



IN THIS ISSUE...

The Level Campground: The Twain Meet

Camp is derived from *campus*, which, in turn, is defined as "level ground." For generations, American children have been sent to residential summer camp by their parents. Kids without disabilities were packed off to *their* camps; kids with disabilities attended camps structured especially for *their* needs. The twain rarely met. Inclusion and economics have changed that equation. With low camper-to-counselor ratios, often as low as 1:2, residential camps for children with disabilities are considerably more expensive to operate than inclusionary camps. As a result, camps dedicated specifically to children with disabilities are slowly but steadily disappearing. Campers of all abilities are increasingly mixed together in the spirit of inclusion, leveling the camping experience as the twain finally meet in summer as they meet during the school year.

This issue examines the summer camp experience for children with disabilities and the available information resources designed to help families and campers derive the most benefit from it.

Ann Dolloff Speaks

More than two decades ago, fresh from a Masters program in therapeutic recreation at Philadelphia's Temple University, Ann Dolloff sought a way to fulfill her field work requirements and to fill in experience gaps before she set off on the next phase of her professional life. A friend had often extolled the value of residential summer camp as a

way to gain the kind of intense, concentrated exposure Ms. Dolloff sought. She soon found employment in an Easter Seals facility for three months, 10-12 days on, 2-3 days off. It was a total immersion exposure to campers with a range of disabilities. At summer's end, she admitted to herself, "That was the most intense, incredible experience of my life." She also vowed to *never* again duplicate that experience. "It was way too much." She remembers driving from the Easter Seals camp in Connecticut to her family's home in Maine thinking, "Never again!" However, giving proof to the old adage that one should never say never, she returned the next summer, was hired fulltime and then earned a second Masters degree -- in camping administration. For the ensuing 22 summers, ending with the summer upcoming, she returned to direct residential camp programs for children with disabilities. Much of her time was spent as state specialist/New Hampshire 4H Camps, a program housed at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH. Today, she's back at Temple University, where she earned her Masters, as Information & Referral/Special Projects Coordinator, Pennsylvania Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT). She is a strong advocate for inclusion in residential summer camps.

Supporting our interview with Ms. Dolloff is our resource section, with materials designed to assist parents and others in selecting and preparing for residential summer camp. We also feature members of our **Knowledge Network**. The members spotlighted this month are residential summer camps that accommodate the needs of children with

disabilities. We invite you to contact these members for further information.

Please share this newsletter with other organizations, families and professionals who may benefit from it. We invite you to contact us at <http://www.fctd.info>. We welcome feedback, new members and all who contribute to our growing knowledge base.



Why Inclusion in Summer Camp? *Because it Works*

An Interview with Ann Dolloff, Summer Camp Administrator

Children with disabilities, who range in age between 6 and 18, living in rustic conditions often far from home and the familiar landmarks of their lives, many for the first time, supervised by counselors ages 17 to mid-20s with experience ranging from none to some: at first glance, these are ingredients for disaster. A closer look, however, reveals that this odd mix annually produces one of the great success stories in American recreation: the residential summer camp.

Ann Dolloff remembers that she once said in a newspaper interview, "If you think hard about all the potential risks and downsides in inclusion camping, you ask yourself, 'Why are we in this field?' And the answer is always the same: *Because it works.*"

It works, she notes, because all the parties involved – camp administrators, counselors, parents and the children themselves – understand the fragility of the camp system, the vulnerability of all the participants, and work hard to blend the parts into a

functioning, robust, vibrant whole that benefits all who are included.

Inclusion Is Embraced

While segregated camp facilities just for children with disabilities are declining in number, many other camps have embraced inclusion, or can be convinced to embrace it, thus expanding the universe of camps nationwide that have opened their tents and cabins to special needs kids.

Economics, not the advent of inclusion, have jeopardized the future of traditional disability-focused residential camps and decreased their number. Running a camp that is just for kids with disabilities can cost an average of \$125-\$150 per camper per day, compared to the general camps' cost of \$60-\$100 per child per day, Ms. Dolloff explains. "Most camps for kids with special needs are non-profit," she adds. "Very often there can be a lower rate at a private for-profit camp because that camp is building in a profit margin." Non-profit camps, she reminds, "need only to cover their budgets."

Yet, there are exceptions to the disability camps' \$125-\$150 per camper cost. "Six years ago," she says, "I managed a segregated, self-included special needs camp and we operated at a rate of about \$110 per child per day." Later, when she was operating 4H camps in New Hampshire, she notes, the daily cost was shaved to \$60-\$100.

