

# CLARION

FALL EDITION 2015

WWW.CEDARS.ORG

NOVEMBER 2015



## THE POWER OF CAMP: MAKING SMOOTH STONES

1 Samuel 17 is a familiar account of David and Goliath. Yet there is a portion of that story that I believe could be an excellent description of the struggles that the youth of our day face during the years of self-discovery that every teen must go through. Just as the shepherd boy, David, is set to face the mighty giant, Goliath, there are those around him that firmly believe they know just exactly how he should go about it. After facing verbal discouragement from his older brother, Eliab, David is then exposed to Saul who proceeds to reinforce his inability. Finally, giving in to David's plea to face the giant, Saul then attempts to place all kinds of protective armor on David as well as a sword in his hand. Great intentions by a very powerful and wise man. But in verse 39, we see that David quickly shed all the armor and picked up his sling shot and proceeded to carry out

his calling with the things that he was comfortable with and confident in. Picking up five smooth stones from the stream and placing them in the shepherd's bag, David was now ready to face what was in front of him. David walks toward the giant he is facing with remembrances and faith in one whom had rescued him many times before. The experiences that David had lived while watching the power of a God who he knew was for him and not against him, now prepared him to face any circumstance.

The young people of our day face many giants in a culture that offers more uncertainty than ever before.

As a camp director, I often ask how camp can be just one of those smooth stones that will help lead each one to victory through the challenges of life. My question to parents and guardians is this: are you doing all you can to make

those "smooth stones" available to them in their formative years or are you weighing them down with Saul-like armor?

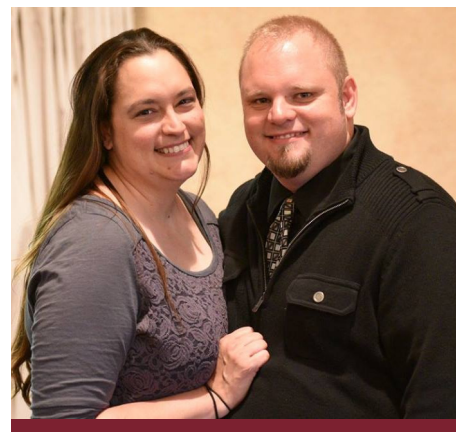
This generation has limitless opportunities, but they also face significant challenges. Life is complicated! The world is smaller! Expectations are huge! How do we help them rise to the occasion and discover all that God has created them to be?

At a Christian camp, kids discover the gift of God's love for them. They have an adventurous time in His creation, stretching their hearts and minds (and legs) to gain a new sense of purpose. And at camp, they discover hope, peace and acceptance.

We pray that you, too, will help us to allow the great "power of camp" to be one of those smooth stones in their arsenal that helps them through life to discover the great purpose and joy that God has for them!



*Jim Eaton on his last Sunday service at Countryside Covenant Church in McPherson, Kansas. He was director of student ministries for eight years.*



*Eaton and his wife, Amber, with their daughters, Ella and Hadley.*



# RESONATE DISCIPLESHIP WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR

Resonate is set to launch into new territory in its first year as new director of discipleship, Jim Eaton, takes the reins.

Although a recent edition back in October, Eaton is no stranger to the Covenant. For eight years, he was the director of student ministries at Countryside Covenant Church in McPherson, Kansas. He was responsible for all middle school and high school ministries during his time at the church.

Born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, it was there he met his high school sweetheart, Amber. They were married in 2001 and will be celebrating their 15 year anniversary on January 5.

Together they have two girls; Ella, 13, is the oldest daughter and she enjoys running cross-country for school. Hadley, 11, is the youngest and she enjoys her horseback riding lessons. As homegrown Minnesotans, the Eatons are diehard Minnesota Twins fans and enjoy watching their baseball together.

Outside of the home, Eaton is rounding out his degree. Currently, he is a student at North Park Theological Seminary and will graduate in May with a Master of Arts in Christian Formation and a Master of Arts in Non-Profit Administration. Additionally, he will be ordained to Word and Service at the ECC Annual Meeting in June in Phoenix, Arizona.

As Resonate takes shape over the next year, much is to be anticipated. Eaton believes his passions, gifts and abilities are aligned with the mission of camp to make disciples of all nations.

"I'm excited to build and develop a community where young adults can grow deeper in the knowledge and understanding of God," he said. "To strengthen their relationship with God, understand their role in God's kingdom and experience life together where iron sharpens iron."

