



kidz2leaders® NEWS

August/September 2009

CAMP HOPE 2009!

**134 Campers & 321 Volunteers serving God =
1 AMAZING WEEK!**

Seems like only yesterday, but in all reality, it was over a decade ago when, in a corner booth at the Chick-fil-A on Whitlock Avenue in Marietta, Georgia, I sat with two close friends and shared her dream of starting a camp for children with incarcerated parents. My how time flies when you're having fun!

On Sunday evening, July 12th, in the auditorium of Rock Eagle, Camp Hope celebrated it's 10 Year Anniversary. On stage with me that night, were folks who were there for that very first camp which had a total of 32 people. My, my, has God done a work in us! Oh, we just "think" we are serving God by serving the children at Camp Hope when in reality the serendipity is that WE are blessed. Each and every time we pour ourselves into these children who have no hope of breaking the insane cycle of incarceration (National Statistic = 82% of inmate's children will end up in prison), God smiles on us!

Let me tell you about a week at camp - we start the week on Sunday night with a message about FEAR – God conquers all fears, and He definitely protects us at camp too! Monday through Thursday, we celebrate four other main truth's of God's Essence... God's LOVE, TRUST, FORGIVENESS, and JOY! Closing on Friday, we are reminded that God is with us ALWAYS.

This year, we were thrilled to highlight 21 of Camp Hope's greatest campers from the past that returned as counselors and cabin leaders. The impact these camper-turned-counselors had on their campers – you have no idea!

And now to you! Our Volunteers! Every single volunteer played an integral role in the preparation of camp on so many levels; planning the campers' transportation, leading Super Skilz, praying in the 24-hour prayer vigil and serving campers as the hands and feet of Christ during the week. We could NEVER do it without you all! Thank you so much! If you haven't worked Camp Hope before, make it down for next year! I can't promise what cabin you'll be in, what kind of campers/counselors will be there, or that you will get much sleep – but I can promise you this... without a doubt, it will be the most difficult, heart-wrenching thing you'll ever do, but equally so, without a doubt, when you see the Kingdom of God touch down onto one of your campers because of your efforts – and see their lives transformed – you will realize that Camp Hope is the most rewarding thing you've ever done.

We were privileged to experience God's amazing love at Camp Hope this year and look forward to seeing camp grow over the next ten years – with you right there with us! Come on and let's go play! Thanks be to God!

- Rev. Diane Parrish

Some Important Dates to Remember...

- **September 20: Camp Hope Benefit Concert at 6:30 p.m. at Mt. Bethel UMC**
- **December 12: hope4christmas party at Mt. Bethel UMC**



Interns Complete First Summer!

152 working days have come and gone as the introductory class of interns have completed the program's first year. What an amazing experience for each of the interns and sponsor companies. God is SO good! Chelsey Robinson, a graduate of interns4tomorrow, wrote the following essay about how she believed God acted in her life while working at ZC Sterling:

I did experience God working in my life. He really helped me succeed throughout my internship. For example, my very first day everybody got together to welcome us and I felt like God actually placed us there for a reason. I felt like He actually had something going for me and this was only the beginning. At the welcoming ceremony everybody was so nice and welcoming, I knew for a fact God had placed them in my life for a special reason and he wanted me to never forget that experience and those people.

The second day at ZC, we got to meet the C.E.O. and C.F.O.! I mean really! That was truly a blessing and a WONDERFUL experience. Right then and there in my heart,

I knew God was putting His plan into action. He had a plan set out for me and Jamil, and His plan for us was to get to meet those wonderful people. Throughout my internship I don't know how many people told me that they haven't even seen or talked to the C.E.O. and the C.F.O. And at that point I actually said to myself, WOW, I must really be blessed to actually meet them because even the employees who work there and come in EVERY day haven't even met them. That was truly shocking and great.

Again, I did feel like I experienced God working throughout my internship. I felt so loved and welcomed at ZC, that I was really sad to go. But in my heart I truly knew that God allowed me to experience the internship because He was just getting started with the opportunities in my future. ZC is a GREAT company, and God has truly blessed each and every person that has something to do with that company. I wish I hadn't left, but again that was all in God's plan!

The seven interns that completed the program are being recognized for their hard work and commitment at a celebration at the end of August.

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• A Note from kidz2leaders, inc...

• Rather than sharing my thoughts, counselor Grace Thackston beautifully articulates our love and passion for our Camp Hope kids in an essay she wrote for her Philanthropy 101 class.

• *"Based on the career paths I'm interested in right now, I'm never going to be rich....For me, philanthropy, or the love of mankind, is all about the relationships...."*

• *Every summer I volunteer at Camp Hope, a camp for kids who have parents in jail. Camp Hope is unique because each camper has their own counselor who acts as a role model and helps the camper have fun and grow in their faith. I always look forward to Camp Hope because I love the one-on-one fellowship I get to have with my camper, and I love seeing how everyone at camp is affected by the relationships they form throughout the week, both with each other and with God. Despite everyone's different backgrounds, the cabin is always a place where we can be honest about our struggles and help each other figure out how to get through whatever we're dealing with."*

• Well said Grace! I look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming events. Blessings!

• - Cris