The worsening national economic situation in the wake of the boom economy of the 1990s placed some of the more isolated special needs-dedicated camps in jeopardy, especially those whose sponsoring organizations were under financial stress. Ms. Dolloff explains that many of those organizations that had previously sponsored summer-long camps now fund one or two-week programs instead. The physical facilities that were once full-time special

needs camps continue to exist but the sponsor organizations have constructed conference centers and have instituted other programs to offset rising operational costs.

Parents Need to Look a Little Harder

Parents are the catalysts of the residential summer camp inclusion experience. Their camp selection process keys all that follows in a child's summer. For parents of children with disabilities, Ms. Dolloff asserts, choice is the greatest benefit. Although much has changed in the past 20 years or so, she cautions that not all camp directors are enthusiastic supporters of inclusion. When investigating potential camp destinations for their children, parents "may need to do some educating as well as inquiring."

Parents, she declares, "need to look a little harder" for the most appropriate camp for their child. "They need to advocate for their child." Full disclosure about their child's condition, she emphasizes, is essential in effective advocacy and in a successful camp outcome.

There remains a tendency among some families to not always disclose everything about their child's condition. "They may not share all their child's needs," she declares. Parents may not share information on all the issues that surround their child's ability to function away from home because "they desperately want their child to be admitted into a summer program and they are afraid of discrimination and they fear they'll be denied."

Among families of children with disabilities, Ms. Dolloff observes, "the need for summer childcare is huge." Camp directors, she asserts, "hate to think of ourselves as childcare providers" but, ultimately, "that's what camps do." Camps, she claims, provide childcare during the summer months, "but hopefully with a lot more emphasis on outcomes in terms of healthy

growth for children." Parents' need to successfully place their child in a residential camp program, she declares, "may often override the obligation to completely disclose everything about their child, and I don't think that's beneficial to the child, the camp or the parents."

Failure to disclose all the necessary child information can result in serious consequences, Ms. Dolloff explains. "Having run summer camps for five years that had comprehensive inclusion programs, I can say with confidence that fully 25% of our kids arrived at camp with an educational or medical diagnosis. Fifteen percent, she notes, were classified as "at-risk" because they came from low-income or foster care households and possessed other characteristics that contributed to special needs categorization.

Older Adolescents Taking Care of Younger Adolescents

Based on her long experience, when campers' parents divulged all necessary information – "when we knew what the children's backgrounds were, what their medication routine was going to be, what issues caused negative behaviors" – campers with disabilities enjoyed successful summers. "When kids somehow slipped through, either because information was incompletely disclosed or because we may have failed to review submitted information closely enough, we struggled and the children struggled."

In order to make the inclusion camp system function effectively, she says, camp directors *must* communicate effectively with their staff. "A communication mindset is a requisite for a good camp," she states. "Most camp staffers are 17-25 years old, so there's a continuous and often intense learning process that is ongoing." It is worth remembering, she observes, that in summer camp "older adolescents are taking care of younger adolescents."

Logic, she notes, dictates that such a care giving system should not work, especially when staff and campers are confronted with complex situations. Yet, "it does work – extraordinarily well." Good camps, Ms. Dolloff asserts, "provide a very strong supervisor/adult mentoring system for the staff members who need training and support so that they can work effectively with the children." The staffers need that training, she declares, "because we put them into a 24/7 situation and expect them to perform perfectly all the time."

The Ideal Staff-to-Camper Ratio Is 1:2

In a true special needs camp, she insists, the ideal staff/camper ration is 1:2. However, in a typical general camp setting, more campers are assigned to individual staffers. In the New Hampshire 4H camp system, "we operated at around 1:4 or 1:5, which is a little bit lower than most general camp settings." Those camps, she stressed, included youngsters with disabilities.

The ideal staff ratio depends on the needs of the individual child, she notes. Some campers need one-on-one attention. Others will be able to function in small groups. Over the long term, she says, "You'd like to see independence in a child but also peer-facilitated grouping so that kids are initiating activities with other kids and are not dependent on adults to facilitate activities between campers."

Ironically, she notes, "the lower the ratio, the more adult facilitation that occurs." As a child grows, she explains, he or she becomes more capable and independent. She recalls several children in her camps who, after attending for several summers, appeared to the camp staff capable of achieving success in camp without the aides they had brought with them. Their parents, she remembers, were confidently advised by the camp that aides were no longer necessary.

There is a wide variation between camps on what constitutes the ideal staff/camper ratio. Ann Dolloff's camps, she comments, operated under the premise that "Fair is not getting what everyone else gets; fair is getting what you need." Because many children are unable to communicate clearly, "if one child acts out because no one understands what he or she needs, and another has no issue but simply chooses to act out, how is that handled – are the consequences the same?" Staff training, not staff ratios, often determines the answer to that question and others that are even more complex in the minute-to-minute camp experience.

