

My Favorite National Park Family Memory

by Aiden Chen

The dry arid air of Zion National Park toasted my already dry skin. Red rocks and desert was all I could see on this rather uneventful hike. But something larger jutted from the horizon. It was the same dusty red color that surrounded me, but it was larger still, an aberration from the horizon. I looked forward to where this boring hike would reach.

Our trip to Zion National Park was just a segment of a longer road trip with my family: my older brother, my parents, and both sets of grandparents. It was August 2018; the summer before COVID struck. I was seven years old. Zion was an endless desert of red rocks to the seven-year-old me, with bits of greenery here and there. We were slowly approaching the large red rock as I bit down on a granola bar. Now that we are closer, I could see it was some sort of cliff. There was a mountain of rocks and on ground level, it carved into the mountain to form a sort of cave with a rocky overhang. We arrived at the cave, and I discovered it had excellent echo and I kept yelling "Hello!" just for the pleasure of hearing my call bounce back to me.

I noticed other kids were climbing on some of the red boulders. It looked fun! I ran off to join the excitement! It took several attempts, because I kept slipping down, but I finally climbed to the top. I could see a lot of people from up there. I enjoyed the great view in between trying to convince my brother not to fling my cap down the cliff.

Being too impatient to enjoy the view for long, I scampered down and continue yelling hello to hear my echo. After running around the place for a while, my parents told me it was time for the long hike back. I whipped out another granola bar and bit down on it.

Even now, 4 years after that trip, the cap that I wore on that trip is still tinted a little red from the rocks. It reminds me of my little adventure at Zion National Park and that a seemingly boring hike could twist into me having a great time.