

Sadie Kolke

---

**R.L.I.A Grant Allen Scholarship:  
What Rush Lake Means to Me**

When I think of Rush Lake, I think of the essence of my childhood. Fishing and swimming, s'mores and evening campfires: some of my fondest memories of growing up were created at that lake and along the shores East Rush. It's the place where my mother and her siblings grew up, and it's the place where I am proud to say I have spent my summers growing up.

For as long as I can remember, my family has spent almost every weekend in the summer at my Grandpa Jim's cabin. On Friday nights, my brothers and I would pack our bags with swimsuits and sweatshirts in anticipation of the morning trip. Coolers and pillows were piled into the back of the Tahoe and inquiries of "What time are we leaving?" and "Who else is going to be there?" were made time and time again. The trip always seemed to take forever, even though it's only a short 20 minute drive from home. When my dad would finally make the turn from County Road 1 onto Belle Isle Drive, there was always a feeling of excitement bubbling up inside of me at the first sight of East Rush's rippling waves; there were so many possibilities that each weekend could hold.

When we would finally arrive, there was always a flurry of activity as the car was unpacked and greetings were made to aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins. Once the heavy lifting was done, the fun would begin. My cousins, my two brothers and I would go

swimming and playing off the end of the dock while the adults would prepare lunch and relax on the deck, always keeping a watchful eye over us. We would go for paddle boat rides along neighboring docks, and kayak to the channel at the end of the isle. Tremendous sand castles with moats and bridges were built in the hot sand on the beach, and frogs and turtles were caught in the warm shallow water near shore. If the day proved to be a real scorcher, the pontoon was cleaned off and taken out, where everyone would enjoy the cooler temperatures of deeper water. When dusk would arrive, marshmallows were toasted by the campfire, and games of ball tag and ghost in the graveyard were played between the tents and trees. There was never a dull moment, even after the sun went down.

After all these summers, my memory is still imprinted with the sights, smells and sounds of Rush Lake, and I get that feeling of excitement and anticipation when I think of going the Cabin. To me, Rush Lake isn't just the place where I learned how to swim, or caught my first fish; it's the place where family comes together and on those summer weekends, even the most ordinary of days is made special. Rush Lake, I proud to say, has always been a part of my family and I hope that it always will.