Now, the year involves finishing touches on the curriculum as he awaits the first students to arrive in August for Resonate Discipleship.



# FROM TIMBERLAKE TO CEDARS

Nate Opfer begins his new role as operations manager this month, bringing years of camp experience into the mix. Opfer attended Timberlake Ranch Camps into his high school years. It was there he committed his life to Christ. Following his sophomore year in high school, he began to volunteer as a junior cabin leader, cleaning, serving and leading young campers.

After his high school graduation in 2001, Opfer moved to Lincoln to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He began working with Youth for Christ through Campus Life where he would meet his wife, Steph. Now they have been married for eight years, and the opportunity to serve at camp was decided as a team.

"I wanted her to be on board with my decision to follow my heart back into ministry, and it was an absolute 'yes' from her," Opfer said. "She is my partner, helper and friend, and we are glad to serve together."

Together they are raising three "studs." Griffin Harold is the oldest son at five-years-

old, Drake Shepard is the middle child at two-years-old and Phoenix Nathan is the newest edition to the family at four-months-old.

"My wife and I could not have any greater blessings in our lives than our family," Opfer said.

Opfer discovered a love for teaching, speaking and discipleship while finishing his degree at Grace University. Skip ahead a few years. Through prayer and searching, he was referred to an opening for the operations manager. Two days later, he and his family were visiting camp.

"It was God and just a willingness to be obedient," he said.

Now he desires to see summer staff grow and mature in their faith. He hopes to lead them in discipleship through a depth of knowledge and understanding of the Gospel. Through careful example, he strives for the summer staff to learn, grow and be blessed as they bless campers at camp.

"I hope to grow myself, [too]," Opfer said. "Effective ministry is only [effective] if it ministers to me as well."



*Above: Nate and Steph along with their three sons Drake Shepard, Phoenix Nathan and Griffin Harold.*



*RJ Bacani served this summer as the summer program director. Now he transitions into his role as the creative ministry director.*

## PROGRAM SHIFTING

He is new on staff, but he isn't new to camp. RJ Bacani joins the team as the creative ministry director, previously serving on summer staff for six years. He began on the activities crew and then served as the game coordinator. Most recently, he has served as the summer program director. Now as the creative ministry director, he is responsible for print and web design as well as future planning for the summer program.

Growing up in Omaha, he was part of Community Covenant Church throughout his childhood. In 2011, he graduated

from Millard South High School and moved to Lincoln to study at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He plans to graduate next May with a Bachelor's Degree in Advertising and Public Relations.

As plans begin to unfold for next summer, he is excited to be part of the process. Bacani believes there is much in store for him over the upcoming year.

"It's been a humbling experience for me to be out here serving with everyone," he said. "God is constantly teaching me that this is His ministry. He just blesses me to be a part of it."





*Summer staff employment opportunities include working on the facilities crew, activities crew, core counseling, maintenance and programming. Volunteer counselor opportunities are also available during summer youth camps.*

# SUMMER STAFF ON THE RISE



Every summer starts with the willingness to serve others.

Whether it is on the facilities crew serving meals in the kitchen or lifeguarding the lake on the activities crew, summer staff members are the fuel behind the program. Every year we are blessed to work alongside young, enthusiastic students who are eager to share the Gospel with others. God uses our staff in very special ways to build relationships and preach the Gospel through love. This summer will be no exception.

Camp is already beginning to eagerly seek summer staff candidates and is now accepting applications for the upcoming summer season. Paid employment opportunities vary. Facilities crew allows students to have hands-on experience preparing and serving guest meals as well as maintaining guest lodging. For the adventurous spirits, the activities crew is the spot for you. From lifeguarding at the lake and pool or belaying campers up the rock wall, the activities crew

enables students to capture the excitement of camp. If you desire a direct impact on campers, core counseling should be at the top of your list. Counselors will have the chance to lead a cabin group of campers closer to the truth of the Gospel each week. Behind the scenes work is perfect for the maintenance crew. This allows students to work with their hands maintaining and repairing campground facilities. For the more detail-oriented, program crew should be your choice. From coordinating games and planning worship sets, the program crew will help foster the creative mind.

Start the application process by filling out the online application. Fill out the application completely and thoroughly. Once an application is received, an interview will be done through a series of questions sent via email. In spring, Covenant Cedars Bible Camp will be in contact either to offer you employment or decline the application. To get involved today, please visit [www.cedars.org](http://www.cedars.org).