

CAMP HARRISON NEWSLETTER



❄️ WINTER 2025 ❄️

SUMMER IN REVIEW



We had another incredible summer at Camp Harrison with 1,727 resident campers joining us for a total of 1,999 weeks of impact at Herring Ridge! The LIT program continues to be a lasting tradition, welcoming 44 teens this summer to learn, grow, and serve. Over 500 Bibles were requested by campers and staff, continuing the tradition of sharing our Christian principles with those who join us at Herring Ridge. This was our second summer of allowing campers to choose their own activities, providing campers with the opportunity to develop skills in their favorite areas and try new activities!

In the 2025 season, \$477,349 in scholarships opened the doors for campers of all backgrounds to join the Camp Harrison family, ensuring access to the magic of camp for 350 campers. This is a 283% increase in funds over the past three years, enabling an additional 243 campers to attend camp because of our incredibly generous donors who strengthen our community and impact generations of youth.

The staff team hit a record number in 2025, totaling over 125 staff! As you know, the people make the place and this team truly brought the impact. This was the second year welcoming staff from all over the world, with 32 staff from the UK, Mexico, and more, further diversifying and uniting our Camp Harrison family. The BEAR UP Award, formally known as the Spirit of Camp Award, was given to Trey Dean and Mary Taylor. To learn more about "Bear Up" and other Camp Harrison traditions - both new and old - be sure to check out the tradition and legacy section of each newsletter!

**HONORING LEGACY & BUILDING
TRADITIONS: THE WOODS**



Opening Campfire on Sundays still has so many of the traditions we love – singing about Beaver Sharks, meeting the Head Counselors, and closing out the night with Taps. And now, there is a new tradition at Camp Harrison... The Woods! Each staff member and camper is sorted into one of the Woods Houses for the week – Pine, Oak, or Maple – in which they compete during evening programs, meal times, and spirit competitions. Throughout the summer, points are tallied as the houses compete for the grand prize – The Herring Cup.

Once sorted into a Woods House, campers are there for life, as is their family line. As younger siblings grow old enough to come to camp and alumni who are part of The Woods send their campers,

their Woods legacy continues in the same house. The Summer 2025 Woods Herring Cup winners were PINE, and each member of The House of Pine was mailed an exclusive pin to commemorate their incredible victory!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Olivia Formato (Camper & Staff '14 – '24)

Olivia's Story

Olivia first went to Camp Harrison in middle school and like so many of us, instantly fell in love with camp. She continued to spend every summer at Camp Harrison, even after moving to Norway for high school and to the West Coast for college. Olivia started as a Junior Counselor in 2020, then stepped up as Girls

Teen Camp Chief, was promoted to Older Girls Head Counselor, and finally served as Assistant Resident Camp Director in 2024. Olivia graduated from Pepperdine University with a double major in Education and Marketing this spring and is heading to Los Angeles for a career in social media marketing.

With so many dreams and aspirations, what kept Olivia coming back to Herring Ridge for over a decade? The camp magic. Her counselors made her feel seen and loved, inspiring her to one day have that same impact. Olivia had one counselor that became her role model – Liz Wilson Mercado. “Liz showed me as a camper what it means to balance being fun, silly, and unapologetically yourself, while also being able to hold space for real moments and conversations about life and faith. She showed me that it is cool to be kind and to care. That was huge for me as a middle school girl and something that I really worked to infuse into my role as a counselor and a leader.”

Being at camp for so many years, Olivia has carried on our favorite traditions while helping to embrace new ones. Her favorite is closing campfire because you see the impact camp has each week on both campers and counselors! As a Maple herself, Olivia believes The Woods program is an incredibly special new tradition that combines people from all different parts of camp to transform rivalries into a healthy competition through which campers make tons of new friends.

Olivia continues to embrace all that it means to be a Camp Harrison alumni in her daily life and currently serves on our Alumni & Advancement Committee.

VOLUNTEER CALL



Are you interested in getting more involved as Camp Harrison alumni? Email our Alumni Engagement Director at Lexie.Ratliff@YMCACharlotte.org for information on volunteering, joining a committee, or to learn more about our Advisory Board.

THE RIDGE REPORT

Bear Cubs

Isaac & Shelby Black

Anderson "Andy" or "Sonny" Shay Black

July 2025

9 lbs 4 oz, 21 inches long





Have you had your own Bear Cub in the past year? Fill out the [Ridge Report](#) to receive an exclusive t-shirt for your future camper!

Don't Miss It!

Open now! [Summer 2026 Camp Registration](#)

Camp Harrison Mission

To root faith, grow character, and build confidence in our staff and campers.





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