



June 16, 2024

Camp family and faithful community,

The last few days have been filled with deep sadness and heartache. Earlier this week we shared the devastating news that on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, two of our summer staff members were involved in a fatal car accident. They were returning to Red Willow after leading a day camp in Milnor, ND when a single passenger vehicle crossed the centerline and struck them head on. No one survived the accident. We grieve the loss of all three of these individuals; our hearts are with the families of all those affected by this tragedy.

We remember and celebrate the lives of these two outstanding Red Willow Ministries and Park River Bible Camp staff members.

One young woman was from eastern North Dakota and grew up coming to camp. She professed deep love for her days as a camper at Red Willow, which led her to serve on summer staff for the last three years. As a camp coordinator, she led worship, sharing her love of music, especially camp songs, in our community with a joyful heart. Cross Hill was her favorite place to be at camp.

The other young woman came to our camps through International Exchange of North America (IENA) and their American Summer Camp program. She served as a cabin leader and was always the first to lend a helping hand. She loved to meet new people and learn about new cultures. Her home country was Columbia.

These young women made an incredible impact sharing their love for Jesus at Red Willow Ministries and Park River Bible Camp. They were dearly loved and will be greatly missed.

On Tuesday, when we received the news of this tragic and unexpected loss, we immediately assembled a team of local pastors and board members to provide immediate and ongoing care for our staff and camp community. Our staff at Red Willow Ministries and Park River Bible Camp are deeply hurting.

Campers were on site at Red Willow this past week and out of care for our staff, the campers returned home early. We are grateful to the families of these campers for their kindness and understanding in these difficult circumstances. Through the quick and gracious support of other outdoor ministry sites from North Dakota and Minnesota, teams have been assembled to continue ministry for the groups and day camps scheduled for next week. We will be in touch with registered families about any changes to future camps in the coming days and weeks.

We are profoundly grateful to the countless number of you who have shared fervent prayers and kind words over the past few days. Many of you have asked, 'How can we help'.

First, continue to pray. Please pray for peace, grace, and comfort for all those affected by this heartbreaking loss. If you have a church home, add prayer requests for these families and friends who grieve. As 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing."

Secondly, we are committed to supporting the families of these two young women who lost their lives. IENA is graciously assisting in coordinating travel arrangements and financially supporting travel and lodging costs for one family member to come from Columbia. We hope to raise funds to support two more family members who plan to join them to bring their daughter home.

The family of our local staff member has designated memorial gifts for Red Willow Ministries.

You can partner in these priorities by navigating to redwillowministries.com or parkriverbiblecamp.org and clicking the donate button at the top of the page, or by sending a gift to Red Willow Ministries, 1651 Jacob Drive, Binford, ND 58416 or Park River Bible Camp 106 Solid Rock Circle, Park River, ND 58270.

Finally, we will be sharing continued volunteer needs at both Red Willow Ministries and Park River Bible Camp in the coming weeks. If you, your family, or your group would like to serve in this way, please contact our camp offices.

Thank you for your faithful support. May God's grace and peace be ever-present for these beloved families, our Park River and Red Willow camp family, and with us all.

Jessica Gulseth

Executive Director
Red Willow Ministries &
Park River Bible Camp

Todd Edland

Board Chair
Red Willow Ministries

Gary Helland

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