

Gabby's Story – Learning To Be Herself

I started going to day camp when I was younger, but when I was 9, I decided to try overnight Girl Scout camp. It was a big step, and my mom wasn't sure I was ready to stay overnight without getting homesick, but I gave it a shot.

My first day, I loved it. All the new routines and traditions were so exciting to me. I started out going one week a summer, and that turned into three. Eventually, I was staying for the entire summer. I would do any program I could sign up for...cooking programs, singing programs, adventure programs, you name it.

Each week, I got to meet new people and make new friends. Even though I only got to spend a week with some girls, we still keep in touch to this day. In addition to all the girls I became friends with, one of the things that kept me coming back was the staff. I admired all of my counselors.

As each summer ended, I was already awaiting the next. I remember one Thursday night, during my second year of camp, I started to cry. I didn't even understand why at the time, but the thought of leaving camp for a whole year was heartbreaking at that point. I still remember the exact words my counselor said to me, "When you start to cry on the last night, that's when you know you're here for good." And she was right. I'm working this year with the incredible friends that I made as a camper, and I don't have any intentions to leave any time soon.

Not only have I had all these amazing memories and met a lot of amazing people, but I've also learned a lot along the way. I've learned how to be a good friend, how to adapt to new situations, and most importantly, I've learned how to be myself.