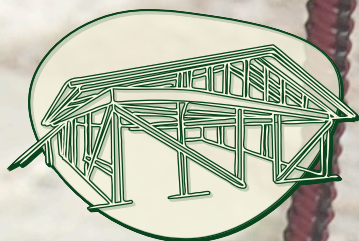


GOOD THINGS

camp deer run



RAFTERSPROJECT

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Letter from the Director

Deer Run Family,

Wow! What a summer!

First, I want to say thank you for the incredible support you've shown throughout this season. I have been truly blessed by this community. Y'all have encouraged me, my family, our full-time staff, and our summer staff through texts, phone calls, prayer, and countless conversations. We genuinely felt your prayers and support every step of the way. Thank you for faithfully standing beside us and partnering with us in this mission. We could not have done this without you.

Second, what an incredible summer it has been! I have the unique privilege of seeing God's work unfold every day through our staff as they invest in the lives of our campers. Whether in the laughter of kids simply being kids or during quiet moments of worship, devotion, and discipleship, God has been at work. Every moment has been an opportunity for Him to draw campers closer to Himself, and I am incredibly thankful to witness it firsthand.

This summer, we have seen campers take steps of faith, friendships built on the foundation of Christ, and lives transformed by the gospel. It has been a joy to watch our staff faithfully love, serve, and point each camper to Jesus with humility and enthusiasm. These moments remind us why Camp Deer Run exists—to create opportunities to encounter Christ and grow in relationship with Him.

As we wrap up another incredible summer, I am reminded that none of this happens on its own. God has been so faithful. Thank you for partnering with us in the ministry of Camp Deer Run. We are excited to see how God continues to work in the months ahead, and we are grateful to have you prayerfully supporting us every step of the way!

With gratitude,
Morgan Ohrmundt





flagpole devo

BY CALEB BRYANT
RAFTERS PROJECT MEMBER, SUMMER STAFF MEMBER 2013-2017

When I think of Camp Deer Run, the first image that comes to mind is of Killi Creek. Growing up in McKinney, TX, I didn't have many opportunities to experience true wilderness. I'd maybe catch a glimpse during visits to family in Daingerfield, a fishing trip on the lake, or a weekend at a state park. These moments came and went, and often left me wanting more wilderness. I always knew I'd see it again at Deer Run, along Killi Creek.

As a child, I appreciated that creek for all the fun I had there – catching crawfish in 2-liter bottles leftover from canteen, donning war paint and setting out on a “beaver hunt” during cabin activity, or belly-flopping with reckless abandon into six inches of water. Killi Creek brought out the simplest joy in me (as it still does today for many others), not because it involved getting covered in copious amounts of mud, but because our Creator made it so.



“I realized that nature is intentionally and perfectly made. It sustains us, gives us peace, and in the creek’s case, gives us memories of good times and a peek into God’s heart.”

Psalms 19:1-4 says “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Later on, Killi Creek represented much more to me than fun. I realized that nature is intentionally and perfectly made. It sustains us, gives us peace, and in the creek’s case, gives us memories of good times and a peek into God’s heart. The best memories are of time spent in stillness and prayer while listening to the babble of the clear water. He has called us not only to appreciate His creation, but to conserve and sustain them.

I am a forester now, a passion I owe in large part to the Pineywoods at the end of CR 4590. Everywhere I go, I see my Creator’s care for me and every living thing.

Through generations, Camp Deer Run has nurtured our affection for pure and simple fun in the wilderness. I have so much to thank Camp Deer Run for – emboldening my walk with the Lord, introducing me to my wife, blessing me with lifelong friendships and memories, and helping me find my calling.

I look forward to my next visit to Killi Creek, or wherever else I see God through His creation.

“Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads”
–Henry David Thoreau, Walden (1854)



Every summer, thousands of children at Camp Deer Run are empowered to build
LIFELONG MEMORIES, FRIENDS, AND FAITH.

When we build these things at Camp, they are
BUILT TO LAST.



PROJECTS

REBUILD BOTH BATHHOUSES

Replace failing facilities with higher-capacity, easy-to-clean, durable, and sanitary bathhouses on both sides of Camp.

