



# Wilderness SUNRISE

EQUIPPING BOYS FOR LIFE

Summer 2017

## THANK YOU FOR HELPING MATT GRADUATE

Recently, Phil Hollinger (family worker) was invited to the high school graduation of Matt, a former camper. For Phil, these events are an opportunity to catch up with a boy and his family to celebrate his accomplishments with them.

Two of Matt's former chiefs, Cliff and Kendall, remember him as a sensitive yet determined boy at camp. "He was smaller than some of the other boys but worked hard and did his part in the group," Chief Kendall recalls. "He had some hard family things to work through, but I felt like he was able to talk about those things and get help while at camp."

Chief Cliff agrees. "Matt was an easygoing boy, but he had a tendency to bottle things up inside himself. However, by the time he graduated, he had opened up and was willing to let go of things from the past."

### ***One of the Hardest Things I Ever Did!***

Fair Play Camp School will always have a special place in my heart," Matt's mother, Julie comments. "Had it not been for

camp, I dread to think where Matt would be today."

"Sending him to camp was definitely in my top five hardest things I've ever done. No parent wants to send their son away,

**"Camp taught Matt how to be a man."**



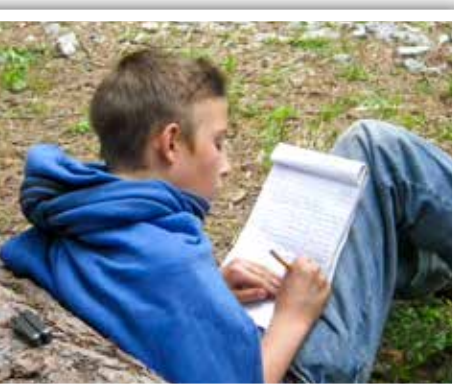
Matt (on right with dark gray shirt) with his group, Chief Cliff and Chief Kendall

especially at such a young age. I have no regrets and feel like camp changed Matt forever," Julie said.

"I believe one of the keys to Matt's success was having such positive role models at camp. His chiefs were young, but they had a lot of patience. They didn't pre-judge Matt and had a genuine desire to see him succeed."

"Another key to Matt's success was his own desire to change from the person he was into the person he knew he could be. I wouldn't say that Matt was 'healed', but he learned coping skills for the trauma in his life - skills which I believe will be a part of him for the rest of his life."

Julie continues, "To hear Matt describe camp to his friends, you would think he had spent time behind the Berlin Wall. Yet, when several of his



Matt worked hard while at camp

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## THANK YOU FOR HELPING MATT GRADUATE CONT.

chiefs' names are mentioned, he mellows quickly. He acknowledges that his camp experiences taught him a lot of life lessons. I believe camp taught Matt how to be a man."

### *Celebrating Success*

"It was a gift to be part of this big accomplishment in Matt's life," Phil said. "I remember how he struggled academically and relationally at camp. To see how far he has come, and to be so whole is very encouraging. It's also rewarding to see how Julie values her relationship with camp."

"Seeing Matt receive his diploma was very special to me," Julie concludes.

"Even though he missed the entire seventh and half

**"Had it not been for camp, I dread to think where Matt would be today."**



Family Worker Phil with Matt and Julie

of the eighth grade of public school, he was able to graduate with his class. This is just another reminder that God is Good!"

### *You are the Reason!*

We know that helping boys like Matt is very important to you. We are honored that you have joined with us in being a resource that provides boys and their families the tools and support they require to live a life worth living.

## MAKING MEN OUT OF BOYS ...AND NOT JUST THE CAMPERS

*This is the first in a series of three articles looking at the lifelong impact of being a chief. In this issue we look at Chief Andrew Smoker, who just graduated in April.*

We've talked a lot about the difference camp has made in the lives of boys and their families. When one father was asked how camp impacted his son, he replied, "our son went to camp a boy and came home a young man." Camp provides an atmosphere that enables boys to mature to manhood.

While this certainly applies to campers, it is also true for chiefs. Chiefs arrive at camp - young, passionate and with lots of energy. It often doesn't take long, though, until they realize that it is going to be a lot more difficult than they expected.

