

Author-4  
1st place

## Living the Dream

My sister would always say she was living the dream life when her life was going really well. She also did the creative writing contest I think, so say hi to her. My normal life is pretty lackluster. It's definitely not the dream life. So obviously, I want to see what the dream life is. But what even is the dream life, and how do you get there?

Normal life is pretty stressful and pretty boring. This is primarily because of school. Now I'm not saying I go to a bad school. It's just that there <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ a lot of things to stress out about at school. It's also that there are too many annoying and dumb people there. There aren't that many people to really have a nice conversation with. So to live the dream life, the first step is to be away from school. And that's pretty much the only step. To live the dream life, you gotta get away from school. So summer pretty much. Except that to live the dream life, you need to surround yourself with another cool community.

So this past summer, I finally found the dream life. I had to go to some academic camp at Princeton. At first, I thought it was gonna suck, but it actually ended up being super cool. I didn't have the stress of school, and it was actually really fun. The classes were surprisingly really fun, and there were many fun activities. The high school students also got a lot of freedom, and we could walk around campus without any counselors.

But the reason why this was the dream life was because of the community at camp and the people I met. I felt like a part of a community for once. At regular school, I always feel like a bit

of an outsider. I don't really know why--the people I'm surrounded by at school are too fake, and I don't really want to talk to them. But at Princeton, everyone was a real person. Talking to other campers, even ones I hadn't met yet, felt so natural. It is so cheesy to say this, but I finally felt free to be myself there without being heavily judged.

We all became a really close tight-knit community. Everyone knew each other. It felt like we had known each other for years, even though we had only met a few weeks before. Our community made Princeton feel more like home than our own hometowns ever felt like. We were all family pretty much. For the last week, we all lived in denial that we were going to leave.

However, like a dream, the dream life eventually has to end. And after three weeks of the dream life, it abruptly ended. No one wanted it to end. It came too soon. We all came from different parts of the world, and we had to part ways. Saying goodbye was too much. We had only known each other for a few weeks, but it felt like we had known each other for a lifetime. For many, the end is a gateway to a new beginning. However, the new beginning we were all headed to was sadly worse than our previous chapter in life. This is the only downside to the dream life, your life after the dream life is pretty bad compared to it.

My dream life is over for now. However, the memories I have from it are pretty much infinite. And someday, I would like to return. It would be highly unlikely for everyone to meet up once again, but I believe we can. We all lived the dream life together, and if we did it once, we can certainly do it again.