

Newsletter

Issue 5 - Spring 2008

Unit Heads Rule!

Nick Melvoin has been a counselor and alumni unit head for the past 7 years. He is the epitome of the United in Harmony counselor-volunteer growing into the type of young adult we hope to nurture. This spring Nick will graduate from Harvard University and has been accepted into the Teach America program in Los Angeles. We are thrilled that Nick will be close to home and United in Harmony. We asked Nick to compose an article for the newsletter that would explain how important the unit heads are to Camp Harmony. This past winter session we had 10 unit heads volunteer to provide the link between the counselors and the adult staff, in charge of the daily activities, counselor well-being, camper affairs, and more. Nick enlisted the help of his fellow unit heads to offer their experience about why they continue to return to Camp Harmony year after year. So here's to our fantastic, promising, loving Unit Heads in their own words:

Nick Melvoin, 22, Harvard University
Years at Camp: 7

"I keep coming back to camp because it just feels wrong to be anywhere else.

There's a vitality to camp that can't be replicated outside of Harmony—everyone who participates, from camper to unit head, is filled with an incredible energy and purpose. You



feel part of something bigger than yourself, and when you see these kids year after year you begin to realize that they feel it too. My only hope is that my campers learn as much from me as I do from them and that they enjoy the experience half as much as I do."

Alex Tuch, 21, University of California, Santa Cruz
Years at Camp: 7

"I keep coming back to Camp Harmony because it is a grounding experience and it helps to put my life into perspective. I love to show these kids a good

time and knowing how much enjoyment they get out of it is extremely rewarding. I think that Camp Harmony is an incredible organization for what it does during camp as well as during the year."

Benjamin Hoffman, 22, University of British Columbia,
Vancouver Years at Camp: 4

"I go to Camp Harmony every year because the smiles and laughter of children at play reminds me that there is more to life than the hustle and bustle of my typical day. Nothing will replace the feeling of contentment I have after spending time with 300 super-charged youngsters for a weekend."

Taylor Wasserman, 19, University of California, Santa Cruz
Years at Camp: 5

"No matter if I was support staff, a counselor, or unit head, every time I have been to camp I have made a special connection with at least one child that makes the time,



energy, effort, and expense all worth it. Camp is a place that I can give 110% of myself and in the end have only wished I could have given more."

Lili Miller, 19, University of Arizona
Years at Camp: 4

"Camp Harmony has been like an extended family to me and being able to participate in it has been a great privilege that I am happy to have!"

If these experiences are at all emblematic then one thing is certain: doing a good thing doesn't have to be a chore. What brings these kids back year after year is the bond that they feel not only with their campers, but with one another as well.

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WENDY KLAPPHOLZ



Excited and delighted would describe how I feel about becoming the Executive Director of United in

Harmony. I want to thank the Board of Directors for their trust and confidence in my abilities. Together, United in Harmony will start to see some amazing changes and growth.

I have been a camper, counselor, and camp director for more years than I care to count. As a child and well into college, I would travel from Tennessee to Wisconsin every summer for eight weeks of sleep away camp. Many of those girls are still my friends today. I was a director at M.Larry Lawrence Jewish Community Center

day camp in La Jolla. I have also been a teacher, school administrator and college counselor over the past twenty years living in Los Angeles.

It seems fitting that I have worked with children at every age level and will continue to do so at United in Harmony. I am committed to helping children reach their potential in life no matter what their circumstances.

United in Harmony and Camp Harmony have a very bright future ahead. The Board of Directors and I have set goals to reach out to as many needy children as possible, to offer as many opportunities as we can to our high school aged counselors to be hands on and effective in their community, and increase the visibility of United in Harmony's mission.

Winter and summer sessions at Camp Harmony are the lifeblood of our

organization. Every session we bring as many children as we can accommodate to camp in Malibu. Filled to capacity, we provide clothing and medical care as needed, food, food, food it is truly "all the food they need" also hugs and fun. Camp is fun we all know that, but what the campers take away from Camp Harmony is more than an art project and a couple of mosquito bites. Most importantly, they take home the hearts of their counselors.

Our high school counselors and college aged unit heads are the feet that keep Camp Harmony moving and the hearts that keep the spirit pumping. Our goal as an organization is to inspire young adults to become life-long philanthropists. It is our hope that they take the spirit of giving they have learned at Camp Harmony and continue to volunteer in college and beyond. We hope they develop into citizens with a passion for helping and giving to others less fortunate.

FAMILY FUN FOR ALL!

Giant inflatables, games, zip lines, food, fun and families all converged for "Harmony's Family Fun Day" the 2007 annual fundraiser held at Camp Keystone in Calabasas. Lauren Pelissier chaired this wonderful event for people of all ages. Everyone enjoyed the jumping, sliding and climbing in the inflatables as well as flying across the zip lines, dancing and the delicious buffet lunch.



