



S'more Stories

Adventures from LOMIK Camps & Retreat Centers



David

Carried

As a young elementary aged camper, David had experienced a lot of trauma in his life. That trauma presented as aggressive behavior during his first summer as a camper. For the safety of other campers, David was sent home early from camp.

His next attempt, in cooperation with LOMIK included an aide to be with David during the week in addition to his counselor. For David, the constant monitoring made him feel like he couldn't be himself. Eventually, he chose to stop coming to camp.

Then, life handed David even more trauma and grief. His mother passed away after a sudden illness. She had been one of the only steady, kind voices in his

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life. Losing her reshaped everything. As David entered middle school, with time to mature and grief heavy on his heart, he made a surprising decision: he wanted to come back to camp, on his own, for the first time in years. After some discussion with the camp to ensure that he was ready, David returned.

That same summer, his counselor, Jackson, was also carrying loss. During staff training, only days before camp began, his longtime friend was tragically murdered. Grief followed Jackson into a season he had hoped would be full of joy and focus on God. Training felt heavy. Worship stirred questions about pain, faith, and purpose.

And then David arrived.

Knowing David's past, Jackson was nervous and prayed constantly. With God's help, Jackson met David where he was emotionally. David had an incredible week - no outbursts, no discipline issues, just kindness, self-control, and a quiet determination to choose differently.

One evening during devotions, David courageously shared with his cabin what it meant to lose his mother. He spoke honestly about his grief and about his struggle to understand why God would allow it. He shared that he was trying to make better choices, not just for himself, but because he felt he needed to honor her. In that moment, Jackson shared his own story of loss. He spoke about grief, confusion, and a line from a funeral poem that had stayed with him: *"Over life's short span, who are we to know God's plan?"*

Something sacred happened. One by one, each camper shared a loss - some big, some small. A grandparent. A pet. Even a missing bike. Every story mattered. The cabin became a place of trust and care for one another.

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David wasn't dragging his grief anymore; he was learning how to carry it. Through the faithful discipline of helping meet campers where they are, David and LOMIK worked together to get him back at camp safely. Because of this work, David was gifted with Jackson as a counselor, and other campers who all needed each other that way. Because of that, trust was built, grace was shared, and belonging found its way to shining light into grief.

Your generosity to camp makes it possible for us to answer God's call to grow faith, lift up God's children, and create space for healing and wholeness.

