

Camp Marydale

C.Y.O. Leadership Development Program – Counsellor in Training (C.I.T.)

Summer camp, specifically Camp Marydale, has been an incredibly influential part of my life in so many ways over the past four years. From the people I've been able to meet, to the way I've grown as a person. Marydale has allowed me to learn a lot about myself and become a stronger individual as a result. When I first entered the C.Y.O. program four summers ago, I was a quiet, introverted person who was there to get some volunteer hours and have fun at a summer camp. As time went on, however, my motives changed. The C.I.T. program was a great introduction to the camp atmosphere, letting me learn about how the camp worked and what many of the positions were like, as well as leaving plenty of time for activities just for the C.I.T.s. Throughout the year, I ended up treating my position more and more seriously at camp, as I enjoyed interacting with the campers and helping organize and lead activities. From then on, I've been back at camp as a counsellor, lifeguard, and Junior Boats Head, and each year has been just as fun and rewarding as the last. Some of the best things I've been able to take from camp for myself have been a stronger work ethic, improved social skills, good sense of professionalism both between coworkers and with the public, and the ability to be a more well-rounded person overall. Working at Camp Marydale has been one of the best experiences I've ever had and I can't think of any other way to spend my summers.

C.I.T. - Gabriel Passaretti

Leadership Opportunities

My name is Mathew. I'm 17 years old now. I started at camp Marydale as a camper in 2010 and became a C.I.T. in 2013. As a camper, I needed one-to-one help with the activities and structure. I was not always the best camper but tried to be. With my mental and emotional issues, sometimes it made it hard to listen and follow instructions. Camp Marydale staff never gave up on me. They helped me every step of the way. As I got a bit older, I matured and realized my dream of becoming caretaker. I grew to realize that I could help the camp by becoming part of the maintenance team. In 2015, I became a group counsellor. I was nervous and scared - making sure I didn't lose any kids and that they all had fun. I did well at it and I called the kids each week to make sure that each child was included in the group. I never wanted anyone left out like I had been before - at school or other camps (not like Marydale).

A few weeks into summer 2015, I was given the opportunity to join the maintenance team. I finished that summer with a lot learned from weed whacking, which I had never done, to cutting grass, which seemed endless at times. We had to be careful not to hit stones or anything in the grass we may not have seen. John taught me how to work together with the other guys and I was nervous with my abilities that I would not fit in. But, he made sure we were all equal which made it easier for me to adjust.

I learned that safety was number one. We got to use things (equipment) I had never before and I had to be sure not to fool around. If I did, I could injure myself or someone else. I took it seriously- to prove I could do the job.

In summer 2016, I re-applied and got the maintenance job right away because I proved to myself, and the staff, that I can do the job. I grew more confident this year. I got to learn how to drive the tractor, which again I have never had experience with. I loved it. I got to drive a lot of different things, to work around the camp, and transfer things like canoes and wood. We also were in charge of cleaning the change rooms, unclogging toilets, if needed, and making sure there was enough toilet paper and paper towels. We built a dock/bridge for the wheelchairs to go over. We cut down trees and added fences. I have had a lot of great experiences working there and continued to learn each time I go. I love that I was not looked at for my disabilities and they allowed me to be myself and do the same jobs the other guys were doing. One time I was cutting grass and everyone was done their job but me. I did get a bit frustrated but told myself I could finish and show I can do it - and I did. Best thing is, at the end of a day, John would always say we are a team and that we'd done a great job. That made me feel proud and realized I do have potential and purpose. I wouldn't know what I would do in the summer if I was not given the opportunity to prove to myself, and everyone else, that I can do it. I have learned life skills to pass along to others. Seeing past someone's disability is how camp Marydale works. They give them chances and make them feel they can do anything. I am very grateful for having the opportunity to work there and be part of a great organization.

One-to-One Camper Respite Care Program – Brennan Wright

My name is Tatjana, Brennan's mother. I thought it would be nice to share the feedback I heard while I attended Brennan's Specialist appointment. Developmental Pediatrician, Dr. William J. Mahoney, spoke extremely highly of the C.Y.O. and your camp's 'One-to-One' program at Camp Marydale. Camp Marydale staff showed spirit, respect, flexibility and willingness to work with Brennan, ensuring him, staff & campers were safe, while also doing their utmost best helping to keep him IN camp, and ensure Brennan had as much of a positive experience as peers! In fact, Dr. Mahoney explained to his shadowing Student how Camp Marydale came about, the continued dedication of staff and "labour of love" towards those who experience challenges. You could hear his utmost respect! I've had many people since recommend and suggest Camp Marydale, from therapists to OT's (that's how I found out originally), but I thought it nice to pass along such wonderful adulation from such an esteemed member of the medical community. My family surely felt the dedication, respect and efforts staff put into their work! So, thank you very much! Words are not enough when it comes to Brennan's happiness and positive memories!

