

# **SCIENCE CAMP**

**By Rebecca John  
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I was extremely excited. I had waited years for this event. I was finally going to go to science camp!

I stood at the front of the school, with all the other restless 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents. My mom, my friends, and their parents stood beside me. Finally it was 8:45, and the buses were ready. I boarded the dandelion yellow bus, and chose a brown, leather seat in the middle of the bus. However, while the bus driver was showing us the first aid kit, the big, bulky kit fell down and smashed into the glass door of the bus with a sickening crash. We all had to wait for 30 minutes for a new bus to arrive. This delay did not dampen my spirits, though, and soon I was happily riding the bus, after saying bye to Mommy. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way, my throat started hurting, and I leaned against the seat in front of me. The ride was almost two hours long, and I was glad when the bus pulled into a parking lot. All the students got off the bus, and we walked under a wide wooden arch with the words **Camp Campbell** engraved on it. I called Mommy to let her know that I reached camp, on Kavya's mom's cell phone. We were led to a small clearing, in which there was a stage, with wooden benches seated around it. I soon learned that this place was called the Main Campfire. Many of the benches were already filled up, with Beachwood Elementary, Carrie Elementary, and other Forest Park students. Forest Park made up a majority of the crowd. We sang some songs, and talked about camp, a bit. Then, we figured out our cabin groups. Kavya and I were not in the same cabin, but Vanessa was in my cabin. There were six other students from Forest Park, and six 5<sup>th</sup> graders from Carrie School. Our group was called the Manzanitas, a type of berry that grows in the chaparral. Here are the names of the girls in my cabin:

- 1.) Rebecca
- 2.) Vanessa
- 3.) Saisha
- 4.) Nikita
- 5.) Manasi
- 6.) Meghana
- 7.) Anisha U.
- 8.) Anisha B.
- 9.) Brynn
- 10.) Isabella
- 11.) Katie
- 12.) Caroline
- 13.) Saher

My cabin leader was a senior in high school, and her "nature name," was Moonlight. She was nice, but the phrase she most often said was, "Okay, you guys need to hurry up. We only have a few minutes!" We went to our cabins, which were huge, buildings, held up high in the air supported by tall, wooden beams and were connected together by walkways. These, cabins, called the Treetop Cabins, were the girls' cabins. There were quite a few of them. I was in Cabin 3. The boys' cabins, on the other hand, were about  $\frac{1}{3}$  the size of the girls' vast cabins, and did not include built in bathrooms, like the girls' cabins did. Not even the teachers' cabins were as comfortable as the girls' cabins were.

After we saw the cabins, we went to the immense, wooden dining hall that had just recently been built. There we ate our packed lunch, with our cabin groups. After lunch we joined our field teacher, Mark Beetle, who has been living at Camp Campbell for five years. The other cabin group that was in our field group was the Bark Beetles, a boys group. We took a small hike, and then everyone returned to his or her cabins. At 5:15, let me repeat that, at 5:15, we had DINNER! Wow, huh? Dinner was Chicken Parmesan, with green beans and salad, with a dessert of a chocolate ice-cream bar. We were assigned to seats, so I didn't get to sit next to any of my

friends, but there were other sixth-graders I knew from Forest Park. Before every meal, we had to sing a song, and have a moment of silence. The song goes like this:

Oh, the earth is good to me,  
And so I thank the earth,  
For giving me,  
The things I need,  
The soil, and the rain and the redwood tree,  
The earth is good to me.  
Uh-huh (x6)

We then had a fiesta, where we danced and played games. We were told a story about how these really short people with very big feet, called the Sand People, lived in the area before Camp Campbell was built. It is a story about how they agreed that if George Campbell built a camp on their home, they would be able to sleep on the porches of the cabins that were very quiet. Sometimes, if you're very quiet, the next morning, on the porch, will be a huge, glittery, colorful shoe; a token of thanks from the Sand People.

