

Horizon Hope Grant Essay – Application B

I attended Horizon's summer camp for the first time the summer after my freshman year of high school. The connections I made in my cabin helped me to feel a sense of community and to build confidence in myself. On the third night of camp I sat by the docks and watched the sunset with a woman several decades older than me who had recently lost her husband. I was moved by her asking me to share the sunset moment with her, then telling me about her life and offering advice. She was the first new camp friend I made—a friendship that crossed generations, differing physical abilities, and different life experiences. That's when I understood Horizon's power to bring people together, build relationships, and transcend barriers. Since that first year, I have attended nine summer camps, each year learning more about myself and about fostering community. As I grew in confidence, I became a Team Leader and also began participating on the Recruitment Committee where I've continued to play an active role. The relationships I've built have extended far beyond camp to include regular chats, visits, and more recently, Zoom calls that have helped to build lifelong friendships. These relationships, and the growth I've seen in myself and others through participating in the Horizon community, influenced my path towards pursuing a graduate degree in social services. In school and in my life beyond, I have tried to embody Horizon's mission by fostering inclusive communities that work to overcome boundaries and increase accessibility. While the past year of living in a pandemic has tested everyone's limits, I have worked to continue living into Horizon's mission. Participating in weekly Horizon Zoom calls and regular virtual events has brought me closer to old friends and helped me to meet new ones. Seeing how the Horizon community has continued trying new ways of

connecting and supporting one another throughout this difficult year has been a constant inspiration and motivation. I will continue to support the Horizon community that has helped me to grow over these years by assisting with recruitment and contributing to new ideas for virtual engagement in the year to come. I am excited work on creative recruitment strategies that can help sustain and add to the Horizon community. I also look forward to becoming more involved in fundraising and seeing how my continued studies can support work that is in line with Horizon's vision.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my application, for your engagement with the Horizon Hope Grant process, and for the work that you do to make Horizon a supportive and inclusive community.