

# The Wilderness Way

Wilderness Way Camp School Newsletter



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Dear Friends,

Reflecting on 2025 at Wilderness Way Girls' Camp, one word comes to my mind: gratitude. We are grateful for you, your prayers, your generosity, and your faithful support that enabled families that arrived carrying heavy burdens to leave camp with hope. Lives are being changed not simply because of this camp program, but because you made this work possible.

Throughout the year, we watched girls arrive guarded and families overwhelmed. Girls learned healthier ways to relate, to regulate emotions, and to take responsibility for their choices. Families who once felt desperate experienced hope as real change took root.

You are part of every changed life. Every breakthrough and every step toward healing is a shared victory. Thank you for believing in this work and for standing with these girls and their families.

With gratitude,

John Bowman, Director  
Wilderness Way Girls' Camp

# ROSA'S STORY: *as told by her parents, James and Deb*

Our friends, churches, media, and books often paint a picture of what family should look like, usually ending with a neat solution. We believed that while challenges were inevitable, love and consistent discipline would be enough. We expected bumps along the way. What we did not expect was discovering that love and discipline alone would not be enough.



Rosa on a trip with her group

## ***When Everything Began to Unravel***

By 2018, we knew something was terribly wrong. Our daughter was diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder. By 2019, her struggles had escalated. She was skipping classes, failing in school, disrupting classrooms, cheating, lying, and stealing. At home, life became unstable and frightening. We locked doors to prevent theft and installed cameras to protect James from false accusations. Our daughter attempted, often successfully, to control our household. The more chaos she created, the more fear and division followed. Though she appeared in control, she was completely out of control.

For James, home became unsafe. The threats and accusations were traumatic. We were desperate. We were begging for help and tried everything we knew. Nothing was working.

## ***Finding Help Where We Least Expected It***

A friend told us about a camp that helped children like our daughter and arranged a meeting with a former staff of a boy's wilderness camp. His insight led us to contact Wilderness Way Girls' Camp. After meeting with staff and learning about the program our daughter decided to join camp. What followed were more than two years of hard work, growth, and healing.

At Wilderness Way, our daughter learned to work with others, trust adults, share work and control, and live with family. At the same time, we were learning too: gaining skills to communicate better, address conflict, and respond in healthier ways. Every six weeks, she came home for a weekend to practice what we were learning together. Regular evaluations with staff helped us understand her goals and recognize her progress, even when we couldn't yet see it ourselves.

## ***A Moment We'll Never Forget***

When our daughter graduated from Wilderness Way, we believed she was ready to return home and continue high school. During a meeting with school leadership, the principal, who had known her before camp, said in amazement:

*“I knew your daughter in Middle School. I saw her often in the office. She was out of control. But the girl I just met is a totally different person. We need to do everything we can to help her succeed.”*

**In that moment, we clearly saw how far she had come.**



## ***Gratitude and Hope***

Our friend's guidance, our daughter's willingness to attend camp, and the dedication of Wilderness Way Girls' Camp were the miracles our family needed. They made it possible for us to live together as a family again.

Life is not perfect. There are still challenges as we help our daughter manage her disability and pursue her goals. But last year, we celebrated something we once feared might never come, her high school graduation. **We are deeply grateful for the young women who guided her, taught her, and held her accountable, and for the staff who cared for her, challenged her, and loved her unconditionally.**

*James & Deb*



**Stories like Deb and James' are why Wilderness Way Girls' Camp exists.**

Rosa's change didn't happen overnight or alone, it happened because people like you stood in the gap for their family and believed change was possible.

**THANK YOU** for believing in this mission and helping make stories like this possible!



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**Thank You...** for allowing healing in families to happen. Your support provides consistent, Christ-centered care.

**In 2025, you supported:**

- Girls being equipped with the tools for life.
- Hope for families in crisis.
- Staff who faithfully walked alongside girls.

***Read Rosa's story of healing inside.***

