

Life at the Archery Range

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The level of maturity and responsibility expected of counselors often provides young adult staff members with unique learning experiences. Michaela, currently a sophomore at Clark University in Worcester, MA., wrote this short essay about a significant job experience for a college application in the fall of 2006. She submitted it to the Writer's Corner on March 1, 2009.

For the last three summers I have worked at Echo Hill Ranch, as an archery instructor and senior bunkhouse counselor. Though summer camp is fun for kids, it can be hard work for counselors. I was faced with tough situations I had never dealt with before; having to be an authority to keep kids safe, helping a six year old feel taken care of away from home, and facing my own frustrations when I didn't live up to my ideal of a 'perfect counselor.' During those three summers, I learned and grew as a leader and gained a greater understanding of young children and of myself.

I chose archery as my activity to teach, because it exemplifies what camp should be. The archery range is a small patch of flat land, surrounded by massive oak trees on one side and a shallow creek on the other. Campers come to the activity to learn how to hit a target and spend time talking with their friends. Most campers try archery for the first time at camp, and often cultivate a love for the sport. While I am not the best archer on the ranch, helping an eight year old girl hit the target for the first time makes me feel like the archery master. Camp is meant to be an oasis for children to explore all opportunities available to them, and break away from expectations placed on them by parents, friends and society. The archery range accomplishes exactly that.