A Key Question: How Are Staff Hired and Staff Trained?

Meting out precise, appropriate discipline requires intense training, Ms. Dolloff states. Therefore, she comments, parents should ask the following questions of camp directors: 1) How are staff hired?; 2) How are staff screened?; 3) How are they trained? (The ACA mandates a six-day training period for residential camp counselors); 4) How are staff supervised and supported by camp administrators?

Taking care of five or six campers with various disabilities 24 hours a day is a very intense experience for a 20-year-old, she cautions. "If it isn't a 1:2 ratio, which I have had in other camps, then meeting the care needs of these children, i.e., feeding them every meal, getting up in the middle of the night to take a child to the bathroom, or to change his or her sleeping positions, getting them in or out of the pool and doing arts and crafts with them, can be a huge responsibility for a young adult."

The pool of staffers, she notes, usually consists of students aspiring to careers in occupational therapy, recreational therapy or nursing. Others, she says, simply want to experience something different from their norm. "One of our best staffers," she

recalls, “had just finished her Ph.D. in physics. Physics!” That young woman “wanted something totally unrelated to what she’d been doing, saw an ad for our camp and thought, wow, that would be cool! She was outstanding.”

As an administrator, she reveals, “we don’t want to become locked into a profile of what the ideal staffer ought to be because a candidate who is perfect but whose background doesn’t fit the profile may be passed over in the selection process.” Happily, she declares, “Most camp administrators just can’t afford to be rigid; staffing is too difficult at summer camp to afford directors that luxury.”

Staffing requires a creative approach, she explains. Some camp directors travel extensively to recruit on college campuses. Some camps conduct in-camp training programs and promote from within. Some of the most effective staffers, she reveals, are those attracted to camp by friends who have preceded them in staff positions. “They know from their friends what it is really like to work at a particular camp.”

Many camps draw staffers from Europe to make up for a shrinking pool of homegrown candidates who opt instead for tourist-oriented employment where the pay is far better and the work much less intense. The influx of camp staffers from overseas, she says, brings diversity to camp programs, which families appreciate.

Special needs camps have their own stigma when it comes to staffing, she comments. “Potential staffers look at jobs in those camps and say, ‘That’s way too hard.’” Attitudinal barriers, she adds, also prevent good candidates from applying. “I would introduce recruits to my staff and have my staff tell them why they choose to return year after year.” That approach, she explains, is especially useful with college students “who want to know what they’re

going to learn that will change them for the better.”

For staffers, there is little difference in pay between private camps and non-profit special needs camps – except for tipping. In some camps, tips can double a staffer’s \$2,000-per-summer pay. However, in the camps where Ms. Dolloff has worked, all of which were non-profit facilities, tipping was not allowed. “I tell parents who want to tip a particular counselor that they can make a contribution to the camp or put the money into a pot for all counselors, or pay for a staff event or a pizza party that benefits everyone.”

She adds: “If parents want to reward a counselor whose care was especially beneficial to their child, I always recommend that they write a personal letter to the counselor, which has a big positive impact on the counselor, much more so than a tip.”

Integrating Aides into the Camp Staff

If a camper with disabilities wanted to bring an aide, she says, “we’d include that person at no extra cost for either housing or board and would fully integrate that aide into our staff.” Not every camp fosters that level of integration. Ms. Dolloff advises parents to ascertain whether it exists at the camps they’re investigating, either through extended school year funding or via other sources. “We had some parents who paid the cost of aide room and board out of pocket,” she remembers, “and we would sometimes provide staff ourselves to support a child, depending on specific circumstances.” Either way, she cautioned, “parents who intend to supply an aide for their child need to know how that aide will be supported.”

Again drawing upon her camp administration background, she says, “If we were able to meet, train and orient all the adults coming into our camp who were

going to work with children – adults who were not hired or paid by us – prior to their arrival for a camp session, those aides and our staff were much more successful than those who arrived minus that pre-camp support.”

Ultimately, she explains, “parents will gain a positive reaction from a camp director if they disclose their child’s true needs, including their need for a supporting aide.” She recalls a boy who attended one of her 4H programs for four years who had Williams syndrome. “He was a great kid,” Ms. Dolloff says. “He had more camp spirit than any kid I’ve ever been around.” His mother, however, sought a long-term camp while Ann Dolloff’s facility only did weekly sessions. The camper’s mother was refused repeatedly by camps with longer term programs because she elected to fully disclose her son’s condition and his needs.

