

CAMP AGAPE



**Bereavement Camp
for Children**

Healing Little Hurting Hearts

Who

Camp Agape Bereavement Camp for Children serves children ages 7 through 12 who have experienced the loss of a loved one. Due to the amount of children in need of our service, a child is only allowed to attend our program as a camper once, unless they have suffered a new loss.

What

Camp Agape is a faith-based program that supports children and families who are grieving the loss of a loved one. The trained staff and volunteers are committed to sharing the belief that through Christ there is HOPE and will provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children to heal from the pain of grief.

Camp Agape is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization and provides our service free of charge to children who have suffered the loss of a loved one. We pray that each child will come to know that God comforts and heals our hurting hearts, and He will carry us through the despairing times of our lives, just as He has promised!

When & Where

Camp Agape 2016 will be held **July 18th-21st** at **Camp Buckner**, located in Central Texas. The first ever Camp Agape summer session dating back to the year 2000 was located at Camp Buckner, and we are very excited to return to this site as it is a perfect setting for both children and adults to take time to worship and grow closer to our Lord all while having a blast!

Why

The losses from which our children have suffered are great and range from cancer and illness, suicide, accidents, murder, and military losses. The children learn they are not alone in their grief while making life-long friendships. Our program allows these children to feel normal again, even though they have suffered a tremendous loss at such a young age. We teach our campers that although we may feel weak, in Christ we are strong!

For more information, please visit our website at: www.campagapetexas.org

Camp Agape's Director:

Name: Christen McVaney

Email: Director@CampAgapeTexas.org



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The theme of Camp Agape Bereavement Camp for Children:
"Footprints in the Sand"

One night I dreamed a dream.

As I was walking along the beach with my Lord,
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.

I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
Especially at the very lowest and saddest times,

There was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.

But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
There was only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.

When you saw only one set of footprints,

It was then that I carried you."



"I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you. Isaiah 46:4"

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Who We Are

Executive Director

Christen McVaney

Board of Directors 2016

Matt Cochran – Treasurer

Jason Coleman

JD Hansard – Vice President

Amanda Janecek

Serena Patterson - Secretary

Kim Turk - Founder

Joe Vogel – President

Advisory Board 2016

Marlie Austin

JC Cauthen

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John Dirba

Elmer Friedrich

Neva Friedrich

Cory Hanneman

Romi Lessig

Thom Feather

Jacob Oberrender

Amanda Richardson

Keegan Sandman

Siera Sproul

Bridget Thien

Special Thanks To...

Gay Bergman – Bookkeeper

Dustin Warncke – Webmaster

The Camp Agape office is located at the Whitestone Counseling Center in
Marble Falls, Texas.



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Testimonials

"My son and daughter were blessed beyond measure this summer at Camp Agape. I can testify that Camp Agape was a life changing experience for both of my children. What a difference a few days can make! My kids felt so close to God and were filled with hope and peace. The experience at Camp Agape far surpassed other forms of therapy and support my children have received. The therapists and "Buddies" combined with the activities definitely made Camp Agape worth our long drive from Oklahoma. My kids didn't feel different there, being with other kids who experienced losses. There was excitement in their voices when they told me about the activities they participated in. The most awesome thing about the activities is that the kids do not feel like they are receiving therapy, and therefore feel safe expressing their grief. Of all the blessings my children received at camp, the most helpful was HOPE. My daughter shared she learned that just because something horrible has happened, it doesn't mean she should live the rest of her life in fear of more tragedy. This greatly impacted her perspective on her life. The therapy my children received was intense and it did a world of good. My children learned coping skills that they were able to apply to their lives. The tools they brought home were so helpful. Camp Agape is a special place with exceptional people where my children were comforted by the promises of God. I am forever grateful to you for touching my children's lives and healing their hurting hearts." – **Shannon, Mother of two campers**

"The impact of Camp Agape in my life began the summer of 2011, just six months after my life was completely derailed. I was a junior at the University of Texas studying for my midterms when I received the phone call, which forever changed my life. It was my Father telling me that my perfectly healthy Mother, who was also my best friend, "was gone... she has gone to Heaven." Shock and numbness filled my body, but my soul was filled with the Holy Spirit. In my life, the scripture Psalm 34:18 which says "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" has proven itself to be so true. I came to Camp Agape as a Buddy that summer and I, just like my camper, was a child crushed in spirit. I healed alongside the campers and other volunteers and began to feel the spiritual healing inside my own heart. Camp Agape teaches that in our times of weakness, God lifts us up and carries us through both our difficult and happy times. We remember and honor our loved ones all while glorifying God. I love that Camp Agape allows these precious children to come meet others with similar losses so they no longer feel alone in their grief, and it truly gives them hope for their future. Galatians 6:2 tells us to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ," and this is the spirit we evoke at Camp Agape." – **Christen, Executive Director**

