

## Press Release

16 October 2009

### Summer Camp USA Experience Much More Than a Holiday

A journey to America to work at a summer camp gave one young Australian much more than just a fun alternative to the Australian winter. After spending three months working with children at a weight-loss camp, Emma Holmes was able to gain some valuable insight into her own field of study and her chosen career.

20-year-old Emma studied nutrition at university and was keen to use this knowledge together with her experience working on the water to help children at a camp over the American summer. The role she landed ended up being incredibly varied,

*"I was nutritionist, culinary instructor, life guard and counsellor," Emma said, "I had many roles as did the other staff. It was great that way because you were always doing something different so nothing got boring; we were always on our toes."*

Emma admitted it wasn't just these instructive roles that were an important part of her experience at camp, she explained, *"Being all of these roles was nothing compared to the other persona you take on without realising, because my kids were still young and 4-8 weeks away from home is a long time, you were also a mum, sister and friend, I think that's the most important role I took on."*

Emma was placed at the camp, Wellsprings in Florida, a camp that focuses on the importance of health and nutrition in children, through non-profit work and travel organisation, International Exchange Programs (IEP).

*"Wellsprings have lots of camps in the US and I was part of the Florida staff to begin their first camp down there," Emma said, "Its main role is to teach kids about healthy living and making a life change rather than a quick weight-loss for just the summer. I loved that aspect so much, it wasn't just focused on weight-loss during time at camp-even though that was important they were also learning tools to take away and maintain and continue our program once they returned home."*

The experience of working at a camp that was directly linked to her field of study only strengthened Emma's desire to work in nutrition here in Australia. She expressed a deep appreciation for witnessing the outcomes and positive changes in over-weight children as they learned the skills and acquired the tools for living a healthy lifestyle.

In addition to the career experience Emma gained, she also made comment on the cultural exchange that working at an American camp provided her with.

*"...since I was the only Aussie there I was confronted with a million questions about home- they wanted to know absolutely everything! But I never would have thought how much the experience would have impacted my life so much," Emma said, "when I first met the kiddies I was looking after (I had the 11-14 yr old girls) I was amazed at how different they were from kids here, but they were such a joy and to see them change and get through camp was so rewarding."*

As Emma settles back into life here at home and looks forward to possible opportunities with Wellsprings in Australia, the next generation of Australians hoping to head to camp are completing *Summer Camp USA* applications and getting their plans underway.

Emma's incredible experience has left her with very positive memories of *Summer Camp USA* and she shares this insight of camp with future participants.



*"It was everything I hoped for and more! I think nothing could have prepared me for the most amazing summer of my life!"*

Australians interested in *Summer Camp USA* can call 1800 SUMMER CAMP or email [summercampusa@iep.org.au](mailto:summercampusa@iep.org.au)

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**Media Contact**

Naomi Joyce-Marketing/PR Coordinator  
[naomi.joyce@iep.org.au](mailto:naomi.joyce@iep.org.au)  
02 9299 0444  
[www.iep.org.au](http://www.iep.org.au)