



## Having Double the Fun at Camp Manitou

### The Story of Arlo & Giovanna Iannarelli-Hawkins and Evelyn & Cohen Schroedel

Friendships created at Camp Manitou are truly unique. The connection among campers is a remarkable experience that happens when children break away from daily distractions, immerse themselves in their environment, forge relationships, and engage in new experiences.

"I never got to go to Camp Manitou," Brett Schroedel shared. "I missed out as a kid so to have Cohen and Evelyn be able to go, I was able to live through them. It was a week with no screen time and they survived, so it's good as a parent to have them be a kid and socialize and have them realize they can make memories and friends without iPads and PlayStations - it's old-school wholesome fun."

Emily Barnes & Brett Schroedel sent their twins, Cohen & Evelyn, to camp for the first time hoping they would make friends and lasting memories. "I was able to attend Camp Manitou when I was a little girl. I wanted Cohen & Evelyn to experience Camp because it was so much fun for me," Emily shared.

"At a minimum, they had each other, that's a neat thing about having twins. We told them they would make new friends, too," Brett expressed.

Evelyn and Giovanna Iannarelli-Hawkins immediately became friends when they both were assigned to Wood Cabin for a session of Mini Camp. They had a lot in common, most notably their shared love for Taylor Swift music, but quickly realized they had something very unique in common, they both had a twin brother camping in North Pine.

The four of them, Cohen & Evelyn and Arlo & Giovanna, quickly connected and started forming their unique friendship. Coming across another set of boy-girl twins the same age was rare. "These are the only other boy-girl twins we know that are the same age as us," Arlo shared.

"Friendships like this don't happen a lot but it's really nice when they do because we are the same age, my brother has a friend, I have a friend. You immediately know you are going to have a lot in common since we are both boy-girl twins. Me and Evelyn have a lot in common and so do Cohen & Arlo," Giovanna exclaimed.

"I was worried about the social stuff. Are they going to make friends? Are they going to have fun? What was that going to be like?" Collin, Giovanna & Arlo's dad, expressed.

Carmen, Giovanna and Arlo's mom, added, "Our kids had never really been away from us for more than a night, so this really was their first experience away without a family member. It was pretty scary as a parent, but I am so glad that I made it about them and not me. It is about them and they loved it and everything was fine and now they are going for a full week next summer-and not just the mini camp."

"If we missed our families, or they missed us, we could send them letters and they would send us care packages," Giovanna chimed in.

The bond between Arlo, Cohen, Giovanna, and Evelyn grew stronger each day at camp. They immersed themselves in various activities, shared laughter, and created memories. They appreciate the unique bond they share as twin friends. Evelyn shared, "We met right away and just focused on each other and growing our friendship." Their special connection added an extra layer of closeness, making every moment at camp feel even more magical. "It made camp extra special to meet Evelyn and Cohen and it's fun because we all still talk and we have double the fun, because we are twins," Giovanna added.

Giovanna, Arlo, Evelyn and Cohen are all anxiously awaiting the arrival of summer so they can head back to camp. Recalling memories of campfire dinners, the mud hike, the endless laughter, and all the pranks, there is one thing they can all agree on being the most excited about. "We are all looking forward to seeing each other when going back to camp," Cohen shares.

"These campers are in great hands at camp. The camp does a great job. You have young adults who are invested in your kids that are looking out for them. I missed them, but letting them go and have that experience is important because they aren't going to have that experience at home. Letting them go and be kids and hearing their stories and enjoyment of the week after the fact is worth the worry of sending them out into the world," Brett said.

"I didn't get to go to Camp Manitou when I was a kid and I always desperately wanted to as I had a number of friends that went." Collin expressed, "I knew before we even had kids that they were going to go to Camp Manitou. Now to hear these stories and to see that they made some really great friends, that has been the best thing ever."



For Brett, Emily, Carmen & Collin, experiencing Camp Manitou through their children's eyes, and having such a unique friendship flourish as a result was a true gift. They heard stories of their children embarking on new adventures, making lifelong memories, and forging bonds with their peers, specifically another set of twins. They are thankful for the opportunity that Camp Manitou has given their children and the countless opportunities it will give them for years to come.

