

The
**UNION
MISSION**

MISSION NETWORK

JULY 2025

**“Sharing the Gospel, helping
kids understand the Bible,
and having a blast doing it.”
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“Camp Changed My Life”



When you hear the word “camp,” what comes to mind? Fun, friends, swimming, bonfires? For Nick—former camper, staff member, and now leader at Camp Hope Haven—one word rises above the rest: life-changing.

Nick first heard about Camp Hope Haven as a curious six-year-old. His older siblings came home raving about slip-n-slides, swimming, games, and all the unforgettable fun. “I was jealous,” he laughs. “Every summer, I’d beg my mom to let me go.” At age eight, he finally got his chance—and he never looked back.

“Those early years were just pure fun,” Nick remembers. “It was everything I imagined—nonstop excitement. I didn’t really understand the spiritual side at first, but that started to change as I got older.” One of the turning points came through a counselor named Luke. “I asked him a million questions. He never brushed me off. During free time, we’d end up talking about life and faith. Looking back, I can see God was drawing me to Him even then.”

Nick’s journey took a deeper turn in high school, when he joined the camp staff. “It was the best. I was more aware of my spiritual condition, and the camp leaders were super intentional. Still, while I claimed to be a Christian, my life didn’t reflect that.”

Then came the summer of 2020. “One night, I was overwhelmed by conviction. I just broke down before God. I told Him, ‘If you’ll take me, even with all my sin, I’m yours.

I’ll give it all up to follow You.’ After that night, camp felt even more joyful—because it all had purpose.”

In 2021, Nick returned, this time with a mission: to serve Jesus, create a fun and safe place for kids, and help them see the love of Christ. “I wanted campers to feel what I felt—that this place could change your life.”

And it’s not just the staff who make that possible.

“Donors, sponsors, people who pray—you’re a huge part of these kids’ stories too,” Nick says. “You’re helping build a place where hearts are changed.”

Nick’s role has grown—from Camp Intern to Environmental Services Lead, to Boys Camp Lead. “It’s the best job I’ve ever had,” he says.

“Sharing the Gospel, helping kids understand the Bible, and having a blast doing it? It doesn’t get much better than that!”



“Looking back, I can see God was drawing me to Him even then.”



Discovering, now building, a real Christian community at camp.



When Ruth talks about camp, it's with the conviction of someone whose life was changed by it—and now changes others' lives in return.

One moment that still moves her came during a heart-to-heart with a teenage girl struggling with sin and pain. "She told me I had shown her more love in a week than anyone else had in her whole life," Ruth recalls. "She cried as we talked about surrendering what our hearts want in exchange for Christ. It's not easy, but it's real—and it's where the Gospel meets them."

As Assistant Director, Ruth's days in summer revolve around staff and campers: "I oversee the staff, making sure they're trained and prepared to lead and love well. During the year, I'm mentoring interns to do the same—and handling all the behind-the-scenes logistics that keep things running."

Ruth's own story with Camp Hope Haven began when she was ten. "We

thought it would be too expensive, but a flyer showed how affordable it was. The first week I came, it felt like home. I saw the joy of the staff—it was contagious. When I turned 15, I joined the summer staff and discovered what real Christian community looked like. It wasn't perfect, but it was real—teens trying to follow Jesus in their mess. I rededicated my life to Christ that summer. I've been growing ever since."

Over the years, Ruth rose through the ranks—from camper to counselor to Assistant Director.

Camp Hope Haven now runs with around 60 summer staffers, ages 15 and up. "Teens 15–17 mostly serve as support staff—lifeguards, kitchen, cleaning, nature trails. Older staff step into counseling and teaching roles. We place two counselors per cabin, and each has strong leadership above them. We also have staff leading Bible studies, nature activities, and sports—always with a biblical focus."

So what does a day at camp look like? "After breakfast, cabins gather for Bible devotions. The rest of the day is packed with fun—everything from swimming to team games—all rooted in Scripture. We close out with chapel in the evening. We don't want to overwhelm them, but we make sure the message of Christ stays at the heart."

How can supporters get involved? "Please pray. Lives are changed here. I've seen campers and staff leave transformed—seen kids walk in hurting and walk out as leaders. It's like a small-scale revival." Or give funds to provide sponsorships to children who can not afford to go to camp.

Camp Hope Haven isn't just about summer fun. It's about transformation. "We watch kids discover who they are in Christ. They leave feeling seen, loved, and called to more. All the qualities of great leaders—they learn them here. All the glory goes to Jesus."