For the first time, the venue allowed enough space for us to invite families from three local shelters to join in the fun. We were thrilled to host entire families of campers who have benefited from Camp Harmony at the event. It was truly a special experience for all those who attended. In addition to raising money for United in Harmony we were able to reach out to the families of the children we serve for a day of relaxation and fun.

Special thanks to Wendie Goode Dox and Tobi Martin for organizing the silent auction, Brian Kramer for taking family portraits and especially Lauren for her energy and dedication to United in Harmony.



New Home, New Staff

United in Harmony welcomes our new office assistant, Calvin Dacosta, a Wilshire Blvd. Temple religious school educator and Jewish Studies student. Calvin has also been a member of our support staff and is a former Leadership counselor at Camp Hess Kramer. We're glad to have him!



WE'VE MOVED!

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Alumni Star: Lindsay Tucker



I volunteered at Camp Harmony when I was 14 years old approaching 10th grade. I was a counselor to 12 children from different shelters around Los Angeles. After my first year as a counselor I knew I was hooked.

I was a counselor all through high school and continued to volunteer as I attended college at UC Santa Barbara. Each year was more rewarding than the last. I was thrilled to be a Unit Head and lead a group of high school aged counselors. After four years I was invited to assist in camp programming. I also had the opportunity to chair the Harmony Holiday Party for two years and really see how the organization operates in a new way. All of these opportunities gave me new experiences and helped me to build my personal skills.

Currently, I'm serving on the Board of Directors and as Director of the Leadership program. It is a privilege to work with so many wonderful dedicated people. Growing up at Camp Harmony has been an honor that allowed me to see how camp was built, the time and effort it takes and the commitment of so many volunteers to make United in Harmony a reality.

Harmony Honors... Brian Kramer

Brian Kramer has been our official photographer and unofficial angel since 1994, when sparked by a big office cleanup after the Northridge earthquake, he decided to give his clients all their stored negatives in exchange for donations to United in Harmony. His plan, affectionately called "Turning a Negative into a Positive", is still in effect today, and has netted United in Harmony over \$20,000 in donations.

Brian also donates his time and the time of his associates to come to EVERY Harmony Event. He takes portraits at our fundraisers, and also comes to every Summer and Winter Camp to take photos of the Campers with their Cabin-groups. Brian prints a copy for EVERY camper to take home for a lifetime of memories, and stays the whole day to capture the faces of Camp Harmony. We thank him with all of our hearts for all the hearts he has touched.

Just a side note: Brian is single and available.



Mentoring Today

We are celebrating the close of our fifth successful mentoring season. This year we have had an outstanding group of Mentors who have been passionate in reaching out to work with impoverished inner city middle school students. They have really come together as a whole and made a difference in the lives of each of our Mentees.

The Mentoring Program began as a way to continue our wonderful work at Camp Harmony. Children who have attended camp and have aged out of being a camper have been referred to our Mentoring Program where high school students continue efforts to reach out to impoverished children at monthly activities. The Mentoring Program has grown from 15 high school Mentors to 32; which also mean more middle school Mentees.



Mentors and Mentees have had some terrific adventures together this year playing games, learning at the Pacific Aquarium, LA Zoo and the Museum of Tolerance. Our year culminates with The Amazing Journey a journey through downtown LA that includes applying for a library card and checking out a book from the Main Library. The Journey ends with a final banquet of our Mentoring season. We have grown stronger as a program, we have seen the counselors grow closer to their Mentees and we have planted some seeds of hope and opportunity.

Leadership-Julia Steinberg

After such an amazing experience as a counselor at Camp Harmony, I knew that that could not be all- I just couldn't wait until next summer to do something. Then I heard about Leadership, a program that is part of Camp Harmony that allows counselors to have contact with the campers throughout the year. I have been a part of Camp Harmony for four years and of Leadership for two years.



Through my experience with Leadership, I have been able to form meaningful relationships with many of my campers. Every week I get a call from at least two campers updating me on their family, friends, school and anything else going on in their lives. Leadership has provided me with a connection to my campers that helps them through the year, and also helps to give me a meaningful opportunity to connect with some amazing kids.

Whether we laugh together at a bowling event, learn about teamwork at a basketball game, learn about the world at the science museum or let loose at a dance party, the monthly events allow homeless children of Los Angeles an opportunity to just be kids. I am eternally grateful for the opportunities that Camp Harmony and Leadership have given me, and to quote our own Camp Harmony Song, "Camp Harmony's a part of me. Everywhere I go. Because it's the place where I feel safe with everyone I know."

Passmans Pay it Forward

On the first day of Winter Camp 2008 you would have passed a table full of big, beautiful cookies. Shana Passman baked dozens of cookies for all of the counselors and support staff volunteering at Camp Harmony. Shana once again fulfilled her role as the most nurturing, loving volunteer we are proud to know.

