

THE CARSON COLLECTIVE

A January Misson's Update



Close Up Winter Camp

During the first night of Close Up, our winter camp, four young men walked into my cabin who were not even with our group. They were all guys I had mentored years ago, and their church, TLC, just happened to be scheduled at the same retreat center that same weekend. When I asked them for one word of wisdom for the younger guys, one of them said, *"Choose to be vulnerable in this room. Some of my biggest breakthroughs hap-*

pened right here during cabin time." That set the tone for the weekend.

One of our students responded to that challenge by doing exactly what was asked of him. He had been coming to lunch meetings for months and only recently stepped into Bible study. During cabin time he shared that his greatest struggle has been a chronic loneliness he could never shake. That night he opened up and something shifted. For the rest of the weekend he regularly shared during cabin time what he felt God was teaching him. He stopped sitting in silence. It was one of those moments where you get to watch someone discover what it actually means to risk vulnerability in a godly community.

Another student shared about growing up without a father. His dad was abusive and left when he was only a few weeks old, leaving his mom to carry everything alone. He said he had always felt a gap in his life but was never quite sure what it was until that night, when he realized how much not having a father had shaped him. After he shared, a few of us had the chance to speak a blessing over him. I looked him in the eye and told him I was sorry he had to grow up in that situation, but that his father missed out, not him. That hit him deep. For a young man who doesn't always find it easy to connect with his emotions, it was a sweet thing to witness.

The next morning, those same guys (from TLC) showed up at breakfast and asked if I had time to sit with them. We ended up talking for an hour or two about life, girls, leadership and following Jesus. Years after graduating, they are still walking with God, still in church, still close friends with each other, and still hungry for honest conversation. Watching them want to gather around a table and go deep reminded me of exactly what we are trying to build in the younger guys sitting in those cabin rooms.



By the end of the week, 33 students said YES to Jesus for the first time. Part of our culture at Close Up is that we don't just experience the gospel, we share it. On the drive home, students stopped at the mall and split up by cabin groups to go talk to strangers. **In just a few hours, those same students talked to 416 people, shared the Gospel with 111, and 4 people prayed to receive Christ!**

This was our largest winter Close Up yet, 176 students and 48 staff, 224 people total, from 17 campuses. Camp has a way of galvanizing students' faith so that when they walk back onto their campuses, they do it with real confidence. That's what we're believing for this spring.



Prayer Update

- Pray for the 33 students who said yes to Jesus at Close Up, that what began in those cabin rooms would take root on their campuses this spring.



With a string tied to his tooth, Cayden SLAMMED the door shut to lost his FIRST TOOTH!



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