

# Sow Nurture Flourish



When Mischia Jackson first came through the KAA gates in 1995 as a child she had no idea how deeply woven into her life story KAA would become.

Growing up in Joplin, Missouri, Mischia's upbringing was deeply influenced by her paternal Southern heritage and the guidance of her grandmother and great-grandmother. Growing up alongside her twin brothers, she often took on a protective role within the family. Despite the complexities of her parents' divorce later in her childhood, she successfully maintained strong, lasting bonds with her mother, father, and stepmother.

Mischia still vividly remembers her first summer at KAA. For a girl from Joplin, meeting peers from other areas was remarkable. **“Meeting kids from Chicago and Dallas felt like meeting people from all over the world. The best part was being able to see people my color who praised Jesus and loved the music and culture that I did.”** She describes KAA as being amazing! **“At KAA, I remember feeling so loved, and I remember having the best time of my life.”** For Mischia, KAA was more than just camp—it is where her faith became personal. Growing up in the AME church she knew about Christ, but it was in locker 8 at KAA 1 that she truly surrendered her heart to Christ. She was thrilled to return the next summer to build on that foundation.

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Mischia graduated from high school in May 2000. During high school, she pursued pre-nursing technical coursework to prepare for a healthcare career. Her leadership as president of RESPECT, a student organization focused on community and inclusion, led her to being crowned Miss Emancipation at the annual Joplin emancipation celebration in August 2000.

Mischia entered Missouri Southern State University with a passion for both healthcare and teaching, yet finding the right path took some exploration. While working as a certified nursing assistant, she realized the premed route wasn't for her. She pivoted to education, only to discover that her true calling lay elsewhere, prompting her to continue searching for her perfect fit. Mischia says, **“I loved medicine, but I still had not decided to be a nurse although I was working as a CNA.”**

Mischia got married in January 2005 and quickly got pregnant. Her son, Brandon came early at 27 weeks in September 2005 weighing 3 lbs. 1 oz. and had to stay in the NICU for nine weeks. Mischia states, **“Our marriage was rocky. My husband was not a man of God and we were not living how we should have.”** She attended church weekly with the kids but he never attended. Despite separation and reconciliation, during which they welcomed a daughter, Myiah, in September 2007, their marriage continued to decline and they divorced in 2008.



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While balancing the demands of being a single mother and working as a CNA, Mischia's potential was recognized by a nursing instructor during a clinical rotation with her students. When the persistent instructor advocated for her, doors began to open. With the incredible support of a boss, Mischia finally pursued nursing, graduating in 2011 as an LPN. She saw God's hand providing for her family as she began her career. **"God was blessing me as I able to support my children."** In 2013, her heart and home expanded even further when she lovingly adopted her ex-sister in law's two children, officially becoming a devoted mother of four.

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In what she calls another **"God showed up big"** moment, Mischia transitioned from long-term care to a teaching position at Crowder College—a role she felt unqualified for but one that God perfectly orchestrated, right down to the salary. **"The Lord has a way of putting me in uncomfortable situations that I feel I am not qualified or deserving of and he allows me to shine."** For over 11 years, she has flourished in the classroom while maintaining a 26-year legacy in healthcare. Today, she celebrates the blessing of doing both: pouring into the next generation of nurses as an educator and returning to the hospital bedside she loves.

When her daughter was nine and her son was 11, she began researching whether KAA was still in operation. **"I wanted my kids to be able to have the life-changing experience that I did. I knew my kids desperately needed the same aha moment I had as a child."** Mischia reached out to KAA, volunteering as a camp nurse so Brandon and Myiah could attend. The impact was life-changing: both children committed their lives to Christ that first summer. For Brandon, who lacked a consistent father figure, seeing godly men model integrity helped him heal from deep-seated anger and grief, reminding him he has a Heavenly Father who loves him intimately. Years later, KAA remained a sanctuary for Myiah, offering her vital strength during her own seasons of struggle.

Mischia's heart overflows as she watches her granddaughter, Nova, head to camp this summer, marking a beautiful third generation of KAA history. But the camp's healing reach didn't stop with her children; it also became a lifeline for her brother. After his brave journey through some problems in life, he joined Mischia at camp volunteering as a mechanic. **"At KAA, I saw a joy in his smile that had been absent since our childhood."** For Mischia's family, KAA isn't just a camp—it's where generations come to be made whole.

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In 2024, Mischia's journey came full circle as she joined the KAA staff as Health Services Director. With a heart for every child, she has transformed our health centers—expanding our reach to include nursing interns, deepening our mental health support, and opening doors for campers with diabetes and sickle cell. For Mischia, this isn't just a job; it's a mission to ensure every camper, regardless of their medical needs, feels the same safety and love she found here years ago.



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When asked what the best part of her job is Mischia replies, **"I am beyond blessed to bring my three greatest loves—teaching, nursing, and Jesus—together in one place. I get to care for others and mentor future medical staff, all while sharing the heart of the gospel with every camper I meet."**



God used KAA to sow seeds in Mischia's heart that didn't just last a week but it also helped nurture and transform her life. It has been a joy to watch her flourish into a woman of God, and we are so excited to see how He now uses her to impact the next generation at camp.