

Profile: Jeremy Todd



Hometown:

Nelson, New Zealand

Program:

Summer Camp USA

Tell us in a few hundred words which Camp you were at and what you got up to at camp?

I was based in northern Wisconsin, about 90 minutes south of the Great Lakes, at Camp Timberlane for Boys. Camp Timberlane is a traditional non-competitive camp. Traditional in the sense that the boys come for a period of four-eight weeks and have a structured activity program which they choose.

The range of activities I was exposed to, taught and led was something phenomenal. I was employed to help with the Mountain Biking Program, but as the camp management got to know me more I found myself working in all sorts of activities, from Rock Climbing, Archery and Swim lessons, to training the older campers to become lifeguards.

As a counsellor I was also given the responsibility of managing a cabin of young boys. This was my number one priority. This involved keeping them active and enthusiastic plus being there when they needed a hand or someone to yarn to. The cabin/counsellor part of my time was the most rewarding and hanging out with these boys was some of the funniest and craziest times!

The other huge element of camp life was the interaction with the other counsellors and staff. There were endless fun times both at camp and on days off adventuring around the area or hanging out being 'campers' and trying the other activities around camp.

What was your role at camp?

As a counsellor my first priority was the well-being of my cabin boys. Lots of energy was well spent in and around the cabin, the meal table and getting involved with their activities around camp. Second to that being involved with organising and running activity programs such as the Mountain Biking Program was a great opportunity to get into some of my favourite hobbies and show passion and enthusiasm and watch the boys learn and succeed.

Top 3 memories of Summer Camp?

1. Camaraderie of staff/counsellors all working toward the same goal, the great fun we had and getting to know so many amazing people.
2. Getting to know my cabin boys and hearing all their stories at the meal table or before lights out about how they tried something new that day.
3. Waking up the boys at midnight for a surprise pizza party and seeing their shock and excitement!

Was there a camper that stands out in your mind? If so why?

I had this one boy in my cabin who was the ultimate dude. Respectful, thoughtful, always completed his chores well and was an amazing football and baseball player. We hung out lots and he taught me how to properly throw a football and baseball. Such a great young dude!

What are some of the experiences that you had which made an impact on you?

The camp management were really involved in giving the counsellors leadership opportunities and really teaching us how to be great counsellors. This made us the best we could be, thus the campers got the best counsellors.



WORKING ADVENTURES WORLDWIDE

Were there any times that were hard?

My patience was tried at times by some overbearing campers, but then it's not hard to push past it and remember that they look up to the counsellors heaps.

Did you travel after camp? Tell us about your adventures – where did you go?

Post camp I navigated around the States, mixing it up between people I wanted to visit, both from camp and from NZ. I travelled with friends from camp and we covered... Chicago - Niagara Falls - New York - Washington DC - Orlando - Las Vegas - San Diego - LA.

How was the camp food?

Brilliant, our head cook would even get up at 3am to hand bake cinnamon rolls for the entire camp.

What was your accommodation like?

Each cabin had from 6-10 campers with a side room for the counsellors. Each had a fully equipped bathroom.

Would you do it again?

Given the chance I will be back in a second!

What is something unexpected/different/strange about USA compared to home?

There are lots of little differences but on a whole life is similar to that back home in NZ. Food was the biggest change. It was amazing!

Do you have any advice for someone who wants a Summer Camp adventure?

It is a phenomenal experience. Don't worry for a second that you 'might not be up to scratch' just put in 100% and you will get back 110%.

Did you have a good experience going on Summer Camp USA with IEP?

IEP were great. Always able to answer the questions I had. While at camp we had a guy from BUNAC come to check out how we were doing. Really good to know that they were there for support.

What did you value about going to Summer Camp with IEP?

I reckon IEP's range of programs is a compliment to the Summer Camp Program. They know all the in's and out's of the whole setup.

Did you gain anything from Camp that will benefit you in what you do next?

Understanding and working with people from a range of backgrounds is a huge skill I will take back into the workforce. Leadership, patience and keenness to get involved are definitely traits I developed more while at camp.

What is next for you?

While I am now back at my job and plan to complete post grad study part time, I really hope to fit in another summer in northern Wisconsin.

