

## ***Elevate 2010***

Well, after two 14-hour drives and a week of camp, we're back! As most fun things do, the week passed by incredibly quickly. We laughed, we cried, we loved, we worshiped, we stayed up too late, we were covered in crud, we traded dimes for karate lessons and electronics, we break danced, and we were "attacked" by the Mysterious Raccoon Man. Don't worry; if you're confused, you're not alone.

120 kids lived in the dormitories of Rochester College for the week, with groups coming from Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia and, of course, Connecticut (that's us!). Andrew Gilliland and Gabbi Mack attended from CVCC, and Leena Mack went with us as an adult chaperone and co-navigator. The overall theme was "Riddle Me This", emphasizing the questions that we have about God and His role in our lives. The directors and staff of Elevate provided a wonderful combination of faith and fun. The Nashville-based band, Salient, and worship-leader Chris Shields provided a high-energy, sincere worship experience. Peter Reed spoke to us about the importance of bringing our emotions to God "from the gut", as well as the beauty of our covenant of renewal. Dion Frasier implored us to take our questions before God, assuring us that God is not threatened by our questions and doubts. Gary Spear brought us deep into the waters of rational and relational thinking, discussing transcendental and remnant theology.

Small groups, composed of eight to twelve kids and two or three adult leaders, drove the relationship-building of the camp experience. Teens were put into groups based on age instead of state or congregation, and in several groups even the leaders did not know each other at first. Small groups participated in discussion sessions twice a day and competed with other small groups in various competitions throughout the week entitled "Elevate Olympics". Competitions included a relay race composed of various silly races, traditional sports, a game of "Trade-Up" in which campers were given a dime and then had to go into town and see what they could manage to obtain by trading up with pedestrians, eating contests, Bible trivia, original skits, and an epic water fight. Points from all events were totaled to determine the winner. My group won...not that I am bragging or anything. Small groups were a definite blessing, creating friendships that may not have existed otherwise.

While we are glad to be home, we are sad at having to leave our new friends. Facebook definitely has some new connections within its network. I know and pray that God has touched the hearts of everyone who attended last week. Elevate was a wonderful, God-filled experience for all of us who went. According to Andrew and Gabbi, it was an experience worth repeating.