

# Moments of Heart Change: One Campers' Journey to Summer Staff



When signing up for camp, you may dream about all the fun you will have, but you rarely stop and ponder the life-changing impact that camp can have on you. For Emma Jean “Whisk It for the Triscuit” Severide, a radio advertisement and a family friend inspired her mom, Suzanne, to sign Emma Jean up to attend camp at the Towers. Little did her mom know: growing up through the Pine Cove camps would impact Emma Jean forever.

Suzanne was driving through Colleyville, Texas when she heard a radio advertisement for Pine Cove. She didn't think much of it until a teacher of Emma Jean mentioned that her son would be working at Pine Cove the next summer. When Suzanne heard this, she knew camp was worth looking into.



Needless to say, Suzanne was impressed by the results of her internet search, and she decided to send Emma Jean's older brother, Riley, to camp first. Emma Jean was not yet old enough to attend Pine Cove. But once she stepped foot on the Towers property, she knew that camp was somewhere she wanted to be. Her first memory of Pine Cove was speaking to her brother's counselor. He got down on her level, face to face, and explained the age to come to camp. Even though she wasn't old enough yet, Emma Jean naturally wanted to be there.



Emma Jean fondly remembers her experience at the Towers as the time where her eyes were simply opened to the joy of Pine Cove. She remembers, “I was in second grade and my brother was three years ahead of me. We were at the old Excalibur [the camp store], which was called the Cheerio back then. And it was free time and our mom gave us money to buy candy and we thought we were really, really cool.”

But free time is not all she remembers. She got to see college students on fire for the Lord through her counselor, “Fall Ridiculous.” Sitting by the pool gate, Falls shared the Gospel with some tears due to the beauty of it. When Emma Jean saw her counselor’s passion for the Gospel and love of Jesus, she understood what it meant to love the Lord and stand by Him. In that moment, Emma Jean decided to be a follower of Jesus and have a personal relationship with Him.



As she continued to attend the Towers and then moved to the Ranch, Emma Jean learned more and more about what being a follower of Christ truly means. Every

Friday night at the Ranch is talent show night, and Emma Jean wanted to dazzle the crowd with her singing. Before she got on stage, though, she began to get nervous. But her counselor, “Floppertone,” was there to support her. Floppertone talked her through her fear and when Emma Jean got on stage, her counselor went crazy cheering her on. Emma Jean took that lesson home, having learned how to root for others and to exhort, or encourage, those around her. She also learned that it’s okay to be goofy and silly, and that being joyful is something worth celebrating.

Moving on to the Timbers, Emma Jean began to completely embrace Pine Cove and even started going the same week as her best friends from home.



Her summers at the Timbers were marked with lessons on prayer, worship, and living in community. Emma Jean got to show her friends the place that she loved with her whole heart. Through the Biblical wisdom of her counselor, “Medallion Stallion,”

Emma Jean learned how to be a true friend and began to learn how to live in true community with those closest to her.

During her time at the Shores, she decided that she wanted to come back to Pine Cove as a staffer. Her counselor, "Project Aisle," or "Projects," had a big hand in this decision.

Projects was Emma Jean's first counselor at the Shores, and Emma Jean was in Projects's first cabin. "She was asked to be a good counselor for a week and nothing else was expected. But she chose to be my friend and invest in me outside of camp," says Emma Jean. After camp came to a close, Projects would drive from Dallas to Grapevine, a 45 minute drive, to watch Emma Jean play a volleyball game, go to a church service with Emma Jean, or get ice cream together. Projects wasn't involved in just the fun side of friendship, but gave Emma Jean Biblical wisdom in the tough parts of life.



“She was really faithful to me, even though that was never asked of her,” says Emma Jean. Emma Jean saw the faithfulness that her counselor showed and knew that the Lord was calling her to invest in campers in the same way.

In 2019, she returned to serve a counselor at the place where it all began for her: the Towers. In the midst of staff training week, before campers had even arrived, Emma Jean decided she had the best job ever.





Throughout her time at camp, she was constantly finding herself learning more about the Lord and learning how to live in unity with other believers. “One of the biggest things I have learned is just how to walk in the light,” says Emma Jean. During camp, you grow really close to your coworkers and learn how to live in a Biblical community. Not everyone has the same background or goes to the same school or has the same likes, but they have a common denominator: Jesus Christ.

Her time as a staffer has also taught her the idea of becoming weak, or living in a state of spiritual helplessness, that is spoken about in 2 Corinthians 12:10 and John 3:30. Coming into camp, Emma Jean relied on her own strength. “I think I went into camp being like, I can run really well on my own strength, but at one point you hit that wall and you're like, ‘I can't do this anymore,’” says Emma Jean.



When a staffer hits a wall of physical weariness, they need the Holy Spirit's strength. She learned this first hand her first summer when she arrived at camp for the second half of the summer and was told that she would be a counselor, not a cook as she was expecting. In the cabin she never expected to lead, she had a camper that was having a tougher time at camp. Emma Jean's patience was wearing thin, and she finally hit a point where she felt defeated. She didn't know how to handle the situations that arose, but her senior counselor that week pointed Emma Jean to the way to truly love that camper: through the authentic and patient love of Jesus.

As her time as a Pine Cove staffer continued, Emma Jean helped lead the day-to-day camp agenda as a Senior Counselor and Assistant Program Director. These roles come with a lot of responsibilities that often go unnoticed. As she navigated these roles, she learned that serving behind the scenes means doing a lot of work that can go



unappreciated and even a little gross (like cleaning a drain!), but it's so worth it to help support the mission of camp.



Emma Jean says, "It's worth all the spreadsheets and all the weird things I do. All the skit planning, all the challenging conversations, all the late nights and early mornings and time in the office and hang times. Let's do it. You know? Because the harvest really is plenty, but the workers are few."

As camp winds down and staffers go back to school, Emma Jean has taken the lessons she learned at camp each summer back to school. Through reflection of her summers at camp, Emma Jean came to a conclusion: camp hasn't just been a big part of her life, but Pine Cove has become the ministry of her heart.



Emma Jean explains this a little further, "It's fun and camp should be fun. But also at Pine Cove, you taste and see the sweetest of loves and it's this: ministry to campers hearing the name of Christ maybe for the first time in their life, which is really sweet and really worth it in my mind. And I would love to do this forever. As long as the Lord calls me here, I'm down."

## SOCIAL

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