

CAMP IS JUST THE BEGINNING

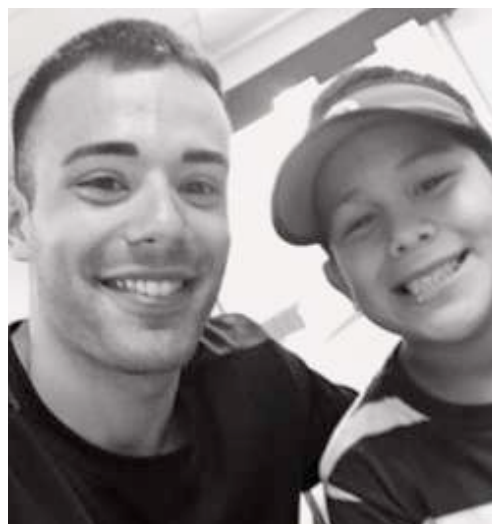


Eric Hamlet
ISC Summer Staff Member

This past summer was my first time serving at Inspire Sports Camps (ISC). Beyond my unfamiliarity with this particular program, it was also my first experience as a camp counselor. After hearing several stories from counselors who had previously served at ISC, I felt a degree of nervousness begin to mount at the thought of the campers I would be looking after. They prepared me for “rougher” types of kids, and I quickly learned this bit of information to be true. While I intended on having an open frame of mind regarding what the campers would be like, I certainly did not anticipate them to have an impact on me.

On the day of arrival, I looked over the list of campers to make sure all had arrived. Slowly checking down the list of names, all but one of them was present – George. At that very moment, the cabin door flew open, bags dropped to the wood floors, and there he was. George wasted no time in getting to know everyone by joining

the game that was already in motion. My initial impression of George was that beneath his “thick skin” exterior, he was just a kid who enjoyed making others laugh.



Over the course of the first two days, George proved to be a difficult individual to get to know. The other boys in the cabin were very responsive to personal questions, whereas George was not.

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Director’s NOTE

A recent study of the ‘Parable of the Great Banquet’ (Luke 14) immediately lead me to praise God for what He continues to do through ISC. In the story, the intended guests turn down the master’s invitation to his lavish event. He responds by ordering his servants to go to the ‘the streets and alleys’ and bring in the ‘poor, crippled, blind and lame’ so they could experience something they never dreamt possible. These secondary banquet guests are our campers. However, at ISC they are the initially intended guests! ISC was created to be a life-changing opportunity for underserved young people from dark and desperate places, and each of YOU makes this unthinkable experience possible for them. This summer, we will host and serve a record-breaking number of campers. They will experience so much more than a banquet feast; they’ll experience the love of Christ and an encounter with their Savior. Thank you in advance for making this experience possible for so many MORE campers this year.

Trusting Him,

Kurt Schwarz
Executive Director

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Asking him simple questions about his hobbies, family members, and favorite subject in school typically came with a sharp-tongued response such as: “none of your business,” a shrug accompanied by, “I don’t know, shut up,” or no answer at all. Needless to say, the very first thing I learned as a counselor is that I would need to muster up extra patience.

As the week wore on, George gradually opened up to me. One of these ways was through routine piggy-back-rides, which he seemed to love; however, carrying around a ten-year-old child on my back all day was not my preferred method of bonding. With the intention of understanding this complex child (as well as lessening the frequency of rides), I decided to barter every ride in exchange for an answered question. He was hesitant at first, but agreed, eventually asking me for more questions. Ironically enough, his favorite memory was going on a roller-coaster, while his worst was coming to camp.

Throughout the rest of the week, I was able to get to know George better and see his compassionate and conscientious side in his interactions with other campers. Specific evidence of his gentleness shone through when one of the campers tripped and landed right in a puddle of

mud. George eagerly helped me get the boy cleaned up and spent the rest of the night trying to make him feel better.

During the Thursday night message where the campers learn about Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and the love He has for them, kids were pouring out the hardships and burdens they were carrying around. It was astounding to witness them truly being changed by the love of Christ. George was standing strong and holding others as they sobbed in his tiny arms. It was amazing to witness a ten-year-old child nurturing those who were older than him.

“kids were pouring out [their] hardships and burdens”

Later on that night though, George was visibly upset and closed off. When the

Counselors’ CORNER



Sarakaye Freeman

Farleigh Dickinson University

Biology Major and Chemistry Minor

I’d never heard of Inspire Sports Camps before, but when Kurt came to FDU to tell us a little about ISC, I was hooked. I knew I just had to go. When I went down for staff training it was like an experience out of this world. I went there with an open mind and open heart, and man was I blessed. The speaker Bill Page touched a part of me that I thought God was ignoring. But God sent Bill and his wife to assure me that more is yet to come. That night when I worshipped, I worshipped every doubt, every worry, every concern, right into the hands of God.

When I first met the girls that I would be counseling I didn’t know what to expect. But as the days went on, I grew closer to the girls, they opened up to me and I opened up to them. They were all special, crazy, and unique in their own way. Seeing how they were the first day compared to the last day of camp was such an amazing shift. Being an ISC counselor has allowed me to form life-long relationships that I’m glad to have made. I love ISC and, God willing, I will be back this summer again!!!

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session ended, he marched right back to the cabin, not wanting to talk at all. The campers and I gave him space as we got ready for bed and, after some time, I asked him how he was doing. Despite his response being similar to his vague answers at the beginning of the week, this time he did not seem to mean it. When I asked if I could pray with him, he nodded in agreement. I reminded him of the love Jesus has for him, the counselors at camp had for him, and that I did as well. He broke down in tears and hugged me tightly.

The following day, George gave his life to Jesus. He seemed like a different child altogether, and when he prayed for our table at dinner, he asked that God bring him back to camp next summer. When the week was over and it was time to leave, I met George's father. The man was very friendly and appreciative of the opportunity for his kids to come to camp. Since the distance between our homes was not too far, we planned to go on some more adventures.

After camp, George, his family, and I went on a fishing trip. This was something

he experienced at camp for the first time and was able to teach his siblings subsequently. We spent the whole day digging up worms and catching/releasing fish. I also joined his family and relatives for a barbecue, which was a lot of fun to experience a culture different from mine. It is now nine months later and he still calls me weekly to share about what is happening in his life, to ask for help with his homework, or if I am still wearing the bracelet he made me at camp.

It is truly a privilege to see this young boy grow into a Godly man as well. At camp, he was given a Bible, which he later gave to a friend from home to read. He also continually invites his friends to come to the next ISC week and raves about the activities and messages he has experienced. I am thankful for the opportunity I had to serve at ISC and, like George, look forward to going back this summer.



Counselors' CORNER



Ryan Campbell

Rowan University

Liberal Studies

Inspire Sports Camps to me is the highlight of my year. I look forward to the month of July every year because of camp. ISC gives me a unique chance to use my love of sports combined with my love for Jesus. Being able to build a relationship with all my campers and other counselors is so important to me. I have met some of my best friends at Inspire Sports Camps. God uses all my talents and gifts he's given me for a chance to further his kingdom at ISC and I couldn't love it more.

THANK YOU!

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

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



*If you would like to make a donation to ISC and sponsor campers for 2018, you can do so with the attached “**Sponsorship Letter**” or by clicking on the “**Support**” page at: www.inspiresportscamps.com

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