
Where the World Ends and Paradise Begins: College Admission Essay Sample

“Where the world ends and paradise begins” is what the founder called my little safe haven where I worked the past summer. Working was basically like Cheaper by the Dozen without the promise of financial stability and with the fact that the girls weren’t my actual kids. A schedule of waking up, getting all ten 10 to 11-year-old girls dressed with brushed hair and teeth, getting them all to breakfast, redressed for activities, and then repeated three times a day for two consecutive weeks. As a 17-year-old only child that has only had to take care of at most four small dogs in a lifetime, there is no better way to prompt the entrance to adulthood. There were the girls who would wake up screaming and go to bed the same way, the one with lice and impetigo, and the one who wouldn’t brush her hair, so every two days I was gifted with a knot the size of a golf ball to unravel without cutting anything. In the end, it was the best time of my life and the happiest I have ever been.

This is Camp Longhorn Indian Springs. You enter the campus with a drive through the peach tree farm on your right and a seemingly endless garden of vegetables and fruit to the left. Down the road are dozens of signs with cringe-worthy puns such as “7 days without camp makes one weak” and “if this sign is underwater, turn back”. Next are the cheering college kids that lift the 70-pound trunk and excess bags out of cars and sweep the kids into this little world.

I had attended camp for five years before becoming a counselor, and along with all the duties of caring for my campers, some of the magic of the place was demystified: every camp secret and story turned out to be a lie and crushed childhood memories, furthering my trek into adulthood. Our little camp tales and so-called historical sites involving water from the limestone caverns are completely false or a water hose to make the illusion of a crying face on a mountainside. These were fables to teach campers valuable lessons about respect, friendship, and responsibility. Also teaching these silver-spoon girls how to sweep, make their beds, fold laundry, and separate lights from darks was an unparalleled challenge since I had to convince them that yes, they can have fun, but they also need to take care of their cabin.

I remember one night in particular, taking care of the girls alone before a dance night. Fifth grade girl panic initiates with tears of “I don’t have anything to wear” as she searches through the mountain of fabric. The other side of the cabin has attacked each other with lipstick and there is screaming because “that boy from the Jackrabbit cabin wants to dance with me and Chloe”. Of course that is the crime of the century.

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“Ten minute warning until dance night, Camp Longhorn!” sounds over the speakers and it’s time to sit them all outside to be silent at five minute warning. One girl is still crying because obviously the ten-year-old boys put all of 15 seconds into what they are going to wear. The dance commences along with the drama that was destined to come and as the hours pass and the sun sets, they’re all finally happy, just in time to sleep.

This experience of taking care of these girls taught me more about myself and who I am than any sunrise yoga could. I have the capability to teach young girls that how they look and what they wear has nothing to do with who they are as individuals. By gaining the confidence needed in myself, I enter the world with the capability to continue learning and teaching.

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