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# Camp Wakonda Changed My Life

By Kenneth Leiva



Anthony Isensee

▲ Kenneth Leiva

**WHEN I WAS A KID**, I was never able to experience Camp Wakonda as a camper. I always heard stories from friends about how amazing it was, how they got to make new friends, or see friends they haven't seen in a while, and how they were able to grow closer to Christ.

I was always jealous and envious of my friends. I mean, what kid wouldn't be jealous after hearing all the fun things their friends were able to do? After many years, God gave me the opportunity to work at camp and, ever since, my life has never been the same.

I have been a camp staff member for three summers; summer 2018 will mark my fourth. Throughout these past summers, God has truly blessed and equipped me: from being

a cafeteria worker to a counselor, and now boys' director. God has taught me various lessons about trusting in Him, about how, even though there are times where I feel useless, He is able to use me for His work.

When I was a counselor, I felt God working through me for the first time in a real way. When I was notified that I was hired as a counselor, I thought to myself, *"There is no way I can do this. I don't feel like I'm cut out for this. I feel like I'm not in tune with God enough . . . what if I fail? What if . . .?"* and my insecurities continued all the way up to the moment I received my first junior camper. At that moment, I was still thinking I couldn't do the job God wanted me to do. I felt very inadequate, but I had to go through with it, since I was past the point of no return.

Throughout the weeks, from junior camp on through tween and teen camps, I was able to connect with my campers — still fearing I wasn't cut out for this job. I heard many of their stories, about how they wanted to grow closer to Christ because of the play they saw during the week, or because of the people they met, or simply because they felt God was tapping them on the shoulder, telling them He wanted to be with them.

During this time as I was listening to these young people, I realized this is where God wanted me to be. I realized I was the person the Lord was using to help these young men take that step to becoming closer to Jesus. Even though these young men are from all different backgrounds, God helped me convey His Good News to these campers.

So, from cafeteria, to counselor, to now being boys' director for Camp Wakonda, I am no longer insecure because I know God has awesome plans for me, just as He promised in Jeremiah 29:11! ■

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