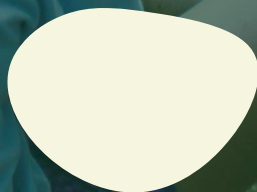


GOOD THINGS

a rafters project magazine



RAFTERSPROJECT

Contents

3 **Flagpole Devo**

BY KYLE THOMPSON



5 **Swing through the Years**

A LOOK BACK AT THE HISTORY OF THE SWING

7 **Connections**

MEET OUR NEWEST FULL TIME STAFF MEMBER

11 **Member Spotlight**

MARYN HEMPHILL

13 **Prayer**



Director's Letter

God is faithful. God is good. God is loving, kind, caring, thoughtful, and just. He is a good Father! God is a refuge and strength. God is my light, my salvation, and the stronghold of my life. God is holy and most high. Have you thought about God and his amazing qualities?

Our world is fast-paced, chaotic, busy, and cluttered with messages. We can be overwhelmed by so many commitments. We can easily wear out by running around trying to get it all done. Do you relate to any of that?

I hope this magazine will give you a reason to slow down today. Slow down and think about Good Things going on at Camp Deer Run. Slow down and consider the greatness of our Heavenly Father. As I said, our God is so wonderful, mighty and magnificent but somehow in all the busyness, I can dwell far too much on to-do's, worries or stress instead of dwelling on Him.

"BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD." PSALM 46:10

Recently, at the Summer Staff Retreat, I asked the Staff to consider what quality of God He might want them to be still and know or remember about Him. Be still and know that I am _____. Loving, kind, compassionate, faithful, etc. I hope that thought blesses you today. I hope you can slow down today and fill in this blank... Be still and know that I am _____.

Camp Deer Run provides kids with this very experience. Kids have the chance to get away, be still, hear God's voice and remember or know that He is God. Your generosity is vital to our efforts to provide this experience for our campers. Thank you for your continual support of this precious mission.

I hope you have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

In Him,





flagpole devo

BY KYLE THOMPSON

STAFF 2012-2017 & RAFTERS PROJECT MEMBER

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." John 14:27

What is your idea of peace?

For me, it is sitting in front of the Crafts Hall at Camp. I would be helping a camper learn the ways of the lanyardsmith (if that is a word). In the moments of pause, I look up and take in the scenes of Camp. One group is on the Canteen Porch having their snacks and swapping stories of a hard-fought game of capture the flag. Others are enjoying the pool on a hot East Texas summer day. Some are gathered outside their cabin for Cabin Bible.

Whatever comes to your mind when you think of peace, whether it is a memory from Camp or relaxing on the beach, one thing is certain: we all want peace. Jesus said that he would leave His peace for His followers, and He contrasts this with what the world offers us instead. Maybe stop and consider for a moment all the things that the world gives. Do you have a slight sinking feeling in your stomach like me? It is interesting to think that the world would give anything.

A more accurate way to think about it may be to ask what the world takes away. This might just be the point Jesus is making.

The Hebrew word for peace is “shalom.” Jesus, like any Jewish teacher, would certainly know this. But to say that shalom just means peace is to sell it short of its fullest definition. The better translation of shalom is to be wholly unified with God and others. I believe this is why Camp is such a special place for so many. Camp is a place where people experience the shalom that Jesus promised, where the connection

with both God and others is palpable. But the good news is that this isn’t something that can only be true of Camp.

Recently, I have been focusing a lot on the various ways Jesus invited people to follow him. My current favorite comes from Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to

“You are not alone. Jesus has invited us all to lay our burdens down and follow Him together.”

me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

If you are anything like me, then you often feel a disconnect between this invitation and what your day to day life actually looks like. How are we to find the sort of peace we experience at places like Camp in the midst of such a chaotic world? How are we to be wholly unified with God and others when the world is constantly giving, or taking, things that distract us from Jesus?

The answers are simple, yet challenging to practice. The first is to receive the gift of peace that Jesus offers in John 14. This gift is the Holy Spirit, God dwelling in you, helping you to find peace in the present world. The second is easy to miss when reading the Mathew 11 passage. Jesus calls “all who labor and are heavy laden.”

You are not alone. Jesus has invited us all to lay our burdens down and follow Him together. Lean into the community of believers around you. As you go about your day, take upon you the easy yoke of Jesus. Receive His gift of peace through the Holy Spirit. Take part in the restoration of all things by joining with other believers in the ways of Jesus. In doing so, may you become a person of peace in this world of chaos.



