



Healing Little Hurting Hearts



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Spring 2016

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A Letter from our Director

Hello Camp Agape Friends, Family, and Supporters!

My name is Christen, and I am so excited to announce to you that after 6 years of volunteering with this amazing ministry, I am the new Executive Director for Camp Agape! The impact of Camp Agape in my life began in 2011, just six months after my life was completely derailed when I received the phone call forever changing my life. It was my Father telling me that my perfectly healthy Mother, who was also my best friend, "was gone... she has gone to Heaven." Shock and numbness filled my body, but my soul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

In my life, the scripture Psalm 34:18 which says "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" has proven itself to be so true. At Camp Agape, both volunteers and campers show up to camp feeling crushed in spirit, but in just a matter of a few days, we heal alongside one another and feel the astounding spiritual healing inside our hearts.

Over the past 6 years, I have served on both the Advisory Board and Board of Directors for Camp Agape, and now God has truly blessed me with this amazing opportunity. Camp Agape teaches that in our times of weakness, God lifts us up and carries us through both our difficult and happy times. We remember and honor our loved ones all while glorifying God. Galatians 6:2 tells us to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ," and this is the spirit we evoke at Camp Agape.

At our summer session this year, we are able to serve close to 35 children, so space will be limited. If you know of a grieving family in need of our services, please remind them to sign up today! We are also in need of volunteers for this summer session, and later in this newsletter you will find some of the available roles.

If you have any additional questions about our program, please feel free to email me at Director@CampAgapeTexas.org, and I will be happy to speak with you!

God bless!

Christen McVaney

Camp Agape Summer Session 2016

Camp Agape 2016 will be held **July 18th-21st** at **Camp Buckner** located in Central Texas. The first ever Camp Agape summer session was held back in the year 2000 at this location, and we are very excited to return to this site as it is a perfect setting for both children and adults to take time to worship and grow closer to our Lord, all while having a blast!

JULY 17TH – 21ST (Sunday through Thursday)
VOLUNTEERS AND CAMPERS NEEDED!
Ensure your spot; Apply Today!

- *Volunteers will arrive late afternoon on Sunday, July 17th.
- **Campers will arrive midday on Monday, July 18th.
- ***Camp Agape will conclude midmorning on Thursday, July 21st.



Be a Volunteer for Camp Agape 2016!

Please visit www.campagapetexas.org to fill out an application today!

All volunteers ages 18+ must complete a thorough background check

Buddy (or mentor): As a Buddy, you must be 18 years or older and will be paired with a camper to assist throughout the entire camp program. This role will be responsible for working with your camper throughout all activities including play therapy, the candle lighting ceremony, devotional times, and physical activities.

Assistant Buddy: As an Assistant Buddy, you will support the buddy/camper pairs in your group during activities. You act as an integral part of the Camp Agape program by assisting a group of children throughout the entire camp program, but you will have more flexibility throughout activities.

Counselor/Therapist: As one of the Counselors, you will observe the children in your assigned group during group-therapy activities and be available to analyze behavior and/or counsel with children as needed. You will receive extensive training equipping you to lead play-therapy activities. *CEU credits are available for Counselors and Interns.

Physician/RN: As a medical professional, you will examine each child as they arrive at camp reviewing their medical records and administer medications as needed throughout camp program.

High School Helper: As a high school helper, you will work directly with the activities coordinator helping to organize all camp activities throughout camp session. High School helpers are very important and will also participate with praise and worship. *A certificate of Community Service Hours will be presented to each student.

Adult Helper/Floater: As an adult helper, you must be 18 years or older and will help with administrative duties, as well as help to organize activities.

*Please find complete listing of volunteer roles on our website.

FAQ About Being a Buddy

We know when you 'click here to apply' to be a volunteer for Camp Agape that a million thoughts run through your head. *What is camp like? What is being a buddy like? Do I have to have all the answers? What if it's too hard to be around kids who have lost so much? Etc. etc. etc.* It's okay and normal to ask these questions, but we don't want any of these questions (fears) to hinder you from applying to be a volunteer!

What is Camp Agape like? Is it sad all the time?

Camp Agape is FUN. It has all the fun of a regular summer Christian camp: swimming, archery, gaga ball, horses, games, worship, and team building activities. You will have fun and the kids will have fun! There are reverent moments throughout the camp: there are group therapy sessions/activities that help the child process the loss and all the emotions they are feeling, there's a candlelight ceremony which honors our loved one's, and a special session at the end of camp which ties in all of the sessions together and points the children to their Great Comforter, Jesus Christ. We hope they leave with amazing memories of the fun they had with new friends, the tools to continue grieving and processing their loss, and an understanding that although we feel weak, with Christ we are strong.

What is being a buddy like? Do I have to have all the answers?