The difference between those camps and camps like those Ann Dolloff ran, she stated, was that, having received the same camper information as the camps that turned the boy’s mother down, “we asked ourselves, ‘How can we make this work?’” She reminds families that those camps that refuse their application when they’ve opted for full disclosure are in potential violation of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Are such refusals still commonplace? “The camp director and advocate in me says ‘no,’ but, in fact, they are probably more common than not, which is unfortunate for the camping field as a whole.” Nevertheless, Ms. Dolloff claims, “such refusals should not overshadow the fact that there are an awful lot of camps out there that are responding [to the needs of parents with disabilities who fully disclose their child’s disabilities] very proactively and positively in terms of ‘What do we need to know?’ and ‘How can we make this work?’”

Is the solution that simple? Comments Ann Dolloff: “I have a former supervisor who tells me that I simplify this process way too much, because if it were that simple, wouldn’t a positive attitude among camp directors be more pervasive than it appears to be?”

Her response, Ms. Dolloff says, “is that everything depends on the willingness of the camp director to see the possibilities for success.” That does not mean, she adds, that camps should admit campers who have the potential to be harmful to themselves or to others. “I think that’s where some camp directors can be very frightened of the stereotype that says that we are going to hurt a child by not knowing how to work correctly with him or her, or that problems with communications convince the camper’s parents or the camp that harm will be done in a camp program due to the camp’s negligence, the child’s negligence or both.” That approach, Ms. Dolloff declares, “is a misconception that impairs the judgment of both parties.”

The negative approach of many camps, she observes, merely reflects society’s focus on liability minimization. “It’s true,” she declares, “we take other people’s children, we care for them overnight away from their family by using adolescents as care givers. In theory, this should not work.” Then she adds, “you pile on additional factors, like poor communications, the inability of a child to care for himself or herself and different diets and other variations from the perceived general camper norm” and some camps see potential liability where other camps see an opportunity for acceptance and success.

The bottom line, though, is that “we are talking about people who serve a segment of the population that is not going to go away – and we can’t make it go away.”

The Search Process: Start with the ACA

Ms. Dolloff recommends that parents seeking a residential summer camp for their child with disabilities begin their quest with the American Camping Association (ACA). The ACA, she states, is the largest professional association serving camps. The organization maintains a parents' website and publishes a camp guide. The ACA, she explains, "will conduct training, conduct professional conferences and talk to individuals and other organizations to help parents gather information. It's the perfect source to start gathering information from."

She advises to begin the information gathering process as far ahead of time as possible. In fact, she emphasizes, "Parents should initiate the search the summer *before* they intend their child to attend camp, especially residential camp.

Day camp, she points out, differs from overnight camp in two important ways: 1) Day camp is more normalized to a school schedule; and 2) No overnight, away-from-home care is required. Ms. Dolloff recommends day camp as a good way for a child to become acclimated to the camp experience. Even with a child in day camp, however, "parents, during that summer, should be visiting prospective overnight camps."

In fact, she adds, "searching for a camp is like applying to college but it's even more daunting because your child is still a child and, presumably, not a young adult." When a child has disabilities, however, "you're talking about a much more vulnerable, dependent person. Therefore, the scrutiny by parents should be even greater than for kids who do not have disabilities."

As a camp director for 22 years, she declares, "it still amazes me how few parents apply the level of scrutiny that's required." It also amazes her "how much

inherent trust – whether that trust comes from desperation or is built into the system – that parents have in camps to take care of their children." Visiting a camp -- walking around, seeing how staff interact with children, how the days are structured, looking at the facilities in use – can provide a parent with "a gut feeling that this is a place where I want my child to be, or a place I can't get away from fast enough." She adds: "Just sitting in a camp dining hall listening to counselors talking to kids during meals can give you an idea about how a camp values children."

The application process, she advises, continues throughout the ensuing year, depending on the individual camp. Some private camps, she notes, are filled for the next year before the current summer ends. Others don't disseminate their information packets until April.

How Far from Home?

How far from home should a child's camp be? It depends on economics, Ms. Dolloff says, and on the purpose of the camp. "If you're talking about a camp that has a heavy educational component or a strong training component for a specific purpose, then parents may be more likely to travel." For a more traditional program, she observes, most parents select a camp that is about a day's commutable travel from home.

Post 9/11 security at airports now becomes a factor in camp choice, she points out. "ACA puts out information on how to get to specific airports and how to get through security to safely pick up kids who need to be transferred into a camp's care from an airline." These strategies, she comments, mainly apply to private for-profit camps. Not-for-profit camps, she says, "do not usually do the same level of travel and pick-up as for-profit camps." Some funding agencies, she points out, specify their

service area. "They say, 'We raise funds locally, therefore we support local kids.'"

