



Counselor

Michaela O'Connor - Nurse

Michaela is a lead nurse in one of our boys cabins. She brings a sweet disposition, quiet confidence and loving care to all she does. But we are pretty sure she jumps right in the thick of all of the shenanigans!

How did you get involved in CHAMP Camp? I was introduced to camp by a former counselor and friend Stephanie Murray, who at the time was my preceptor as I was new nurse in an adult ICU. Stephanie encouraged me to try camp, but I was hesitant since I had never worked with kids as a nurse, and I don't exactly love camping. But after a year of Stephanie telling me I should go, thankfully I finally decided to try going because I love kids and being outdoors (and I learned the cabins are air conditioned). =)

After your first year, why did you come back? My first year I was in a cabin with a few first-time campers, with the youngest camper only 6. I remember feeling so nervous as a new counselor, and I couldn't imagine how anxious a 6-year-old would feel. Despite being so young and unsure about being at camp, this camper bravely tried so many new things, sometimes even with tears in his eyes, and ended up loving camp. Seeing our new campers experience the love, fun, and support of camp is indescribable and what keeps me coming back.

What is your favorite memory from CHAMP Camp? I don't have a specific favorite memory, but my favorite memories while at CHAMP Camp are the quiet moments I have with campers. A lot of camp is filled with activity, and cheering, and fun, and pranks, but between those times there are sometimes quiet moments you experience with the campers, when they open up and tell you about their life outside of camp or the things they hope to do in the future; those are the most memorable and impactful times for me.

How does your week at camp impact the rest of your year? For me, camp is a tangible experience of happiness, love, and the good in our world. A few years ago, a camper at the end of camp excitedly said to his mom "Mom, there were NO bullies at camp!" Those few words were so impactful on my life and often remind me of the love that everyone deserves. I think it's easy to get weighed down by the stressors of everyday life and crises of the world but having the ability to interact with so many special and loving people (campers and counselors) for a week each year, is what reminds me to live for the joy and goodness in life.

Why should someone in your profession consider being a counselor at CHAMP camp?

Acting as a nurse and caring for incredible kids in the middle of the woods is a privilege only found at CHAMP camp. It's not easy to be in the world of nursing right now, but camp offers an opportunity to use the nursing profession in a way that truly means something.

We are so lucky to have you Michaela! Thanks for taking care of our boys!



2023

**Bonus Photos!
Gabe and Michaela
in 2016 and 2023!**

