

# INSPIRE

## *Sports Camps*

### 2022 TERM ONE REPORT

ISC Family,

We just waved goodbye to campers from Newark, Elizabeth, Paterson, NJ; Queens, Brooklyn, Long Island (Elmont), Poughkeepsie, NY; and Akron, OH. It was a lively and fun group, but the stories of any Camp Term are best understood by individual campers and breakthrough moments. Our vision is to see cities transformed ONE camper at a time by Jesus Christ, and that certainly happened during Term One!



#### **More than Jokes**

At morning meetings, one of our counselors shared about a 17-year-old camper who turned every single conversation into a joke. He provided comic relief all day long and was actually pretty funny. It wasn't until mid-week that this young man got serious during a small group discussion. He talked about the anger he had towards his father for leaving his mother and him. At that point it made sense... Fooling around was his way of distracting himself from the pain. As the week continued, God continued to work on his heart. During testimony time on Friday, in front of everyone, he shared about meeting his new heavenly Father at camp this week.



### **A Bucket of Water**

It's not uncommon for the first couple of days to be a rough transition for some campers. Camp culture is a lot different than the world they come from. One boy wanted nothing to do with any of it until "Save the Duckies" (a giant water fight event). His counselor snuck up behind him and drenched him with a Home Depot bucket filled with water. The camper immediately chased him down and reciprocated the favor with some water of his own. By the end of the game, they were best buddies! This moment only went well because of the half a dozen loving conversations the counselor had with him ahead of time. Believe it or not, there was a lot of Christ's love in that bucket of water!



### **A JC with a Purpose**

Over the last few years, our Junior Counselor Program has boomed. It's an amazing opportunity for former campers to continue growing with Jesus and take a step forward in leading others. Meet Jeremiah: a 3-year camper, a Term One Junior Counselor, and next week a US Army soldier. He reports to basic training next Wednesday. Even though Jeremiah could only serve for one week this summer, he said, "I wouldn't have missed it!" He remembers the impact his counselors had on his faith and journey with Jesus. Jeremiah took the only week he had this summer and used it to serve boys who were just like him. What an amazing example for all of us!



Every night our CLUB speakers lay out a different aspect of the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ for our campers! Most of them make 5+ hour round trip drives to deliver the message. We are extremely grateful for them!

**TERM ONE CAMPER EXPERIENCES IN THEIR OWN WORDS:**

- *"The speakers really helped me look at things from a better view."*
- *"I was able to be with people who went through similar experiences this week."*
- *"My perspective changed this week and I learned how to forgive. I am no longer holding on to anger and sadness."*
- *"I recommitted my life to Jesus and learned how to pray for wisdom going forward in all things."*
- *"This week showed me that I am able to stay away from my phone."*
- *"I realized that I am only feeling lonely because I've been trying to live without Jesus."*
- *"I felt seen for the first time in a long time."*

Our Term Two campers arrive today! Thank you in advance for all of your PRAYERS and SUPPORT for our summer staff team and the young people that we get to love, serve, and introduce to Jesus this summer.

Trusting Him,

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### 2022 TERM TWO REPORT

ISC Family,

Term Two was an energized population of campers from Newark, Elizabeth, The Oranges, New Brunswick, Paterson, NJ; The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, NY; and Philadelphia, PA. The competition was not contained to basketball courts and soccer fields it even spilled over into cabin clean-up! The team cheers in the dining hall were absolutely deafening... **But the most exciting part of the week was watching Christ's love at work in individual campers.**



#### Now It Makes Sense

A counselor shared what he learned about one of his 13-year-old campers who had been driving him crazy. "(The camper) told me, 'If she didn't leave us, she'd still be here.'" The boy told him that shortly after his mom left his dad she was shot and killed. He opened up about living with his father before he too passed away due to complications with COVID. The counselor said his camper's behavior now made perfect sense. For the rest of the week, the mission was clear- remain patient.

On Thursday night, a 14-year-old young man turned to his counselor as the speaker closed out the message and couldn't hold it in any longer. Tears filled his eyes as he told his counselor, "No one loves me." He spent the next 30 minutes crying on his 21-year-old athletic counselor's shoulder. This same camper had been in a couple of verbal and one minor physical altercation earlier in the week. Each time, his counselors and lead

counselor would sit with him and kindly talk through things with him. He was searching for love and was met by men who showed him the love of Christ all week long.



### **Unplanned but not Uncommon**

As the rest of the camp was at sports specialties and activities this lead counselor and a girl from her area shared an unscheduled moment on the ground outside the dining hall. Someone in her cabin group said something that set her off during breakfast, and she was taken outside to cool down. After a long talk with her counselor, the lead counselor took over. The interaction went from anger to this tear-filled embrace. I don't know the details of this conversation, but I do know that these acts of love and teachable moments happen all the time at ISC.



