

# The **Difference** You Made

I remember as a counselor that at the end of every week I would decide in my head if it had been a “good week” or a “bad week”. “Bad moments” included behavior issues, campers not being vulnerable or interested in morning watch, and the time that I passed out in the dining hall. “Good moments” included weird and enthusiastic group cheers with a panda hat, campers asking great questions in morning watch, and campers who cried at the end of the week because they didn’t want to leave their “camp family”.



The funny thing is now that I am a director I see that there is sooooo much more than “good weeks” or “bad weeks”. God is up to something in our campers lives that is so much bigger than one week or one summer. God is forming them for a lifetime. Below is a story I heard from this summer, I hope you know it is not the only one, but one of many.

**God brought His Kingdom to Earth this summer.  
We got to be a part of it.**

Dear Heartland Center camp,

I am not certain to whom this email goes, but I hope it is to the overnight camp directors/staff. My daughter, has been attending overnight camp at Heartland for 1 week each summer for 6 years. She is an extremely shy teenager who struggles with anxiety. The week she spends at your camp transforms her each summer. From her stories, she is a confident, anxiety-free, genuinely happy person. These are not adjectives I would use for her in her every day life outside of our home. This year I am observing the most obvious change thus far, and it has only been 2 days!

I cannot thank you enough for what you do. There have been times I didn't know how to pull her out of herself and her fears. Times that we were scared & worried about her. She absolutely loves being at Heartland. The fact that she will leave the security of home to spend a week with "strangers" is shocking to me, since she has difficulty ordering a meal to a waiter in a restaurant! This shows me what that week means to her (and us). Even though it's only a week each year, I do believe the time there has helped to build her up and allow her to become a more confident and relaxed teenager. The counselors and staff at Heartland are amazing, patient & kind. What you all do for our daughter is priceless and something she will take with her forever.

We are forever grateful for you.