

It was almost the end of the day and the air was clear and crisp. The grass prickled on my bare feet as I ran up and down the soccer field, chasing around the campers and enthusiastically cheering on my team, self titled "The Rockin' Bananas". When the opposing team snagged the ball and ran down the field in the opposite direction, I stopped running and glanced around to make sure all was well. Suddenly I got nervous. 'Where are all the counselors?' I thought. And then I realized: I *am* the counselor.

In my experience, I have discovered that the beauty of a community is progression; not necessarily of the community itself, but rather, of your role within it. I have witnessed my own progression through my community, Adventure Day Camp.

I began attending camp in 2nd grade. I immediately fell in love, and from the end of the first week I already knew I wanted to become a counselor one day. And that's exactly what happened.

Through camp, I learned so much, not simply lyrics to camp favorites such as "The Moose Song" or "The Princess Pat", but invaluable life skills. Camp has taught me that during a rough, hot day, the only thing you need is a big water bottle and a positive attitude. I've learned the importance of having fun and not taking yourself too seriously. As I grew older and became a junior counselor and this past summer a counselor, I became a strong, confident, and responsible leader. Camp also taught me to always be compassionate towards both my campers and coworkers. My leadership, responsibility, positivity, and compassion are what I consider to be my most valuable assets, all of which I gained through my camp community. Though I just started out as

a typical little camper, I was able to become the person I am today through my progression in the Adventure Day Camp community. When I was a camper, my counselors were always good role models for me, and consistently made me feel confident in who I was. And as school became a place where it was harder and harder to be myself, I *always* had the camp spirit to fall back on. And now, as a counselor, I have the opportunity to create the environment that was so vital to my upbringing for others. The fact that I can provide that for my campers is almost more important to me than actually being able to experience it for myself when I was younger.

Adventure Day Camp has shaped my dreams and aspirations in that, though I don't know necessarily what I want to do with the rest of my life, I know how I want to live it. My dream for myself is to find happiness, embrace life, be myself, and inspire others to do the same. And I know that I will continue to progress into this person, just as I have progressed through eleven perfect summers at Adventure Day Camp.