RENOVATE OLD MESS HALL

Convert it into a full medical station on one side, a permanent gift shop on the other, and add new restrooms.

100+ ACRE LAND PURCHASE

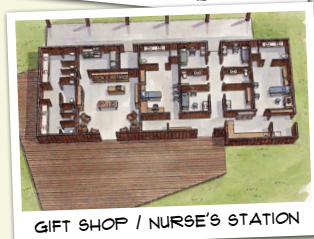
Protect Camp's seclusion by securing adjacent land, some available for the first time in 60 years.

GOAL:

\$3.5 MILLION



BATHHOUSE



GIFT SHOP / NURSE'S STATION

TIMELINE

BOYS' BATHHOUSE
CONSTRUCTION
AUG 2026-MAY 2027

\$3.5 MILLION RAISED BY
END OF 2026

GIRLS' BATHHOUSE
CONSTRUCTION
AUG 2027-MAY 2028

OLD MESS HALL
REMODEL
2028 - 2029

PROJECT COMPLETE
SUMMER 2029

Join us as we take the last major steps to build an infrastructure for Camp that will allow thousands of campers, present and future, to build memories, friendships, and faith that last. We're not changing Camp. We're making sure that it's here to stay, and

BUILT TO LAST.



RAFTERS PROJECT

15%

AMOUNT OF OUR SUMMER
CAMP COSTS COVERED BY
THE RAFTERS PROJECT

Camp Deer Run is one of the most affordable resident summer camps in our area, but it's not because our expenses are lower. We have always set our prices well below the actual cost of providing Camp. Currently, our camper fees only cover 85% of our operating expenses.

The result: more families can afford to give their children the life-changing experience of a week or two at Deer Run.

The cost: a 15% budget gap every year.

So how do we pay the bills? Well, that's you! Monthly donations from the Rafters Project cover that 15% gap and support the everyday needs of Camp. In short, YOU keep the lights on and water running, and in that simple act, change thousands of lives every summer.



WHAT YOUR MONTHLY GIFT COVERS

Monthly Gift

Yearly Total

What this gift covered in 2026

\$25/month

\$300

Milk Crates for Crate Stacking

For our newest ropes activity at Camp: Crate Stacking!

\$50/month

\$600

Pool supplies and chemicals for the summer

A whole summer's worth of pool cleaning supplies

\$100/month

\$1,200

Photo printing materials

Photo paper and ink to print group photos for campers to take home

\$150/month

\$1,800

Two new cameras

Replaced broken/outdated Camp cameras

\$200/month

\$2,400

Summer Staff Wages

Covers one Staff member's wages for the summer



and



she



did



Nine days before 2nd Session 2026, Annie Henderson was in a wheelchair, paralyzed from the waist down. From her wheelchair, she started packing her bags for Camp, unsure yet if she could even go, but determined to get there.

Annie's seventh-grade year was anything but normal. In the fall, she started to experience frequent, unexplained pain – everything from her knee to her stomach to severe migraines. The pain got so severe that her parents, Melanie and Brad, had to rush her to the ER multiple times. But these visits gave them no answers and Annie no relief.

Eventually, Annie was diagnosed with a neurological condition called Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS). Her doctor recommended a treatment that she began in November. The treatment seemed successful and gave her a pain-free week for the first time in months. Sadly, it didn't last.

"About a week after that treatment, she got just a mild case of the flu that took her down for a couple days, but nothing major," her mom recalled. "But after that everything got a lot worse, and she started having trouble functioning some days."

As time went on, Annie's condition began to progress in a terrifying direction. She started having seizures and fainting spells. More testing gave her a clean bill of health, but all of her symptoms persisted and were actually getting worse. She left the hospital in a wheelchair, unable to use her legs.

"She was having frequent seizures, fainting spells, and paralysis," Melanie explained. "The rest of her body would wake up, but her legs wouldn't."

She was missing weeks of school. She missed her big seventh-grade trip, dance classes, athletics, birthday parties, holidays – she was missing it all.

The year went on, and the seizures continued. Some even temporarily left her completely paralyzed – unable to swallow,

unable to move anything but her eyes. She was physically healthy, but her brain was out of sync with the rest of her body.

