: I first came to Deer Run because my siblings all came before me. I instantly found Camp so fun and beneficial to my faith and could tell from the jump it was something special. I keep coming back because of how Camp keeps surprising me. Right when I think I have done or seen it all, the Lord works in ways I never saw coming. It's just too unique of a mission to let go of quite yet.

R: I ended up at Camp because my church, Decatur Church of Christ, took a bus full of kids to 2nd Session, and I wanted to join. I also grew up knowing the Taylor family, who are big Deer Run people!

Describe the moment when you realized Camp was going to be a significant part of your life.

B: Getting baptized at Camp was a big moment for me. Making the biggest decision of your life at a place you love basically solidifies the fact that it'll always mean a ton to me. I was baptized when I was in Men's 2, and funny enough, the first camper I ever baptized was my camper when I counseled Men's 2.

R: I remember sitting in the grove each summer, watching the women's staff introductions and hoping that one day I could be just like them. As I got older, I never really questioned whether I wanted to work at Camp. During my senior year, I spent a lot of time talking with Regan McClure, my last counselor, about what it meant to be on Staff. As my final session came to an end, the seniors gathered around the fire to talk about our plans for the future. The moment I left Camp, I found myself checking for application openings almost every day, eager for the opportunity to serve a place that had served me so well.

What experience or person at Camp has impacted you the most?

B: Camp has shown me what true joy of the Lord is. Not just one singular experience, but kind of everything I have experienced all put together has really taught me what true joy feels and looks like. It's taught me that everything in the world will let you down, but true joy from Christ will last, and that's a good thing to remember.

R: Regan McClure. She led by example, she led humbly and served with great joy. The Lord was so incredibly evident through the way she listened, cared, and loved me and others so greatly. Something she would always say that stood out to me was, "It's not about me." This short phrase became a pillar for me in college, in my family, in my church, in my jobs, and, most importantly, in serving the Lord. Holding onto this mindset has helped me understand that God's plans are far greater than anything I could comprehend, and that pressures, expectations, anxieties, and fears can shift my focus inward. When I let go of that and remember it's not about me, I can better see the work God is doing and become a vessel through which He can move and reveal His greater purpose.

What scripture has been on your mind most lately?

B: The scripture on my mind lately is Psalm 52:8-9. "But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever. For what you have done I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people. And I will hope in your name, for your name is good." I've been finding a lot of comfort in it. I think the concept of being so trusting in the steadfast love of God that you feel the presence of Him is a really mind-blowing and incredible thing.

R: 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage battle according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete."

What's one thing you wish every camper understood about Camp?

B: The God you experience at Camp is the same God at home, school, work and everywhere else. He's not JUST here.

R: I wish every camper understood how fleeting their time at Camp really is. I wish they could see how special each moment can be if they choose to be fully present. Looking back, there were times when I took that for granted or didn't fully soak in the relationships, lessons, and joy that Camp offered. It goes by much faster than you expect.



Psalm 119:105 says God's Word is a lamp and a light. What does that imagery mean to you personally?

B: My mom my whole life has said "everything in the darkness dies in the light." To me the dark is confusing, scary and hard to manage. You feel like someone's watching you, it's uneasy and difficult to stay in. When you add a lamp and a light that fear is basically gone immediately. I like the comfort that brings knowing that that's what His word can be for us.

R: I picture an old-timey oil lamp in a pitch-black room, where the only way to see is to bring the light close to whatever is right in front of me. It makes me realize how often I choose to walk blindly — sometimes I get lucky, but other times I find myself stuck, standing still with no sense of direction. Without the Word of God, I can easily become lost. I'm reminded that I have a choice to make: I can continue wasting time in rooms I was never meant to stay in, or I can light the lamp and begin moving forward, step by step, toward a Father who is patiently waiting at the door for me.

Is there a time when Scripture was a lamp for you in a real situation?

B: A verse that has stuck with me for years now is Psalm 46:10. I can think of so many instances where I needed to just "be still and know," and seeing/ rereading this verse always humbles me. What's really cool is that when I was a group leader, I gave a group bible on how this is my favorite verse and campers will still bring it up to me at Camp, retreats or even send me pictures of it if they see it on a sign.

R: Around the age of 15, I was really struggling with understanding Christianity. I was weighed down by questions with no easy answers, or answers that seemed to lead me nowhere. I remember going to Camp and feeling hopeless. It felt like my faith was unfolding only to reveal nothing. I ended up reaching out to my group leader, Adam Foster, through a letter. In his response, at the end of a very encouraging letter, he wrote Proverbs 3:5-6. The words "lean not on your own understanding" stood out to me so clearly and gave me a sense of peace. That Scripture was a light for me. It showed me that I don't have to understand everything to trust God — He may not illuminate the entire path at once, but He lights each step and shows me His goodness along the way.