Th



60s & 70s

80s & 90s

the Swing

THROUGH THE YEARS

Do you have a swing story or photos from your days at Camp Deer Run? We'd love to hear about it! Email us at office@campdeerrun.com with your Swing memories!



90s & 00s

10s & 20s

connections

MEET CAIN LANGHOFF, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

We're excited to introduce you to Cain Langhoff, the newest member of our full-time staff. He will be taking on the brand-new role of Director of Development. But that's skipping ahead a little bit. Let's look at Cain's story through his many years at Camp Deer Run, from PeeWee camper to Summer Staff Member to Director of Development today.

As a Winnsboro native, Cain Langhoff has been around Camp Deer Run for almost as long as he can remember. He started his Camp career as a PeeWee, then jumped right into a two-week session when he turned nine in 2005, following in the footsteps of his older sisters, Alex and Amber. But he didn't fall in love with Deer Run immediately.

"I liked Camp. I was never homesick or anything. But I was never one of those kids who just couldn't wait to come back."

Luckily, in 2010, he started attending 4th Session and met some people that would change everything. Many of the other boys in his cabin that summer would be the same people he camped with until he graduated and even his coworkers on Staff.

He remembers specifically that his counselor, John McAree, made a big impact with his lessons that summer. Enough of an impact to lead Cain to be baptized when he got home from Camp.

"I remember that John spent the majority of our time in Cabin Bible that summer focusing on prayer. It was the first time that I can remember really having an understanding of what prayer

was and how influential it could be in my relationship with God."

After that session, he became "one of those kids who just couldn't wait to come back."

"After that summer, I started to feel drawn back to Camp. I was always looking forward to what would come next. I was always pumped to come back."





He says that most of his favorite Camp memories as a kid came from cookouts.

"Cookouts were a time when you really learned to just talk to people. It's not super organized, but you sit there around the fire and eat hot dogs and just talk. And after Camp, I would always just crave that kind of conversation."

His senior summer ended his camping career with a bang. He was

in a close-knit group of guys, led by their counselor Briggs Burt.

"My senior year had a big impact on me and helped me to see the value in building relationships with people. It made me really fall in love with the value of friendship with people who are following Jesus alongside you."

Looking back, he sees his own evolution through those camper years from a background observer to someone who was not only comfortable with himself but also comfortable being in community with other people.

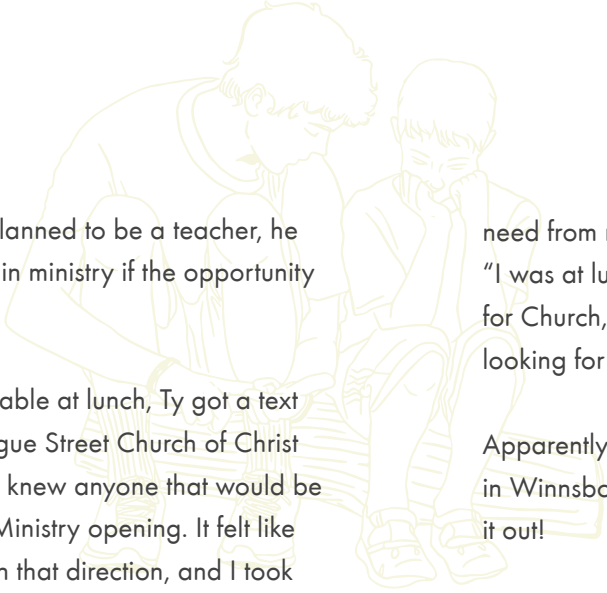
He began his first year on Summer Staff in 2015 and had a cabin of boys during 2nd Session that he made a strong connection with and had the privilege of counseling again the next summer. In his later Staff years as a Group Leader and Program Director, he was blessed to baptize a few of those boys, and it was another moment of realizing the importance of strong relationships.

"You know, we didn't communicate at all during the school year, these are young kids so it's not like you're texting them or communicating on social media, but just being their counselor again the next summer made that connection even stronger. Even this past summer I saw one of those guys, and it just made me so happy."

Throughout his time on Staff, he continued grow in his relationships with campers, with the other Staff members, and with God. And in 2017, he became the Cheuk Group Leader. He claims that summer as one of his favorites.

"I loved it so much that I made the decision that summer that I wanted to be a 3rd or 4th grade teacher. Also, the guys in the Hilton that summer are still some of my closest friends today."

