

SUMMER CAMP 2015

hope

MISSION

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“Elise was able to share her burdens, and learn of a God who loves her immensely” - Jay



CAMP MEMORIES FROM TIA

Summer camp counsellor, Tia, lights up when she talks about the kids she meets at Hope Mission Summer Camp.

This year, a little girl who we'll call Sarah was paired with Tia as her 'little sister' for the week of camp. Each camper is paired with a staff member while they're at camp, so kids have the opportunity to talk to someone one on one.

"She'd lived in foster homes her whole life."

It was after chapel on the Thursday night of summer camp, that Sarah started to open up to Tia about her home life – one of loneliness, isolation and feeling like she didn't belong.

"She'd lived in foster homes her whole life. She told me that she just wished she could call someone mom or dad. All the foster homes she'd lived in didn't want that or weren't open to that," Tia recalls.

Sarah had never had the chance to celebrate Mother's Day or Father's Day. This little girl who felt so alone and didn't have anyone in her life she could call her family, asked Tia something remarkable. "She asked me if we could pray. She said, I want to pray and ask God to go with me when I go home," says Tia. "To be the person to sit with her and pray with her, to see that she could feel God and that she knew it was real, was incredible."

As a camp counsellor, Tia is a cheerleader, a role model, a warm hug or a shoulder to cry on for kids who are facing enormous challenges.

"That's what I love about summer camp and what it does for kids coming back year after year," says Tia. "We can have these consistent relationships in

kids' lives. It might be the only consistency they're getting. It might be the only chance they get to see what things should really be like, and that's so important."

Tia has seen many times how powerful it is when kids understand that God loves them and they can put their trust in Him.

Tia met Rebecca (not her real name) in 2009, she was six years old. Rebecca has come to camp every year since and loves it.

In the seven years Rebecca has come to camp, life at home has been tough. Things haven't become much better for Rebecca, but what has remained constant and strong is her faith.

"Through all of that, her faith hasn't changed," explains Tia. "This year, she was one of the girls in the cabin talking to the other girls about God and what He does. She wanted to connect with the other girls and keep in touch with them after they went home. She still sees God and still believes in God."

"Through all of that, her faith hasn't changed."

God touches the lives of campers in so many ways. Through the excitement of an outdoor activity, quiet moments in reflection, or talking to someone who just wants to listen – kids learn of a God who loves them, in whom they can trust.

"To know where God is and how He's protecting you in a tough situation can be a difficult thing for a kid to understand," says Tia. "But when they do understand His goodness and His love for them, it's so powerful. It's life-changing."

STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION

AS TOLD BY JAY

When Kyle (not his real name) first came to Hope Mission, he was uncooperative. His actions and words told the story of an angry, sad child. Kyle's parents were recovering from some struggles and came to Hope Mission for help, so their son wouldn't repeat the same destructive cycles they did.

Kyle was disruptive, and didn't want to participate in activities. And yet, staff members loved him and showed him that he could count on them to support him. Over time Kyle found hope and began to understand there were people in his life that cared for him.

"The counsellors saw his attitude and outlook change," says Jay Vedoya, Manager at Hope Mission in Calgary. "He wanted to participate, help, care for other kids, and also talk to other kids about the hope he'd experienced from actions and words of others."

Jay shares that this year at summer camp Kyle was leading the other campers in song, songs of joy and hope – standing at the front of the group, with a big smile on his face, waving his hands to the actions of the song. Today, Kyle is confident, joyful and free.

Jay tells of another young life blessed at summer camp. This year, Elise (not her real name), found hope at summer camp, despite a difficult home life. Elise was angry and upset that her parents were divorced. She couldn't understand why. Her counsellor sat with her, just listening and providing a shoulder to cry on.

"She was encouraged, and felt hope because of her conversations with her counsellor," says Jay.

While the challenges and difficulties at home haven't been solved today, in her time at camp Elise was able to share her burdens, and learn of a God who loves her immensely.



BY THE NUMBERS ACROSS ALBERTA

937

Kids came to camp

14,055

Meals served

148

Youth attended our youth development programs

RIDE-A-THON FUNDRAISER

Thank you all who participated in this year's Ride-A-Thon. This year we had 120 riders raised \$24,789, sponsoring 82 kids to come to camp!



CONTINUE TO PRAY

Even though summer camp has come and gone, please continue to pray for these kids and youth as many of them go back to difficult living environments. Some will have parents in prison, or parents struggling with addiction, or will be living in the foster care system or in group homes. Pray for positive role models. Pray for spiritual care and support for those striving to make better life choices and a relationship with God.



SUPPORT SUMMER CAMP

Camp's Needs List

GENERAL | small truck, picnic tables, skid steer attachment (chains), small grain bin for oats, tires (summer and winter - inquire for sizes), aluminum canoes, air impact wrenches, brush mower, taxidermy animals, kids story books, children's bibles, wood chips, fruit trees, floor hockey sticks, firewood, Gator or quad, 7 seater van.

FOR HORSES | lead ropes, halters, riding helmets, bridles, saddles, oats, hay and straw bales, arena equipment (barrels, poles, standards, pylons), round pen panels

Collect Air Miles for Camp Using this Card:

Cut this card out and use it when you make purchases wherever Air Miles are accepted.



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Tickets to Spare?

Part of our follow-up program is one on one time doing activities. If you ever have tickets to an CFL game, a hockey game (NHL or Jr.), water park, theatre or whatever, we could really use them. Donation receipts can be issued for the value of the ticket.

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