After a hospital stay in May, Annie was diagnosed with Functional Neurological Disorder (FND), a broader diagnosis that encompassed her earlier CRPS plus a wider range of other neurological issues. But with the new diagnosis came the hope of a new treatment that would “teach her brain to stop the loop of symptoms, redirect them, and get control back.”

2nd Session at Camp Deer Run was now only a few weeks away, but Annie was determined to be there on her own two feet.

Annie had attended 2nd Session at Camp Deer Run for the first time the summer before, in 2025. One session was all it took. She was hooked.

“The day she got home, she just couldn’t stop talking about it. She told us to put it on the calendar for next summer, that she wanted to go back to the same session with the same people,” Melanie said. “It was a huge milestone for her independence. I think she would choose Camp over vacation or anything. It became the top of the list of all the things she loves.”

Now, as the summer and the session she’d been looking forward to for a year approached, everything was uncertain.

“She was in a wheelchair, but she was

telling everyone how excited she was for Camp,” Melanie said. “I was struggling with how to tell her we weren’t sure that was going to happen. I didn’t want to break her heart.”

Her doctor told them that going to Camp the next month wasn’t impossible, but that it would take a lot of hard and painful work.

“We couldn’t have had a better ‘carrot on a stick’ to motivate her than Deer Run, but there was also potential for the biggest disappointment if she couldn’t do it,” her mom said. “We prayed about it a lot. Even her two older brothers, who have never been to Camp, were devastated by the thought of her missing it. They were praying too.”

But even if the treatment worked, Melanie and Brad were hesitant to send her off to Camp. Ultimately, they decided that if she physically could, she should. They believed Camp was what she needed.

About two weeks after beginning the new therapy, Melanie asked Annie, “What is your goal?”

Annie replied, “I want to get out of this wheelchair. I am going to do it.”

And she did.

“She worked so hard – literally sweating, out of breath, just trying to stand up and make her brain talk to her legs again,” Melanie recounted. “And she did it. She

was out of the chair, and was able to get most of the feeling back.”

Annie had done her part, but Melanie wasn’t sure if Camp would even be comfortable with her staying, given the circumstances. She called the Camp office and explained everything to Morgan, our Interim Executive Director, and asked if Annie could still come to Camp. Morgan consulted with Dr. Joe David Bowers, a Camp Deer Run board member and practicing neurologist. After getting approval from Annie’s doctor, everyone agreed. Annie would attend 2nd Session.

“If it had been any other camp, I think they probably would have said no,” Melanie said. “And I would have totally understood. But the willingness to give her a chance was huge for our whole family.”

At the end of May, Annie was in a wheelchair, unable to move her legs. But on June 7th, she walked to her cabin on her own two feet. No wheelchair in sight.



Her parents wanted her to have the full Camp experience, but they also wanted to be sure that if anything did happen, one of them would be nearby. So when Annie was moved into Women's 3, Melanie unpacked her things at a nearby Airbnb and got ready for a Deer Run experience of her own.

"The goal was for her to be as independent as possible, but also make sure that if anything happened, she could get what she needed without me being in the way. Ideally, without her even knowing that accommodations were being made," Melanie explained. "We wanted her brain to recognize that she was safe, but without seeing mom hovering around."

So 2nd Session began, and Annie had an incredible two weeks at Camp while her mom got the unique opportunity as a parent to have a front-row seat to it all.

Annie did have a couple of minor episodes during the session, but was able to enjoy Camp mostly unbothered by her FND. Before Camp, seizures and fainting episodes were daily occurrences. It wasn't uncommon for Annie to have multiple seizures in a day.

"She had one seizure the first week of Camp, and that was it," Melanie said.

"She fainted a few times but I don't even know that the other campers noticed. She had that one seizure, and one episode of paralysis that lasted a little while, but her symptoms actually improved while she was at Camp."

During the session, Annie threw off all of the things that had been limiting her all year. She ran and played like every other camper, despite some pain in her leg. It felt so good to be active and on her feet that she hardly slowed down to notice it. It was only after she got home that she brought it up. An MRI revealed that the pain she was playing through was actually a broken bone – in two different places.

"She came into Camp with some pain – we think she had deconditioned and lost some bone density from the paralysis. But she just ran on it the whole time anyway because she wanted to participate so much," Melanie explained. "But she was actually thrilled that that was the answer, because it wasn't about the FND. That's something that heals, it's not complicated."