These two pictures are taken at the same pool at the same time. Both show counselors connecting in different ways and both scenes are awesome on so many levels!

**TERM CAMPER EXPERIENCES IN THEIR OWN WORDS:**

- *"I was able to be happy here being all sober. It showed me that if I can go 5 days clean, hopefully, I can go 5 years and it all started here."*
- *"I learned that I don't always have to fight when somebody wants to or someone messes with me. I can show discipline."*
- *"This week I learned how to love myself and that Jesus loves me just the way I am."*
- *"I learned how to build a relationship with Jesus and I also learned about the wages of sin."*
- *"I feel like I can pray in a more organized manner now."*
- *"Jesus made me a new man."*



***This camper shared, "After learning more about God and what Jesus did for me this week, I rang the bell and accepted Jesus... I am no longer in a bad mood and I am going home with so much love for my family and more importantly for God."***

Staff Training B begins on Wednesday, July 13, and Camper Term Three begins on Sunday, July 17. Thank you in advance for all of your PRAYERS and SUPPORT for our summer staff team and the young people that we get to love, serve, and introduce to Jesus this summer.

Trusting Him,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kurt Schwanz'.



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## *Sports Camps*

### 2022 TERM THREE REPORT

ISC Family,

When I called one of our speakers to confirm with him, he asked me how the week was going and my response was, "*You are coming out to an active mission field, get ready to give them Jesus.*" **ISC is a mission field disguised as a camp program.** Mission fields around the world are messy places with all kinds of ups, downs, highs, and lows- ISC is no different.

During Term Three we hosted young people from outreaches to housing projects all across NYC; a mentoring organization from Bushwick, Brooklyn; and other partners from Newark, Irvington, and Hackensack, NJ; and Harrisburg, PA. All week long we battled a real enemy named Satan, whose strong grip was visible in so many young lives. However, by the end of the week, **we witnessed real victory as MANY campers surrendered their lives to our savior Jesus Christ!**





### **HIS Perfect Pairings**

Each week co-counselors are assigned to age group-specific cabins, but it is God that puts the right people together. As they shoot hoops, catch fish, and have water gun fights, trust builds and friendships form between our counselors and campers. Here is a sampling of the connections and conversations that we couldn't possibly plan:

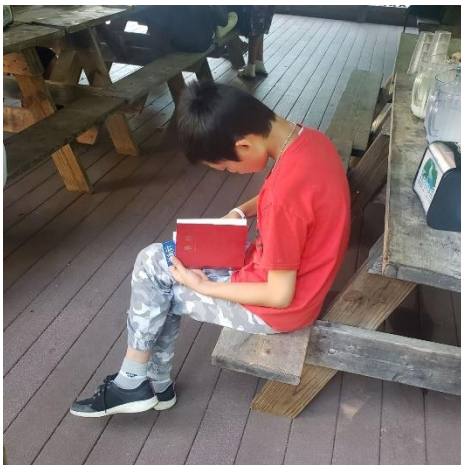
- A counselor noticed that one boy would shut down and withdraw in the large group settings. When the counselor asked him about this, the camper talked about spending a lot of time alone ever since his parents divorced. As they talked more, the counselor learned that this camper loved to read just like he did. That night, the counselor shared about one of his favorite books and took it upon himself to order it for the camper on Amazon. The counselor thought the book would encourage this camper, and it will arrive as soon as he gets home!
- In another cabin, during small groups, a teenage camper from NY opened up to his counselors about watching his brother die right in front of him. It was a quiet and serious moment. The counselors empathetically listened and one of them responded that he knows what it feels like to lose someone special because not long ago he watched his best friend die in front of him back home in Newark.

Our young adult summer staff team has made themselves available and God continues to place them perfectly for interactions just like these.



### **Current Reality**

During our mid-week leadership meeting, we received feedback about six campers who had already opened up about sexual identity issues. Thankfully God makes no mistakes, even in scheduling that happens months in advance. Patti Height was here on Thursday all the way from California to share her personal story about how Jesus rescued her from gender confusion and a homosexual lifestyle. After each session, she had a Q & A. In all our years, we've never heard more poignant camper questions. After the last session, she stayed for hours talking to and praying with campers who needed to talk more. Young people today are being fed more lies than ever before, but we need to remember that this spiritual battle is not lost... Christ's love and truth win!



### **The mission field truly came to us this week!!**

This young boy moved from China to NYC just 3 months ago and still can't speak English. He was able to enjoy all of the activities, but this made communication throughout the week very challenging. On Thursday morning, when every other camper received NLT Bibles, we gave him a Bible in Mandarin and he began devouring it right away!

