



A Love Letter to USHthis VA 2025

For someone as talkative as me, it's rare that I'm at a loss for words. However, when it comes to describing my experience at USHthis VA 2025, speechless is exactly how I feel. Not because there are no words to describe it, but because there are, in fact, too many.

Taking place at Camp Bethel in Wise, Virginia, USHthis VA 2025 was my first experience of an authentic American summer camp and, more to the point, an authentic American USHthis summer camp. It was actually my first experience of a whole bunch of things – solo international travel, visiting the USA, and Disney World Orlando – but all of those things pale in comparison to summer camp.

I was apprehensive before I'd even left home, and not just because of my fear of flying. I was visiting a new country, a new camp – a camp with a group of mentors and campers who already knew and adored each other. I was terrified that I wouldn't fit in, wouldn't find my people, wouldn't know what I was doing, wouldn't enjoy the week, wouldn't feel useful, wouldn't have anything to offer the campers or other mentors... I'm sure you get the point. Even though I was so excited to be there, my own self-doubt began to cloud my mind and at one point, I genuinely began to wonder if I'd even made the right decision by going.

And then I arrived at camp.

Actually, I hadn't even arrived yet. At Atlanta Airport, I was lucky enough to be on the same flight as a few of the staple members of camp, including the legendary camp nurse and some of my fellow mentors. Then, on arrival in Tri-Cities airport, we connected with a few more members of the USHfam to head to camp together. I couldn't have imagined that just one week later, I'd be teary-eyed (*correction: sobbing*) at the idea of leaving these people behind.



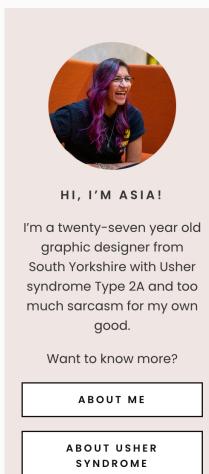
I thought, after attending the UK camp last summer, that I grasped the full extent of the magic of the USHthis experience. How wrong I was.

Immediately upon stepping off the shuttle bus at Camp Bethel, I felt like I'd stepped straight into the set of an American summer camp movie. Trees everywhere, wooden cabins, birds chirping, blue skies... I could hardly believe I'd get to spend the next week there.

But that wasn't even the best bit.

Not even close, actually. The best bit?

The people that I got to spend the week with. I'd been lucky enough to meet fellow mentors Ava, Lilly and Gavin at the UK camp last summer, as well as legends of the USHfam, Carly, Brett and Meg. As someone who routinely struggles with social anxiety, I was convinced I'd spend the week glued to the sides of the people I already knew, too afraid to branch out of my comfort zone. Little did I know that I'd spend the week talking, laughing, crying (happy tears, I promise!) painting, *livin'* with people who became fast friends – people that I hope to maintain connections with for the rest of my life.



This Mind of Mine



Connecting Continents: Australia 2025





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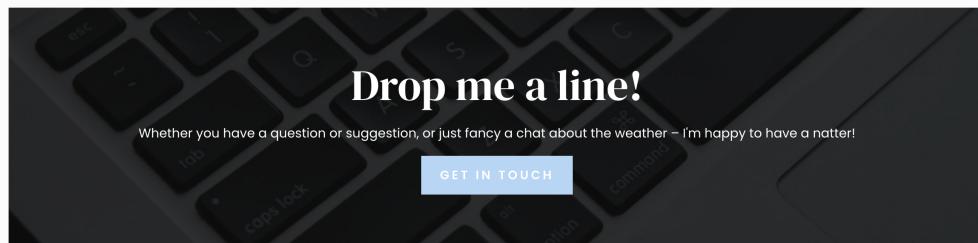
And that's the key word here: **connections**.

That's what the USHthis experience is all about. **Connections**. Being welcomed with open arms, being embraced – *both figuratively and literally* – by this incredible, wholesome, chaotic, loving, and very, very rowdy family. I talked about connections a lot after the UK camp last summer, but the fact that the effect was the same, if not magnified by about a million percent, during my trip to the USA just proves that the USHthis effect doesn't care who you are or where you come from. The connections we make transcend those borders. The oceans between us become as insignificant as a puddle on the pavement (*that would be sidewalk for my American readers*) when you attend an USHthis camp with an open mind and an open heart.

Now, I'm aware that I haven't talked at all about what we actually did at camp. I'll be sure to get onto that when I've had time to actually process the week a little more, but for now, this serves as a very rambling love letter to USHthis USA 2025.

Thank you for having me, and if you ever need a perpetually emotional English woman to fill a space in a Perfect Circle, you know where to find me.

dream it. believe it. crUSH it!



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