

SPOTLIGHT ON MISSION

Positive stories. Valuable work.



Camp helps young leaders develop lifelong skills

Arnes strives to connect with kids at their level

Rachel Bergen
Manitoba Correspondent

ARNES, MB—Before coming to Camp Arnes as a young child, 23-year-old Julie Ridge did not know God. She struggled with making friends and she struggled with learning.

“I was a really wimpy kid, I had no friends and I really wanted to go to camp. My parents and I chose Camp Arnes and it’s been pretty life-defining,” Ridge says.

The inter-denominational Christian summer camp on the west coast of Lake Winnipeg is where Ridge came to know God, where she made her first friends and where she learned to read using the Bible, the only book she wanted to open.

When Ridge returned to school after a summer at camp, her teacher was awestruck at how much progress she had made in her reading skills.

Ridge was hooked. She has been at Camp Arnes every summer for the past 16 years, twice a year when she was a camper. For the past six years she has served as a counsellor. Although this is her final year in that role, she still hopes to be a board member one day.

Meanwhile, she is studying at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), working toward going to seminary in order to go into ministry.

“At Camp Arnes, God told me to pursue ministry, God made me a leader and He made me a camp speaker.... It is a life-giving organization,” says Ridge.

“Camp has taught me how to minister, how to do things that are difficult, how to take risks, how to fail, how to deal with others in conflict, and how to be what the kids need me to be.”

Ridge isn’t the only one who has been impacted by Camp Arnes.

Her colleague, Brent Murray, a psychology student at CMU, has worked at the camp for one summer as a paintball leader and counsellor. He discovered his passion for working with children and adolescents.

“My faith grew so much over this past summer and I am excited to see what more God has in store for me



Julie Ridge (centre) says camp has taught her how to minister.

“Our mission is for campers to know about God and Jesus being their Saviour. We want to help train people to lead others to Christ and to equip them to use that wherever they go.”

this summer,” says Murray. He plans on continuing to work at camp for summers to come and hopes to work with youth in his future career.

“Camp definitely impacted this decision,” he says.

Developing future leaders for ministry is a role the camp takes seriously.

While the camp offers a full slate of activities and adventures including art, paintball, sports, music, and drama, it also provides Senior High Team Building programs, staff training at the beginning of the summer, hands-on experience in leadership and consistent experience talking to others about God, says Shannon Loewen, director of summer ministries.

The goal is to “connect with what the kids are interested in and ways that God can speak to them through that,” she says.

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To learn more about Camp Arnes, visit www.camparnes.com or call 204.338.4647.

Spots

- An estimated 1,400 campers attend Camp Arnes each summer. Campers come from all walks of life. Many are from Winnipeg but there have also been campers from Quebec, Germany, France and the U.S.
- Camp Arnes’ summer ministry is dependant on its staff. The camp has about 100 staff each summer and is currently hiring for its summer ministry. Visit www.camparnes.com.
- Camp Arnes is for all ages, from ages six to seventeen. We also have Family Camp in August and our Freedom 55 camp in September.
- Seventy volunteers help out at camp throughout the summer. The camp is looking for registered nurses, handymen, parents, grandparents, anyone who would love to lend a hand for a week or two. Contact Shauna Wear at 1-204-642-7618 or shauna@camparnes.com for more information.
- Camp Arnes has been around for 62 years. Our team is excited about the ministry opportunities that God provides through summer ministry, Outdoor Education and retreat groups.

COURTESY JULIE RIDGE

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