All the best, Tatjana, Brennan & Mike Wright

One-to-One Counsellor - Alexandor Muratore

I am writing this letter on my work experience during the summer. I found it interesting, both on and off the worksite. When I was asked to handle the job, I was nervous. It was a new experience to me, and did not know what to expect. I found it unusual that they were asking me to take care of a special needs camper, because I was autistic. During the summer, I really enjoyed my time, especially when I stayed one task at a time, and did not get frustrated, I felt a connection with Anders and Michael. I learned that Anders was a camper who enjoyed one on one time, and Michael enjoyed group activities. Although I had issues with feeding, swimming, boating, and changing diapers, I was also upset that Michael left because of an emergency, and was replaced working with Anders. However, I would put all those issues aside, because not only did I earned a sense of trust from Anders, as I did with Michael, I achieved success while being autistic. I learned a lot about myself during the summer. Even though I'm autistic, I am still capable doing tasks like everyone else. If I put in time and effort and look past the barriers, I can create amazing progress. This is something that I could apply at home, as I did with work. I want to thank you for the amazing summer, and hope to have more in later years.

Leadership Opportunities – Counsellor in Training

During my experience working with children and adolescents, I have learned many different ways to approach, engage, manage, and instruct students of many different age groups. Working at CYO's Camp Marydale as a CIT and Counselor gave me my first look at how children play, learn, communicate, and react to different leadership styles. I found that it was very important not only to be friendly with every camper, but to also present myself as a caring adult and a role model for the whole group - someone who can create a fulfilling and enjoyable experience, but also acts as a mediator and strong leader. I learned the importance of being able to effectively plan an itinerary, execute it, and evaluate and reflect on the success of the activities based on camper's participation, enthusiasm, and responses. Based on camper response to my program planning, I learned to change aspects of some activities to suit the particular needs of certain children. Problem solving and conflict resolution while in a position of leadership was another skill I developed through these experiences. I also developed the ability to better interpret, understand, and include campers with special needs. The CYO strives to create an environment where everyone is included regardless of ability, and it was my job to uphold that standard and ensure that all campers were involved and could enjoy their time at camp. I was always having a great time leading groups at camp, not only because I got to be a part of engaging activities with children and youth, but because I truly appreciated interacting with them in a positive and meaningful way, while being able to contribute to their growth and development."

One-to-One Camper Respite Care Program – Benjamin Van Bulck

My son, Benjamin Van Bulck, has been attending camp for the past two weeks and has one week to go. This morning I asked him if he is still excited to go to camp Marydale and his response was, “YES..it’s the best, mommy!”

I just wanted you to know that your staff have been awesome. From the moment the bus pulls up to St. Eugene and Andrew walks off, always happy to see the kids, to his counsellors (Tiriq wk 1, Peyton wk 2), they have been great at making Ben feel comfortable and making sure he is having fun.

Also, I had to switch his bus stop last minute, and this was accommodated without question.

I know that you most likely often hear if something negative happens, so I just wanted to share my son’s (and mine) positive experiences. These are the memories that will last a lifetime. He has already informed me that he is going to be a C.I.T!

Have a great weekend!

Angela

One-to-One Camper Respite Care Program – James & David Walford

During the summer 2017, Mary Walford decided to send her children James and David, who both have special needs, to Camp Marydale. Her response to our One-to-One Program and the care and compassion of our staff was overwhelming for her.

“My name is Mary Walford,

My children, James and David, have just finished attending Camp Marydale for the first time and they absolutely loved it. David, suffers from seizures and hyperactivity and complications from Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), and his brother James has De George Syndrome and ADHD.

Every day they couldn’t wait to get on the bus to get to camp. Your ‘One-to-One’ program is amazing, along with your Counsellors. It brings me to tears thinking that, after 10 years, my little boy can be a boy and play with other children without having to be held-back by a harness. I can’t thank you enough. I will be the first one to register next January, even if I have to camp out in front of your office. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much”.