OPERATION HYDRATION

BOTTLED WATER

DRIVE



For more info, email
volunteer@ummnorva.org

DONATION DROP- OFF

THE UNION MISSION

5100 E. VIRGINIA BEACH BLVD., NORFOLK

HOPE HAVEN

3000 NORTH LANDING RD., VA. BEACH

OTHER NEEDED ITEMS:

- WHITE TOWELS AND WASH CLOTHS
- SPORTS BRAS IN LARGER SIZES
- WOMEN'S PAJAMAS IN LARGER SIZES
- SHOWER SHOES FOR MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN
- SACK BREAKFASTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 18th - FRIENDS AND FAMILY TOUR

OCTOBER 3rd- 2ND ANNUAL MISSION GOLF TOURNAMENT

SHARE YOUR LOVE OF THE UNION MISSION

Friend and Family Tours on July 18 at 10 am.
Tour followed by Ice Cream!!



Let us know you are coming by emailing
legacygiving@ummnorva.org
or calling 757-627-8686 x 805

The Union Mission Ministries has job
openings in several departments.

Take a look at our current employment
listings or apply online at:

[unionmissionministries.org/
job-opportunities](http://unionmissionministries.org/job-opportunities)



REGISTER FOR THE 2ND ANNUAL MISSION GOLF TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3
Ocean View Golf Course, Norfolk

Tee up some friends for golf at our Union Mission
Golf Tournament. Registration is open at \$125 per
golfer. You can sponsor the event, the lunch, the
prizes or a hole.

Go to unionmissionministries.org/getinvolved/events
or scan the QR for more info.



5100 E. VIRGINIA BEACH BLVD.
NORFOLK, VA 23502

757-627-8686

TIN: 54-0506427



Thank you for caring!



REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What do your summer months look like?

The kids are out of school. Perhaps vacation is just around the corner. Maybe summer is the busiest time of year for you. Though you may see us outside a bit more due to the nice weather, our goals here at The Union Mission remain the same – to serve and love the homeless community. With your precious support, we share the Truth of Jesus with the love of Jesus so that lives will be changed for the glory of Jesus.

This is our same heartbeat at Camp Hope Haven. Hundreds of young people step onto our camp property each summer with a plan to have a week full of fun activities, but leave with their lives miraculously and eternally changed. Please pray for these campers. We want them to choose to follow Jesus and grow more like Him. Pray for their safety. Pray for strength and perseverance for our summer staff, who give their summer to serve at camp. Pray for changed lives.

We are so thankful to partner with you, our donors, in fulfilling God's work in the Hampton Roads area. Whether through The Union Mission shelters or Camp Hope Haven, we confidently believe your generous support has an eternal impact. May God bless you this summer.

In His service,



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, 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 to
transform**



SCAN TO GIVE ONLINE
unionmissionministries.org/Camp

Rev. Gray, I want to help the shelter guests and campers learn about Jesus' love for them!

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.

07-2025

3 Gifts Your Family Will Always Treasure

Michael Johnson had a unique obsession: car keys and key fobs. After he passed away, Michael's parents planned to keep the treasures that brought him so much joy. Then three years – to the day! – after his death, his mom saw a Facebook post from a neighbor looking to fulfill her son's birthday wish for car keys and key fobs. Their next step was clear, the Johnsons passed on Michael's legacy to a child who would cherish it just as much.

When it comes to your legacy and creating a will, you might think you don't have anything to give to your loved ones. The reality is you hold the keys to unlock meaningful gifts, and your will is one of the best ways to share them. Those gifts include:



- 1 The gift of clarity.** Having a will in place means your family won't have to guess at (or worse, disagree about) your wishes after you're gone. Instead, they'll have clear direction about your desires, from how you'd like your assets distributed to naming a guardian for your minor children.
- 2 The gift of simplicity.** In addition to clear instructions, a will maintains that information in one central location. Your up-to-date will means loved ones will easily find what they need and know their next steps.
- 3 The gift of love.** Psalm 145:4 reads, "Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power" (NLT). Your will is an opportunity to communicate about how your faith in God has changed you and the values that have shaped your life.

What a precious legacy! And when you make a gift in your will to ministries you care about like The Union Mission Ministries, you share that legacy with your family and the people who will be impacted by your gift. These gifts are for you too, so don't miss out.

August is National Make-a-Will Month, an annual reminder about the benefits of creating or updating your will.

Visit unionmission.christianwill.org for our free Will Planning Guide to get started.
Email legacygiving@ummnorva.org or call 757-627-8686 x805, if you have questions.

Comments / Change of Address:

EMAIL

PHONE

No person is denied service based on race, creed, gender, national origin, or disability unless it's beyond the scope of our care.

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 those experiencing homelessness 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.

THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES

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