



A Friendship Like Theirs

Everyone deserves a best friend. That one special person who is a trusted confidante and encourages you to be your best self! Friendships like that are essential to our health and well-being as they provide a deep sense of belonging and safety. Thankfully, 17-year-old Lilly Hartman and 15-year-old Ayva Delaine have found just that and so much more in each other.

Reuniting at Camp Easter Seal after a two-year hiatus of in-person camping due to the pandemic, the girls didn't skip a beat getting back to their usual antics and inside jokes! "We had a lot of fun! We hadn't seen each other for a while so it was nice to catch up and just hang out again – oh and get each other's Snapchats," exclaims Ayva, who along with Lilly wasted no time in making sure they would be in the same cabin after Camp registration! Not only were the two cabin mates, but in true best-friend fashion, their beds were side by side for optimal and unsuspecting late-night chatter.

Bonded at Camp and through shared interests and experiences like playing sledge hockey as teammates, the girls also came to lean on each other for support and advice during more difficult moments like surgeries and hospital stays. "With their age difference, it has worked out nicely because Ayva will have some surgeries that Lilly already had two years previous so they can talk to each other about that. Even the last big surgery Ayva had,

Lilly was in the hospital at the same time – on the same floor so they were able to see each other right after, which was kind of crazy that it worked out like that. But it's that kind of reassurance that they can provide each other and that is so important to both of them," explains Lilly's dad, Paul Hartman of the invaluable emotional support Lillian and Ayva share with each other.




For over 65 years, Camp Easter Seal has been providing a safe and inclusive place where campers can explore, grow, experience independence, and build lifelong friendships. We invite you to share in our continued mission to reunite Camp friends like Lilly and Ayva for the 2023 camp season. With your generous donations, we can give the gift of Camp – ensuring more memories are made and friendships fostered in a safe and supportive environment where truly, everyone belongs.

Anyone witnessing the 'two peas in a pod' together at Camp would admit their bond is both heart-warming and inspiring. "They have a friendship that everybody dreams of. The girls might not talk to each other for a month, yet they meet up at Camp and just pick up right where they left off. I think they both know they have a life-long friendship no matter what," expresses Ayva's mom, Tracy Delaine.

CONTINUED ON REVERSE

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Lilly and Ayva are such great people and seeing their friendship flourish at Camp is truly amazing. They are both already bright beacons in this community and I think their friendship just enhances that."

JENNIFER CHRISTIAN,
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR,
CAMP EASTER SEAL

efficient and providing some direction to the new seasonal staff! Word is, the best friends duo is happy to keep its camper status; they aren't quite ready to entertain any future plans as camp counselors at Camp Easter Seal...yet, anyways!

The 2022 summer and return to in-person programming at Camp Easter Seal was a great success and we could not have done it without donors like you! Seeing friends like Lilly and Ayva reunite after being apart for so long was one of the best parts and we want to keep that momentum going into camp season 2023. We know isolation is hard on everyone – but especially individuals experiencing disability, and who rely on recreational programs like Camp Easter Seal for much needed social connection. With your support, we can give the gift of Camp to the many participants who are excited and hopeful to reconnect with their best camp friends! We truly believe, everyone deserves a friendship like Lilly and Ayva's!

Sincerely,

Ian Wilkinson,
Executive Director

For Lilly's mom, Teresa Hartman – the girls' friendship has brought out a side of her daughter she doesn't see every day. "Lilly doesn't necessarily have a lot of able-body friends. When she goes to school, the first people she wants to go hang out with are her teachers or the educational assistants that help her. She's an old soul. With Ayva, Lilly can be a kid. She can giggle about stuff or make silly noises at nighttime, or they can push their beds together at Camp because heaven forbid, they'd be more than two feet apart," jokes Teresa. "I just appreciate their friendship so much because they have so much fun together and that's really important to see as a parent."

With plans to reunite once again at Camp Easter Seal for the 2023 camp season, Lilly and Ayva, as you can imagine, are well-known faces to full-time staff members and returning camp counselors. Some even joke the two have become volunteer 'upper management', pointing out ways to make things more



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