

HOPE AIM Testimonial

HOPE has worked with AIM for the last three years as a partner in our summer Youth Sports Camp for middle school students in Big Stone Gap, Virginia. Archery as a sport provides the perfect medium through which to introduce and illustrate the Gospel, and AIM does it so well. Our campers rotate through several sports stations throughout their day, and archery is always a fan favorite! I try to drop in and watch as often as I can, because I love seeing the students interact with a sport that is brand new to them. On the first day, they are wide-eyed and unsure about the whole package—the tools, the process, the idea that they could ever wield this instrument and launch an arrow with any measure of intention or accuracy—everything. Many of them are saying either with words or their facial expressions, “There’s no way I can do this!” By the end of the second session, they are applying a mental and physical process to ready themselves, they have confidence, and many of them are consistently hitting their mark. Their excitement when those first few balloons pop is palpable and so much fun to watch! The concentration on their faces explodes into surprise and pure joy when they or their peers succeed. And when the balloon doesn’t pop, AIM instructors are right there with encouragement a teachable moment: what went wrong? Why did I miss the mark? How can I do better next time? Each step of the process developed by AIM for teaching and calling the students to self-evaluation of their effort is related back the concepts of sin (the original missing of the mark), the Gospel of Christ, and the Christian walk in a way that the kids can really understand and connect with—even those who were just as new to the Gospel at the beginning of the week as they were to archery. Each AIM instructor we’ve had at camp has been truly committed to investing in the students, getting to know them, and reaching their hearts with the message of Christ. The space that AIM is filling in reaching the world for Christ through the platform of archery is so unique and broadly relatable. HOPE has been blessed to partner with AIM, and I highly recommend them as an organization dedicated to advancing the Gospel.

Diana Bass, Executive Director
Helping Oppressed People Everywhere (HOPE)