

My Experiences at the TTCC Summer Camp

There is not a summer that goes by that I do not think of working at the TTCC summer camp – and I still miss it! Some of my most cherished memories are the fun times I spent there, both as a camper, counselor and lifeguard. I was fortunate enough to be a camper for 8 years! A few of my favorite activities were swimming at Newfoundland lake, being at the lodge, splash hikes, hiking, cooking on the campfire, capture the flag, kickball, dodgeball, water balloon games, tie-dyeing, snipe hunting (if you don't know what this is – ask! 😊), campouts, telling stories, trivia games, and so many more. I remember feeling so sad about camp coming to an end in 8th grade, that I was eager to be a counselor and to become part of the staff that made camp so much fun.

For me, it was an honor to be hired to work at the camp. It was so special to be part of this team and to take on my very first leadership role on my way to young adulthood. Most of my friends had never had a full-time job like that before entering high school, so I felt pretty responsible spending my summers this way. It is an important responsibility to work with kids all day, especially when you still feel like you are a kid yourself. Working at the camp truly taught me to grow up and to act more like a role model than a kid. I learned quite a few lessons.

I'll never forget how, when I first started as a camp counselor, we were playing dodgeball in the gym with the kids (which I used to take pretty seriously haha). Les nicely reminded me that the idea was not to play to win (like I tended to do), but to show the kids how to play and how to lose. Of course, it was embarrassing to hear this from such an important role model in my life, but it changed the way I ran activities with the kids. The kids are why we are there. They need to learn how to play, how to win, and especially, how to lose; they only learn that if we model it for them.

Another life skill I learned was “safety-first”. No matter how tiring it can be to remind kids to stop running, to look both ways before crossing the street, to use the buddy system, or to speak up if they need help – it is so important. It is the most important part of the job. The saying “safety-first” has helped me to prioritize my decisions when working with kids as a counselor and now as a teacher. Working with staff that created a “safety-first” environment, with no exceptions, taught me to keep kids safe; to anticipate any danger, to be aware of my (and kids’) surroundings, and to follow my instincts to respond to situations quickly. Even today, when kids cross the road, I will stand in the middle like a crossing guard until the last kid is on the sidewalk. Whenever I am in the water, I still scan the surface to see that kids are playing not panicking. I learned this all at camp, and I know it will always be with me.

I could write a lot more about how I benefitted from my experiences as a camp counselor, but I will finish with this. This TTCC summer camp is not like any regular day camp. It has decades of history, character, adventures, funny stories, awesome field trips, and staff that are dedicated to helping kids have a fun, yet safe summer in their own community. This does not happen in every town. It is a great place for kids to grow up, and your role in their summer is more important than you may realize. The time you spend working here will go by faster than you think, and one day you will miss it. Make the best out of each day and remember, the kids will never forget these summers. I know I never will!

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