



## Trouper Alumni: Where are they now?

### Willow Yonika, Trouper 1999 - 2001

In 1999, I walked high wire with Jade Kindar Martin and Rachel Schiffer. While Rachel was calm as a cucumber up there, I was a total wreck each show. To calm me down, Jade used to just chat away about mundane things-- my favorite Ben and Jerry's flavor, what funny thing happened that day, etc. We were far enough away from the audience that they really didn't see what was happening, and it always did the trick! "

After the best years any teenager could imagine in the Smirkus ring, I abandoned any hope of getting over my stage fright in order to establish a performing career, and instead became a Registered Nurse.

While I grew up on the east coast, I decided to move to California to work in an Intensive Care Unit at a hospital in Los Angeles; days were crazy there, but in my free time I was able to hang with some of my favorite Smirkos who also landed in the area. After living there for about 4 years, I started to have an east coast itch, and decided to go back to school to get a masters in health policy at a school in NYC. The best part of going back to school I discovered, though, was that I had suddenly had a couple of summers free, so it was a no brainer when I was asked to be Head Counselor on tour for the summers of 2011 and 2012! What a joyful experience!

No matter what I do, or wherever I go in the world, Smirkus will always be home for me.



**SMIRKUS IS... ..CHANGING THE WORLD  
IN A VERY UNIQUE WAY.**

**I COULDN'T BE PROUDER EVERY TIME I VISIT,  
AND HOPE THAT OTHERS ARE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE  
THAT FEELING OF TRUE PURPOSE.**