

## Heart Behind the Scenes



You are standing in the dishroom. It's Monday morning breakfast. Steam fills the air and sweat rolls down your back. Water is flying everywhere, cups are being tossed, the dragon (or dish sanitizer) is roaring, and people are running all around. You are being asked to grab dirty dishes as campers drop them off, to grab more rags, or to put away clean dishes. All of this is happening at the same time and lasts for about five minutes.

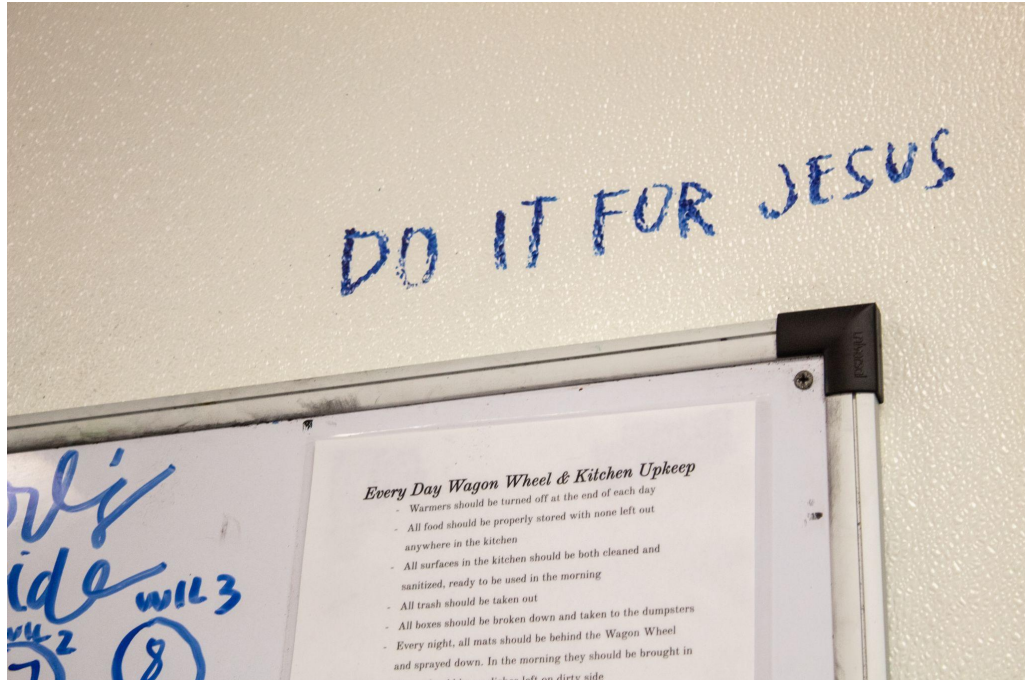
It is one of the most chaotic times as a Pine Cove staffer, yet everyone is smiling and belting the lyrics to "Work This Out" from High School Musical.

This is the next week of your summer. Welcome to work crew!



Work crew is a team of counselors who serve in a behind-the-scenes role for a week, rather than in a cabin full of campers. They help set up for theme nights, clean dishes, run activity classes, and more. Though not in charge of a cabin, they continue to be the very hands and feet of the body of Christ, mainly through helping with meals.

From the outside looking in, it doesn't make sense. Why would a bunch of college students willingly place themselves in a position where they are asked to wash hundreds of dishes up to six times a day?



They do it because they get to see the character of Christ in serving and share in that experience with Him. They do it because washing a plate can empower counselors to have Gospel-centered conversations with campers which can lead to an eternity being changed.

By work crew cleaning plates instead of individual campers, campers can relax to enjoy a meal and bond as friends in the process. That connection formed during meals empowers campers to have fun at activity classes, to participate in Bible study, and to enjoy Club.





This isn't the first thought people have when you say that you did dishes at camp. Honestly, most people probably think it's just a gross job that someone has to do. It definitely *can* be gross, but that's the beauty of it. Within the literal dirt and grime, work crew realizes that camp is not about them. It's about putting the needs of others above their own comforts.

Philippians 2:5-8 teaches us this heart of service. It's about laying down our own desires to meet others' needs. Jesus Christ Himself became a servant by denying His body and royalty to save the world, according to Paul. If the Savior of the world describes service as offering oneself for others, then we can serve those around us too – like filling up their water bottles before sitting down to eat our own meal.

The joy of service is described in Philippians as a character trait to be adopted. That takes time and work. Not every person in the dishroom loves it at first. It takes some time to understand the joy of serving.

This is the case for a few staffers, including Lana “Sleep Sea Fishing” Harrison, a first-time staffer at the Towers. Throughout her first few weeks at camp, she was concerned the Lord couldn’t—and wouldn’t—use her for His purpose since she wasn’t in a cabin. She went through the motions during the day, believing that nothing she was doing was going to make a difference. No one could have guessed that she was struggling with doubting the Lord’s strength to use anyone.



It wasn’t until the work crew director told Lana that if she needed anything, she would love to sit with Lana in prayer, to read, or just to sit. When Lana heard that, it all clicked.

Lana realized that she hadn't been serving like that. She had never thought to be present with others by building them up with words from the Bible, but simply would say something along the lines of "You are doing great!" Instead of relying on the Lord for strength to do anything, including comforting those around her, she had been relying completely on herself and her environment.

Learning to rely on the Lord to wash one more dish changed her entire perspective on camp as a whole. Coming into camp she served herself, looking to make herself comfortable. But through work crew, she has learned what it looks like to truly serve the Lord and do it all with joy. "I can serve with joy because I realized none of this is about me. Like, if me serving you means Christ gets to reveal Himself, then let's do it. If I can do your laundry, let me. If I can do your dishes, let me."

Lana is not the only staffer who has seen the Lord's character through serving on work crew. It took Evan "Wholly Chacomole" Lemons a little while longer to see the joy of being on work crew.

Before coming to camp, Evan's idea of service was just getting a job done in order to pass inspection. Through work crew, Evan learned that even washing dishes or taking out the trash is an opportunity to serve faithfully and joyfully.

At first, Evan didn't understand the purpose of behind-the-scenes work. It wasn't until snack time the second day that he saw the impact.

"I saw those trash cans overflow quickly, within minutes. It hit me that in the same way, we should want to overflow with the joy of the Lord and serve those campers well," says Evan. "Picking up this trash is so simple, but I know there's a reason behind it, and it's bigger than me."





Evan and Lana both came into camp with the distorted view of service that most people have: a task to complete before going on to the next task. Through their week of work crew, they learned that they can imitate Christ's example in the smallest moments, even through cleaning up cabins and taking out trash. They have begun to adopt the mindset that Philippians 2 speaks of. Service has become the opportunity, not to just serve camp, but to worship the Heavenly Father.

Grace "Hammie" Courtright, the 2021 Towers Work Crew Director, says it best, "I am here to serve camp, yes, but I am not here for man's approval. I'm looking forward to hearing the Father say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"