Shana and Don Passman have been involved with Camp Harmony since its inception 19 years ago, and have had the joy of watching it grow into the expansive operation it is today. All four of the Passman children, Danny, David, Josh and Jordan have participated as camp counselors, leadership and support staff at camp. They have made life-long friends and the experience has given them a perspective they would not have otherwise found. David recalls the summer he rode on the bus with the campers through the tunnel in Santa Monica and the beach appeared. All the campers on the bus ran to the windows to see the ocean a sight in their own backyard that they had never seen before.

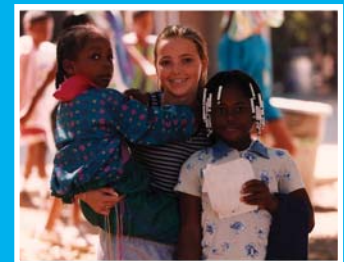
The entire Passman family has shared in the Harmony experience. Don wonders, "How many chances do we get to work alongside our children? To see them mature as they guide young people? How wonderful is it for the campers to have positive role models? How impressive is it that so many volunteers, both young people and adults, give freely of their time to create this experience for needy children?"

Shana, Don and their sons continue to volunteer in all aspects of United in Harmony. Shana serves as Vice President on the Board of Directors, Danny has wowed campers at the Harmony Holiday Party for the past two years with his magical skills, Jordan has been a Unit Head and Josh has been sharpening the chess talents of the campers.

Special thanks to Shana, Don, Danny, David, Josh and Jordan for the gifts you bring to United in Harmony. We have no words to express our appreciation for your generous spirits, good humor, positive outlook and delicious treats. United in Harmony is honored to recognize the Passman family.

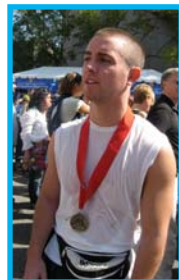


Who's this Counselor?



Mike's Run

In high school I remember a bunch of my friends would go to Camp Harmony to work as counselors. I never understood that. Why would they spend their free time doing that? Finally, I get it! Experience has shown me that when I give a good day, I get a good day. When you see the difference you make or the appreciation you get from others, there's nothing else that can match that feeling.



I decided to run the Los Angeles Marathon this year for the very first time. I also decided to try and do it for a good cause as well as my own satisfaction. I called a family friend, Laurie Bernhard, and we started brainstorming. Laurie suggested Camp Harmony.

I approached my family and friends to support my run by making a donation to United in Harmony. As the weeks went by the checks started rolling in, I couldn't believe it. The amount of money I got back from everyone was beyond what I had expected. Ronna Slutske called to thank me and invited me up to Camp Harmony's winter session. That's when it came full circle, when I saw how Camp Harmony makes a positive impact on others. While I was there every support staff member I talked to said that they had been coming to camp for years. That really blew me away and showed me how involved the volunteers are with this organization.

On the day of the race I wasn't really sure what I

was getting myself into. I didn't want to think about it either. I ran through neighborhoods I had never seen before but every face we passed was smiling at us, especially the children. I started to think about the kids at Camp Harmony and how their being able to attend camp depended on me finishing the race and how all of my friends and family have helped me get to where I am today. I made it to the end! The city came together to help the runners the way my family and friends came together to help me make a difference in someone's life. I am forever thankful. I am also thankful to everyone at United in Harmony for giving me this opportunity.

Thank you Mike Walzman you raised over \$5,000 for United in Harmony!

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CHARLOTTE GOODE AWARD



Congratulations to [Cari Kay](#) and [Scott Boyer](#) for receiving our 5th annual Charlotte Goode Volunteer Award. This award is given to volunteers who have given of their time, effort and support always willing to go the extra mile to make United in Harmony a unique and successful organization.

Cari Kay has been a volunteer at Camp Harmony and United in Harmony events for the past eight years. Cari is the “can-do” volunteer, she never says no and is always ready, willing and able to assist in every way.

Cari truly values the difference every single person at Camp Harmony makes in a child’s life. She says,

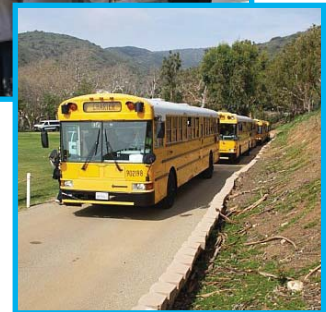
“You walk away feeling accomplished.”

Scott Boyer came to United in Harmony seven years ago although he feels like, “it had always been a part of my life; like I was home. From the first day, I knew that Camp Harmony was a wonderful place to be. I knew that these kids needed help and United in Harmony was dedicated and focused on giving it to them.”

Thank you Cari and Scott for your dedication and commitment to United in Harmony. Thank you for your support in every way and everyday.



A look at Winter Camp 2008...



The buses will be coming soon!

Camp Harmony summer session starts this August.
Get ready for another fun filled summer.

We would like to thank the following people for their support of United In Harmony.

If we have misspelled or omitted your name, please accept our apologies and contact the office so that we can make the necessary corrections.

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