A Need for Parental Self-Reflection

Parents ought to reflect on why they want to send their child to camp, Ms. Dolloff insists. "Parents need to ascertain what their priority is for their child at this point in the child's life." Some parents, she says, want their child to be more independent. Others say, "I know my child needs to separate from me because I'm the primary caretaker and I am too powerful a force in their life." Others, she adds, "just need a break." Still others need to spend quality time with their child's siblings who do not have disabilities.

Ms. Dolloff's favorite reasoning for camp came from "a very powerful, politically astute, advocate mom who told me that her child needed to know that things could be done differently as long as they were done right."

There is no firm minimum age for campers, she explains. Ms. Dolloff says that she has worked in an overnight camp setting with campers as young as six or seven. "But that's not for everyone," she admits. The typical age range for residential camp is 8-13 for campers with and without disabilities. When they enter teen years, kids without disabilities tend to move to specialized camps. In their teen years, children with disabilities, she notes, need and want social interaction with peers.

Many families, she observes, are not yet ready to send their children away to camp. Other families are ready when their children are very young, sometimes as young as ages six or seven. For some families, sending a child to camp at such a young age "helped the structure of the family, and it helped the child learn and grow in a way that probably could not have occurred at home at such a young age."

She adds: "I can remember kids who came to camp at age six and by 13 or 14 had me thinking that they probably could not have done as well as they did with their lives had they waited until they were older to come to camp." Then there were others who arrived at camp for the first time at age 14 or 15 "and suddenly blossom."

She recalls one girl who had been mainstreamed at school very young and who is now attending the University of Miami. "She came to camp because she didn't have a group of friends who had disabilities -- and she needed one -- anywhere other than at camp. The young woman continued to come to camp long after I thought she would have outgrown it because she needed the social connectiveness she got from her peer group there."

Some children come to camp before they are ready, and a few, very few, she says, are thoroughly miserable. "We would not have a child at camp at all costs. We'd rather have the child stay for a couple of nights, go home and not have a negative perception of camp for the rest of his or her life because they had been made to stay in camp too long. Then we say to the child, 'Maybe next year you can try again.'"

There are parents who are not yet ready, she admits, who drop off their charges with "much hesitation and trepidation." Often, she notes, that trepidation is derived from "the parents' perfectly understandable ego needs that are strained when a child begins to break the dependency and adjust to a new setting. The parents think, 'Oh, no, someone else is capable of taking care of my child!' They're not comfortable with that, initially."

The Role of Assistive Technology

AT, she explains, is part of the disclosure process. "I remember having the attitude, 'We don't need that [AT] equipment. We

can figure out how a child communicates. We've got staff here to meet the needs of kids. We don't need machines; we have counselors to do the legwork." That was 15 years ago, she recalls, "when I failed to support the AT that a child brought to camp." By failing to provide that support, "we failed to help that child achieve a higher level of independence."

Ms. Dolloff now believes in the value of AT at camp. In fact, she declares, training ought to be conducted for staff at camp so that counselors are familiar with AT equipment and its purpose.

"My advice to parents whose children use AT and want to bring it to camp is, do not assume that the equipment will be embraced at camp." Achieving universal acceptance of AT "may require further education on the part of camp directors." Parents, she advises, "should invest the time on registration day, or in advance of it, providing, in writing, the information for their child's AT so that the device is used and not put aside by the camp staff." That, she concludes, "is critical."

Inclusion Works

Ann Dolloff's "biggest thrill" in camping, she declares, "is getting young staff turned on to the field." She recalls that before she departed her job as a New Hampshire 4H camp director, she wrote an article describing the highlights of her final summer there. "I had seven therapeutic recreation students on my staff – no camp has seven therapeutic recreation students on staff! – and I sold them all on the concept of viewing inclusion close up and in action." She wanted her students to see how inclusion works, to understand what is required of camp staffers in order to make it work.

She says: "I wanted them to understand that you can't just throw kids into a group

and expect it to work." The students' year-end comments indicated to her that "the light bulb had been turned on" for all seven. According to Ms. Dolloff, the students learned the following about inclusion in residential summer camps: 1) It isn't easy; 2) Inclusion must start very early in a child's life; and 3) Inclusion *works*.

The students' recognition of inclusion's utility and workability, she concludes, "was very, very cool."



