

Letters from Adahi



Hidden away among the trees, Camp Adahi, a summer camp for children age 9 and up, comes alive each and every year for a single week in the month of July. Camp Fire kids from near and far flock to Adahi for a week full of fun, laughter, and great food. The camp is divided into two sections (for sleeping), and the campers are dispersed between six tribes—the Zuni's (exiting 3rd grade), the Navajos (exiting 4th grade), the Cherokees (exiting 5th grade), the Comanches (exiting 6th grade), the Kiowas (exiting 7th grade), and the Apaches (exiting 8th grade). For a camper, camp begins on Sunday; however, for a counselor, getting to camp is a much longer process.

For myself, packing for camp can be a seemingly endless process. Whether this can be attributed to the fact that I waited until Friday night to start packing, or the attempt to fit a million and one things into my duffle bag, is still left to be determined. As I come to Adahi year after year, I have found that my packing list gradually becomes longer and longer. From the craft supplies to the flashlight, we are always afraid that we will forget something, and the minute we drive through the Adahi gate, we remember that one apparently essential thing. However, after settling in, items that were left at home are either forgotten or borrowed from friends or counselors, and the crisis is averted.

Preparation for camp begins long before the frantic night before camp packing. Beginning in January, the Camp Adahi steering committee meets to discuss all of the logistics and organizational aspects of camp. It is their hard work throughout the year that keeps Camp Adahi up and running. Over the summer, counselors go through many trainings to prepare us for anything and everything that could happen up at camp. The weekend prior to camp beginning, "Setup Weekend," is a time during which Camp Fire families volunteer to come help get the essential parts of camp set up—the kitchen, the nurses shed, and the tables and benches are just a few of the things that need to be prepped, put out, and cleaned. Their hard work allows the staff (who come up a day early) to finish all of the little details before the campers arrive.

Around 1 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, campers start to trickle in. This year, they brought with them a surprise—the rain. Right around lunchtime, as the campers were caravanning up the mountain, a sprinkle began. Although the rain continued as they unloaded their belongings, the staff were well prepared, and the bed setup went smoothly. The rain let up soon after, and campers began to tidy up their living spaces—making their beds, sweeping tarps, and creating trails.

Then, the campers were charged with creating their tribe's symbolgram out of any items they could find in the forest surrounding them. These pieces of art are judged, and winner is announced at the end of the week. After they took a tour of camp, the tribes played bonding games until dinnertime. One of the most memorable camp traditions is brought back to life during the first meal each and every year. Of all the rules at Camp Adahi, at mealtime, only one reigns supreme: **DO NOT PUT YOUR ELBOWS ON THE TABLE**. If you break this rule, you will be subjected to "the wheel"—whose consequences range from singing a song to hugging a tree to sitting in the creek!

After dinner, the entire camp participated in bonding games before heading to council fire. As the sun set and the stars began to appear, the entire camp sat around the fire—dancing, laughing, and singing songs late into the night. Because we do not use tents at camp Adahi, we are very fortunate to be able to gaze up at the stars as we drift to sleep. As the first day of camp draws to a close, the air is static with excitement and anticipation for the week to come. We can't wait to see what this year will bring!

