

BURLEIGH FAMILY NEWS

SUMMER/FALL 2025

“It is for freedom Christ has set us free!”

-Galatians 5:1



MINISTRY

Our 2025 summer camp ministry season has wrapped up, and with it we welcome the transition of seasons and a shift in workflow at YAA. This year’s camp theme was “The Year of Jubilee” with Galatians 5:1 as our guiding verse: “It is for freedom Christ has set us free!” Each week, we emphasized the invitation for every camper to say “Yes!” to Jesus—a true cause for celebration. We even leveled up our check-in days by hosting a lively “party” to welcome each camper by name, setting the tone for a week of joy and fun!

Our summer staff rose to the occasion with energy and enthusiasm, creating a welcoming environment for a new group of campers each week. Over the course of our 12-week season, we hosted more than 700 campers—providing exceptional camp experiences and sharing the love of Jesus week after week.

Last fall, we were able to hire Abby Sandstedt as our Office Administrator—a long-anticipated and much-prayed-for addition to our team. Abby and her husband Stephen were already established in Bozeman, and through interviews and conversations, it was clear she was a great fit. Over the past year, we’ve transitioned much of the administrative workload from my desk to Abby’s, including her serving as Summer Camp Registrar. With that shift, Jim has been helping guide me in how to fill my time with the right tasks, rather than simply the most urgent ones.

This adjustment has allowed me to step further into development and fundraising responsibilities for both YAA and the Ascend Campaign. Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to assist with grant writing, and plan and execute a fundraising Gala event in early 2025 resulting in significant funds raised toward the Ascend Campaign.

This summer, we worked to strengthen our fundraising efforts with new tools like a pitch deck and brochure that combine meaningful stories with clear impact. These resources are helping us better share how YAA is making a difference in the lives of campers and families, and why our presence in the community matters.

One story that captures that impact came from a hesitant mom who reached out before camp. She wrote to say, “We aren’t a religious family. Can you help me prepare my daughter for what type of religious exposure she can expect?” After a thoughtful exchange, both she and her daughter felt comfortable moving forward. Following her daughter’s week at camp, the mom sent this note:

“Thank you for taking such incredible care of my kiddo and showing her such a wonderful time. It was Lucy’s first time at YAA and she came home saying it was the best camp EVER. And we have tried several. I was so thrilled to hear she played hard and enjoyed the music and connection and made friends. And most of all that she felt safe, well taken care of and able to be herself. It was such a great experience for her on many levels. Camp built her confidence, encouraged her contemplation, reignited her playfulness and introduced her to new perspectives. She hasn’t stopped talking about it two days later.”

This kind of testimony is a powerful reminder of why we do what we do.

Looking ahead, this fall marks an exciting new chapter with the launch of our nature-based preschool program, LEAP (Little Explorers Adventure PreCamp) at YAA. We’ve officially hired Sarah Nitzsche as the Lead Teacher for this pilot year of M/W/F morning classes. Nora and Griffin will be part of the program alongside seven other children, filling 9 of the 10 available spots. LEAP is the formal roll-out of a program Sarah has already built and led for staff kids in recent years, and we are eager to see how it grows as a new extension of YAA’s programs.

January of 2026 we anticipate the first 5 of (hopefully) 8 cabins to be completed which is a significant first benchmark in the Ascend Campaign. We are continuing on in fundraising efforts, and are grateful for all of the support that has come thus far. Next summer we will have brand-new camper cabins and guest rooms for our Family Camps. (Come stay with us!) Along with the addition of a lake on the property providing exciting new water-front activities.

PHOTOS

(Top to Bottom) A spring cross country Ski

Nora, Zara and Elowyn as flower girls in Cassidy’s April wedding

The Burleigh’s get a NEW (to us) couch after 13 years of service from our last couch enduring much Woosely & Burleigh Kid reunion

Naomi & Nora show off our Elfabia & Glinda Easter eggs

Birthday date night with Mom & Dad

A National Championship celebration photo - Go Bucks!



FAMILY

The Burleigh crew had a full and joy-filled Spring and Summer season. David, Ethan, and Logan jumped into downhill skiing last winter and spring, and we're hopeful that by this coming winter all seven of us will be on skis together. Three of our five kids participated in camp programs this summer, while the youngest two are now old enough to enjoy life around camp more independently—which has been a big milestone for our family.

We were blessed by visits from many close friends and family, including our Alabama friends the Woosley family, longtime Ohio/Camp friends Mark & Nyssa Tucker, and a long visit from Lula & Ddad (Naomi's parents) to close out July.

August was a month of play—we took a family trip to Sandpoint, Idaho, and spent a day at Silverwood Theme Park. While it wasn't quite the Cedar Point experience David and I grew up with, it was a wonderful first go with roller coasters for our kids. We came home proud of ourselves for making space for a family road trip—something we haven't attempted much since having five kids. It was a practice in adventure, and we came away with great memories.

David and I continue to navigate owning a business and are learning how to weather the inevitable ups and downs that come. Through it all, we remain grateful for the ways God continues to provide what we need, when we need it, and continue to learn a lot in each season.

Ethan (12) celebrated his birthday in August with a laser tag party (perks of camp life!). He's now in sixth grade, enjoying YMCA flag football, cheering on the Buckeyes and Bengals (with a few MSU Bobcats games sprinkled in), and diving deep into books whenever he can.

Logan (9.5) has started fourth grade and is developing an interest in football. He's also giving flag football a try this fall. Logan remains our most musically inclined (drums like David!) and loves drawing and creating.

Hudson (6) started kindergarten at Anderson School, joining Ethan and Logan. With Grandma (Pat Burleigh) working there and friends like Zara Hickinbotham in the halls, he's thriving in the school community.

Griffin and Nora (5 this fall) are excited for more friendships through the LEAP preschool program. Nora had the sweet honor of being a flower girl in our friend Cassidy's wedding this spring. Griffin spends much of his time getting into adventures with Hudson and Luca Hickinbotham—often things they probably shouldn't be doing, but it's fun to watch their friendship mirror the kind of family bond we experienced as kids growing up together in Ohio.

Our kids often remind us of the beautiful chaos of those early years for our own parents. Watching them build friendships and memories in this community has been one of our greatest joys.

We hope this update finds you well and enjoying the start of Harvest Season with your own families. We always want our updates to feel like a letter from a friend—that's how we see you: our network of supporters, family, and friends. Thank you for journeying with us.

Love to each of you!
The Burleighs



P.S. Would you consider making a financial contribution to our support-raising efforts at YAA? As a non-profit organization that relies on donations for about 30% of our budget, it is a privilege to share our story with you and invite you to participate in the ministry of YAA through prayer and financial support. Thank you for choosing to support all that camp does. It means so much!

PLAN A TRIP

Whether you sign up to join us at Go West Family Camp, or you are already planning a trip to YNP, please come visit us! We LOVE to host our friends and share camp with you!
October 4th | Annual Harvest Market
Jan - March | Cosmic Tubing Hill Open
March 26th | Annual Fundraising Gala
July 19-25th | Go West Family camp

PHOTOS

Naomi had a girls weekend to Nashville with HS best friends
Nora & Naomi on a summer Sunday
Luca, Hudson & Griffin after some summer antics
The five with Lula & Ddad at Palisade Falls hike
Logan & Ethan first day of school
David, Ethan, Logan & Hudson on a mountain bike ride
The five
Naomi & Cassidy on a mountain bike ride