

## SUNDAY CALLS WITH JULIE



By Julie Santiago  
ISC Summer Staff

Inspire Sports Camps was the first camp experience I ever had. I never went to camp as a kid and I had never been a counselor before. I was naturally a little nervous but I am a member of a Spanish-speaking inner-city church in North Philadelphia and have worked in several ministry roles, so I figured I was ready. Boy was I wrong!

I ended up with a tough group of campers from several different places. They were from Washington Heights, East New York, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Paterson, NJ. I really struggled to connect with the girls in my group. I patiently listened to them. I shared about friends and family members who went through similar things, but nothing seemed to work. I was sincerely questioning myself- Did I respond incorrectly? Was I trying too hard? I did my best

to show compassion and empathy, but I was deeply frustrated. I came to camp to serve, and nothing I was doing was working.

Even though I desperately wanted to, I started to doubt my ability to reach this group of girls. Towards the end of the week, I was drained both physically and emotionally,



*God gives us the sweetest gifts as a reward for trusting Him.*

and spiritual fatigue was setting in. I was at a loss until God brought Becky to me. She was one of the quieter campers in our group, and until the 4th day of camp, I did not even realize that she was struggling with the same issues I was. She came up to me, sat down on the grass, and opened up about how she had been feeling discouraged by her fellow campers who didn't seem to care about having a relationship with Jesus and doubted her overall purpose and decision to come to camp.

CONTINUED ON PG. 2

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Sunday Calls with Julie	1,2
Counselor's Corner	2,3
Christian Padilla	
Rebekah Simpson	
Summer Forecast & Sleeping Bags	3

## Counselor's CORNER



### Christian Padilla

Rutgers University

### Mechanical Engineering Major

At ISC 2022 it was my first time being a counselor at any type of camp and I served for 4 weeks straight. What I loved the most about it was meeting so many kids from different environments and experiences. One thing that I will never forget from my first week of camp was seeing the growth in my cabin from the first day to the last. One of my campers after being given his personal Bible and during his quiet time with the Lord, began to open up to me about some of his struggles and pain that he had been dealing with for a while leading up to camp. I remember talking to him about my related experiences and praying with him during the rest of the session, leaving us both in tears. That experience is something that I hold onto even today. The fact that he was willing to open up and trust me with parts of his life is something that I didn't take lightly, and I'm grateful that God put me in the place where I needed to be so He could use me to reach my campers. All the glory goes to God for what He does in the campers' and counselors' lives not just during camp, but after as well.

That afternoon, after we shared our stories, I told her that hearing her talk about how much she loves Jesus and how much she desires to grow in her relationship with Him, was the encouragement God knew I needed; and He was faithful enough to provide her. Becky was taken aback by my statement and began to cry a bit knowing that God used her, a 16-year-old girl, at that moment. We were both reassured that we serve a mighty God, who is with us in all situations, answers our prayers at the perfect time, and fills our hearts with His goodness. God knew exactly what He was doing as we connected with each other. Romans 8:26 says, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans."

That week was the beginning of much more! Becky and I stayed in touch after camp and she expressed her interest in having a mentor. That is when we set a

regular time to talk. Each Sunday night we talk on the phone. Sometimes we just discuss what is going on in her life. Other times we read scripture, talk about sermons or share Bible studies we have been doing on our own. We end each call by praying with each other and for each other. It has been so encouraging to be used in this way, and it is amazing to see Becky standing strong for Jesus back at home.

As I think back to when Becky and I first connected, I am reminded of this verse from 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." God gives us the sweetest gifts as a reward for trusting Him as we submit ourselves to Christ and surrender our motives, expectations, and desires. The mentoring relationship I have with Becky has been a true gift to me.



## SUMMER FORECAST & SLEEPING BAGS



In less than a month we will welcome volunteers from all over the country to Summer Staff Training, and this summer we are forecasted to serve over 800 campers from inner-city neighborhoods across the Northeast! Many of you reading this have been making camper sponsorship donations for years, and “Camper Sponsorship” continues to be our biggest fundraising initiative. Thank you for your faithfulness! This year, we are introducing a “Sleeping Bag Sponsor” option.

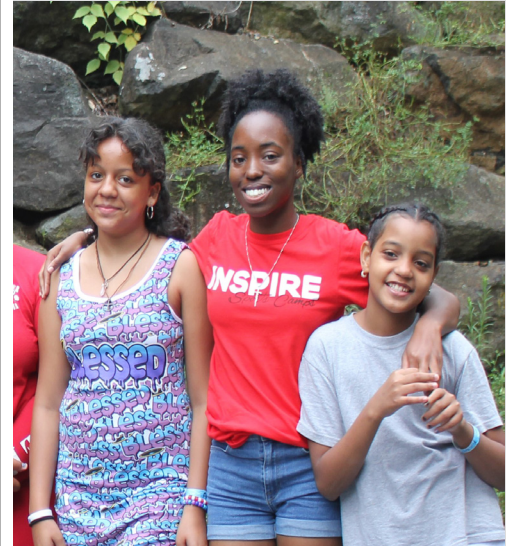
***Did you know every Sunday night at camp our leadership team goes cabin to cabin just to ensure all campers have bedding?***

We end up giving out dozens of new sleeping bags, pillows, and bed linens to those who simply do not own them. For an extra \$35, you can provide a new sleeping bag and pillow for campers who do not have them. Would you consider helping us with this need? Thank you for giving hundreds of young people the opportunity to experience God’s love and meet Jesus this summer.

With Sincere Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kurt Schwanz".

## Counselor’s CORNER



**Rebekah Simpson**

**University of Delaware**

**Chemistry Education Major**

My ISC experience was very special. I now teach in an urban school district, so the campers reminded me of my students. In fact, the girls in my cabin group come from very similar backgrounds to many of the students I teach back at home. The main difference, and the most awesome part about ISC, is that I can be totally upfront about my faith in Jesus and share it with them! At my school, I feel the need for Jesus each and every day, but the opportunities to share about Him are very limited. ISC enabled me to fully give to my campers what I wish I could give to my students. God has given me the heart and desire to work with young people from inner-city neighborhoods, which is why I am in my element at ISC.

# THANK YOU!

You make ISC a reality for young people from inner-city neighborhoods across the Northeast.

On behalf of our campers, staff, and entire leadership team we "Thank You" for your relentless prayers and generous support.



*All sponsors receive a handwritten thank you note and a baseball card picture of the campers that they sponsor.*

Donations can be made with the enclosed envelope or by visiting [www.inspiresportscamps.com/give](http://www.inspiresportscamps.com/give)

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