RESOURCES

Camps 2004: A Directory of Camps and Summer Programs for Children and Youth with Special Needs and Disabilities in the Metro New York Area

Resources for Children with Special Needs
Publications/Department B
116 E. 16th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10003
(212) 677-4650

E-mail: Info@resourcesnyc.org

Web: <http://www.resourcesnyc.org/rcsn.htm>

\$33.00 including shipping and handling
(available in English & Spanish)

Guide to Summer Camps and Summer Schools

2002-2003 (28th Edition)
Porter Sargent Publishers, Inc., c/o IDS
300 Bedford Street, Building B, Suite 213
Manchester, NH 03101
(800) 342-7470

E-mail: info@portersargent.com

Web:

http://www.portersargent.com/SummerCamps_SummerSchools.htm

\$45.00 hard-cover; \$27.00 soft-cover (plus shipping and handling)

Guide to ACA Accredited Camps 2004
American Camping Association (ACA), Inc.
5000 State Road 67 North
Martinsville, IN 46151-7902
(800) 428-2267; (765) 342-8456
E-mail: bookstore@acacamps.org
Web: <http://www.acacamps.org>

National Camp Association, Inc.
610 Fifth Avenue
P.O. Box 5371
New York, NY 10185
(800) 966-CAMP (2267); (212) 645-0653
E-mail: info@summercamp.org
Web: <http://www.summercamp.org>
CampQuest, an on-line camp selection guide, is available on the NCA web site.

Summer Opportunities for Kids & Teenagers 2004
Peterson's
Princeton Pike Corporate Center
2000 Lenox Drive
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
(800) 338-3282
E-mail: info@petersons.com
Web: <http://e-catalog.thomsonlearning.com/326>
\$23.96 (plus shipping and handling)
The best way to access information about this guide is to type "Summer Opportunities" in the search window.

KidCamps.org
One of the most comprehensive directories of camps and summer experiences, this guide lists more than 21,000 camps and summer programs, and over 100 programs for children with physical limitations alone. Other camps focusing on disabilities include developmental disabilities, diabetes, epilepsy, oncology, speech/hearing impairments, and visual impairments. Visit this site at <http://www.kidcamps.org> or <http://www.kidscamps.com>

Brave Kids: Camps and Resources for Children with Chronic, Life-Threatening

Illnesses or Disabilities
<http://www.bravekids.org>

Camp Channel: Bringing Summer Camps to the Internet
<http://www.campchannel.com/docs/campsearch.html>

The Camp & Conference Homepage
www.camping.org
To locate camps for children with disabilities, click on "By Type" on the homepage, then "Speciality Camps".

Camps for Children with Diabetes
<http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/camps>

Camp Search: The Search Engine for Camps
www.campsearch.com
The database can be searched by "Specialty Camps".

Children's Oncology Camping Association
<http://www.coca-intl.org/list.html>

Diabetes Camping Association: Diabetes Camp Directory—U.S. Camps
<http://www.diabetescamps.org/uscamps.html>

National Center on Physical Activity & Disability (NCPAD) Summer Camps Fact Sheet
<http://www.ncpad.org/Factsheet/html/summercamps.htm>

Summer Camps for Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of hearing
<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/142.html>

Summer Camps for Amputees and Children with Limb Differences

http://www.amputee-coalition.org/fact_sheets/Kidscamps.html

Thomson & Peterson's Listing of Special Needs Summer Programs

<http://www.petersons.com/summmerop/select/t004se.asp>

Camp Depot

Camp Depot connects families of children with disabilities with recreational opportunities.

http://campdepot.com/PC_CampSearch.html

ACT Amputee Children's Camp

Sponsored by Amputees Coming Together (ACT) of Knoxville, Tenn., this camp for adolescent amputees aged eight and older, is held in Bryson City, NC's Nantahala Outdoor Center. Although there is no fee to attend the four-day camp, attendees must provide their own transportation to and from the meeting locations. For more information, contact Missy Wolff-Burke, Camp Director, at (540) 545-7238.

Adolescent Amputee Camp

The Adolescent Amputee Camp (AAC), located at the YMCA's Camp Kon-O-Kwee in Zelienople, PA, provides amputee youths ages 8-18 with a week of indoor and outdoor activities, including swimming, hiking, ropes courses, and indoor wall climbing. Funding for the camp has been provided for 35 years by the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Registration fee is \$35. Camp is in session the first full week in June. The summer camp is held the first full week of June. For more information, call Steve Schilpp at (412) 931-2561.

Adventure Camp

Located in Middleburg, VA, Adventure Camp is available for three days to amputees ages 6-20. Camp activities are managed by coordinators from Kluge Children's Hospital at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. Activities include swimming, fishing, hiking, volleyball, and horseback riding. The camp is the first week in August. Registration fee is \$5. For more information, call Beverly Gryth at (434) 293-9720 or Mary Grant (434) 293-9870.

Camp C.A.M.P. (Children's Association for Maximum Potential)

Located at Center Point, TX, C.A.M.P. accommodates adolescents with physical limitations, including amputations. Activities include cookouts, carnivals, and dances. Campers are ages 5-21 and include their siblings. Fees can be waived or lowered by cost-sharing programs, sliding fee scales, and camp scholarships for lower-income families. For more information, call (210) 292-3566 or access their website at <http://www.campcamp.org>.

