

A proposal, a loss and an answered prayer at camp

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AQUILLA—On Nov. 8, Abel Kent had one thing on his mind: Asking his girlfriend Katelin “Kat” Weikel to marry him.

The pair were both sponsors of youth from Providential Baptist Church in Pearland attending Royal Ambassadors Campout and Missions Mania, a youth discipleship event at Latham Springs Camp and Retreat Center in Aquilla. Kent had picked the venue purposefully.

“I have been coming here with my dad since 2011—since the very first Missions Mania,” he said. “We’ve called this our home camp for a very long time. I’ve worked here, and I’ve also been here as a camper.

“It’s also the reason I became a RA State Staffer, so this whole campsite is just very important to me. It’s been a very big stepping stone in my path, and I wanted to make this (engagement) another one.”

Kent had a simple proposal plan in mind, and it involved his parents and sister. He would set up a candlelit heart-shaped circle in the camp’s outdoor prayer garden area, ask Weikel to marry him and present her with an engagement ring. As a further symbol of his love, he ordered a matching set of rings for them both.

Spoiler alert: She said yes.

Was she surprised? “Yeah, but I had my suspicions,” she recalled. “I was like, ‘He and his mom are conspiring about something, but it’s probably nothing.’”

It was something.

“It really was a surprising experience, even though he knows I’m really good at guessing,” she said. “I had a feeling, but thought, ‘No, he’s not going to do it at Missions Mania, because we’re camping and all that stuff.’”

The two proudly shared their matching rings with those standing around them. But the happy story took a negative turn as camp ended that Sunday.

As the group broke camp, Kent made a shocking discovery.

“As we were putting up everything at camp, everything’s in the trailer, and everything’s in the back of the van, I happened to look down, and I’m like, ‘Oh no, my ring’s gone,’” he recalled.

“He was so scared,” his fiancé said. “We spent about 10 minutes looking around. It felt way longer than that. We spent a long time scouring, and I was about to break, I started praying, ‘Please, let us find this.’”

Others helping in the search stopped to pray, as well. After the prayer, Kent said the group witnessed a miracle.

“She walked over to me in order to help comfort me, because I was starting to get super-worried. I mean, I was already worried, but I was way too deep in my head. So, she gave me a hug and some words of comfort,” Kent said.

“And then as we separated, she looked down—and the missing ring was right between us on the ground.

“I stared at it for like a second,” Weikel said, “and thought, ‘That’s shiny. ... That’s a circle. ... I found it!’”

As of the end of camp, the couple had not yet set a wedding date.