Jumping ahead to life after Camp, Cain spent a semester abroad in Tanzania helping at an orphanage there. When he returned to the States, he remembers having lunch with Ty Ford in Winnsboro and



mentioning that while he still planned to be a teacher, he wouldn't turn down a position in ministry if the opportunity ever came up.

"While we were sitting at the table at lunch, Ty got a text from the Youth Minister at League Street Church of Christ in Sulphur Springs asking if he knew anyone that would be a good fit for their Children's Ministry opening. It felt like God was clearly leading me in that direction, and I took that job and stayed there until COVID hit."

It was through that job and his relationships at League Street that Cain would meet his wife, Camri. When the pandemic came, Cain felt called again toward his original goal of being a teacher, and he became a 4th grade teacher after all. But after a couple of years teaching, another opportunity called to him.

In 2022, Cain and Camri bought some of his family's chicken farms, and Cain quit teaching to work full-time on the farm with his dad. He admits that it was a little bit of a roller coaster ride jumping from job to job, but ultimately, it led him here.

This year, his family decided to downsize their cattle operation, and with the chicken farms mostly taken care of by their hired hands, Cain found himself with not much left to do. He started praying for a new direction. He kept telling Camri that he just wished there was some way that he could be helping Camp. She urged him to call and reach out, but he kept telling her, "No, there's nothing they

need from me right now." It turns out, there was.

"I was at lunch in Winnsboro again, after visiting my family for Church, and I was telling Ryan Terry about how I was looking for a job, and he told me that Camp was hiring."

Apparently if you're not sure about your future plans, lunch in Winnsboro with Camp friends is a great place to figure it out!

"As soon as he told me that, I looked over at Camri, and she was already giving me a look, because we had talked all summer about how I just had this yearning to be back at Camp. And right then at the end of the summer when

I was really needing to figure out what I was going to do next, this opportunity presented itself."

He went home and looked at the job description for the new Director of Development position and felt like this was exactly what he had been

looking for.

"Camri and I read the job description and we both just felt like I fit almost everything they were looking for. So, I sent in my resume and reached out to Ty. We spent a couple week praying about it, and by the end, we both felt like not only was this an answered prayer but that it was God actively pulling me in this direction."

Cain felt passionately that not just his own Camp story but his whole life story was leading him to this role.

"I'm supposed to lead others to Christ and model that lifestyle. It was so clear to me that this is what I was supposed to do."

"I'm passionate about Camp Deer Run and its mission. I've seen the impact that it's had on my life and on others as well. And now that I'm a father myself, I want to make sure that Camp and other places like it are here not only for my kids but for his kids and generations to come."

Cain began his role in October of this year and is hard at work to cultivate and develop the support for Camp Deer Run that will ensure that not only this generation, but every generation to come, will have an opportunity to experience God here.

It's no coincidence that one of Camp Deer Run's biggest impacts on Cain's life was to show him the value of Godly relationships. Through his time at Camp in all the various roles he played, from camper to Staff to Group Leader to Program Director to now, God has shown him and grown a desire in him to connect to people and their passions and their walk with Christ.

"I believe that when you trust God, he puts you on the right path. At every stage, God has been teaching me things that would help me in the next phase."

In Cain's words, the work he'll be doing is actually very similar to the work he did on Staff.

"On check-in Sunday when a parent drops off their kid, they're entrusting to you something that is extremely

important to them, and they expect you to steward it well. You have to shake their hand and show them that you deserve their trust. It's the same thing as the Director of Development. When I work with our donors, I want them to trust that the resources that they have been blessed with and worked so hard for, that they are entrusting to us, will be stewarded well. I want them to be able to trust that what they're entrusting us with will be used to the greatest possible benefit of God's Kingdom."

We hope that you'll join us in welcoming Cain to our team, and that you'll cover him in prayer as he goes about this important work. As a member of the Rafter's Project, you'll definitely be hearing from him soon, and we hope that you'll be as blessed by his friendship as we have been.

"When you trust God with your life, he puts you on the right path. At every stage, God has been teaching me things that would help me in the next place."



Cain, Camri, and Judson Langhoff

Member Spotlight

MARYN EVANS HEMPHILL and her husband, Jay, are both lifelong Deer Runners. After their camping years, they both served as Summer Staff for multiple summers. Today, they live in Longview, Texas with their two kids, Nelle and Evans, and attend Pine Tree Church of Christ.



What is your background with Camp Deer Run?

