

*Reflections from
the 2010 Summer
Camping Season*



Volunteer Voices

Camp Civitan has changed my life forever. I have never met a more welcoming group of individuals. The campers are some of the strongest people I've ever met. I'd always had trouble approaching people with disabilities, but now I realize that they're just awesome, normal people.
-Laura

There are no words to express how much I enjoyed this experience. Everyday was a new battle, which I wanted to overcome. A few times I wanted to give up and go home, but I pushed through. I used to be the person to see a disabled person and stare and say mean things behind their back; my outlook has completely changed. My most memorable moment was the Grand Canyon. I was walking with one of the campers and people kept staring at him; it broke my heart. Then he started singing, people looked even more, so I started singing louder and dancing to keep the attention away from him. I was also really affected by the dance. Seeing the campers dancing and singing and having them want to dance with me made me feel like I had a purpose; that for a week I made someone's day, maybe even hour. -Janelle



While at Camp Civitan I got to experience a new way of life. I have a newfound appreciation for people with disabilities and their families. Spending a week at camp has helped me realize how challenging a person with disabilities can be. But it's also shown me that even though they can be difficult they can also bring great joy to others. Camp Civitan has not only given me a great experience but also a new outlook on people with disabilities. -Maddie

When I signed up for Camp Civitan I had no idea what to expect. All I knew was that I wanted to give as much as I would take away from my experience. I soon realized that I have lived a very sheltered life when it comes to interacting with people who have disabilities. After only one week, I feel that I am completely exposed to the gradient that disabilities are on. For me the most memorable experience was during lunchtime the first couple of days. Sitting across from me were two campers. During my meal I was able to strike up a conversation with one about the day's activities. However, when I turned to the other, all he did was stare blankly back and make clicking noises with his tongue. This was so valuable and memorable because it showed me that there is no way to stereotype these human beings into the category of "handicapped." Each one is an individual with their own personality and ideas.
-Eric



I can't express in words how this week changed my life. I have always had a passion for working with special needs kids, and after this week I have a newfound respect for them. They opened up my eyes to so much and made me a better person. Camp Civitan has changed my life. In only 8 days the campers changed me. They touched my heart and have made a huge impact on me. They are all so special inside and out, and even though some of them have had the hardest life, they are the happiest people I have ever met. I am less selfish, self-centered, spoiled, and inconsiderate, and I am more understanding, happy, and more compassionate because of them. This week at camp has made me a new person. The campers made me feel loved and that I have a purpose; even though they barely know me they love me for my heart, and so many campers have touched my heart. -Kelsey

Camp Civitan was indubitably a memorable experience. Its impact on me was immeasurable. Camp taught me how to be more responsible and accept people for who they are. I will admit that I viewed the developmentally disabled as less capable of having a strong character and personality. I now know, however, that they are just as colorful as you or I. This is a lesson I will remember for the rest of my life. My most memorable experience was that of the dance because I had a fantastic time both with the campers and volunteers. I will never forget the bonds I made here. Thank you for allowing me to participate in this incredible experience. -Hans

These past two weeks at Camp Civitan have without a doubt been the most memorable and well-spent weeks of my summer. I can honestly say that my experience here has taught me more compassion and patience than I could have learned anywhere. The campers have touched my

heart in indescribable ways- they have shown me that joy can be found in every moment and every aspect of life. Talking to them and learning about their lives has been incredible- especially since their timelines range from 9 to 79 years. One of my favorite parts of camp was that it was so easy to make friends.

Everyone is here to have a good time, connect with others, and enrich themselves. Dancing was probably my favorite activity to do with the campers, when no one worried about looking silly. Overall, it's hard to understand the Civitan experience until you do it yourself. As a wise camper once told me, "livin' ain't easy...", but it's a lot better here. -Michelle



Before coming to Camp Civitan I felt scared and unsure about interacting with developmentally disabled people in fear of hurting them and/or their feelings. Now I feel very confident and rather enjoy spending time with them. Civitan has changed my way of thinking and has made

me exceptionally grateful. All the campers have such sweet spirits and can make your day so much better. They are always there to remind you of what is important and I love that.

-Cody

For more information regarding volunteer opportunities, please contact Megan Reddell, (602) 953-2944 or mreddell@campcivitan.org