"I learned about Camp Agape and its mission to help grieving children in 2012, and I've been involved ever since. I feel honored to stand along other wonderful people and leaders who volunteer to make Camp Agape happen every year. I was a little hesitant to come to camp my first year. Would I know the right thing to say to this grieving child? I soon began to realize that with God's hands on our shoulders and the child's, we are just there to offer a comfortable, safe environment to help the child with their loss. No one handles grief the same way, but when the children are here and they get to talk, see, hear and feel other children going through the same feelings that they are, they begin to start processing some of their emotions. It truly is a remarkable transformation from the first day of camp to the last. Although I wish there were no grieving children in the world, I'm thankful for Camp Agape and its ministry to help heal little hurting hearts." – **Amanda, Buddy and Member of the Board**



Camp Agape offers a unique and innovative summer camp program designed specifically for children who have suffered the loss of a loved one. The losses from which our children have suffered are great and range from cancer and illness, car wrecks, suicide, accidents, murder, as well as military losses. Our faith-based service is available to ALL children between 7 and 12 years of age who are grieving and need support. The children learn they are not alone in their grief while making life long friendships giving them true HOPE for their future.

Volunteer Roles

All volunteers ages 18+ must complete a thorough background check

Buddy (or mentor): As a Buddy, you must be 18 years or older and will be paired with a camper to assist throughout the entire camp program. This role will be responsible for working with your camper through all activities including play-therapy, the candle lighting ceremony, devotional times, and physical activities. *Please be advised that being a buddy requires stamina! You will be with your child 24/7 and participating in all activities. Please keep this in mind when considering a position to volunteer for.

Assistant Buddy: As an Assistant Buddy, you will support the buddy/camper pairs in your group during activities. You act as an integral part of the Camp Agape program by assisting a group of children throughout the entire camp program, but you will have more flexibility throughout activities.

Counselor/Therapist: As one of the Counselors, you will observe the children in your assigned group during group-therapy activities and be available to analyze behavior and/or counsel with children as needed. You will receive extensive training equipping you to lead play-therapy activities. *CEU credits are available for Counselors and Interns.

Spiritual Leader/Chaplain: As the spiritual leader, you will maintain a spiritual focus through prayer and Godly counsel throughout the camp program. You will lead mealtime prayers and follow the theme of the day for daily devotional times. Although everyone will be responsible for counseling and praying with campers, the spiritual leader may step in and further counsel children and volunteers as needed when counseling faith based issues.

Physician/RN: As a medical professional, you will examine each child as they arrive at camp reviewing their medical records and administer medications as needed throughout camp program.

High School Helper: As a high school helper, you will work directly with the activities coordinator helping to organize all camp activities throughout camp session. High School helpers are very important and will also participate with praise and worship. *A certificate of Community Service Hours will be presented to each student.

Musical Leader/Guitar Players: As the musical leader, you will offer times of praise and worship through songs. You will teach the camp theme songs to the campers and volunteers and may recruit High School Helpers during these activities. The musical leader will lead the Footprints in the Sand skit performed on our special luau night.

Photographer: As a member of the photography team, you will be responsible for capturing photos of children and activities during the camp session to be used for promotional purposes and the Camp Agape scrapbook. The photography team will collaborate each evening and upload photos to our photo sharing account to share with the camper's families back at home.

Equestrian Therapy Leader: As the leader of the equestrian activity, you will be responsible for collaborating with Camp Agape's director to create a therapy program integrating the use of horses and will be responsible for monitoring children's safety during this activity. Insurance is required.

Adult Helper/Floater: As an adult helper, you must be 18 years or older and will help with administrative duties, as well as help to organize activities.

Snack team: As a member of the snack team, you will make homemade snacks and treats to provide for campers during set snack times.

Agape Gift Makers: As an agape gift maker, you will be willing to work outside of camp to create crafts and gifts that the campers will be giving during camp program to take home with them. If you are interested in joining this team, please contact our Director at Director@CampAgapeTexas.org

Prayer Team: As a member of our prayer team, you will be notified via email of children and volunteers who will be attending Camp Agape who are grieving and in need of support. You are someone who may not be able to physically attend Camp Agape and would like to support our ministry throughout the year. To join our prayer team, please contact our Director at Director@CampAgapeTexas.org