What are you personally hoping to grow in or learn this summer?

B: I want to be more interruptible. I think that's a trait Jesus has that I really look up to. I want to be present, where my feet are, and easily adjustable.

R: I hope to develop a quieter, more attentive heart, one that listens more than it speaks. By learning to silence my own thoughts and worries, I want to create space for God to work within me, shaping my heart to become more graceful and merciful, strengthening my faith, and leading me toward a greater sense of peace and purpose in serving His kingdom.

Why do you think Camp is important to kids today?

B: At Camp kids can be kids. There is so much "mess" in the world right now, and places like Camp that are focused on the GOOD are so hard to come by. It is a place where kids can find Christ and see first-hand how living for Him changes how you act, benefits your life, and is also super fun.

R: I think that more than anything, kids today need a clear direction. The world is constantly pushing and pulling them in so many different ways, and Camp is a place that centers them because of its foundation in Christ. It provides a safe environment where kids can truly be themselves, step out of their comfort zones, and be creative, and experience genuine love. When someone feels truly safe, they begin to thrive, and kids today need that more than ever.



What comes to mind when you think about Camp operating for almost 70 years?

B: I think it's really cool how the mission of Camp has impacted so many people through the support of so many different people. As Summer Staff members, we have the unique opportunity to directly carry out the mission, but the truth is there are so many other factors and people who help push the mission forward behind the scenes. Camp teaches us a valuable lesson on what it feels like to truly be a part of something bigger than ourselves. It really does take so much prayer, leadership, and wisdom, and Camp Deer Run's network of those kinds of people is unmatched. The Lord has entrusted us with this mission that obviously works, so we owe it to Him to serve with all of our heart. I think that lasts longer than just our time on Staff, and we have great examples that have shown us what that looks like. It gives me so much confidence to know we have so many faithful people behind this mission who are always willing to help.

R: The first thing that comes to mind is the incredible faithfulness of the Lord. I know this operation could only continue through His power alone. The phrase "It's not about me" plays in my head, especially as I reflect on my own contributions over the past couple of years on Staff. It's easy to feel pride or take credit, but I'm reminded of Deuteronomy 6:10-11, which says God will give His people "great and good cities which you did not build...vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant." Like Israel, when we arrive at Camp, we step into something God has already built and blessed. We are here only for a short time, and we did nothing to begin this place. We get the privilege of stewarding it for a season. Every Staff member, camper, and supporter across the decades reflects His provision, and it's a powerful reminder that God's work endures when we trust Him.

Briefly describe the impact Camp has had in your life.

B: From 9 years old to 21, Camp has been a rock in my life. A place that means so much not only to me, but for my whole entire family. It has given me my best friends, my happiest memories, and so many incredible summers. At the same time it has pushed me in every way, helped me heal when I felt broken, and given me valuable experiences that teach me how to be a better believer, man, and future husband and father. I really do love Camp Deer Run.

R: Camp has changed my view of the Lord in so many ways, and in turn, it has changed my life. Every summer, I pray for the ability to see people the way God does, and I am amazed every single time at how He answers that prayer. Camp has taught me to work hard, love others well, be authentic, and experience immense joy through it all. I am forever grateful to be a part of the work of the kingdom at Camp Deer Run.

What would you like the Deer Run family to be praying for as the summer approaches?

B: Pray that those of us in leadership roles lead with gentleness and focus on the mission. Pray that we as the Staff remember what is important and don't let anything else get in the way of that mission. Pray for safety and peace for the campers coming in and that they leave with a deeper understanding of who Christ is. For me personally, I would like prayers for wisdom — always.

R: I would love for the Deer Run family to be praying over all the preparation that goes into this summer, for each Staff member as they step into Camp, often in new roles, and for every camper who will run through the gates. I pray that the campers would feel safe, known, and beloved; that their hearts would be open to what the Lord has for them. Above all, I pray for love that goes beyond ourselves, that truly sees others, and for peace that surpasses all understanding to fill this summer.





member spotlight

EMILY FOSTER ABRAMS is a second generation Deer Runner. She was a camper throughout her childhood and in 2020 she joined the Summer Staff, following the footsteps of her older brothers Rob and Cody. Emily met her husband, Micah Abrams, when working together on Staff. They now live in Sherman and attend the Van Alstyne Church of Christ.

How did you first get introduced to Camp Deer Run?

I was first introduced to Camp by my dad, David Foster, who camped from 1978-1987. I also followed in both my big brother's footsteps, Rob and Cody Foster, as campers and counselors.

What is the most important lesson you learned from your time at Camp Deer Run?

