

How do I demonstrate Horizon's mission outside of camp?

In keeping with Horizon's mission to foster relationships that overcome the challenges associated with physical disabilities, I believe that differences are valuable and uniqueness should be celebrated! It is so much a part of who I am that I carry the Horizon camp family spirit with me everywhere I go. I see it as my responsibility to cultivate camp friendships throughout the year. When I see a camp friend's name on my caller i.d., I not only think about the specific person calling, but I also think about what each person represents. Each Horizon camp family member enriches my life through his or her own unique perspective. There are campers who have stopped coming to camp who still call me even on a weekly basis to ask for relationship advice, to schedule a get together, or just to laugh and reminisce about camp! I also regularly visit my two former campers and am helping one write his autobiography.

How have I contributed to Horizon?

I am immensely loyal to my camp family. This coming summer will be my 9th consecutive year volunteering at the summer camp, and I expect to continue coming back to help out. What began in 2007 as needing to earn service hours has become a personal passion for me. That first year, as we were leaving to go home, one of my cabin teammates caught up to me and told me that he would love to see me come back in 2008. His personal touch meant so much to me. As a result, I've made it my mission to give similar words of affirmation to other volunteers in hopes that they, too, would help out another year. I know it's made a difference since I could name teammates and friends who I've helped inspire to join us again at Horizon! I also plan to continue to participate in Horizon's raffle, benefit events, and recruitment of people wherever I am connected.

Why should I receive the Horizon Hope Grant?

I am glad that the vision for the Horizon Hope Grant extends to students with a wide range of majors, not necessarily related to physical disabilities. I will continue to devote myself to caring for those with special needs, but I am particularly passionate about caring for people inside and out, body and soul. In one of my recent visits to a camper's apartment he told me: *"I need something like that. I feel like I am just here. Unless I talk to people no one asks me anything. They tell me what I ought to do. They should listen, and not laugh at me because I want to be able to laugh at things that are really funny and not at things that are superficial. I get that all the time and I hate it. I want to enjoy life. I haven't had that since camp and I'm hurting because I can't open up to be who I really am."*

The Horizon Hope Grant would support me in pursuing my vision for my life which is to serve as a counselor, teacher, and father who helps people open up to bring out the best of who they are. My Masters degree in Theological Studies will probably lead to further studies in counseling. I will continue to work as many hours as possible in my part-time job to pay for tuition and living expenses, but the Horizon Hope grant would definitely strengthen me as I work towards my goals. With your support I will be enabled to give back with even more gratitude!