Work Camp 2025 Reflections

The most impactful thing for me on Work Camp was being in nature. The first night I was so anxious I couldn't sleep. At a certain point I went outside to use the bathroom and saw the sky. I felt an overwhelming peace wash over me as I saw all the stars we can't see at home. The star-filled sky made me feel like all the things I was worried about were small and insignificant and I slept soundly after that moment.

What I found to be particularly impactful during my time at Work Camp was reading Psalm 19 during quiet time and looking around and seeing those words come alive. There was something so innately beautiful about reading, "the expanse proclaims the work of his hands," and seeing that physically etched into the landscape around me. From that experience, I've gained a new appreciation for how nature can be used as a means of worshipping the Creator.

For me, I believe work camp matters for a variety of reasons, in which I find all hold an equal amount of importance. First it's a chance to walk in Jesus' steps and serve others without reward in return, a selfless act in helping another community or organization. Second, work camp allows you to grow with your own community, maybe those you've seen around but don't know, or those you've never met before. For me, I grew especially close with a lot of guys at the work camp through activities and work but also just through casual conversations. Third would be a phone detox, as most of us did not have our phones, we were able to be fully present in the nature, the work, and the worship we took part in. Lastly, work camp is an opportunity to grow in maturity and in God, as you find yourself learning more about God while being responsible for yourself during the work days.

Work camp mattered to me because it gave me a chance to grow much better relationships with the people around me, and in some cases grow in relationship with people who I've never gotten along with. The most impactful moment from work camp that I had was hearing the testimony of one of the volunteers named Ethan.

The most impactful moment from Work Camp for me was hearing the testimonies of the summer staff and learning how they resolved their own problems that some of us as students are probably going through.

The most impactful moment from work camp for me was seeing how all the kids connected and included the staff members from Stonewater. Usually in normal work camps we are kind to the staff that we work for, but this time it was different because the staff members were not just handing out jobs for us but also joining us and doing the work with us. It felt like they were part of the team instead of being separate and that was amazing to see.

I feel like this work camp, going into it I didn't really expect it to be a very impactful experience because last year we did something that literally changed the entire lives of a handful of people by building them houses, but I came out of work camp this year with so much more than i expected. First of all, I grew in my connection with so many other high school students and Summer Staff at Stonewater (and even the adult leaders). And secondly, while the work we were doing felt very basic and not really like it was worth doing at times, seeing everything come together was very special, and hearing how important it was to the camp director meant so much. But the main thing i took away from this trip was that i felt very seen. The testimonies of multiple members of Stonewater's Summer Staff made me realize that so many of my feelings that I have always felt unique and alone in were exactly the way that they felt, and it was really really important for me to hear that from others. Also, it was really heartwarming to hear directly how we as a group impacted the Summer Staff, one of them said that this was her first time leading a big group and she was really scared about it, but we all loved her so much and we made her realize that she was able to do this and it really validated her that she had chosen the right thing. So, while this year at work camp we didn't build houses, we built so many connections, which I really think was just as important.

The two most impactful moments of work camp for me were when I realized how grateful and what a privilege it was for me to be there, away from all responsibilities and worries for the week. The second was one of the testimonies that really resonated with me, and I hadn't realized it had gone on for around an hour until afterwards, but I was so glad it did because it was a very important story to tell and to listen to.

The most impactful experience I had on the trip was simply spending intentional time with God and recognizing the glory as reflected by His beautiful creation. It was truly a thin space and made me feel so close to His power and radiance.