The most important lesson I learned from Camp is the importance of intentional and uninterrupted time with God. At 9 years old, as a camper, I was introduced to "quiet time". Then, as a counselor, we were given 30 minutes each day to find a place around Camp to spend time with God called "vine time". Vine time was a requirement on Staff, but it quickly turned into a time that I craved and a time that refilled my cup. There were also a couple occasions where Ty sent us on vine time for multiple hours, even into the night. I remember wondering what I would spend hours doing alone in the woods of Camp, and ended up feeling the closest to God that I had ever felt. Vine time taught me that God will bless your time with Him and there should never be a season in my life when I am too busy to give Him that.





How have the relationships you've made through Camp continued to play a part in your life post-Camp?

The relationships I've made at Camp have blessed me so much in my adult life. From having Camp friends that I camped and counseled with as my bridesmaids to ultimately marrying my husband, Micah Abrams, who I met at Camp the summer of 2021, I feel like I hit the jackpot! When I got on Staff, a few of the girls (Abby Jameson, Campbell Barnett, & Ashlyn Smith) made the gazebo our meeting place when we felt overwhelmed, needed prayers, or just wanted a friend to talk to. We ultimately coined the nickname "Gazebo Girls" and they have become pillars of support in my life. Although we do not have a physical gazebo anymore, we still see each other as often as possible and use our group chat to stay in touch!

Why is it important to you to support Camp Deer Run now?

It is so important for Micah and I to support Camp because we want generations to come to get to experience the blessings of Camp that we experienced. Our dream is that when our future kids go to Camp, they get to make lifelong friends and learn so many of the valuable lessons about the Lord that we learned. I also still have younger cousins camping and on Staff and I want them to feel the support I felt when I was in their shoes, whether monetarily or just knowing that someone is praying over their Camp experience!

What's your fondest memory of Camp?

My fondest memory of Camp is Cowboy Day night canteen! Being an Aggie, I loved any chance I got to teach or be taught some line dancing!! I also just loved the energy of the kids after coming back from a cookout!

How did God use your time at Camp to shape your faith as an adult?

God used my time at Camp to shape my faith today through all of the mentors I was blessed with during my 12 years in the pines. From my group leaders and counselors as a camper, to the different tools and devotionals Ty equipped us with at Staff orientation, and all of my fellow Staff along the way. There are so many inspiring testimonies and wisdom I will carry with me forever from all of these amazing people. I know that no matter how far out I get from being a camper or on Staff, I will always carry the truth I learned and the love I felt from being a Deer Runner!

pray with us

PLEASE CUT OUT THIS PRAYER LIST AND
PLACE IT SOMEWHERE YOU'LL SEE IT
OFTEN AND BE REMINDED TO
PRAY FOR CAMP!





Thanksgiving

STAFF HIRING

We mentioned this in the previous issue of the magazine, but now that Staff hiring for the summer of 2026 is officially complete, we feel like it's fitting to mention it again. God has assembled an incredible group of young people to serve our campers this summer, and we could not be more excited to see what He does through them. Join us in thanking God for providing these Christian men and women to build His Kingdom through this mission.

CAMPER REGISTRATION

Your prayers for our 2026 Registration season were certainly answered! We had an incredibly smooth and successful registration day, and the time that has followed has continued in that trend! We have no doubt that God's hand was over this, and over all of the hard work from our office staff that made it possible.

"ALONG THE ROAD" PROJECT

We are so grateful for the amazing ways that God provided for Camp through our end of year fundraising project to repave the Camp Road. The generosity of the Deer Run family was unbelievable, and thanks to all of you, we have been able to complete the first phase of the road project. We hope you will come out and give it a test drive this summer!

Petitions

STAFF TRAINING

The summer is coming up quickly, and our Staff are getting started on their preparations for the summer! Please pray for these young men and women, that God would give them wisdom, courage, creativity, patience, and energy this summer to change lives for Him. Please also pray for their health and safety this summer - 10 weeks at Camp Deer Run can come with a lot of wear and tear!

SUMMER 2026 CAMPERS

As always, we ask for your prayers throughout the Spring and Summer for our campers. We pray for their safety at Camp and that they would have so much fun, get a break from the stresses and anxiety of daily life, and most importantly, encounter Jesus in a life-changing way! Please pray that God would be working in them as he prepares them for their experience for this summer, and that they would find exactly what he has planned for them when they arrive.

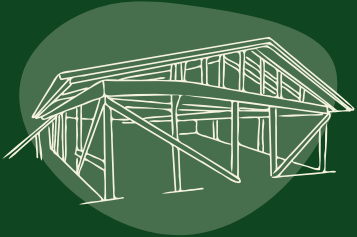
FUTURE LEADERSHIP

With Ty's recent resignation, the Board of Camp Deer Run has a tall task ahead of them in determining the future leadership, structure, and direction for Camp. Please pray for them as they work toward those decisions, and for the rest of the full-time staff who will keep the operation on track in the meantime!

Camp Deer Run

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