



Our decision to attend the Christian Values Conference for the first time actually started a couple of years earlier when the Mississippi Gulf Coast Y was visited by Gary Golding, longtime CVC volunteer. The passion with which he spoke about the conference and the changes he witnessed in kids that attended convinced us that should the occasion arise we would take part.

Though several years passed, I never forgot Gary and what he told me. In 2014 we attended for the first time with four girls who had earned their way by volunteering for a YMCA camp. To be honest, 48 hours into the week my wife and I were convinced we had made a mistake. Conference attendees were so different from our girls that they wanted only to cling to each other. But then a 180 degree shift occurred. I believe it is referred to as the "magic on the mountain." Whatever it was, suddenly our girls saw past surface differences and started seeing the person's true self. A desire to fit in, the need to have life purpose, are the same whether you hail from a small town in Mississippi or from one of the nation's largest in Houston, Texas. Excellent volunteer leaders, a Christian focus and a whole lot of FUN made for an unforgettable week.

But it didn't end there. Our four girls were changed, and they wanted to get more people involved. They told anyone they knew about the great things that happen at CVC. They even approached several businesses to raise funds for the trip. To say they were hooked was an understatement. Because of that hard work, the next year we took 13 kids to North Carolina who had the same great experience.

My career then took me to Vicksburg, Mississippi, but the same desire to get kids involved in the great happenings of CVC still drove us. This past summer we were fortunate enough to take 30 teens from our new home to experience CVC. Next year, who knows?

If you have not noticed, our teens are not the only ones who have been changed. My wife and I have witnessed the amazing power of this unforgettable experience called the Christian Values Conference, and are just as passionate, just as excited to expose others to it. It has become our favorite week of the year, and we hope to be involved for years to come.

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