Camp Cheerful

Divided by age groups throughout the summer, Camp Cheerful in Strongsville, OH offers week sessions that include basketball, horseback riding, ceramics and challenge courses. Day camp sessions are also available. To receive more information, call (440) 238-6200.

Camp Riley/Camp Kan-Du

Held at Bradford Woods, Martinsville, IN Camp Riley is attended by children and youths with disabilities ages 8-18. The one-week sessions are divided into age groups throughout the summer. Activities include archery, camping, canoeing, and nature studies. Camp Kan-Du, also in Martinsville, provides programs for campers ages 8-18 who require more specialized care. Call Heather Perdue at (317) 634-4474 or toll free at 1-877-867-4539.

Camp Victory

Established to serve chronically ill and physically disabled youths, Camp Victory, Columbia County, PA, has facilities that are equipped for people with a range of disabilities. In addition to regular camp programs, activities include a climbing tower, hayrides, and talent shows. Weekend and weeklong sessions are available. Contact Jamie Huntley at (570) 458-6530 for more information, or view their website at <http://www.campvictory.org>.

Easter Seals Camps

With 140 sites nationwide, Easter Seals provides extensive camping and recreational programs in settings that are fully accessible. Day camps, residential camps, and respite camps address the diverse needs of children with physical disabilities. The camping experience includes sing-a-longs, campfires, boating, nature walks and arts and crafts. For more information and a list of the camps, call Information Specialist Rosemary Garza at 1-800-221-6827 or e-mail her at rgarza@easterseals.com.

Wonderland Camp

Individuals from the age of six with disabilities can attend Wonderland Camp, Rocky Mount, MO. Attendance fee is \$325. Activities include boating, fishing, archery, miniature golf, nature walks, and riflery. Visit <http://www.wonderlandcamp.org> or call Allen Moore at (573) 392-1000.

National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD)

For the past 34 years the NSCD, Winter Park, CO, has offered children and adults with disabilities the opportunity to participate in a variety of outdoor sports and recreational activities. Outdoor mountain recreation is ongoing from mid-June to early September. The summer program includes mountain, tandem and hand-crank biking, hiking, in-line skating, two sailing programs, therapeutic horseback

riding, white-water rafting, fishing, baseball camps, rock climbing and camping. For further information call (970) 726-1540 or visit <http://www.nscd.org>.

DISABILITY-SPECIFIC CAMP GUIDES

Camp List for Children with Cancer

The Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation
National Office
P.O. Box 498
Kensington, MD 20895
(301) 962-3520; (800) 366-2223
E-mail: info@candlelighters.org
Web: www.candlelighters.org/supportcamps.stm

Camps for Children with Spina Bifida

Spina Bifida Association of America
4590 MacArthur Boulevard, N.W., Suite 250
Washington, D.C. 20007-4226
(800) 621-3141; (202) 944-3285
E-mail: sbaa@sbaa.org
Web: <http://www.sbaa.org>
Call for a state-by-state listing.

Directory of Summer Camps for Children with Learning Disabilities

2001 Edition
Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
(412) 341-1515
E-mail: info@ldaamerica.org
Web: http://ldaamerica.org/store/LD_Directories.html
\$4.00, including shipping and handling



KNOWLEDGE NETWORK MEMBERS

Camping Unlimited



Alex Krem, a special education teacher who helped pioneer methods that mainstreamed exceptional children into a regular public school environment, founded Camping Unlimited. He had entered the special education field late in life after groundbreaking achievements in the study of group dynamics. Earlier, as a chemist, he tested the first polio vaccine.

In 1961 Camp Krem, which would become the Camping Unlimited linchpin, became a tax-exempt organization. Four years later it purchased 45 acres in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Boulder Creek, California, 60 miles south of San Francisco, for a campsite. In the beginning, the camp consisted only of platforms with tents. Through the years, with the help of volunteers and donations, Camp Krem has been steadily improved with buildings, a paved road, hiking trails and a large swimming pool specially adapted for use by children with disabilities. Surrounded by towering redwoods, Camp Krem consists of 10 rustic cabins, an arts and crafts center, a campfire arena, a playground, and outdoor camping areas. Also on site are a dining/multi-activities center and a modern infirmary.

Each season Camp Krem provides summer camp for more than 500 children and adults with developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome, autism and cerebral palsy. On a daily basis, campers, together with counselors, create their own experiences as their abilities grow. Campers can choose from Main (traditional) Camp, Outdoor Camp or Travel Camps. They can set their

own pace and select from the activities offered them.

