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JULY 2022

CAMP HOPE HAVEN

Changing Eternity,
One Child at a Time

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HOPE HAVEN

Celebrating 60 Years of Service

*This year Camp Hope Haven celebrates its diamond anniversary in ministry to our community. We asked our leadership staff—**FRANK WHITE**, Hope Haven Administrator, **DAKOTA BOWLEY**, Camp Hope Haven Director, **ANGELA JEFFRIES**, Camp Hope Haven Assistant Director, and **DIANA JOHNSON**, Camp Hope Haven Registrar—to tell us what makes Camp so special to so many.*

Diana, you're the first contact for our Camp Hope Haven families. What do they most want to know?

DIANA: Once they find out it's a weeklong overnight camp, they ask about the cost. When they discover that the registration fee is all they have to pay, they're usually shocked...and very pleased!

How would you describe the campers on Day One?

DIANA: Nervous and excited at the same time. The ones who have attended before are looking forward to renewing friendships and reliving the experiences. Those who are new don't know what to expect, but it doesn't take them long to start enjoying Camp.

Frank, you've been at Camp Hope Haven for half its existence! What is the unchanging foundation for its success?

FRANK: The primary hallmark is that Camp Hope Haven has always been about

sharing the good news. Many campers have never heard the words "Jesus Christ" except in cursing. But we make sure that they hear that God loves them and they can know Him...and know that His plans for their lives are better than they can ever imagine.

We often say that Camp Hope Haven "safe, fun, and Christ-filled." What safety measures do we take?

FRANK: Staff screening and hiring is a rigorous process, with multiple references and interviews with our leadership. Adult staff also undergo an annual criminal background check. And we are very serious, very intentional about staff training. The mandatory week before Camp begins includes step-by-step teaching through our entire handbook, as well as MinistrySafe training and testing on abuse prevention and instruction in mental health awareness.

And even before COVID we were focused on health, sanitizing, and careful administration of prescription medications. Plus, we always have a nurse on site throughout the summer.

Camp Hope Haven asks families to pay only a modest registration fee, and donors sponsor many campers.

FRANK: That low cost has always been an important part of our ministry. Families with lower incomes have naturally been

attracted to Camp Hope Haven because it's affordable, and the gifts of generous donors help even more. And since we are open to everyone, first come, first served, we always have a good, diverse mix of income levels, races, and churchgoing vs. unchurched children attending Camp.

DIANA: This summer I'd say more than 60% of our campers have never experienced Hope Haven—and some have never heard the Gospel—so I am excited to be reaching new children. So many campers come to accept Jesus as their Savior here at Hope Haven, but even those who have grown up in church are finding a new relationship with Jesus, a new perspective. I love that!

Really, there is no Camp without Christ, is there?

DAKOTA: Christ is absolutely at the center of everything we do. It's good to have fun games and crazy activities, but if we fail to demonstrate the love that God has for our campers, we really aren't doing much. I want them to have a great time and make memories, but mostly I want them to remember their time here and say, "Those people loved me and showed me Jesus."

We show that love to our campers by listening to them, answering their questions, like "Does God care about me?" and even just by doing things that they enjoy. As a counselor you probably don't want to have your cabin pour buckets of water all over you or watch you eat a

chocolate-covered onion, but that's fun for a camper.

So the cabin counselors are our front-liners for fun?

ANGELA: Yes! Whether it's making up creative games or singing silly songs on the way to meals, they do a really great job of making everything really fun. But in having a good time together, they also are fostering lasting relationships.

You've been here four summers now. Which activities do campers enjoy most?

ANGELA: We have an Olympic-sized pool, where they get to swim twice a day. They love that chance to splash and cool off on a hot summer day. And almost everyone loves making Slime or doing hands-on projects. Every Tuesday we hold Carnival Night, with cotton candy, snow cones, popcorn, and a variety of game booths with prizes. There's also a chance to interact with the beach ponies, so that's a lot of fun.

And there are some different activities for girls and boys...

ANGELA: The younger girls really light up over our Princess Party. They get all dressed up for a special evening dinner served by staff, with pretty lights,

decorations, and live skits. It's kind of like a dinner theatre with a Disney singalong afterwards.

And the girls love the Trashin' Show. Each cabin dresses up a model to fit a theme, then there's a runway walk to determine the winner. It's creative and hilarious.