Every camper who attends Camp Agape is assigned a Buddy. The Buddy does every activity with their camper. My camper was pretty closed off at first, and there were some big walls around her heart and with good reason. She had experienced several losses in a short span of time. My story was similar so I saw myself in her in a lot of ways. Saturday afternoon we did horse therapy and those walls she had built came tumbling down. Right after there was a journaling exercise and that was when she told me her whole story. It was nothing I said, nothing I did. It was the work of the Lord and the therapy activities that did all the work. I just got to witness it all happen. But that's not to say you are not playing an important role as a buddy. You'll be an open ear for them, a shoulder to cry on, a voice of wisdom, and their first friend at camp. You aren't an expert. You're not their savior. You're not going to heal them completely, but don't let that discourage you. This should take the pressure off! Jesus loves them so much more than you ever could and He has their hurting hearts in His hands.

Is it hard being at camp with kids who have lost loved ones?

Yes and no -- because they act like normal kids. They are goofy, have a lot of energy, and they laugh and joke and run around. To anyone just walking by the camp, they are just normal kids. However, we know they are carrying great burdens of grief, confusion, anger, and sadness.

I don't think my loss can be of any use. It was too long ago.

Most, if not all, of our volunteers have experienced loss. Losing someone is a unique experience and one that is hard to understand unless you've been through it. If you've experienced loss, you can be a great help for the campers no matter how long ago the loss was. In fact, your perspective is a unique one because you can offer a great deal of wisdom. The kids are all facing recent loss, within the last few years. You can sit in front of them and say, "I got through this, and so can you!"

The most important thing for you to realize is you are not alone. All of our volunteers came to Camp Agape excited and overwhelmed for the first time just like you! We are simply vessels serving our Lord by teaching these campers healthy bereavement practices to take home with them. Our hope is that each child will leave Camp Agape with new lifelong friendships with the foundation of Christ laid in their hearts knowing He is our rock during both our happy and tough times in life.

Camp Agape's Sporting Clays Shoot 2016

Moyesway Shooting Sports
Hosts

CAMP AGAPE



Bereavement Camp
for children

2nd Annual
Sporting Clays Shoot

Date:
Saturday
April 30, 2016

Times:
Sign-In Starts at 9:30AM
Wobble Game from 9:30 to 1:30PM
Main Event Shooting at 10AM
Lunch & Presentation at 12:30PM
Awards & Raffle at 1:30PM

Place:
Joshua Creek Ranch
132 Cravey Rd.
Boerne, TX 78006



Are you a true Marksman? Are you willing to Pay It Forward?
Come help Camp Agape *heal little hurting hearts!*

Camp Agape's Sporting Clays Shoot, the grandest competition west of the Mississippi, will take place the morning of April 30th at the award winning Joshua Creek Ranch in Boerne, Texas! A raffle will occur during the shoot and end after lunch in which a variety of items can be won including but not limited to: a handgun, shotgun, Kendra Scott jewelry, and much more!

Speaking of lunch, shooting clay pigeons out of the sky can make a marksman hungry. Since clay pigeons don't taste very good, we will have gourmet BBQ!

Entry fees are \$175, which will include a gourmet lunch. For the non-shooters, lunch will be \$25. For more information on how to sign up, please visit our website at www.campagapetexas.org.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. If you or your business would like to make a donation or become a sponsor for this event, please let us know by emailing KimTurk@campagapetexas.org

Christ Lutheran's BBQ



Camp Agape BBQ & Silent Auction Fundraiser

Date: May 22, 2016

Location: Christ Lutheran Church
510 Luther Drive, Georgetown, Tx
78628

Pick Up Time: 9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.
\$10 Donation for Sausage or Chicken

Christ Lutheran Church in Georgetown, TX will host a fundraiser for Camp Agape on Sunday, May 22, 2016. The fundraiser will consist of "to go" barbeque chicken or sausage that will be available for pick-up at the church. A donation of \$10 for chicken or sausage is recommended. Tickets for the BBQ will be available on Sunday mornings at Christ Lutheran Church beginning May 1. In addition to the barbeque fundraiser, there will be a month long silent auction beginning in April at Christ Lutheran Church in which all proceeds will go towards helping Camp Agape host another successful camp! We will also be accepting donations for scholarships for the campers to help reduce the cost of attending the camp. Please come and pick up some delicious BBQ, bid on some silent auction items, and be a part of supporting a great cause!

Total God Moment

“Camp matters. This past October I helped Kim clean and organize the camp office in Marble Falls. Enjoying the afternoon, I stopped by the Bluebonnet Cafe for lunch with a piece of pie, of course. I was wearing one of my Camp Agape shirts and the waitress kept looking at me like she wanted to say something but just wasn't sure. I continued to eat and as she was about to bring me my check, she sat down in the booth and asked about my shirt and what kind of camp this was. It turns out she had been a camper when she was 8 years old after her dad had died. We both teared up as she spoke of how powerful camp was for her as a child. Now as an adult, she has just gotten engaged and soon will be starting her own family, and she still remembers fondly how camp had supported her that summer. She was happy that camp is still happening and helping other little hurting hearts. I shared a business card with her and invited her back to volunteer maybe even as a buddy. What we do matters! When in doubt, look around and see all those who have experienced such loss and now thrive because of the healing that happens at Camp Agape. God is with us always and shows up in the most unexpected places.”

