



Staff Spotlight - Juan Bribiesca

Meg Fischer

When was your first summer at camp?

The summer of 1987

How did you hear about camp?

My brother, Jorge, and I attended a Marist high school in Mexico. The summer after a devastating earthquake hit Mexico, my parents decided to send Jorge to camp. When he returned home he was happier, more talkative, and tan. I was intrigued to learn more about canteen, Brother Jim Halliday, and General Swim. AND COLOR WAR! My parents decided to register me for the following summer.



Tell us about your first summer.

I was afraid, because it was the first time I would travel alone. Luckily, my neighbor, Alfredo Calvo, was also attending. I packed the list of clothes they recommended: sleeping bag, raincoat, shorts, swimsuit, and towels. But, I also included many doubts. I hoped, I too, could have an incredible summer like my brother spoke

about.

After more than 9 hours of travel I arrived at what felt like the end of the world. My brother did not tell me about how long the journey would be! In the dead of night it was hard to imagine having the best summer of my life. The next morning everything changed. My prefect, Bro. Jim explained our day: breakfast, activities, places, and people's names. My cabin was Pogoville. It was the beginning of the seven more incredible and memorable weeks, I had ever experienced.

Who were some of the people you met during your first summer?

Bro. Valerian making candles, Bro Ken Marino at Arts and Crafts, Bro. Jim Vagan in canoeing, Kevin Conway as Director, Bro Mike Fisher, Bro Chico, Bro. Anthony, Bro George, Kevin King, Bro Bill Maske, Bro Ken Robert, Joe Bouchard, Tom Lee,

Leigh and Debbie Erickson, and many others who went from being strangers to friends and family. I also met Chris Krueger and Joe Franco as campers.

You currently work at the stables. How long have you been there for?

Since 1994-present. I was the assistant prefect in cabin 3, 4, and 5. Then, I became the AP in Pineview with Vinny. 15 years later and I'm still the assistant prefect!



Brian O'Neil with Juan Bribiesca

Were you a color war captain?

I had the honor of being Captain with Ian Donachie in 1997. Sal Sordo and Chris Krueger were my assistants. We lost, but it taught me a lot.

Nowadays you are known for waking up early and running.

Can you tell us more about that?

Since 2005 I went back to running as a sport and training in the summer for marathons and races. Brian O'Neil and I run along Route 25. The paths and roads around camp and Effingham are beautiful, with the sunrises and sunsets. On Easter 2009, Brian came down to Mexico, and we ran an 8 mile race in Mexico City. We still have plans to run a marathon together with several other Camp Marist people.

Anything else you would like to add?

Camp Marist changed my life since 1987, 31 years ago. I can safely say that the best summers of my life have been Camp, a place I call home. I have lived there through many important joys and sorrows such as the death of my dad in the summer of 2014. I owe Camp Marist for the person that I am today. I thank Camp Marist, the Marist Brothers, and all of you!



Color War

Kevin Winter

Color War at Camp Marist. To quote American sportscaster Jim Nantz, it truly is the “tradition unlike any other” at the end of the camping season. Red Team against White Team. Memorable themes. Cabin and table inspections—a prefect’s dream! Athletic competitions promoting sportsmanship. Team chants and songs. Logo designs on the back of shirts. Staff skits. Joe Bouchard announcing

that this is “one of the closest Color Wars ever!” And of course, the always electrifying tug-of-war to conclude the three days of organized craziness.

This past summer, the ever popular theme of Superheroes against Super Villains was rebranded as “Legion of Anarchy” against “Freedom Fighters”. One can only imagine the awe that a camper in Pineview had when they saw the Joker (Connor O’Neil) enter the mound on a school bus or when Spiderman (Andrew Quinn) zip lined in from a nearby tree during the opening skits. The point total between the two teams seemed to always be in single digits. When all was said and done, the Freedom Fighters (the White team) emerged victorious following the tug-of-war.



There are several key factors that make Color War so memorable. First, the level of buy-in from the staff, who go above and beyond preparing the theme, skits, and artwork for our campers. Their buy-in and energy only makes the campers more excited about the festivities. The overall decibel level at camp reaches its peak during the Color War.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, is that win or lose, Red or White, sportsmanship and friendship endure during and after the Color War. By the time Color War ends, most campers have less than 24 hours left on the property before departing for home. Kids are resilient and are quick to reunite as one cabin and one camp so they can make the most of those final hours. The emotional rollercoaster of screaming “Pull!” during the tug-of-war to openly weeping at the closing bonfire during “Stand by Me” demonstrates that their experience of Camp Marist was meaningful. Perhaps these emotions and feelings prove our campers experienced the true intent of our Mission. Perhaps there was some type of spiritual, emotional, or personal growth that occurred. Perhaps it truly was “the best summer of their life”. Champagnat would be proud.



