

### **From Tivvi, HC's Program Director:**

Horton Center has taught me a plethora of valuable life lessons about myself, others, and my faith. I was fairly timid my first few years as a camper; hiking especially made me nervous. I was never the fastest or fittest in the group and I certainly wasn't experienced at hiking either. I can remember my first few hike days where I couldn't tell if my heart was racing because I was out of breath on the climb or because I was so anxious about it. It was the people I was hiking with that turned that unsureness into confidence and love for the activity. The campers I walked alongside who encouraged me and distracted me with songs and riddles, the staff and volunteers who cared for me and supported me the entire way - those individuals are who I have to thank for my love of hiking.

When I applied for staff the summer of 2016 I wanted to spend my summer giving others the same opportunity I was given as a camper. Whether it's hiking, or jumping off the rock into Emerald Pool, or even leading crazy campfire songs, I wanted to help others discover and develop their love for something they might not have, had they never gone to camp. Have I been successful in this endeavor? Yes. I have seen joy and triumph in first-time campers' faces when they get a bulls-eye on the archery range, or make it farther up the rock-climbing wall than they did last time. I have also seen success in the teary eyes of campers on Saturday mornings when their parents arrive to take them home. Yes, I have definitely given campers the same chance I had to safely experience new things and to fall in love with them and for that I am always grateful.

Being a member of staff at Horton Center is a tremendous opportunity. As a staff member you spend your days working with campers, getting to know them and building connections with them, challenging them to be the best they can be and helping them develop positive self-images and relationships with others and God. I can guarantee, however, that as much as you give the campers, they give back to you. I come away from each summer feeling joyful and inspired knowing that I have made an impact on so many lives. Each group of summer staff becomes a supportive and loving family that works hard and enjoys every minute of that work together. I have grown tremendous amounts each summer on staff and I would encourage anyone to come join us and see what it's all about!