From the Hendersons' perspective, a broken bone was easy. FND? Not so much. But when they picked Annie up from Camp, FND was barely even on her radar.

"When I picked her up, she didn't even mention FND – like it was a non-issue," she



said. "She just wanted to tell me all about everything that happened. I know it was a struggle, and there were things she was having to work on, but for her, it was very much in the background."

Instead of coming home worn down by her two weeks at Camp like many may have expected, she came home mended in more ways than her parents ever imagined.

"At her age, almost 13, kids are gaining independence so fast, and we were rapidly approaching that independence when she just lost all of it overnight," Melanie said. "She came back from Camp with her independence and confidence not only restored, but even greater than it was before all of this. After walking through what she'd just done, getting to just go be a kid at Camp – to not have her participation be all about her struggle, just getting to be a part of the group – was exactly what she needed."

Before Camp, so much about Annie's future was uncertain. But after Camp, all of that anxiety began to fade.

"We had all kinds of questions. Will she be able to drive? Will she ever be able to be home alone?" Melanie reflected. "That all got answered really quickly. Camp could not have gone better for her. She came back with a maturity that I think kids develop at Camp from their relationships with the staff, seeing them modeling faith and service, and making that look like something they want in their future. She came home challenged and motivated to dig deeper into her faith, but also just having the freedom to play and be a kid. That has been so sweet."

For most families, this would be the end of the story. But don't forget, Annie wasn't the only member of the Henderson family at 2nd Session this summer.

Melanie only ended up staying around Camp for a week before heading back home, but what she observed in that time gave her an even greater appreciation for what her daughter, and so many other children, experience at Camp.

The observations she shared from her week at Camp draw this story to a much better conclusion than ours ever could. So, we'll let them speak for themselves.

"Getting to stay close by, I actually hadn't thought much about it because it was such a sprint – such a whirlwind of hospital stays, the paralysis, getting her there, praying a lot – I didn't have a lot of prep

"You do more, experience more, see more, grow more, learn more than you do in the same number of hours outside of Camp."

time," she said. "It actually ended up being so sweet to me."

"I could hear constant joy. I could hear the kids singing, hear the kids laughing and yelling and chanting across Camp. I knew when they were doing big group games because you could hear it from a mile away. Just the sounds of kids playing, constant activity – I could just tell they were having a blast and making memories. No matter where I was in the campground I could hear kids having a blast, and you could hear the staff joining in with them all the time. The sounds of Camp were kind of a soundtrack in the background.

"And just watching how hard the staff works... Man, they are pouring their heart and soul into what they're doing. It's hard work with a lot of kids all at once. All different stories and backgrounds.

"Kids come with all kinds of things going on in their life, and you just never know. It's sometimes hard to see what's going on because kids look okay. And that's part of the nature of Annie's FND. She looks fine, but sometimes her brain is doing some really weird stuff and she's having to work really hard to be present. But there's something about time being different at Camp. You do more, experience more, see

more, grow more, learn more than you do in the same number of hours outside of Camp.

"There's an acceleration, I think, in getting to be in that environment. Annie left home with some pretty tender, kind of recent wounds and scars, and she came back seeming like a lot of those had healed pretty quickly. She had been able to recover so much faster because of the Camp environment.

"It was a really sweet experience for me to get to be a fly on the wall a little bit and get little glimpses into what you guys are doing.

We're just blown away – it could not have gone better, and we can't thank you guys enough. We're so thankful the Lord allowed her to have this experience. I think it changed the trajectory of the rest of middle school for her."



The Henderson Family

member spotlight

JAYMIE SPENCER PHILLIPS has been around Camp as long as she can remember. Her parents, Jay and Gay Spencer, have been heavily involved with Camp her whole life. She did it all in her Camp career, from PeeWees to Camper to Summer Staff to Head Women's Counselor. Jaymie and her husband Kory now live and ranch in Lewistown, MT, with their children Kanyon, Quinn, and Jaylie.



How did you first get introduced to Camp Deer Run?

