

applicant number	applying for	preference
7	Discovery Counselor	Discovery

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO REAPPLY?

More than anything else, the DC17 campers are my inspiration to re-apply. As we were loading buses to leave FFA at the end of Discovery, a few campers with whom I hadn't previously spoken were asking me about my experience on staff. One of them asked me if I wanted to apply again and it took very little time for me to tell her that I did. I had intentionally put off this decision because I wanted to see if my staff experience lived up to the precedents set by my camper experience and by the journey I went through as a counselor-in-training. Dawg Camp has repeatedly exceeded my expectations, and my Discovery counselor experience was no different. Since that moment, I've only been given more reasons to want to re-apply. My own campers have taught me so much, I've made valuable connections with campers from other small groups, and I've developed lifelong friendships with my co-counselor and other staff members. So, if I have the opportunity to reach a whole new group of people through DC18, there's no way I could let it pass me by.

THREE WAYS YOU PLAN TO STEP UP AS A RETURNER

One of my personality traits I'm most proud of is that I tend to be the "mom friend." For me, this means I'm always looking out for the people around me, making sure everyone feels comfortable, encouraging endlessly, and (to the annoyance of my less-motherly friends) often being the one to enforce rules. As a returning counselor, I would certainly put my mom-friend-ness to use. (1) I would intentionally take initiative to reach out to newcomers (especially if I'm sensing discomfort, confusion, etc.) and offer myself as a resource to them for any questions they may have, and as a friend whether they seem to need one or not. (2) I would also do my best to keep any group I'm with on task during trainings, work days, or even the camp itself. As a first-time staff member for DC17, I wasn't always comfortable doing things like that, and at times I still may not feel like I have enough authority to do that, but my time with Dawg Camp has taught me enough about the importance of stepping out of my comfort zone that it wouldn't be a problem anymore. (3) Finally, I would always strive to be the first: the first to notice and step up when LT or Pro Staff may need help with something, the first to volunteer when help is expressly requested (including things like camper recruitment efforts), the first to set the tone for any activity we're doing, the first to adjust my behavior when I'm taking up too much space, always the first (but not in a competitive way, I promise).

EXAMPLES OF JUSTIFICATION

I believe Dawg Camp has made me a better person, but more specifically a better leader. Before my DC17 staff experience, I was pretty unconvinced of my leadership skills because I had this specific image of how a person leads. Now I know how many different leadership styles there are, and I'm proud of the leader I've become. I lead by example. I lead by encouraging. I lead by listening. I believe that other people tend to feel that they can come to me for help. One testament to this is an experience I had with a DC17 camper that was not in my small group. Now, I certainly can't take credit for this first-year's openness because I know he made a big breakthrough at a previous camp, but all it took was for him to see one thing we had in common (music education majors), and just like that he opened up to me in a shocking capacity. I see him on campus pretty frequently, so I always make a point to ask him how he's doing. On at least one occasion I've reached out to him to ease his mind about something that was going on in the school of music because I knew that at this time last year (as a first-year) that situation would have stressed me out big-time. With my own campers, too, I've been able to see how much it pays off for me to put all my pride and reservations aside and just to simply show love. They are absolutely thriving (which, again, I won't take credit for because they're such brilliant and wonderful people) and I know for a fact that they see me as someone they can lean on. I have a bit of a passion for problem-solving,

so when a camper comes to me with any kind of issue I just feel honored that they trust me enough to do so, and excited to work through it with them. As a returner on DC18 staff, I would put all that I've learned about myself and about leadership to use, not only with my campers but with my fellow staff members as well.