**TERM THREE CAMPER EXPERIENCES IN THEIR OWN WORDS:**

- "I felt God talking to me yesterday when I was praying to Him."
- "Before I came here, I didn't believe in God and I thought it was all fake. But here I learned all about what Jesus did for me."
- "I learned that if I give all my worries to Him, he will change my life."
- "This week I got to hang out with actual people, and actually went outside."
- "I never went to church before, just went to Sunday school one time. I think I will start to read the Bible and keep attending the Sunday school in NYC."
- I learned that even when I don't feel or see it, God is always working and He had a plan for me."
- "My life changed this week because I gained more friends and learned how the Bible works."
- "I needed a break from my phone."
- "I never had this much fun."



**This group of boys made their way to the ISC "Born Again" Bell on Wednesday right before lunchtime. The t-shirt of the counselor on the right says it all - "NOT TODAY SATAN."**

Our Term Four campers arrive today! Thank you in advance for all of your PRAYERS and SUPPORT for our summer staff team and the young people that we get to love, serve, and introduce to Jesus during this last week.

Trusting Him,

Handwritten signature of Kurt Schwanz

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### 2022 TERM FOUR REPORT

ISC Family,

On Term Four buses and vans full of young people from Harlem, Washington Heights, East New York, Manhattanville, the South Bronx, and Brooklyn in NYC; Paterson, NJ; and Hunting Park in Philadelphia, PA arrived ready for camp! When I say, ready, I mean READY! Camp spirit was at an all-time high and the response to the Gospel was overwhelming! **This week reminded everyone involved why we do what we do.**

*One young lady from NYC texted her group leader after she arrived home and asked this: "Is there anything you or I can do so I can go back to camp? Honestly, it was really the best experience of my life and I really can't wait."*

This loaded text message sums up so much. God hand-picked these children and youth to experience His love and truth during an unforgettable and life-changing week of camp. Thank you for making it possible for them.





### **No Bags But Lots of Baggage**

On Sunday, as campers filed through check-in lines, we realized that many of them were not carrying much. Some had no duffel bag or suitcase, and no bedding at all. It was apparent that the few clothes and toiletries they did have with them had been thrown in the shopping bag they were carrying right before the bus picked them up. Campers showing up without many possessions is not uncommon at ISC, but this week it was more than normal. Our team, as always, made sure each child received everything they needed, and they all went home with brand new clothes and footwear.

Although many came without formal baggage, this population was full of personal baggage. However, these campers were eager to unload it. It was almost like they were waiting for someone to listen. Counselors heard about poor living conditions, sharing beds at home, families living in shelters, neighborhood violence, domestic unrest, drug-addicted mothers, incarcerated fathers, sexual identity issues, and more. As counselors listened and the love of Christ flowed from them, they earned the right to share with their campers. Counselors not only shared their own stories but the ultimate story - that Christ has a plan for our lives both now and for eternity - and the response was humbling!



### **A Supernatural Response**

The ISC "Born Again" bell rang consistently since Wednesday morning, but God wasn't done yet. The picture above was taken Thursday night at CLUB. Our speaker, Pastor Charles Taylor, challenged campers multiple times throughout the message. He asked them, **"How will YOU go?"** He further explained that *"It's not about whether Jesus will walk with you because He always will. The question is will YOU walk with Him?"* When he gave the young crowd an opportunity to respond, they came forward in droves. Counselors followed and huddled with their campers praying with them and praying over them at the front of the stage. It was a truly special night as young people surrendered their lives to Jesus and took the opportunity to go home with Him!

#### **TERM FOUR CAMPER EXPERIENCES IN THEIR OWN WORDS:**

- *"My counselors talked to me about how the Lord loves me and will never leave me."*
- *"I never even worried about TV once this week. We did so many things that we can't do in the city."*
- *"This week I felt something I never really felt and it helped me so much mentally and spiritually. I felt so welcomed here."*
- *"I have never warmed up to people as quickly as I did at this camp."*
- *"Before I didn't expect to have a relationship with God himself, but now I am leaving talking and praying to Him."*
- *"I never knew that Jesus did those things for me."*
- *"A lot of doubts and questions about my faith were solved at this camp."*
- *"Jesus came into my heart and gave me motivation."*
- *"I gained so many friends that are into Jesus and they are very supportive."*
- *"Jesus will not give up on me and my family."*



**There's not a kid in America who doesn't smile ear to ear when sliding down a Super Slip N' Slide!**

Thank you for all of your PRAYERS and SUPPORT for our summer staff team and the young people that we had the opportunity to love, serve, and introduce to Jesus this summer.

Trusting Him,