The next morning, we woke up from around 6:30-7:00, and most of us, including me, took quick showers. Breakfast was wheat pancakes, cereal, yogurt, soy sausages, and strawberries. We then went on another hike with our field groups. There, we confirmed our nature names. My name was River. Vanessa's name was Autumn, which I suggested, and Kavya's Drizzle. Bhavana's was Thunder. After the hike, we had chicken nuggets and fries. When lunch was over, our field group went to the San Lorenzo River to find macro-invertebrates, and see if the water in the river was healthy. I found a damselfly and a mayfly nymph. At the end of this, we determined that the water was very healthy. We returned to our cabins for shower time, but since most of us had already taken showers in the morning, we worked on our skit, that we would be performing, in front of the dim light of a campfire. The skit would be performed on Thursday, in front of all the students. We met with our school class and teachers, and discussed how we were doing and feeling. Then we filled out a paper on our cabin leader. At 5:00, we went to the dining hall, to eat dinner. Tonight, dinner was macaroni with pesto sauce, tofu, tater tots, and fried vegetables. I didn't eat the tofu or the tater tots. Dessert was strawberry shortcake, which was very good. After dinner, we returned to our cabins, for some time. Then we met with our field group, and we began our night hike. We hiked for a while; probing around in the dark, with just the silvery moonlight that shone between the trees to guide us. Finally, we sat on the forest floor in a circle, and were told a fictional story about how the first bat was formed from a squirrel. Then we were given a candy which Mark Beetle insisted wasn't a mint lifesaver, and that might make a spark appear in your mouth. Number one, I'm pretty sure that it was a mint lifesaver, number two, I think I saw a spark in Vanessa's mouth, and number three, almost everyone's piece wasn't that hard, so it couldn't produce a spark. After that, we all shared something random that was going on in our minds and then we hiked back, this time with our flashlights ON!

The next morning, I took a quick rinse in the shower, and then we went to breakfast, which was potatoes, yogurt, eggs, cereal, and something I can't remember. After that, we packed our lunch for our all-day hike. I packed a turkey, pickle, mayonnaise, tomato, and lettuce sandwich, an apple, and an oatmeal chocolate chip cookie. We walked two miles to the top of Manzanita Mountain, and two miles back. The view at the top of the top of the mountain was breathtakingly beautiful. I gazed at the valley, way below me, and was surprised that I had walked so much. On the hike we saw many of the plants and animals we learned about. I saw a banana slug, red tailed hawks, mushrooms, fungi, and more. We also found scat of a mountain lion and footprints of deer.

When we came back from our hike, we were sweaty and exhausted, so Moonlight told us to take a shower. Then we met with our class teachers and the rest of our school class. I was happy to be with my class again. We played Capture the Flag against 501, and then played Ga-Ga Ball with 501. After shower time, we went to the dining hall for our last dinner at Camp

Campbell. Dinner was EXTRA spicy enchiladas, but they were so spicy, I decided to get one of the last turkey wraps, which were great. Dessert was a churro! The people whose birthday occurred sometime during science camp were sung Happy Birthday to, and got chocolate ice cream and a churro.

Our skit went well. The best skit was probably the teacher's play. We sang a song about Manzanitas, and kind of made that into a play. After our exciting skits, we figured out next day's schedule, and then we went to bed.

The next morning, we went to the Nature Lab with our field teacher. I held an albino corn snake, named Miss Jackson. She felt rubbery and smooth. We had a snack of cake and orange juice in the nature lab, and then we went to the chapel, a cluster of California Coastal Redwoods surrounding a small wooden stage and rows of wooden benches. We had been here before, to sing songs with all the students, and we did that again this time. Then, we headed towards the dining hall, for brunch. Brunch was a tortilla, cheese, and meat, that you could make into a burrito, (which I did,) or a taco. There was also yogurt, (which I took a lot of,) and cereal. Mrs. Munro asked me to say a speech at the closing ceremony, about science camp. After breakfast, everyone chose his or her special activities. The Manzanitas were in second-place, because we had the second most amount of points. I did archery, because I didn't want to do the Mole Hole, and the line for friendship bracelets was filled up. I felt that the zip-lining, wouldn't last very long. I never hit the target on my eight tries, but I got close. Kavya hit the target three times. Mommy was there, and so were Prassana aunty and Vanessa's mom, when we got back from archery. My pants, shoes and socks were caked with thick brown mud. It had started drizzling that morning and the ground became very muddy.

We all gathered in the dining hall for the closing ceremony. We sang some of the songs we learned including a beautiful goodbye song. Mark Beetle played the guitar. Then a representative from each class gave a speech on the camp experience. Mommy said my speech was very good, though I barely got time to prepare! As we drove home, after the closing ceremony, I smiled, sad to leave Science Camp, but happy to be going home.

~~~~~THE END~~~~~