

# Cameron

## BOYS CAMP

**B**aptist Children's Homes provides residential services for boys near Southern Pines, North Carolina. Cameron Boys Camp is a wilderness camping program designed to provide boys and their families an opportunity to work out problems through a highly-structured alternative education program.



Located on 902 wooded acres, Cameron Boys Camp offers the freedom of being outdoors and the structure of small groups with constant, caring supervision. Boys live in groups of ten with three counselors, called "Chiefs." With the help of their peers and Chiefs, campers learn discipline, positive behavior patterns and self-worth.

Therapeutic camping uses a team, or group, work approach to help boys grow socially, emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually. The goal is to build positive, healthy relationships between the boys and Chiefs. Through these relationships deep hurts are healed and bad attitudes are changed. The relationship skills each boy learns are transferred home to his family.

**Activities:** Campers and their Chiefs plan daily activities. They build their own living shelters, cut wood, cook meals two days a week, sort laundry, care for equipment, maintain trails, plan trips, and have fun! Group games, fishing, swimming, crafts, and personal time fill their weeks, providing a well-balanced program.

**Adventure:** Paddling 250 miles down the Suwannee River, camping in the Pisgah National Forest and backpacking the Appalachian Trail are all part of the camp adventure. Trips open doors for growth and practical lessons.

**Camp Community:** Camp spirit and team effort are vital. Everyone helps create the friendly atmosphere essential to group therapy.

**Chiefs:** As authentic, adult role models, Chiefs wear many hats – from counselor to friend to teacher. Solid values and strong standards are the backdrop of a Chief's life. Chiefs become deeply involved daring to change and grow themselves, to help the boys succeed.

**Discipline:** At Camp, discipline is a learning opportunity. Discipline is achieved through mutual goals, group plans, a problem-solving process, routines, and a caring group. No physical punishment is used. Natural consequences may occur for disruptive behavior such as missing fishing time.

**Education:** Camp is an alternative, non-public school. Trips to historical and cultural sites, skits at camp-wide parties, writing for the camp newspaper *Trail Talk*, drafting plans for a new shelter and building it, enjoying natural science, and preparing meals – all make learning enjoyable. The primary goal of Camp is to foster a happy, well-adjusted boy who is confident enough to want to learn.



**Families:** A continuing relationship with family is essential. From arrival at Camp through follow-up visits after a camper leaves, social workers counsel family members. Family sessions, home visits by the social worker, and parent group meetings provide support, education, and insight about family issues. They also serve as a means to monitor family progress and keep parents and custodians informed about their child. Every six weeks, campers return to their homes for a four-day weekend, called “Homesday.” Quarterly review conferences and evaluations monitor progress and highlight achievements.



**Goals:** Campers learn personal worth and discipline through a goal-oriented program of tasks and accomplishments they set for themselves and their peers. Boys learn a pace right for them. From this informal, consistent group therapy, campers learn effective behavior patterns and deeper values. And each new achievement is evaluated for meaning, insight and lessons learned.

**Group Process:** Structured small groups living in the outdoors are the heart of therapeutic camping. Boys are grouped by ages and the types of problems they are having.

Each camper learns the value of honesty, trust and friendship. The group’s success depends on each camper. An evaluation process occurs during a “pow-wow” as the group discusses personal insights, their successes and failures, and the next day’s activities. Boys receive positive affirmation from peers before the pow-wow is complete. The main goal is to build positive, healthy, trusting relationships between the boys, Chiefs, and peers.

These shared experiences and affirmations provide incentives which foster behavioral change. As group identity grows, boys begin to develop loyalty and group cohesiveness.

**Partnership:** At Camp, partnership consists of these elements: the campers and Chiefs, staff members, families, and referral agencies when applicable. When all are together in spirit supporting and working on goals, great progress is made toward families being reunited.

**Solving Problems:** Daily routines are purposefully relaxed allowing time to deal with behavior problems. Because solving problems is key to a camper’s progress, each boy is led to freely and responsibly express himself in discovering positive solutions. The “group” is the instrument of behavior change. Together they discuss a problem using “P-S-P” procedure: identify the problem, decide on a solution, and discuss the prevention of a similar problem.

**Spiritual Emphasis:** The spiritual emphasis at camp is life-wide. It is emphasized in all activities, whether fishing, building a tent or going on a trip. Everything is done in the spirit of rightness and with an attitude of serving Jesus Christ. Through this attitude and spirit, boys experience peace and a sense of rightness drawing them to right relationships with others and God.

Moreover, the entire camp meets twice a week for devotions. The small, informal service allows campers and Chiefs to share spiritual insights realized through the course of their week. Singing, a large part of the camping experience, helps the boys learn to harmonize their voices and their lives with others.

**Cost:** Cost is based on a sliding fee scale.

**Information and Referrals:** To inquire about admission, call the intake social worker at: 910.245.4034

The fax number is: 910.245.3616

To correspond, mail to: Cameron Boys Camp, P.O. Box 277, Cameron, NC 28326-0277

To learn more, see more photos and read Camp’s online journal, go to: [www.bchfamily.org/wildernesscamping](http://www.bchfamily.org/wildernesscamping)

