

Laughter [laff - ter]--noun--an expression or appearance of merriment or amusement. If I had to use one word to describe what Erica possessed most of, this would be it. Not only was she filled to the brim with laughter; she was overcome with joy and love for everyone and everything. No matter how bad your day was, or how sick you felt, you always had a smile on your face when Erica was around. I remember when one of our fellow campers, Meg Boersig, was playing in the football tournament and jammed her finger against another player. They weren't sure if she'd broken it or not (she hadn't), but either way she had to go to the hospital. She was scared and she didn't want to go with some counselor she didn't know, so Erica offered to take her. Even though it was her off period, and she could have slept or gotten something else done, and even though she was deathly afraid of hospitals, she sucked it up to take her camper to the Emergency Room.

Erica wasn't just an ordinary camp counselor. She was an extraordinary one. She made camp so amazing that we begged her to let us hide in the dorms and not go home on the weekends! And if she had a choice, she probably would have let us. The Traveling Pants were a family, and she made sure it stayed that way. If there was drama in the group over silly things like boys, she made sure she got to the root of the problem, heard out both sides, and helped them resolve it. In this way, she made our bunk group so close we literally became a second family. We would sit in a room way past our bedtimes, and talk about everything on the bright side of the moon. We would let out our deepest secrets, knowing we could trust her, and that she'd trust us right back. She was a true sister to us all, and she has a special place in all of our hearts.

It wasn't just how much she laughed; it was the energy she brought with her to camp. The talent shows sparked to life with her energetic dances and contagious laughter. And every lunch period, the Wild Things song was sung so loudly and proudly every time by Erica, who even went as far as to stand on her chair to get people to sing along. And she was even gracious at lunch, too. If there were a National Wrap Wrapping Contest, Erica would win hands down. She could wrap those wraps in five seconds flat! And they were very neat, too. Everyone wanted their wraps wrapped by Erica, even if they were more than capable of wrapping it themselves. As time went on, you would hear, "Erica, can you wrap my wrap?" coming from every direction!

I remember one night, a couple of girls (including myself) were in one room at night when we weren't supposed to be, just talking about they days' events. We got so scared when Erica walked in, afraid we would get in trouble. Instead, she just sat on an empty bed and joined in the conversation. She even went downstairs to the vending machine and bought chips for us!

Erica was friends with everybody. There wasn't a soul on the campus that couldn't honestly say they didn't like Erica Vallario. Everyone knew her, and everyone loved her. She had this fun and crazy side to her that brought out the best in everybody, and she was sure to brighten up every day at Campus Kids.

Erica was a counselor of 14-year-old girls. And as you might know, 14-year-old girls tend to have a lot of drama in their lives, even at camp. There were boys that more than one girl liked, there were girls that just didn't like each other, and there were usually fights starting. But Erica made sure that at every bunk meeting she talked to us and reminded us that boys will never be as important as your sisters. She kept us all in check, strapped us to reality, and made sure that seat belt was tight. If it weren't for her, camp would not have been such an incredible experience. Erica Vallario was an amazing woman, and she is a hero in all of our hearts. I'm sure she'd be proud to see how wonderful her Pants are growing up. There isn't a day that goes by we don't think of her.

Love Always and Forever,

Lauren Harnett

8/19/07