

Some comments about week in Camas in 2019

As a Social Work student on the Masters programme I had heard about the Camas trip from early September 2018, when as part of our course we visited the Grassmarket Project. I was told about the project by both staff and by members I met there who were all incredibly positive and excited about the trip and the benefits it brought to all who attended.

Having now participated in the trip, I can see why they were so enthusiastic about the experience. The benefits brought to me - and I believe the other participant's - from the trip were numerous. Having completed, the week before, a statutory Social Work placement as part of my course it was great and important to be able to connect with adults who need additional support on a human level. It was also a massive boost to speak with one of the member's who discussed so positively the impact their social worker had made on their life. At Camas I was able to meet people from all walks of life and as a group we were able to forge genuine connections with each other. While I truly loved all the activities and overall experience of Camas, it will be the friendships formed there that will stay with me and I hope grow in the future.

Eleanor Odwyer MSW Social work student

Camas was an amazing experience and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to enjoy a week in a residential community setting. We had the opportunity to do various things such as abseiling, kayaking, swimming, hill walking etc. Camas was so peaceful and everyone managed to face so many challenges while on the trip. I developed friendships with the Grassmarket community as well as other university students and on the trip we all became one big family. If you ever get the chance to go to Camas I would urge you to go because the staff are so friendly and the views are picturesque and it is a great way to let your hair down and enjoy a week in a community that is very different to the hustle and bustle of the city.

Choe Walker 2ND year social work student

My trip to Camas happened purely by a stroke of luck when I stepped in for a friend who couldn't make it - and it was possibly the best thing to have happened this summer. The opportunity to meet and form bonds with people from outside the student community in Edinburgh, in this case, the Grassmarket Community, was a valuable experience. The volunteers running the centre were beyond amazing and made sure everyone was well taken care of, in every possible way. The chance to disconnect from our respective electronic gadgets and the internet, and to immerse ourselves in outdoor activities such as gardening, tending to the fruit trees, abseiling, kayaking was something that none of us would've been able to take up on our own. The time spent at Camas facilitated by the Chaplaincy was a wonderful wholesome experience and would hope to see more groups of students and community members coming together for this in the following years.

Maryam Altaf M.Sc. student in Social Anthropology at UoE.

I enjoyed the remoteness that CAMAS provides and how removed you become in such a short space of time. What you deem to be 'essential', seemed insignificant. I was blessed to be

around a great bunch of people, who each added a unique dynamic to the team and something different to the experience. It was brilliant when life; stripped bare to the essentials, allowed what seemed at the surface a random bunch of people, to connect in a way that city life would dictate otherwise. As a student you have a narrow minded view of the city you live, it becomes easy to forget the individuals, who have experienced rough points in their life when surrounded by the lovely city landscape.

The CAMAS trip in my opinion was about friendship, bringing together two segregated communities, our unknown neighbours, into friendships that will last beyond the experience itself.

Paul Bunting chemical physicist 1st year student

Camas is a wonderful place, the location, the people and the opportunity to try new challenges. The variety of our group and that no-one knew each other very well worked well. We varied who we sat with at mealtimes as did the Camas team and this helped us all to get to know most of our other companions. There was an obvious commitment from everyone to make the most of the opportunity of being at Camas. The smaller teams for chores helped build teamwork. Encouragement was a big focus for the week. Camas staff and all of us worked to encourage our fellow teammates. There was no divide between students or Grassmarket members, everyone contributed to the encouragement and received it. The variety of outdoor activities and things to do, the chance to go off grid away from internet was life enhancing. Fresh air and stunning scenery helped me take a step back from university life and consider my priorities, how I find enjoyment and what is really important. The time with people from different walks of life and life experiences helped me re-evaluate the way I approach people and situations. Camas was a wonderful experience and I think we all took away something life enhancing from it.

I really appreciate the opportunity the Chaplaincy gave me; I believe there will be things I can use in my ministry training. The day trip to Iona was a particular highlight.

Kirsty Forsyth MDiv at New College.

“My time on Camas was simply a lovely, peaceful and heart-warming experience that took me completely by surprise and left me with a greater sense of community and lasting memories. Though it was less than a week it felt like so much happened during those days. I got to know an incredible group of people with many different stories to share, I was able to learn from others and encourage them in return, and within the shortest amount of time I felt that I belonged and was part of something very special. I’m very grateful for the opportunity I was given to take part in Camas, and I would certainly recommend the experience to anyone. It was a beautiful five days that I will never forget. “

Sarah Van Eyndhoven PhD student (Linguistics), 1st Year

Camas created a landmark experience for me. Being with the Grassmarket community, vulnerability had a different meaning: that of strength, empowerment and invincibility. In the space of honest and open conversations, dancing through communal chores, engaging in daring sports and outdoor events, eating healthy meals, we formed friendships that were joyful and liberating. It was a good and invigorating break from the fast pace of PhD

research, submission deadlines and the demands of technology. I returned to Edinburgh refreshed and motivated for the next phase of my studies. I am grateful for this unique opportunity and I thank the Chaplaincy for making this possible.

Jessie Fubara-Manuel, PHD student School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh.

I am very grateful to Chaplaincy, so I could attend a week away at CAMAS. I am part-time student, but also part-time member of staff and I really needed to take a break. This experience helped me to get connected to students who were at different stages of their degrees and who trusted me with their difficulties along their studies. It was lovely to receive the 'Most Caring' Award at the end of this trip, which reassured me in a way to see myself not only as an academic but also as a human being with caring values indeed. I also would like to share that, this trip, although no religious, it involved a visit to Iona. It was such an amazing experience that it really got me close to believe in God again, something that I was not expecting during this experience. I totally recommend this trip and hope it can continue.

Azucena.Guzman