– **Bridget, Buddy and Advisory Board Member**



Join our Prayer Warrior Team



Have you wanted to volunteer with and/or support Camp Agape but are unable to make it to our camp session this year? We have great news! You can join Camp Agape's year round Prayer Warrior team where you will be a part of an email thread where you will receive email updates asking you to keep campers, volunteers, and friends in your prayers who are going through difficult life situations. You may also make prayer requests! There is nothing more miraculous than the power of prayer, and there are moments in our life when we all can use as much support as possible.

All you have to do to become an integral member of this team is email your interest to Camp Agape's Director, Christen, at Director@CampAgapeTexas.org and you will be added to this thread! Your information will not be shared, and you may opt out at anytime.

Volunteer Spotlight – Jason Coleman

Camp Agape has been blessed by Mr. Coleman's dedication to our ministry through his service on the Board of Directors, Chair of the Publications Committee, leader of devotionals and prayers, buddy and mentor to our campers, as well as acting as a supportive friend to us all. Thank you so much for your service and commitment to Camp Agape, Jason! You are a true role model and your love for Christ is evident! We are lucky to have you serve with us!

Board Member Testimonial

"I BACK-FLIP for Camp Agape; this is such an amazing ministry. When a longtime friend of mine, JD Hansard, told me about Camp Agape I didn't hesitate signing on as a buddy. I believe that the camping environment takes us out of the norm and puts us in a place to find peace and rest that cannot be found outside of camp. I've served on the Board of Directors for 4 years and for 3 summers now as a buddy and I have been impacted by the experience just as much as the campers have. No matter how old you are, we all struggle with how to process and deal with grief and the loss of a loved one. Camp Agape provides an environment where you can feel safe and be vulnerable with your feelings and allow God an opportunity to speak to your heart and heal the hurting. It is such a blessing to have the opportunity to be a buddy to these young kids who are and who have experienced tremendous loss and see them recognize the pain, and learn how to process it; it is amazing. Most of the buddies who volunteer with Camp Agape have experienced a loss of a loved one, and for their camper to see their buddy process the pain with them, and to be an example, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. To show these kids it's okay to cry and it's okay to laugh even while we're hurting is a lifetime lesson opportunity and I am grateful to have the ability to serve these kids and look forward to many more years of being a buddy for Camp Agape."

- Jason Coleman, Member of the Camp Agape Board of Directors and Buddy



Testimonial from a Parent

"My son and daughter were blessed beyond measure this summer at Camp Agape. I can testify that Camp Agape was a life changing experience for both of my children. What a difference a few days can make! My kids felt so close to God and were filled with hope and peace.

The experiences at Camp Agape far surpassed other forms of therapy and support my children have received. The therapists and "Buddies" combined with the activities definitely made Camp Agape worth our long drive from Oklahoma.

My kids didn't feel different there, being with other kids who experienced losses. There was excitement in their voices when they told me about the activities they participated in. The most awesome thing about the activities is that the kids do not feel like they are receiving therapy, and therefore feel safe expressing their grief.

Of all the blessings my children received at camp, the most helpful was HOPE. My daughter shared she learned that just because something horrible has happened, it doesn't mean she should live the rest of her life in fear of more tragedy. This greatly impacted her perspective on her life. The therapy my children received was intense and it did a world of good. My children learned coping skills that they were able to apply to their lives. The tools they brought home were so helpful.

Camp Agape is a special place with exceptional people where my children were comforted by the promises of God. I am forever grateful to you for touching my children's lives and healing their hurting hearts."

- Shannon, Mother of two campers



Sponsor a Camper Today!

Donor Levels

\$250 – This donation level can provide a **full scholarship** for one camper.

\$100 – This donation level can provide **art supplies** and **agape gifts** for one camper.

\$50 – This donation level can provide **food and snacks** for one camper for the duration of camp.

\$25 – This donation level can provide one child with a **Bible and Daily Devotional** to take home.



Sponsor a Camper Today!

Camp Agape is offered free of charge to grieving families in need and is run strictly off of donations and sponsorships from our amazing supporters.

There are 2 ways to make a donation to Camp Agape

1. Electronically:

Make your contribution through **GiveDirect**, a secure web portal accepting Visa, MasterCard, and American Express.

***Please note that your billing statement will read "Give Direct" instead of Camp Agape.

2. Through Mail:

Send your check to Camp Agape's mailing address:

**Camp Agape
PO Box 1484
Marble Falls, Tx 78654**

*More details may be found on the Donations tab of our website at www.campagapetexas.org.

*Camp Agape is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization and all gifts are tax deductible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