The boys seem to like anything where they can be hyper, loud, crazy, or playing with a ball. They go all out for The Man Games. The cabins compete to complete a series of contests that they have to accomplish together. Some take strength, some brainpower, some good teamwork. The first cabin to complete all these silly games wins the grand prize.

But some of the fun also focuses on God, right?

ANGELA: Since nature and the Bible coincide so perfectly, our lessons on how to start a campfire or identify particular plants obviously point to God. Our world couldn't have happened by chance. As the campers study the intricacies of nature—like the crazy amount of detail that goes into making a spider web—they come to understand God as Creator a little better.

DAKOTA: We're all created in God's image, so our devotionals, Bible memory verses, and Camp chapels help campers understand how God loves them as His children. This summer we're focusing

on God's faithfulness, and the campers learn that we're not much different from the people we read about in the Bible. Like them, we experience confusion, fear, betrayal, and mistakes—and God will always help us just as He helped them. I also like that because our staffers are young, they model that you don't have to be all grown up to love the Lord and follow Him.

How do we help the kids grow in their faith after Camp Hope Haven is over?

DAKOTA: Each camper goes home with a children's devotional, as well as an introduction to some good local churches. We hope to connect our campers, especially young new believers, and their families with a place where they can continue their walk with Christ and stay excited to live for Him. Of course, we hope they'll come back to Camp year after year.

We also encourage the older teens to attend Switchback during the school year. It's a great way for campers to stay connected with our cabin counselors in a fun, Christian community each month... and some may come to work with us in years to come. Many of our summer staff started as campers, and it's great to see them growing in their faith and using their gifts for the glory of God. And their service in ministry all started at Camp Hope Haven!



More than Camp: The Other Ministries of Hope Haven

Hope Haven, founded in 1961 as an outreach of The Union Mission, has always been dedicated to nurturing children, strengthening families, and sharing the peace and presence of God. Though Camp is our best-known program, Hope Haven hosts several ministries at its tranquil, wooded campus in rural Virginia Beach.

SWITCHBACK is a natural continuation of Camp Hope Haven's spiritual emphasis and Christian youth leadership development. Monthly events bring together past summer staff members, recent campers (15 and older), and their teen friends as a way to stay connected during the school year. Through worship, the teaching of God's Word, prayer, team-building activities (with prizes), free food, and fun, participants grow in their relationships with each other and with God in a close-knit, Christ-centered community.

HOPE HAVEN CHILDREN'S HOME provides a safe, loving, Christian home for kids from troubled families. Dedicated, faith-filled house parents minister 24/7 to the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs of the children in their care. Since 1965, more than 350 children have lived at Hope Haven during a time of need. Many Children's Home "alumni" are making a difference in their communities, and three—including Executive Director John Gray—currently serve on the staff of The Union Mission Ministries.



RECHARGE RESPITE CARE gives special-needs children and teens, as well as their siblings, a fun-filled day camp experience each month—and gives their parents a much-needed break from the daily weight of caregiving. Volunteer buddies coordinate a day including games, crafts, toys, inflatables, sensory activities, and a Bible story to provide lasting memories for each child. And moms and dads get a worry-free day off to use as they wish, knowing that their child is receiving excellent personalized care.

THE MISSIONARY FAMILY HOSTEL has provided affordable housing and community support for missionaries and their children for more than a decade. The six-bedroom cottage offers a welcome haven during deputation, furloughs from overseas fields, and healthcare emergencies. This year families serving in Peru, Brazil, and Thailand have lived at the hostel for three to four months. The Christian workers appreciate rental costs well below market rate, as well as the hospitality that they find at Hope Haven.

Thanks to your prayers and financial partnership, and through God's sweet providence, Hope Haven will touch the lives of more than 1,000 people this year!

To support our work at Hope Haven, donate at unionmissionministries.org/camp or www.hopehavenvb.org.

OPERATION HYDRATION

A Summer Donation Drive



During the summer, the need for bottled water is at its highest across our ministry. Help The Union Mission and Hope Haven by donating cases of individually sealed bottles of water or unopened water cooler jugs.

We will be happy to accept your donations Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at

**DONATION DROP-OFF
THE UNION MISSION
5100 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk**

**HOPE HAVEN
1500 North Landing Rd., Va. Beach**

Our Staff is Caring Like Christ...

...and seeking new colleagues to do the same. The Union Mission is hiring! If God is calling you to ministry, whether seasonal, part-time, or full-time, maybe He wants you to serve here. We've have several openings for direct-care workers in our shelters, as well as support staff!

