

Dear Camp Champions,

You have truly changed my life... As I lay here in this amazing room at the Wynn Hotel, I realize I am truly lucky and blessed to be working after college. Yet, in the back of my mind, I know that camp orientation draws near and a certain sadness draws over me, knowing that I will not be able to be there this summer. I would have never guessed in a million years that a place like you could have existed. I attended a camp in Ohio when I was 9. It was the worst experience of my life. I was far away from home, no one seemed to like me, my counselor always forgot about me, and I was paired with a horse that hated me. So from that point I thought all camps were evil. In 2007, I was inspired by a show on MTV called Fat Camp, and I thought it would be cool to help people and do something like that. Long story short, I got an email from the coolest man ever, Wiggy Sir, and I was on my way there for the summer. The rest was history.

I find that I cannot go a single day without talking about a Camp Champions experience, and there is no exaggeration there whatsoever! I find things in my everyday life that are relatable or remind me of things that have happened at camp, and I cannot contain myself from sharing the stories with people. I also find those people getting annoyed because of the many stories, and constant bragging that I do about the amazing things I've done and the kindest, most beautiful people I've ever met in my life at this place, that has made a huge impact on me. One day my sister was so annoyed with me she asked me if I was sure I hadn't dreamed this place up. I told her that my mind is not that creative.

I then realized that people will never understand or appreciate it as much as I do unless they experience it for themselves. They would not understand that its more than just a camp. They would not understand why I am laughing to myself while singing "The Shark Song" and thinking about Marbles acting it out. They would not understand why I wear a bracelet of rope tied together on my wrist. And they definitely would not understand when I went to the movies, heard the loudest scream ever, and saw a little girl from camp run up and jump on me (making the whole theater lobby looking at me) yet not feel mortified in the least bit. They just wouldn't.

Still, I sometimes find my experience there to be so surreal because of the people I've met. Like the most inspirational man I've probably ever met Shirley Sir always says, "Until we get there, it isn't camp. It's just a place with stuff". And that couldn't be more true. You wouldn't think that you would find the people you do at camp. From having the craziest relationship with my camp brother Preston, to spending Christmas in Austin with he and Huey (whom I had just met earlier that summer). Jimmy and Scott were so patient while they taught Ty, Nadia, and me how to wakeboard for the 1st time. But the biggest reward from that would be being invited to Houston by the families of my campers for weekends and family events. Just to know that this place can bring together life long friends from all over the world like Angus from Zambia, whom I still talk to, to this day, to the most suave guy from Spain. Carlos. I could go on and on, but I must get ready for rehearsals and a show tonight. I just wanted to thank you for all you have done for me and the impact you have made on my life. Please let the returning counselors that they are so lucky and I hate them all! :-). As for the new counselors. Tell them to take the summer by storm and appreciate what they have signed up for because it is truly something magnificent and special. Camp Champions, you have truly changed my life. And I thank you.