Camp Marist and My Life

Amanda Leizan - CIT for 2018

It all started Summer 2012, when my parents told me about their interest of sending me to Camp Marist, a place where I would develop valuable leadership skills and make friendships that will would last forever.

Only two days into camp, I felt at ease with a sense that I had been there my whole life. Camp Marist is a place without judgment where people embrace each other.



Summer 2013 and 2014 arrived and I went back to Camp Marist, moving into Scots Lodge cabin. A new year rolled

around and an unexpected event forever changed our lives. On September 17, 2015, my little sister Alejandra Sofia passed away at the age of nine.

It was the worst moment of my life, I shut down, refused to do many things and my faith in God was challenged. Then, I received an important phone call that reminded me that despite the deep sorrow and sense of loss that we could feel at times, there are people who love us and are present in our lives to support us during our most difficult moments. The call was from Joe Bouchard. Since I had returned home and had gone back to school, I couldn't imagine anyone at camp even knew about my sister's passing away. Mr. Bouchard's kind words reminded me of the core values of friendship, solidarity, service and faith that we learn at camp, and most importantly, he said: "He and the staff at Camp Marist were sorry for my loss and would very much like me to go back to camp the following summer." At first, I didn't know what to say, but I later made the decision to go back to camp, and it has proven to be the best decision I have ever made.



I went back to camp, this time as a Sailor. Still feeling very sad about my loss, I felt that camp was the right place to be, surrounded by kind people, go to mass on Sundays and renew my faith. I did open up my heart to yet a new summer adventure, new friends and a new life without my sister. With the kindness of friends, I regained my smile, my strength. After camp, I returned home with a renewed sense of the importance of life and love.

Soon it was to time to go back to camp, again I opened up my mind and heart to new friends and new experiences. This time, one of the most memorable moments came from one of Camp Staff Becky Kowalski's dining hall quotes that really caught my attention, it read: "Life will test you but remember this, when you walk up a mountain your legs will get stronger."

This quote inspired me to keep moving forward and always remember to end up strong. At this time, in the wake Hurricane Maria's devastation of the island of Puerto Rico, I found myself calling again on the core values of service, community and solidarity that I have learned at camp. continues to renew my faith and love of others.

As I look back at my five years at Camp Marist, I can't think of a better way to repay and give back in some measure the strength, love and support that I have received from everyone at Camp Marist. I feel that Camp Marist and life-changing experiences have taught me the skills necessary and prepared me to become a CIT.

I will always cherish my experience at Camp Marist and look forward to going back next summer --- because if it's summer time, there's no place I'd rather be.

Great Memories from a Staff Member

Joe Vari



Andy, Brian and Joe

that I was in a special place. The staff that I began to meet in my first couple of days were mostly returning staff and they all seemed to be like one big family.

On one particular morning, I was asked to help unpack equipment from one of the waterfront buildings. I was helped by a couple of 6ft burly blokes from Scotland. For about 2 hours we unpacked and unloaded canoes, row boats and other stuff – real heavy work. We talked and got to know each other's back grounds. The whole time these two guys were talking, I had no idea what they were saying because of their thick Scottish accents. I just nodded and smiled to be polite. I didn't realize it then, but that was the start of lifelong friendships with the legendary "BIG B" - Brian O'Neil and Fraser McCormick.

What I didn't expect from my first year at camp was to fall in love. She was French and not a bad tennis player. Corinne and I started out as great friends and over the summer fell in love. We got married in 1998 and have 3 beautiful children, one of which enjoyed her first summer at Camp Marist as a councilor last year – Amanda Vari. What an amazing feeling Corinne and I both felt when Amanda told us Vinny had accepted her application to Camp Marist. We both knew she would have a great summer – and she did. Amanda also got to meet some of the staff that Corinne and I both worked with was equally special. To be able to share stories and memories of our Camp Marist summers is incredible.

That is Camp Marist. The friendships you make are lifelong. With today's social media apps, it's so much easier to stay in touch. The memories and fun we all experience are unforgettable.

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We also ask that you update your information and request a Login if you do not have one. Go to the Alumni Dropdown and you can see the options.

Camp Marist “Volunteer Work Weekend”

Memorial Day Weekend—May 25 - 28, 2018

Come help us clean up, paint, set up the waterfront, and help prepare the camp for our opening on June 24th. Come experience the Camp Marist Family spirit!

There are work projects for all skill levels including simple repairs, raking, gardening, cleaning, painting, moving and some skilled labor projects.

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