



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

October 2, 2023

A couple weeks ago (about a month after summercamp ended), I answered the phone in the camp office. On the other end of the line was a tiny voice that said, **"Hello! This is Kenylah from Cabin D!"** After hosting more than 4000 campers this summer, Kenylah from Cabin D was not one whose name I recognized, but I engaged her cheerfully anyway and asked her how I could help. "My counselor sent me a birthday card. I'm turning ten" she said excitedly. We had a little conversation about her birthday plans and what she liked about camp. She said, "Will you please tell my counselor Maya I said thank you? And **I'll see her next summer!"**

Last week I stopped by the barn during horsemanship lessons. I was delighted to find the student at that moment was a 62 year old woman. I chatted with her for a bit while she groomed her horse. Then Emily, our expert ranch director and her instructor, showed her how to pick the horse's hooves. I said to the student, "Thank you for riding at Camp Ernst!" And she replied, **"I can hardly sleep each Wednesday night because I am so excited to come here** on Thursdays to learn and ride!"

Sitting here this fall, I realize campers haven't forgotten the friends they made, the fun they had, and the confidence gained from their camp experiences. And the **feeling of belonging at camp** doesn't stop at age ten or when summer ends.

Thank you for being an important part of making these experiences accessible to everyone!

All the best,