
Meet the Alumnae – Kate Taylor

What years at camp, and in what capacity?

16 years, all told: 1998-2002 as a camper, CIT 2003, Head of Archery 2005-06, Head of Canoeing 2007-08, Senior Unit Head 2009-11, Staff Coordinator 2012, CIT Director 2013-14 (10 years on staff woo!)

What did camp teach you? What did you learn at camp?

Probably one of the most important lessons I learned at camp was to believe in myself, and in turn to believe in others. Ouareau was a place where I truly felt valued, and it taught me that my opinion mattered. That is a value that I always tried (and continue to try!) to pass on to my staff, and an opinion that I continue to hold about myself - I allow myself to take up space in conversations a lot more than I did when I was younger!

What are some of your fondest memories?

I still remember with a lot of clarity the X-Files theme day from when I was a camper - waking up to a UFO crash between the flag and the dining hall... counsellors lurching around as “abductees”... the “Government Agents” who came to enlist our help... I think slime was involved at some point...? And of course every single camp play that I was in will always be on my highlight reel... But one of my most cherished moments was when my cabin group (Couch 2, July 2006) created the song “Oh Ouareau Girls,” which is in the song book now, and sung to this day. I couldn’t have been prouder of my girls than when I watched them present that song to camp for the first time.

Anything about your career you’d like to share?

As you can tell from my “years at camp” answers... Ouareau was my career for a long time! I moved to Montreal in 2010 and started working part time at the MOO (Montreal Office) after joining the Leadership Team in 2009. When it was time for me to move on from Ouareau, I worked for two years as the Assistant Director at Camp Fire Central Puget Sound's Camp Sealth on Vashon Island, WA.

As of January 2017, I have accomplished my dream career: I am a full-time Camp Director! Not at Ouareau, since the Rails are still going strong, but very much thanks to Jacqui and her helping me make connections with other camping folks, I was hired as the director at Camp



YMCA Kanawana! I work most of the year out of the YMCA centre-ville at the Camp's office, and then from June to August I live in St-Sauveur at Kanawana itself. I still get to see Gabz and Jacqui as professional colleagues at conferences, and am very proud to represent Ouareau's values within a new organization. I have been very, very lucky to have never had a bad boss, and Gabz gave me a lot of good tricks for how to manage your manager, so I've formed a great relationship with my new supervisor and am absolutely living the dream, even though it is quite challenging and exhausting at times.



Any other Ouareau connections (siblings, aunts, etc)?

My sister, Anne, went to Ouareau the summer before me, and did 3 years at camp herself (1997-1999). In 1999, she brought her friend Beth Schwartz to camp, and Beth went on to become a CIT and staff member, but Anne moved on to other things. Anne still has very fond memories of Bronwyn Pavey, and her Boathouse August 1999 cabin-mates.

My mom (Frances Tanner) is an avid attendee at Ouareau's Women's Weekends, and has brought quite a few friends and relatives into the Ouareau fold that way! My niece, Lexi, will have the choice of Ouareau or Kanawana when she's old enough, but I'm pretty sure my sister will want her to choose the camp where she can shamelessly pester the crap out of the director for updates! :)

Will you be attending the 100th Anniversary? If so, what are you most looking forward to?

I was SO sad to miss the 95th - I was living in Washington at the time, and couldn't make it back for that weekend. But I will ABSOLUTELY be putting the 100th in my calendar, and keeping my fingers crossed very tightly that no YMCA events conflict. I was able to come to my first Women's Weekend as a client last fall, and it was so lovely to be able to just enjoy my second home again.

As a camp director, you don't necessarily always get to partake in the fun of camp, because you can get awfully wrapped up in putting out fires (both literal and figurative!) so it will be very nice to come to an event that I don't have to manage! Hahahaha...

Anything else you'd like to share?

If there are any Ouareau girls out there who have male-identifying children who can't attend Ouareau themselves, I'd love to have them at Kanawana! ;) Feel free to contact me if you want info about Kanawana... :D I may have stolen another Ouareau Girl to join my staff team already... (sorry Jacqui & Gabz, Maya is mine for good!)