

This Is No 'Preachers of LA': Charismatic Comedy Teens' Reality Show Hits TV

In a market saturated with scripted reality television shows, the authenticity of *All Summer Long* is a breath of fresh air. The new teen Christian reality program by executive producer and co-creator Edward J. Portillo follows a college-aged sketch comedy team as they travel to Christian summer camps across the U.S. to perform, serve and mentor young people.

The show debuted on JUCEtv, and this spring.

With roots running deep in the Assemblies of God, Portillo attended Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California, where he belonged to "The Delivery Boys," a summer camp ministry team.

After the first week of traveling with the team to AG-affiliated camps, Portillo says he quickly realized the experience involved more about work in the trenches with the youth than comedy.

"That ended up changing my life," Portillo says. "Up until that point, I had not understood relational evangelism. I didn't understand what was truly mentoring."

Based on this experience, Portillo began working on *All Summer Long* in 2008 with the threefold purpose of reinvigorating summer camps for young people, emphasizing the importance of mentoring youth and validating young people to explore the creative arts in their church community.

He also strives to tell engaging stories that are worthy of a broad audience while being rooted in a Christian worldview and to create content that resonates with the appetite of today's

culture without diluting the redeeming message of the gospel.

Amy Vogt, a cast member of the pilot season, says the comedy sketches serve to break the ice with the youth and open doors of communication.

"The comedy is the tool to build a relationship, and then the relationship opens the door for them to have more serious conversations with you," Vogt says.

Vogt learned through her experience with "Entourage," an all-girls summer camp ministry team at Vanguard University, that comedy is a valuable tool to reach junior and senior high students, bond with them and spark conversation.

Vogt says she loves being ridiculous on stage, which in turn lets students know that they can enjoy themselves in a wholesome way.

"It's important for youth to see that being a Christian is fun," she says. "The media portray that fun is drugs, alcohol and partying, but the joy of the Lord is so much more powerful."