

FROM THE CAMP NAKAMOTO STAGE

Camp Nakamoto: Where Bitcoiners Disconnect, and an Artist Finally Got Paid

A LETTER FROM AINSLEY COSTELLO

Most Bitcoin events are conferences. Camp Nakamoto is exactly what it sounds like: a youth-camp blast from the past.

Held on Sandy Island in the central Lakes Region of New Hampshire, on Lake Winnepesaukee, Camp Nakamoto trades the usual hotel-ballroom circuit for 66 wooded acres in the middle of a lake. Two hours from the nearest city, you board a ferry and leave the fiat world behind. Co-founded by Jeff Casler and Angelo Firenze, who grew up on the island and spent decades running the family camp there, the whole thing is built less around big-name speakers, sponsors, and ticket sales than around something most conferences forget to offer: human connection.

A bell rings three times a day, and all 180 people on the island file into a shared dining hall together. You eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner initially with strangers, and leave three days later with lifelong friends. Between the meals there's kayaking, parkour, bonfires, foliage cruises, karaoke under the stars, and live music. Capping off the 2026 camp weekend was a private performance by Ainsley Costello, a Nashville singer-songwriter, musician, and band leader who, at the raw age of just 22, has already spent half her life fighting to be paid fairly for her work.

In 2023 she became the first music artist to earn 1 million Satoshi (tiny bits of Bitcoin), worth about \$350 at the time, for her song *Cherry On Top*. Those earnings, over just a few weeks, were 100X the amount she had been paid for her entire catalog to date.

In 2026 Ainsley and her band were invited to Camp Nakamoto.

"Camp Nakamoto absolutely exceeded my expectations. Camp was by far one of, if not the best Bitcoin event I've been to thus far. Camp Nakamoto not only fosters community, education, and entertainment in a way I haven't experienced at even the major BTC

conferences, but it also gives attendees the ability to learn from each other on a human level. Nothing about this event feels like a speaker session or demo. The community and the setting alone would have been enough of an experience, but the attendees, many from the group MassAdoption, were kind, interested, and supportive in ways I hadn't expected."

"After so many years of clawing tooth and nail to be seen, appreciated, and paid fairly by my chosen industry, I can't tell you how much it means to me that the Camp Nakamoto attendees allowed me to show up, do my favorite thing, and even found enough value in my performance to support me instantly with almost 7 million sats (nearly \$4,500 at the Bitcoin price). It was truly the cherry on top of an already amazing weekend."

And for Ainsley, the gratitude runs deeper than one weekend. Rather than just talk about changing the world of money, she has put on her own "proof of work" cap by co-founding the Epoch Music App (epochmusic.xyz). At Camp Nakamoto, this year's attendees became some of the first audiences to see that model in action: artists paid instantly, frictionlessly, and without any middlemen taking a cut. Value is delivered in a musical performance, and value comes back, directly, with no industry middlemen (no agent, venue, or ticketing company) skimming the lion's share. An artist plays the music she loves, a room full of people decides it's worth something, and they pay her on the spot. No quarterly statements. No pennies on the dollar months later.

This is how Bitcoin fixes the music industry.

"There will never be enough words to express my gratitude. Thank you @MassAdoption, @CampNakamoto, @NeedCreations, and everyone who was on the island last weekend. You welcomed me into this community, and I thank you for giving me a platform to bring to the light how musicians have historically been exploited, underpaid, and inequitably leveraged by the mainstream music industry. Thank you for helping me rewrite the narrative that artists can and should be paid for the art they create."

With gratitude,
Ainsley Costello

A NOTE FROM BITCOIN FOR THE ARTS

Bitcoin for the Arts is honored to share this letter from Ainsley Costello. Her appearance at Camp Nakamoto 2026 was made possible by the welcome and goodwill of Ainsley and the Camp Nakamoto team. BFTA proudly served as a volunteer sponsor of Ainsley's performance, and we are deeply grateful to the Bitcoin community who showed up for her on Sandy Island this past weekend.