I have never known life without Camp Deer Run. My Grandpa helped build some of the buildings at Camp back in the 60's. My parents both grew up camping and eventually worked on staff where they met each other in the 70's. I remember meeting up with other CDR families at work days out at Camp in the 80's and early 90's. I have great memories of my family hosting staff weekends throughout my childhood. I finally got MY turn to go to Camp in 1989 and got introduced to Camp Deer Run for myself. I spent the next 15 years experiencing Camp as a camper and a staff member.

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

I was raised by incredible parents. I was brought up in a church where I felt loved and encouraged. I have an amazing immediate family as well as a great big extended family on both sides with a rich heritage of faith and family. I had an incredible experience at a Christian college where I lived out life and faith in my early adult years. All of those people and places built me as a person of faith. Camp Deer Run took that person and taught me to move. My foundation was great but I'm not sure I would've learned what to do with my faith without my time at CDR. As a camper, I saw what life could look like as I got older and continued to follow Jesus. From the time I was eight years old, even if I felt alone, I knew that I wasn't alone. I knew my Camp friends were out there trying to live for Jesus too. I knew the staff members that I looked up to had done it before me, so I knew I could do it too. Having counselors who invested in me

gave me confidence and courage through the time of life when things are scary and it can be really hard to be sure of yourself.

As a staff member I learned how to work really hard to make something good for other people. I learned how to stretch myself to relate to all kinds of kids in all kinds of places in life. I also learned how to make something out of nothing, how to efficiently serve a lot of hot dogs to a lot of kids in a little amount of time, and how to throw a game together to help pass the time. I learned how to soothe a nervous kid, how to instill confidence in a nervous parent, and how to articulate parts of my faith that I wanted my campers to learn. I wasn't a perfect staff member. My theology was immature at times, my ideas were often shortsighted, and I made a lot of mistakes working with my peers. But the opportunity to stretch the muscles of ministry, leadership, mentorship, and responsibility is what put my faith in motion. It taught me to keep my faith active and focused on others. At Camp I learned what abundant life is and how Jesus is the one who can truly give it to us.

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

As I looked through old photos, I was reminded of some people I haven't seen in years, but our time at Camp still makes me feel connected and grateful for those people and that time in our lives. Some I haven't seen in decades, and other friends are a part of my everyday life. My two brothers and several of my cousins did me a huge favor by marrying Deer Runners and bringing some of my favorite Camp friends into our family! Working at Camp together puts your relationships on a bit of a fast track. Intensity, honesty, and vulnerability

come a lot easier when you spend 24 hours a day together. There is something unique about having a seriously strong faith focus mixed with entertaining kids by coming up with random ideas that only a 20-something-year-old kid could think of. It is a recipe for the best friendships of my life. I've been through a lot of highs and lows since my years at Camp. Many of the same people that have walked with me through them are the same people that walked the highs and lows of adolescence and young adulthood with me. 20+ years later, we still spend weekends together, vacations together, eat Pizza Inn on Friday after Camp, have "staff weekends", pray for each other, and many of us drop our kids off at CDR together every year! The icing on the cake of the CDR friendships is watching a lot of our kids love Camp and build friendships with each other. We are three generations deep in Camp Friends! It magnifies the gift of these friendships in a whole new way when I watch my kids experience it. It is a kindness of God that I will never get over.

Why is it important to you to continue supporting Camp Deer Run today?

For all the reasons I have written about so far and all the things I could never put into words, I am compelled to give back to Camp. Being a part of the Rafter's Project is something I can do to help make sure that other people get to have the memories, the friendships, and the opportunity to put their faith into action. On a more personal level, my own children, nieces, nephews, and cousins are in the prime of their Camp Deer Run life and I want to do what I can to support them as they experience Camp. Camp Deer Run is mission and discipleship like nothing else I've ever seen and it is an honor to partner with God in what he is doing and what I pray he will continue to do for generations to come.

What's your fondest memory of Camp?

