

HPCO Summer Ministry 2009

Day Camp

As we look back over the summer and all that took place during day camp, all we can say is we serve a great God! As we got ready to plan for day camp, we were disappointed that the grant we normally receive from United Way was not offered to us. We were also short staffed, short funded and didn't know how overnight camp would look. But now as we are able to see it in perspective, we wouldn't have had it any other way because we were stretched and God showed up in awesome ways. We were able to see His people (many of you!) partner with us through your prayers and financial gifts. We saw God bring incredible interns with a heart for Him and the kids of Highland Park. He deserves all the glory for what took place this summer.

The Interns

This summer our intern team was small, but very tight knit. Dominique, who was with us last summer, returned and assisted Sarah in directing camp. Another blessing to not having the grant was the freedom we had in planning. Dominique's creativeness came out in our planning process and allowed for some new experiences for our kids this summer.

We also had two interns come from Grand Rapids: Katie and Jake. They both were here two summers ago when their youth group came out to serve for a week. Since that summer, they both felt God calling them to pursue ministry. Recent graduates of high school, they willingly gave up their last summer before college to serve God here in Highland Park.



Mr. Jake and one of our boys hanging out on the beach at Belle Isle.



Katie, Ashley, Sarah, Ashley, Dominique and Arriana working/having fun together!

One of the best parts of this summer was that our interns all lived here on Ferris street (the girls with Sarah, and Jake stayed across the street with some of our neighbors). They were able to experience first hand community living in the city. They were intentional about building relationships with our neighbors and the kids.

Teen Staff

Hiring local teenagers to work camp with us is a highlight each summer. We chose teens who are involved in our program during the school year and show spiritual maturity and leadership. Our teen staff this summer were both named Ashley. This year was unique in that our teen staff became a part of the staff team, as opposed to being more separated because of age. Both girls did a great job with our kids and I (Sarah) am looking forward to continuing to work with them during the fall.

Here's what they had to say about their experience at Day Camp this summer:

"Working here has really put a smile on my face as I see that the kids are open to learning about God. I can really see God working in some of the kids and I think that's wonderful. Also I see God working in me and showing me some cool things. As a teenager and working in this program and getting attached to the kids, I now think before I react and ask myself, 'would I do this if one of the kids is around?'. The two summers I have worked at HPCO have taught me a lot of things. I am glad God is using me in this program to spread His Word to the children." - Ashley K.

"This summer was quite an enjoyment for me. The experiences with the children made me realize so much. Not only about the children of Highland Park, but also about myself. Now knowing that this is my calling from God to work with them, I will make it one of my most important priorities to make sure these children know every detail about our Savior and how to walk in His footsteps. I've built relationships with 2 or 3 girls and found out some things about them that assured me that God has a plan for them."
 - Ashley W.



We are so thankful for the kids God allowed us to reach this summer

Urban Arts

This summer, we had the privilege of connecting with another ministry in the city called Urban Arts. Their vision is to partner with local ministries in the city to teach art, music, dance and drama to kids who may not normally be able to have that kind of experience. Not only were the kids taught these arts, they also learned about the fruit of the Spirit as this theme was woven throughout the program. The kids learned a lot in such a short time. At the end of the week, the kids performed for their parents and friends. We had a great turn out of parents to watch their kids. The kids had worked hard all week and it really paid off!



The kids performing for their family and friends after a week of learning at Urban Arts

through examples like David, Esther and Rahab. They also had a lot of fun swimming, learning skills like rifle shooting, fellowshiping with each other and playing fun camp games. Overnight camp is always such a great experience for our kids. They are able to be removed from their normal environments and in a lot of ways, are able to relax and just be kids. God always uses this time to open their hearts. Our staff also grew through this experience as they were challenged and stretched while working with their kids. Their dedication shined through and paid off in big ways!

Overnight Camp

Another way God provided this year was that we were able to partner with Youth for Christ here in Detroit and do overnight camp with them. Our staff was able to participate in a lot of the planning of the camp the week prior to leaving.

We brought eleven of our youth, and were also able to send three others to Wildwood Ranch in Howell (A camp connected with the Detroit Rescue Mission). Our staff also went with the kids and counseled during the week. The theme of the week was "Keeping it 100". We talked about how to be fully committed to Christ and keep our faith real for Him. The kids learned this



Ashley being taught how to shoot a rifle at overnight camp

HPCO Prayer/Praises:

- Please pray for us as we get ready to start planning our fall programs. We have applied for a grant to start a tutoring/arts program. **Please pray that we will be able to receive the grant and also the additional funds** needed to start the program. We are **also looking for tutors to work with our grade school youth.**
- Our Thursday night youth group: this group is transitioning to more of a discipleship program as well as homework help. Pray for our youth that they will stay committed to attending as well as get connected with our leaders and grow in their walk with the Lord
- **Praise the Lord with us for supplying all of our financial and staff needs this summer!**

To sum it up....

At the beginning of the summer during staff devotions, Jake shared from Isaiah 55. This passage was an encouragement throughout the summer. Just understanding how God's ways are beyond ours and so many times we don't know the how's, why's and when's. For each event that happens in our lives, God has eternal purposes that we won't fully know. Each child that came to camp was impacted personally. Some made decisions to follow Christ, some did not. But ultimately, it's in God's hands. And He promises us that "My Word which goes forth from my mouth will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it". What God's going to do because of this summer is eternal. Not only were kids impacted, but families also. We will never know how many more will be reached.

So while the summer was at times draining and we came home exhausted, the fruit of what God is doing made it all worth it! We saw girls for the first time be able to trust someone enough to share their struggles, boys who seemed tough in their neighborhood softened and a dozen or so who gave their lives to Christ. In all, 30+ kids were able to be a part of our program and be taught how to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ!

It took more than the four of us who daily were with the kids, it also took the prayers and support of the family of God who partnered with us. Thank you so much for being part of our team and making camp possible. Our heart overflows with gratitude for you! Please never underestimate what God is doing through you. You may not be able to be physically present here in Highland Park, but we felt your prayers!



Dominique was able to connect with our girls and build meaningful relationships throughout the summer

To God be all the glory... *Sarah, John, Jacky and the HPCO team*