

CAMP ECCO

Review:

I want to begin by giving a huge shout out to everyone who worked so hard this summer to create a great camping season, even in the midst of some major transitions. I am Annette Carr, the new marketing and development director, and I am one of those big transitions haha! But the Camp ECCO community has welcomed me in and there is great hope for the future of ECCO! Chuck and Nettie Campbell, along with Paige Huffman and Leighan Wells, were able to step in as cooks and caretakers for the summer, and did an incredible job keeping fun and sharing Jesus at the forefronts of their minds. We are looking forward to having Chuck and Nettie back this summer (2017), as well as a new full-time caretaker whom we are in the process of hiring.

This past camping season, our programmed camps served about 125 students over our summer season and an additional group of adults and students through our 4 retreat weekends. We also played host to two weeklong rentals and four weekend rentals. Last year we began to build relationships with 6 Carrollton churches/businesses, 3 local camps/Christian retreats, and continue to build relationships with our EC churches as well as several churches previously connected to Camp ECCO. We were connected with our surrounding Carrollton community by participating in a local church's Trunk-or-Treat, as well as Scarecrows on the Square (an annual event put on by the Carroll County Visitor's Center). Camp ECCO has taken the plunge into seeking to communicate more efficiently and regularly with our camp community throughout the year through our website and social media platforms. We have also been working to become more visible through our physical promotional material such as business cards, brochures, and informational table at speaking engagements.

Why it Matters:

Camp is a place where lives are transformed. The traditional format of ministry and youth development can present many challenges. One of the most notable is that there is never enough time – to say what you want to say, to listen to students' stories, to have fun together... whatever it may be in your ministry. Youth and adults alike experience God in a 24/7 format at camp that is not feasible in any other form of ministry. Our time together is specifically set aside for students to engage with the message of Christ in a distraction-free environment, away from their normal routine and friends, with the help of mentors and counselors who provide an example of a life lived for Christ. All of this is taking place along with games and activities that make us laugh, give us unforgettable memories, and leave us with tons of inside jokes.

We have been given an incredibly unique resource to share the good news of Christ and disciple those who are already on their journey. With our maximum capacity (with staff) in each camp being 135 people, it is obvious that we also have significant room to grow and reach more lives for Christ. The work that we have started this past year is significant because we have begun to reach out to our community around us. Most of the people that I have interacted with in Carrollton have never even heard of Camp ECCO or know what we do there. It's exciting that we have finally begun a relationship with many of them that maybe they would be encouraged to be a part of our family in their own backyard as we strive to be a part of theirs. As we reach in to the community(ies) around us, I pray that our efforts in continuing the camp community through social media and camp visits to local churches may spark a desire within all of us already involved to reach out to our brothers and sisters for mutual encouragement,

challenging, and friendship throughout the year. This would hopefully lead to increased desire in all of us to be the hands and feet of Christ right where we've been planted.

Vision for 2017:

We are striving to be a ministry not fixated on growing one particular church, but growing the kingdom of God as a whole - the catholic church (little c). This means using our resources to bring people from all walks of life in to experience Christ and partnering with churches to help them along their journey to share the good news of Christ. We will also be equipping and empowering those who come in contact with us to be Jesus with skin on to their community as we send them out from our sanctuary.

Our goals for this next season primarily revolve around growing and investing in our community. We are seeking to add an additional 40 campers minimum as well as a couple new renters by communicating with our church and camp family that they are powerful weapons in spreading the good news of what God is up to at Camp ECCO. I love providing resources and reaching out on various digital and physical platforms, but there is no more efficient marketing technique than personal conversation and invitation. We are occasionally persuaded by a commercial or a Facebook post, but nothing is as powerful as one parent saying to another, "My kid went to Camp ECCO and they loved it! You should consider sending your kid there this summer too" or, "Hey, you guys are looking for a place to have a retreat? I know this great place! Let me tell you about it." Believe it or not, individuals engaging in regular conversations bring us the most new people, because, after all, networking is just talking to people (p.s. think about how this approach bleeds over in to evangelism as well). We are looking for our community to feel like they have access to their Camp ECCO community all year long through social media, and, of course, we are looking for individuals, churches, and families who are catching on to this vision and desire to donate their time and/or money to continue God's breath-taking transformational work at Camp ECCO.

In Summary:

Camp ECCO is gaining momentum one little step at a time. What we need now is continuous prayers that we would keep the main thing the main thing! We want to serve Christ and live in His purpose for us, empower youth to live bold lives for Christ, and share the good news of Jesus with anyone we encounter. And we need passionate people and generous donations to make this happen. But I am certain that God has us on a great new adventure, if we would only have hearts humble enough to do it His way.

Sincerely,

Annette Carr

Camp ECCO Marketing and Development Director