



First Person: GRAHAM

Summer Programming

After much counting down, the long awaited end of the school year is finally here. The anxiously awaited three months of relaxation have arrived. For most gifted kids, this is a time for complete shutdown and withdrawal. They could spend hours sitting in the mind-numbing aura of a television or sleep for twelve hours a day. For some gifted kids, summer is recuperation from the harsh school year they just survived. But for others, myself included, summer is when the long anticipated summer camp takes place. Instead of shutting down and withdrawing, we are stimulated and placed in an environment where gifted kids have no problem "socializing." New information is absorbed, and the brain is kept awake and active. Things some gifted kids miss out on in the school year are presented in large quantities. Things like a caring mentor, an inspiring

role model, or just a decent learning environment. Self-esteem skyrockets, and gifted kids begin to understand themselves more, by being around others like them. For me, summer programs were life changing. I gained assertiveness, self-confidence, and self-respect. I learned that I was not alone in the world. I learned that there were many other kids going through the same things I did each school day. I found out that I did, in fact, have the potential to do many things that I never knew I could, such as be popular among my peers, be accepted as who I am, and be known as something more than just "the smart kid."

—Graham Oliver
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