The collection of memories that I hold so dear are a wild mixture of insanity, growth, laughter, sweat, and damp socks. Wild costumes, Hymn time, silly games, experiences with God, and the smell of mildew. (You know a place is special if the smell of mildew brings back your best memories.) Rainy Outcamping misery, the slamming of the old cabin screen doors, ending the days on the ballfield, and building lifelong relationships with campers. I remember very well a few specific cabins of girls I had in W4, W6, and a rogue bunch I had in Women's 1/2. All of my memories seem to come out of freedom and security. The freedom to find myself, to be myself, to try things, and to stretch my faith. The security that comes with true belonging, safe friendships, and the grace to figure things out together. Freedom and security are found at the center of all of my Camp memories from the silliest to the most sacred.



How does Camp remain important to your family, even from so far away?

I live very far from Camp. We live on the Phillips' family ranch in Lewistown, Montana. We are 1,618 miles away from Camp Deer Run. I look out my window and see mountains, the air is thin and dry, and I sit in grass without having to worry about chiggers! Seems like a different planet, huh? The hard part is that my family misses out on everything that goes on at Camp during the school year and we aren't around to visit during the summer. But we drop everything and head south for 2nd Session every summer! CDR is a non-negotiable on our family calendar. It is worth every mile and every dollar we spend getting there for us to drop our kids off in the place where they can be with their best friends and experience all that CDR can give them in two weeks. We definitely have times during the year where we feel the distance, but staying connected to Camp friends is where the internet does its finest work! In addition to the kids and their group chats and FaceTime calls, we get to be a fun place for our Camp friends to escape to. We've hosted many Deer Run folks over the years and we are always so thankful to share our home with the people we love the most. In fact, we currently have a Deer Runner spending her summer with us interning at our church and we are expecting a Deer Run family for a visit in just two days. No one worries too much about fancy accommodations since we've all slept on tarps and eaten paper bags for breakfast, so I am able to at least offer a step above that. Living far away from East Texas has shown us that the connection we have with Deer Run and all the Deer Runners we love is greater than any distance on a map. At the risk of sounding a little cheesy, it is comforting to know that the same stars that captivate us on Hoche ballfield are shining on us here in Montana and all the other places where Deer Runners look for the stars.





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

SUCCESSFUL SUMMER

We are blessed to have had another incredible summer at Camp Deer Run. It's impossible to witness this program and not be amazed at all of the incredible ways that God is working. The stories of life-changing discipleship, friendship, and just plain fun are too many to begin to tell. We're so thankful for the ministry God has built here and all of the faithful servants who have made it possible.

CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

The Built to Last campaign is over 90% complete. The Deer Run family has raised over \$3.15 million toward our \$3.5 million goal. Praise God! He has blessed this effort, and we have no doubt that He will continue to do so. Our gratitude, both to God and to His people who have provided so much for this important work, is indescribable. Please join us in thanking God for His provision.

SUMMER STAFF

We say it every year, and this year is no different. All of the amazing things that are accomplished for God's Kingdom and for His children at Camp Deer Run would not happen without our Summer Staff. We had an incredible group of young adults this summer who led and served faithfully and poured out everything they could for their campers. We hope that you'll thank them if you get a chance, and thank God with us for their service this summer.

Petitions

CEO SEARCH

As the summer comes to a close, a new effort is beginning at Camp Deer Run. Our Board of Directors has begun its search for a new CEO to lead our ministry. We trust God's timing and provision in this search, and we ask that you remember it in your prayers. Pray for those on the Board who will be leading it as well as those who may apply - that God would provide them with wisdom, strong judgment, and confidence in His plan for Camp Deer Run.

CAMPAIGN COMPLETION

As we already mentioned, the Built to Last campaign is nearing completion. Please pray with us for the successful culmination of the fundraising phase of this project. We will be fundraising for the project through the end of 2026, and we ask for your continued prayers over its success.

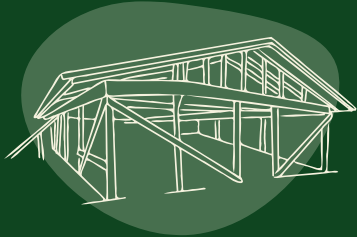
SCHOOL YEAR BLESSINGS

Campers and staff are headed back to school for the fall! We pray that God would be with them through the challenges, opportunities, and successes that await them, and that they will always remember that the same God they experienced at Camp is with them there too.

Camp Deer Run

1227 CR 4590

Winnsboro, TX 75494



RAFTERS**PROJECT**



WWW.CAMPDEERRUN.COM