



## Jonah Satyr's Saturday Sermon

Saturday, June 24, 2023

Shabbat Shalom,

Hello, for those of you who don't know me, my name is Jonah Satyr and this is my eighth year on the Kawaga Shores and third on staff. However, this is not my eighth summer at overnight camp. Prior to my Kawaga experience, I attended a different camp that ended up not being the right fit for me. At that camp, I had lots of friends from my home in Deerfield and participated in activities that I had a lot of fun doing. Despite this, even as a young camper, I felt like there was something I was missing out on.

Maybe I wasn't the type of kid who liked overnight camp at all. I was about to decide to hang up my overnight camp cleats and call it quits. But, I had a baseball friend, Ethan Warady, who really enjoyed the camp he went to and it sounded nothing like the experience that I had thus far.

After my second summer at my old camp, I talked to my parents and decided to give camp one more try with a place called Kawaga. I had much fewer Deerfield friends at Kawaga, so I was a little nervous going into the summer. My whole life I had always been put in situations that were familiar and the summer of 2016 seemed as if it would be anything but that.

The first thing I heard when I reached the shores of Kawaguesaga was that there was someone who knew more about the Cubs than me. Eight years later that person, Malcolm Newmark, would become my college roommate and someone I could call my best friend.

There was something so much different about Kawaga from the very moment I entered Cabin 13. Despite knowing only one person in my cabin, I felt like family right away. I still remember the first day at camp when I was sitting on the bench at tennis not knowing what to do and Brandon Koretz going out of his way to let me win a game of 1 v. 1 basketball against him at the OD.

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Not much longer after that I got my big brother Zach Cohen, who helped show me the ropes and gave me insight on how meaningful Kawaga was. Zach encouraged me to go for Mawanda right away and take part in activities that I wasn't able to do outside of Kawaga. Four years later, Zach and his brother Alex would become mentors and heavily contribute to the best summer of my life as our CIT counselors.

Without Kawaga I would have never experienced what it would be like to play Senior Ball, catch a chipmunk, become close friends with someone from an entirely different country than me, and finally be able to conquer boundaries with the 2020s, Gruber, and Bri.

Maybe some of you guys come here and think that other camps are similar to ours and take for granted the fact that you go to Kawaga. Let me tell you guys from first-hand experience that all camps are not the same and there is something here that is special. I actually find it quite hard within this sermon to put into words what makes this place special. That's because there isn't just one thing. The countless little memories and experiences, evening programs, and even morning polar bears gave me a childhood that I can look back upon in happiness.

For all of you campers, it might be hard to realize at the moment, but these summers at Kawaga do more for you than you think. When I look back on life lessons I have learned, I can always connect them to Kawaga. Kawaga teaches you how to be competitive, but also how to be a good person. Kawaga shows you that the best way to gain respect and achievement is by working hard. Kawaga shows you that sometimes the most important thing is to give a great experience to someone else.

I think of how counselors like Zach, Alex, Gruber, Jack Leshem, and Jack Cadden did everything they could to make sure that I had a summer filled with lifelong memories. I hope that when my time at Kawaga is all set and done, maybe I can help give you guys some of those types of memories.

A big chunk of my memories have happened with my 2020 CIT age group. This might also be one of the last summers in which we get to spend a full summer all together. Again another part of what makes Kawaga so special is that I know whatever the future holds, us 2020s will always be in touch at every stage of life and we have a bond that can never be broken no matter how far our lives geographically part.

There is nothing that can take away from Kawaga and our ability to become family at this place, and form memories and connections that cannot be created anywhere else.

Thank You.