Such was the case with Andrew Smoker. He had always heard about camp and while he thought it might be too much for him, he felt that it was something he would like to do sometime.



The boys knew they could trust Chief Andrew.

### *I Didn't Know What to Expect*

"I've always liked working with kids," Andrew said. "Our church youth group had a children's ministry in our local town. I loved interacting with the younger boys. They are more open to learning and respond more quickly to love and affection."

A few years ago, he came to camp with his church youth group for a work project. While here he visited a group campsite. His interest was once again piqued, but after going home he quickly put it out of his mind.

About six months later he got a call asking him to join Fair Play as a chief. "When he was here with

his youth group we saw leadership qualities in him” observed Program Director Josh Yoder. “I knew instantly that he was chief material.”

Andrew decided to go to camp. He was placed with the Explorers, the youngest group.

“I wasn’t sure what to expect,” Andrew recalls. “But what I didn’t anticipate was how stretching it would be for me. It ended up changing me as much as the boys.”

“I’ve gained a lot more self-confidence,” he continues. “I learned that it was okay to fail and to learn from my mistakes.”

### ***Working Through the Tough Things***

“Andrew had struggles like all chiefs do,” Josh comments. “I remember him telling me that he thought he could come to camp and not deal with his personal issues because he was in a ministry. But we take ourselves wherever we go. I watched Andrew gain courage as he worked through his insecurities and fears.”

“I learned I had to deal with my own issues first if I was going to be effective at leading the group,” Andrew remembers. “The boys could see right through me. It showed by how they responded to me. Chief Adrian (supervisor) was very helpful in showing me how to recognize and deal with my own issues.”

While solving problems is difficult, Andrew enjoyed



“It ended up changing me as much as the boys!”



Making Men out of Boys

when the group stuck together to resolve them. “Working through a difficult problem brought them closer together,” he said. “Boys would feel that their chief and group really cared about them. I went from dreading a problem to enjoying a big problem and working through it. It’s way more powerful when the whole group is doing it together.”

“Andrew truly cared for the boys,” Adrian said. “As he gained confidence in his abilities, he learned to say no and stick with it. The boys would pester him to give in, but he refused.”

### ***The Hardest Thing I Ever Did!***

Andrew says that while he will miss the boys and the community at camp, he is ready to move on to the next chapter in his life. “Camp has been the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my life – but it’s the best thing I’ve ever accomplished. It was definitely worth it! It has prepared me for whatever God has for me in the future.”

Josh comments, “We watched him grow more confident in expressing himself and facing problems head on instead of just hoping that they would go away. He is a quiet leader and everyone likes to stand beside him because he is rock solid.”

Adrian adds “He’s a people influencer; they know what he stands for.”

Andrew, his co-chiefs, and the boys in his group are indeed becoming men. Thank you for helping to develop the leaders of tomorrow.

TO BE CONTINUED...

**“I learned I had to deal with my own issues first if I was going to be effective in leading the group.”**

# OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Are you willing to invest in a life changing experience that will impact you for the rest of your life? Just ask any former staff how camp has transformed them in a positive and powerful way. Here are some opportunities that are available soon:

## STAFF NEEDS

- Chiefs - in August, October and December
- Thrift Store Girls - **NOW!**
- Thrift Store Guy - November



## YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Check out our YouTube Channel and keep up with the latest happenings at camp. Every week or so we upload a new video featuring campers, staff and events. Be sure to subscribe to assure that you are alerted to new videos.



# MINISTRY BANQUET

YODER'S RESTAURANT, NEW HOLLAND, PA

Friday, September 15, 2017 at 6PM

Join us for an evening of inspiring stories and updates on Fair Play Camp School. A parent of a camper will be sharing their journey and how camp has impacted their son's life. Good News will be providing the music!



Kent Beiler & Phil Hollinger  
*Family Workers*



Bryan Casey  
*Parent of Camper*

### For your free reservations:

Sign up at  
[www.fairplaycamp.org](http://www.fairplaycamp.org)  
or call (864) 647-4311.

A free-will offering will be received to benefit Fair Play Camp School.



Good News  
*Bluegrass Gospel Music*



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