My mom, Gail (Roberts) Evans, was invited to apply for staff by friends while attending Abilene Christian University. She worked two summers and the rest was history! I grew up going to camp with my sister, Marlee (Evans) Wilhelm, starting as a PeeWee! We always looked forward to camp every summer as campers and eventually staff members. My husband, Jay Hemphill, also grew up going to camp and was on staff.

Why is Camp Deer Run Important?

It is a different way to experience God outside of the conventional routine and leadership. It's not just the teaching of 'Jesus is important,' but it's the lived experience where faith and action intersect and you understand Jesus is IMPORTANT.

What is something God taught you through Camp Deer Run?

Abiding with Christ is fun, leads to ultimate freedom, and is life-giving! And it's really, really fun!

What made you decide to become a monthly donor?

So much of my faith was shaped by my years spent at Camp Deer Run. My husband and I believe God is at work through Camp still today, and we want to be a part of that mission as it continues to grow and impact new campers each year!

Do you have a favorite Camp memory?

When I walk around different places at camp, instead of recalling a memory - it's a feeling that encapsulates several moments experienced there that comes over me. When I stand on the canteen porch, it's all the crazy moments of creating random chants to scream at the top of your lungs. When I sit in the rec hall, I am connected to the praises that were lifted in times of joy, sorrow, and exhaustion. When I walk next to Killi Creek, my body sort of aches from the belly flops and my nose can smell that 'creek stench' that overtakes your laundry – but that part may not be imagined.

When my sister and I first started camping, Cole Ford (our Cheuk group leader at the time) dubbed us the Gonzaga sisters (as we had showed up to camp in Gonzaga University shirts). For the next couple of years, we would return each summer to a staff member calling us the Gonzaga sisters or the Evans sisters. That moment, and others like it, are the reason for those feelings experienced now as an adult when I visit camp. It's a moment where, as a kid, you are shown that you are seen and important by those you admire and look up to - but ultimately, by your Creator. It's a moment that transcends time – one that builds your confidence as you grow, but that also serves as a tether should you ever lose your way.

How is Camp Deer Run relevant to your life today?

As a mother of two, I want for my children to be exposed to Christians outside of our church and home that can share the Gospel with them. I want them to know another place where they can ask questions, experience God, and understand their identity in Christ.





PRAY WITH US



Thanksgiving

STAFF APPLICATIONS

Our first round of Staff Applications were due November 14th, and we were blessed to have more than 60 prospective staff members apply. We thank God for the ways he is already working to form our 2025 Summer Staff.

NEW FULL-TIME STAFF

This year we have added two new members to our year-round staff. Campbell Barnett was hired as the Office Manager just after finishing her final summer on staff as PeeWee Mama in August. Cain Langhoff joined the team in October as our Director of Development. We're thankful for these incredible new additions to the team and for the ways that God will use them to advance this mission!

NEW RAFTERS PROJECT MEMBERS

At the time of printing, the number of Rafters Project members has reached 173 families. We have been blessed to see consistent growth in this group that is so important to the work we're doing here at Camp Deer Run. We are thankful for all of our new members, but also for all 173 families who make up this amazing group.

Petitions

FUNDRAISING

We are right in the middle of our end-of-year fundraising (or should we say FUNraising) campaign. Please join us in prayer that God would provide for Camp Deer Run through the generosity of the Deer Run family. We pray that we can meet and exceed our end-of-year fundraising goals.

STAFF HIRING

While we are blessed to have many staff members already hired for next summer, staff hiring will be ongoing through February. Please pray that God would bring together a great group of young people to serve Him at Deer Run this summer, and please pray that those involved in the hiring decisions would be blessed with wisdom and discernment in their decision making.

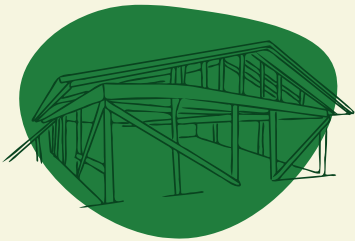
CAMP MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Our new Camp Management Software will go live in January. This transition has come with a lot of hard work from our office staff, and we are excited to see all the ways that it will improve the experience of every Deer Runner. But there is also plenty of stress and anxiety that comes along with making this transition. Please pray for our staff who are hard at work to make this possible, for all the families who will be using the new system, and for a successful transition.

Camp Deer Run

1227 CR 4590

Winnsboro, TX 75494



RAFTERS**PROJECT**

WWW.CAMPDEERRUN.COM