



Wilderness SUNRISE

EQUIPPING BOYS - STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Winter 2017/2018

GOING HOME

Thanks to You, The Camp Journey Continues

Before a boy comes to camp, family workers conduct multiple visits with his family to help prepare them for the journey at camp. During camp, they stay closely involved with the family, keeping them informed of his progress and helping them prepare for their son's return home after graduation.

For most families, the real work starts when their son graduates and returns home. They have seen great progress while he was at camp, and he returns home with the tools he needs to lead a successful life. But a boy's return to home, school, and normal life can create some difficult challenges. How do they maintain and then build

on the growth that he experienced at camp? How is camp personnel involved in that part of the journey?

Recently I had the opportunity to sit down with Carlos and Tamela, parents of a former camper, along with their family worker, Phil, to discuss their journey since their son returned home a few months ago.



Tamela and Hudson at the Mother/Son Banquet



Hudson giving Carlos a Tour of Camp on Families Day

Tamela: Camp Did a Good Job of Giving Him Tools

"When Hudson came home, our expectation was that things should be better than before he went to Fair Play, but that he would need reminders and constant structure for the rest of his life. It would be up to us to continue the structure of camp in our home as much as possible. We want to help him think for himself – to take what camp has taught him and what we are teaching him – and start creating his own structure.

Hudson has a troubled background that he can't help. He has been diagnosed with Reactive Detachment Disorder (RAD). There is a difference between a child with behavior problems and a child with RAD. Behavior problems can often be fixed, but a child with RAD has experienced early childhood trauma. Early childhood trauma

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Tamela Sharing at Hudson's Graduation

GOING HOME CONT.

shapes the brain in such a way that makes close relationships difficult. That comes with challenges forever. Camp did a good job of giving us tools that we can use and apply in his life at home.

I often call Phil and ask for advice on how to deal with problems that come up. Once, when Hudson was struggling, Phil visited him to discuss what he could do to get things back on track. That felt very supportive.

Phil has met with us at different times, sometimes with all three of us and sometimes with just us as a couple to talk about our concerns. He is always available by phone – if I have any issue, he is there to help us.”

Carlos: Camp is a Touchstone for Life at Home

“The lifestyle and structure that camp provided has become a touchstone for his life after camp. It’s something we can refer back to, a base on how to structure his day, how to deal with problems, and how to treat each other. It’s something we can refer to as a common experience. That’s been really good for us as a family.

The big thing we brought from camp is putting structure in Hudson’s day, like making his bed,

brushing his teeth, and doing his chores. We are trying to help him create habits – he is very much about habit. When he gets off that stuff, it’s a signal to us that we need to circle around and get back on track. When we run into a problem, the first thing we do is sit down and figure it out. Later, we discuss it in pow wow.

The continued personal connection with camp has been really good. It did not end when he graduated from camp. The continued connection with camp keeps it alive for Hudson.

It has been very touching to us to see how real, raw and affectionate camp staff is in working with these boys. These are some difficult boys, but they don’t give up. They just keep coming back every day. When you are in the thick of it as a parent, you sometimes get lost in the daily grind. But it’s been really encouraging to me to see that example of God’s love. I often use that as a reference point as a parent.

Before camp, it was just tough to love Hudson because he pushed us away so hard. Watching staff love these tough kids, even when they kept pushing away, is a challenge and encouragement to us.”

Hudson and Carlos: Camp at Home

At a recent Parent Group meeting, Carlos shared with the other parents some of the practices they have implemented since Hudson returned home.

“We set goals for a month,” Carlos explained. “Each Sunday we check in to see how we are doing and then at the end of the month we evaluate. For example,



Hudson Sharing a Moment on a Trip

he wanted to work on his relationship with his mother, so we decided that before he can eat breakfast, he has to give her a compliment.”

He further encouraged the parents who currently have sons at camp. “Before camp, it was difficult to get breathing room just to think about how to make progress. This is really a time to catch your breath. Your son is learning a structure that can really make a difference in his life. So whatever you can do at home to keep some parts of that structure going makes a big difference.

Hudson also shared what it’s been like since returning home. “It’s been going pretty good. One thing that was really a struggle in the past was school. I’ve been doing really good and haven’t got into any problems. I am still working on respect for mom. Every night we do pow wow like we did at camp. We evaluate what we did well, what we need to work on, and we sing a song.”

“Our nine-year-old gets involved in pow wow,

too,” Carlos adds. “Even Tamela and I review our days and have found it helpful to evaluate things that we can improve on.”

Camp Understands Our Son

“The staff at camp understand Hudson more than most people around me, even my very good friends,” Tamela said. “It’s because they spent twenty solid months with him on a day to day basis.

Phil gives us an opportunity to discuss situations to see if we are over reacting and to determine how we should respond to various situations. There are not many people who are comfortable discussing these situations. We are very grateful for Fair Play’s connection to our family!”

Because of your generous support, a few years ago we were able to add a third Family Worker. This makes it possible for camp to stay involved with boys like Hudson long after they graduate. Thank you... so, so much!

TRAIL NOTES

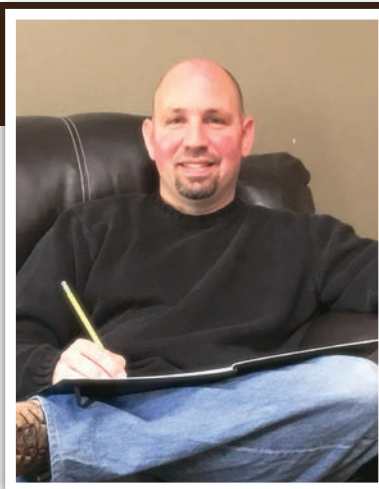
Daniel Hochstetler,
Executive Director

We have again turned the page to a new year. If you are like me, this time always creates a lot of reflection. There are feelings that go along with the chapters that are now written in the pages of history. There is the sense of anticipation and a fresh start inspired by the endless opportunities that go hand in hand with the feeling of having a chance to move forward. The reflection of the past should inspire us to continue on, to make necessary changes, and to move toward excellence.

2017 definitely gave us a lot to process. The darkness of the battles felt intense enough to touch. The silence of God was deafening at times. However, tasting the goodness of His mercy after walking through deep valleys was extra sweet. Experiencing

the reassuring promise of new life never gets old.

The excitement of 2018 has been obvious. We have already seen God moving ahead of us and leading Camp forward. There is no doubt that He is with us and has our best interest in mind. Pray for renewed vision and energy for staff. Pray that boys could have courage and a willingness to work through hard obstacles and feel hope. Pray that God would write the pages of this year in a way that speaks only of Him.





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STAFF NEWS

ARRIVALS

- Lewis Fisher (Night Duty), *Warsaw, NY*
- Dominic Kurtz (Pioneer Chief), *Laurelville, OH*
- Barry Martin (Frontiersmen Chief), *Sundance, WY*
- Jessica Troyer (Thrift Store), *Millersburg, OH*
- Calah George (Thrift Store), *Mechanicsburg, OH*
- Lyle & Sheralyn Kemp (Thrift Store Manager), *Abbeville, SC*

DEPARTING

- Jadon Mast (Pioneer Chief), *Pleasant Mills, PA*
- Steve & Jan Kauffman (Thrift Store Director), *Westminster, SC*

STAFF NEEDS

- Cook - May 2018
- Thrift Store Guys - March 2018
- Thrift Store Girls - April 2018, September 2018
- Chiefs - Two Needed Fall/Winter 2018



EQUIPPING BOYS FOR LIFE

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