



Ecclesiastes 3: 1 "For everything, there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."

Summer is an exciting time for families as kids have finished school and teens are off for 2 months. But summers can also be a challenging time for families with young kids as parents do not have 10 weeks off in the summer. The stress and burden from having to provide care for kids when not in school is only amplified as often both parents must work outside the home in order to financially sustain their families. Living in Richmond is costly and when you don't have extended family to lean on, childcare can be really costly. There are families who struggle to take time off/vacations as much of their finances go to summer programming for their children.

Day Camps at RCAC began in 2009 with a goal of meeting this need for families. We're grateful that it's been over 15 years that we've been able to serve Working Families who really need the care for their children through the summer. What began as a dream with 2-4 weeks of care has now grown into 6 weeks with an additional week especially focused upon the Youth, many of whom volunteer tirelessly at the Kids' Day Camps. While most of the kids attend from 9:00-3:00pm, just as they do for their school days, we also provide Before and Aftercare. This summer, the earliest child arrived at 8:30am and the latest child left at 6:00pm. In order to be sustainable, we only accept 20 kids/week in order to build strong relationships with the kids. We've also noticed that this ministry is especially vital to those families with a single child and do not have other family members to help with care. We prioritize the families already attending church but have accepted unchurched families as there has been availability. The application process, waiting for confirmations & sacrificial attitude of families to only sign up for what they need allows for more families to benefit from this ministry.

While the days are long, we are grateful to have the opportunity to pour into the lives of the kids and bless the families with this much needed support. The 6 weeks of Camp that focus on the bible are rich in teaching and lived experiences. It's easy to read about "putting others' interests before our own - Phil 2:3" but it can be a challenge to live it. The kids have lots of energy but it's been awesome to see the Camp Team match their energy and surpass it. As a Day Camp Team, we are spending more waking hours with the kids than their own families. The many hours allow us to know, understand and love them with Christ's love. It's been encouraging to witness the team grow in all these areas as they serve the little ones. This camp makes space for all the campers and each unique volunteer to live in community with one another.

It's been physically tiring for the Camp Team, but we are encouraged in our Spirits to see the kids grow in attention and love for Jesus. There's been sweet surprises like kids singing spontaneously on their own or repeating some of the prayers/expressions to Jesus. As older people, we know that life will hold many challenges & it will not always be the easy/free days of summer as the kids grow older. It's great to be exposed to God at a young age but a true blessing when a child responds to God's love personally and lives in His love on this earth until we move to our eternal home.

Seasons come and seasons go and now we're already facing the Fall. We are grateful for the season of summer and the ministry opportunities it has allowed us to share His Love and Be His light.

道



傳道書3:1「凡事都有定期，天下萬務都有定時。」

對許多家庭來說，暑假是個令人興奮的時期，因為孩子們放假了，青少年也獲得兩個月的自由。然而，對於有年幼子女的家庭來說，暑假也可能充滿挑戰，畢竟父母並沒有十個星期的假期。當父母雙方為了家庭生計都必須外出工作時，暑假期間照顧孩子的壓力和負擔就更加沉重。住在列治文的生活成本很高，如果沒有其他家人幫忙照顧，托兒費用會相當昂貴。有些家庭甚至難以安排休假或度假，因為他們的大部分金錢都花在孩子的暑期活動上。

列宣家的兒童日營始於 2009 年，為的是滿足家庭的這項需要。我們很感恩，過去15年來，我們有機會在暑假期間服事這些真正有需要的在職家庭。最初只是二至四星期的日營，如今已擴展到六個星期，此外還特別為青少年增設了一週的青少年營，當中許多青少年都是兒童日營中樂此不疲的義工。雖然大多數孩子入營時間是上午九時到下午三時，就像他們上學一樣，但我們也提供課前和課後照顧。今年夏天，最早的孩子在早上八時半到達，最晚的孩子在晚上六時離開。為了確保持續性，我們每週只接受 20 個孩子，以便與孩子們建立更緊密的關係。我們也注意到，這項事工對家中只有一個孩子、又沒有其他親人能幫忙的家庭來說，尤其重要。我們優先服務教會的家庭，但如果還有名額，我們也會接受非教會家庭的申請。透過申請程序、等待通過程序、以及家庭僅報名其所需週數的體諒態度，使更多家庭能從這項事工中受益。

儘管一天很多小時，我們仍然感恩有機會澆灌在這些孩子身上，並透過這個迫切需要的幫助來祝福他們的家庭。這六星期的日營專注在聖經教導，也充滿了豐富的學習和實際的生活體驗。閱讀腓立比書 2章3節「看別人比自己強」很容易，但要真正活出來卻是個挑戰。孩子們精力充沛，但兒童日營團隊的能量不止與他們相同並超越他們，真是太好了。作為兒童日營團隊，我們相處的時間有時比孩子的家人還要長，這些時間讓我們能用基督的愛去認識、理解和愛他們。看到團隊為這些小生命服務，並在愛與理解的方面不斷成長，真是令人鼓舞。這個日營為所有參加者和每一位義工創造了一個群體生活的互動空間。

雖然日營團隊的每一個人人都感到疲憊，但看到孩子們對耶穌的專注和愛日益增長，我們的靈也得到了鼓勵。也有些意外的驚喜，例如孩子們自發地唱歌，或重複一些對耶穌的禱告或表達。作為長輩，我們知道隨著孩子們長大，生活會面臨許多挑戰，不會總是像夏天一樣輕鬆自在。能夠在年幼時就認識上帝是很好的事，然而，當一個孩子能夠親自回應上帝的愛，並一生行走在祂的愛中，直到我們回到永恆的家，那才是真正的祝福。

四季更替，現在我們已經迎向秋天。我們感恩這個夏天以及它所帶給我們的服事機會，讓我們能分享祂的愛並成為祂的光。