

MAGNOLIA MINDS: Summer camp can have lifetime impact

*By Jordan East
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However, camp can be all of those things and more! Camp has the unique ability of getting people out of their norms and allowing them to try new things while giving them opportunities to grow as a person and as a Christian. Here are some benefits for going to camp:

– **HEAR FROM GOD.** A part of camp's uniqueness is getting to experience the Lord in ways campers might not have in their everyday lives. It could happen through the Bible studies in their cabins or worship out at the camp fire. It could be during a conversation while hanging out by the pool or zip-line.

Camp creates ways to point campers to Christ to hopefully allow them to learn and grow in their faith.

– **LEARN A NEW SKILL/PERSONAL GROWTH.** Camp is a safe place to try new things. It gets campers out of their comfort zones and sets guidelines to let them use their talents and gifts without fear of failure.

Camp inspires campers to use those gifts for God's Glory. It's also a place that allows them to work through fears and doubts. Not everyone makes it up to the high zip-line their first time, but they are applauded for trying and encouraged to keep going.

They might not know how to shoot a bow and arrow but they can learn at camp. It doesn't matter if they hit the bullseye; it matters that they tried and had fun doing it.



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With activities such as the low ropes, campers need to be engaged both physically and mentally to figure out each element. Campers might go to bed tired each night, but there is a smile on their faces!

– **BUILD STRONG FRIENDSHIPS.** Being thrown together to complete a certain activity or task allows campers to quickly make bonds. Camp fosters the opportunity for friends to grow closer together and to form new friendships.

The summer staffers who pour into the campers are challenged to be ‘imitators of Christ’ so they can show campers what a God-centered friendship looks like, whether it be with other staffers or the campers themselves.

– Lastly, **CAMPERS WILL BE LOVED AND ACCEPTED.** Camp has something for everyone! Love sports? Cool, come to camp. Enjoy making art and doing crafts? Awesome, we do too. Want to sing, swim, and be outside in nature? Great! Come to camp.

Staffers are trained to show God’s love to everyone who comes through the gates. We are there to listen, encourage, guide,

and to love on campers.

Camp has the potential to have a lasting influence on a camper, so much so that a lot of us return to become staffers. As staffers, camp has the potential to have a lasting influence. Some of our staffers have gone on to be ministers, and others are leaders in their churches and communities.

Only time will tell just how impactful a week of camp this summer will be, but for many it's going to be immeasurable.

East is mission camp director at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton, a ministry of the Women's Ministry/Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union. She may be contacted at jeast@garaywa.org. For information on available camps, [click here](#).