

# BEACH BUZZ

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"Keeping Our Beaches Bare"

## My first nude youth leadership camp experience

By Kyle Hofmann

*Kyle Hofmann, a 16-year-old High School student, along with his sister and cousin, was a participant in the 2003 Florida Association for Nude Recreation (FANR) Youth Leadership Camp. His grandmother was a camp volunteer. Here is his personal account of his experience at the camp.*

I attended my first Nudist Youth Camp in June 2003 at Lake Como Family Nudist Resort in Lutz, FL. Lutz is about 10 miles north of Tampa. My grandmother, who is retired, lives at the resort all year.

I had a great time. In fact it was one of the best times I had in my life. I would have never known about the camp if it wasn't for my grandmother. She heard about it and wanted my sister and cousin, who are both 11 years old, to attend too, so Gramma sponsored the 3 of us. She knew it would be safe, and we would meet kids our age and learn to feel more comfortable with ourselves and with the nudist life.

First, there were rules: like the etiquette of sitting on your own towel whenever you sat down. This, most of us already knew from previous experience at nudist resorts and campgrounds with our parents. Also, we had a buddy system with another camper when we left the youth camp area to visit the pool or other area of the resort, and always had to have a counselor with us. We were told about inappropriate behavior, staring at others, touching, improper dress, belittling talk and proper manners. You were given one warning if you broke a rule. If you broke a small rule

again then you had to go to "jail". There was a so-called "jail" which was a screened room with one chair in it. We called this the "Hot Box". No one misbehaved and had to go in there though. If you broke a major rule your parents were called and they had to come and take you home, but no one did.

Our camp looked like a tent city. There were about 35 sleeping tents for the kids and some of the counselors to sleep in.

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Everyone slept in his own tent. There was a large tent with food supplies. Other tents made a kitchen, a large dining area, and a first aid station, plus there were miscellaneous covered areas for workshops and activities. There were Port-A-Potties in the "Camp Tent City", as well as showers.

We did get a lot of rain the first day or two, but it was warm and we didn't have to worry about getting our clothes wet, because we didn't have any on. Although, inside some of our tents, our sleeping bags, pillows and belongings did get wet. It didn't take long for them to dry, thankfully.

The food was fantastic and before meals healthy smoothies were freshly made and served, and we all really

enjoyed them.

We were broken up into 3 different age groups. "Youth" is 11-14, "Leadership" is 15-18, and "Nude U" is the 18-25 year olds. Most of the "Nude U" participants had already gone to earlier Youth Camps when they were younger. The oldest group arrives first for leadership orientation, and then greets and helps orient the middle age group the next day when they arrive. Then that group greets and helps orients the youngest age group when they arrive the day after that. So the camp lasts 8 to 10 days, depending on what age group you're in. There are also chores assigned to everyone, like cleaning up around the area, taking turns doing dishes, etc.

The many various activities were loads of fun as well as educational. There were of course swimming and pool games, volleyball, nature hikes, daily meditation time, writing an essay, optional lessons for tennis, golf, Petanque, arts and crafts, etc. During our nightly campfire, with a hot dog and marshmallow roast, we had a different topic of conversation. Each person had their time to talk, and each held a lantern at that time which meant no one else could talk or interrupt. That is the individuals' time to express their thoughts and feelings on the topic for the night. Singing and music was also usually a nightly event. Sleep time was 11 PM till 7 AM. We were exhausted when we went to bed, so sleep was surely no problem.

We also had serious discussions on drugs, alcohol, smoking, and body changes, and the older kids were taught how to do a resume. There was never any smoking or drinking allowed in our large camping area by any one, including the



counselors. Also, only those with the appropriate bracelets on were allowed in the kids' camp area at any time. The camp area was also patrolled 24 hours a day by the counselors and volunteers. My Gramma was on watch from 3AM till 7AM.

The night before the camp closed the older groups did the meal preparation and served a spaghetti dinner for about 125 people. That included the rest of the kids, counselors, family members and invited guests. Some kids had relatives living at Lake Como, or at nearby resorts, who visited for this meal. Some parents who brought their kids from farther away were staying at one of the resorts in the area while their kids were at the camp, and they visited too. After the dessert, there was a talent show that was prepared and planned by us kids the 5 previous days. There were 19 various acts that would match any TV talent show. Almost, that is. I was elected by the other campers to be the male Vice President of the camp. So I was picked to be the MC for the evening along with the female Vice President. The show was named, "The Sunny and Bare Show." The nudist

version of the "Sonny and Cher Show." The audience loved it and laughed a lot, there was even a camper raising the "applause" sign, when appropriate.

Awards were also given out to the many volunteers. My Gramma was one of them. She worked in the kitchen, did night watch and other various duties. I was also named "Man Of The Year" and

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received a trophy I am proud of. One other award I won was \$25 for the essay I wrote. It is going before the AANR National Essays and that prize is \$100.

When it was time to leave, there were tears and hugs of new friends found and

formed, counselors and kids alike.

I am so thankful to JFANR (Junior Florida Association for Nude Recreation) for having worked so hard to form and provide the Youth Camp and for raising the donations that help make it possible.

After the camp was over I was provided the opportunity to appear before Rep. Mark Foley in his office, along with my Gramma and about a dozen other leaders in the nudist life. We discussed what was written about the Youth Camp in the papers and shown on TV. OK, I don't think he was a good listener. I can't believe someone goes so far to try and ruin something so special to all us nudists. I can't understand why he won't let us live our lives the way we want to. Can't he see what he is doing to us?

Gramma, Shirley Mason and I also went to Tallahassee to appear before the prestigious movers and shakers at the Capital Tiger Bay Club. Some of them admitted they have been Skinny Dipping before.

As I write this we are scheduled to fly to NYC to tape an appearance on the "John Walsh Show". It is being broadcast sometime in September. ☆