You can review our current employment listings or apply online at

unionmissionministries.org/job-opportunities.



5100 E. VIRGINIA BEACH BLVD.
NORFOLK, VA 23502
757-627-8686



Thank you for Your Generosity!



REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Anyone who knows my story knows that Hope Haven is a part of who I am. As a young boy, I found security, peace, and love growing up at the Children's Home along with my brother. As a teenager, serving at Camp Hope Haven was one of my first experiences in Christian ministry. After college and seminary, my late wife, Jill, and I served the Lord there through a variety of outreaches—and we even raised our family in a small house on the edge of the wooded campus. And now, even though our son and daughter are grown, I still am blessed to live there. Hope Haven has had a tremendous impact on my life!

Hope Haven has also had a significant impact on our local community and Christ's Kingdom. For 61 years, our rural Virginia Beach campus has nurtured children, strengthened families, and welcomed disciples to witness the beauty of God's creation, to learn about salvation through His Son, Jesus, and to grow in grace and service to our Savior. Hope Haven is an essential part of The Union Mission Ministries because it has both an everyday and an eternal influence. And as you learn more about Hope Haven, I hope you'll come to love it as I do.

In His service,



Change a child's life with a week at

CAMP HOPE HAVEN

For many kids, a week of summer camp is a treat their family cannot afford.

BUT FOR JUST \$150, you can sponsor a child for a week at Camp Hope Haven. This summer they'll enjoy nature walks, swimming, sports, contests, team games, and, of course, Bible lessons on our beautiful campus in rural Virginia Beach. Introduce a child to the joy and love of Jesus.

Give today and transform a life for eternity!



SCAN TO GIVE
ONLINE

unionmissionministries.org/camp

Yes, Rev. Gray, I want to help share the Gospel and the love of God with others.

Email _____ Phone _____

I've enclosed: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$ _____

☐ I would like to commit to a **monthly gift** of \$ _____. My first gift is enclosed.

Method of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Card Number _____ CCV Code _____

Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

Please make your check payable to **The Union Mission**. To make an online donation, go to donate.unionmissionministries.org.



Please complete this slip and return it to The Union Mission with your generous gift. Your gift is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send a receipt for your records.

07-2022

Your *Creativity* can change the world!

Fred Barley was a driven, intelligent 19-year-old. He was also *homeless*. When the police found him living in a tent on the campus of Gordon State College in Georgia, he explained he had ridden his little brother's bicycle for six hours in 100-degree heat to attend his second year of college. He arrived two weeks early hoping to get a job before school began.

Touched by his desire to succeed, the officers put him up in a motel room, and word quickly spread throughout the community. A local pizzeria offered him a job washing dishes, the motel owner housed him until school started, and a GoFundMe campaign raised nearly \$184,000 to help Fred.



Stock Photo

When giving gets creative, big things can happen! Rather than a cash donation to your favorite charity, you might ***consider a gift of appreciated stock.*** If you do:

DON'T CASH OUT.

Donating appreciated stocks to a charity like The Union Mission instead of liquidating them first eliminates capital gains for you and for the nonprofit when they're ready to sell.

BUNCH THEM TO MAXIMIZE TAX BENEFITS.

Your total itemized deductions may fall below the new increased standard deduction. But you can bunch two consecutive years of charitable contributions into one year—itemize on the first and take a standard on the second.

INSPIRE GENERATIONAL GIVING.

Appreciated stocks are a great tool for instilling a heritage of generosity for years to come. Choose a ministry to support with your children and continue a family legacy of blessing that lasts!

IT'S EASY TO INCLUDE THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES IN YOUR GIVING!

To donate stocks or include us in your estate planning, contact Helen Sommer at 757-627-8686, x 504.

Comments / Change of Address:

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THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES

P.O. BOX 3203 | NORFOLK, VA 23514 | 757-627-8686
giving@ummnorva.org | www.unionmissionministries.org

No person is denied service based on race, creed, gender, disability, or national origin.

Photos are representative of actual Mission clients.

If you would like to donate much-needed supplies, please see unionmissionministries.org/ways-to-give/give-goods. Thank you!

In the event contributions exceed expenses, extra funds will be used to feed, shelter, and care for the hungry and homeless throughout the year.

Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 919-807-2214 or 888-830-4989 for NC residents.