



Fall, 2016

Gather any group of people and chances are each person can name a number of individuals who have made a profound impact on the course of their life. Recalling an important coach, teacher, or mentor can help us reflect on milestones when our life took a certain turn, when critical choices were made, or when we had a profound learning experience. Sometimes, the lessons are subtle and we remember a person who helped shaped our inner code over years of quiet interactions.



Without effort, I can name a long list of mentors who made a difference in my life: high school teachers and drama coaches, work supervisors, iconic college professors, and even several people who weren't super fun to be around, but who taught me the importance of 'seeking first to understand'. I remember summer camp counselors who challenged me to light a fire with flint and steel (difficult, but doable), and outdoor education leaders who taught me that the woods can be a place of quiet observation, as well as recreation. In my experience, mentors have been there every step of the way.

For the past two years, I've had the honor of speaking to new CBC staff to share my perspective as a camper parent, board member, educator, and a former summer camp counselor. I'm thrilled for the summer they are about to have and I can sense their energy and optimism. I remind them that as a mentor and counselor, in settings that may seem completely ordinary - a canoe trip across the lake, tossing a Frisbee, greeting campers at the beginning of each day - CBC staff will change lives. It is an absolute certainty.

Camp Beech Cliff exists to help all individuals find their better selves and extends far beyond summer camp. Businesses have a retreat center to learn team building and communication, students have an outdoor classroom for environmental education, and young adults have a safe place to learn leadership and decision making. CBC is a camp for all of us, and for the entire MDI community. In turn, we are grateful to our community, parents, volunteers, and donors who together support CBC's programs and mission.

Mike McKernan, Chair of Camp Beech Cliff Board of Directors