

1. Name: **Taylor Jordan**
2. Graduation year: **2014**
3. Favorite outdoor activities and favorite places to play at UTC and Chattanooga: **Raccoon Mountain, LRC, Edwards Point**
4. Job Title: **Program Director at Camp Santa Maria**
5. Briefly explain what you actually do for your job: **I direct a residential summer camp owned by the YMCA of Boulder Valley**



- and located in Pike National Forest in the middle of the Rocky Mountains. I get to spend my summers helping children, teens, and staff experience camp, nature, and community in an incredible location!**
6. What made you choose Outdoor Recreation as a degree program? **It was fun! It was the only major I felt like I would enjoy and that would provide me with appealing job opportunities. My dream has always been to be a summer camp director and it seemed like the best major to put me on that path. And here I am!**
 7. What experiences helped shape you while you were at UTC (personally and professionally)? **My experiences with the Outdoor Recreation major helped me confirm my career path and showed me how I could achieve that goal. I loved being in a major that was smaller than most others because I felt like we were able to develop a community that I did not see among other majors. On top of the coursework at school, I was also able to intern at a camp and learned there the beginnings of camp administration. I don't think I would be where I am today without my experience at UTC and the leadership of Drew.**

8. What do you wish you had known/done while you were at UTC to prepare for the profession? **I wish that I had focused more on schoolwork and applying myself fully to the subjects that I found tedious, such as the majority of the classes for the Business Admin minor. I do wish there had been more coursework revolving around camp**



administration but I know that's a pretty specific subject. Overall, coming in to this position, I felt very prepared and ready for the challenges I have faced and have yet to face due to my time at UTC and my previous summer camp experience.

9. What kinds of things should someone do if they wanted to get your job? (Be honest about where they should invest their time-- getting certifications, making connections, volunteering, academic achievement, etc.). **In the camp world, it's all about certifications. My executive director was an Asian studies major in college and has worked his way to the top of**

the camp chain. It's definitely about putting in the work and gaining camp experience while in college and gathering as much knowledge as possible so you can bring it all with you to camp.

10. What are the challenges and blessings of being in this profession? What frustrates you and what keeps you there? **I love camp and I love spending my summers in the mountains. However, camp days are long and, as a director, you are expected to do whatever is needed at camp. Which usually means waking up at 7am and going to bed at 11pm. It can also mean that if some positions are unfilled, that you are filling**

them. This summer, we didn't even have a chef applicant for the first 8 weeks of camp. So, I spent those 8 weeks in the kitchen cooking breakfast, lunch and dinner for 200+ people every day. It wasn't the most exciting experience I've had but it was definitely a learning experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Now that camp is over, I wouldn't change how it went but I will say that my task this month and all months until next summer is to hire a chef. The campers and seeing how their lives are changed by camp and their interaction with staff and their peers without the distraction of technology is what keeps me here. As bad as it sounds, I love to see kids crying because they don't want to leave camp. It means that my staff and I have done something right!