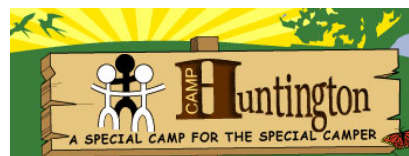
Camping Unlimited's year-round activity programs and travel camps operate from September through May. Some activities are day trips. Others can last up to 12 days. Children and adults of all ages and disabilities, along with volunteer counselors, participate in activities, which include camping and backpacking trips, visits to the snow country, trips to the beach and to state and community parks. They also visit museums, cultural fairs, go on fishing trips and attend movies, theatrical or sporting events. During the summer, five Camping Unlimited travel camps journey throughout California, Nevada and Washington State.

To learn more about Camping Unlimited, contact:

Camping Unlimited
PO Box 20774
El Sobrante, CA 94820
Phone: (510) 222-6662
E-mail: campkrem@campingunlimited.com
<http://www.campingunlimited.com/>

Camp Huntington

The camp is a co-ed, overnight, seven-week



program for children with learning and developmental disabilities, ADD/ADHD, Asperger's, Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD), autism and other special needs. The facility is located in High Falls, New York, within the Catskill Mountain region. The camp's focus is on adaptive and therapeutic recreation.

Camp Huntington offers three main programs:

- Recreational and social skills development with LDs and ADD
- Independence for the developmentally disabled
- Participation for children with autism, Asperger's and PDD

The Delaware-Hudson Canal's first cement kilns dating from the 18th century are located on the Camp Huntington grounds. Several canal worker cottages have been restored for living, activities, infirmary and main office use. The area surrounding the camp offers an array of family vacation options, including bed and breakfast inns, the famed Mohonk Mountain House, antiquing, craft fairs, local artists' shops, tubing, swimming and boating.

Each of the camp's 20 fully equipped sleeping cabins contains a private bathroom. All cabins have ventilation and hot water. Sleeping quarters are well lit and outfitted with electrical outlets, sturdy beds, and pine board cubbies. Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and emergency exits are plentiful and strategically located.

For further information about Camp Huntington, contact:
 Camp Huntington
 56 Bruceville Road
 High Falls, NY12440
 Phone: (845) 687-7840
 Fax: (845) 687-7211
 E-mail: camphtgtn@aol.com
<http://camphuntington.com>
 Contact: Bruria Bodek-Falik, Ph.D., Director

Camp Kirk

Established in 1993, Camp Kirk is a residential camp for boys and girls ages 6-14 with learning disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD (with or without hyperactivity),



including children with incontinence or enuresis (bedwetting) difficulties.

Camp Kirk's 110-acre camp property near Kirkfield, Ontario is owned and maintained by the Lions Clubs International. Lions Clubs volunteers constructed the camp over a three-year period.

Camp facilities feature a swimming pool equipped with diving board and slide, a basketball court and two 40-foot climbing walls with overhangs. Canoe trips are made to nearby Algonquin Park, the Leslie Frost center and other accessible wilderness areas. Staff supervision in all activities is mandatory. A medical clinic is located in the village of Kirkfield, a five-minute drive from the camp. Ross Memorial Hospital in Lindsay, ON is also minutes away.

Fundraising is underway to fund the following future enhancements:

- Experimental learning and adventure-based programming through the expansion of the ropes course, climbing wall and canoe trips
- Ecology and natural sciences, by enlarging the current gardening program and creating a program featuring the care and nurturing of small farm animals
- Drama and music, the physical centerpiece of which will be an indoor facility that can double as a recreation hall during inclement weather
- Leadership, through the institution of Leader in Training (LIT) and Counselor in Training (CIT) programs which will enable some former campers to return to Camp Kirk as counselors and which will require the construction of 2-3-person tent platforms
- A residential camp program for teens ages 13-16 at a different camp location

- An urban-based winter program
- A family support group for parents of Camp Kirk campers
- A year-round advocacy effort

For more information on Camp Kirk, contact:

Camp Kirk

378 Fairlawn Avenue

Toronto, ON M5M1T7

Phone: (416) 782-3310

Fax: (416) 782-3239

E-mail: campkirk@campkirk.com

<http://www.campkirk.com>

Contact: Henry Audet, Executive and Camp Director

Camp Kodiak



Located near Parry sound, close to McKellar, ON, Camp Kodiak focuses on children and teens ages 6-18 with and without learning disabilities and ADD. Campers hail from the U.S., Canada and around the world. The camp consists of a 425-acre campground with about 1.5 miles of waterfront. In addition to outdoor facilities, the camp also features extensive indoor activity areas ensuring a full schedule of daily activities regardless of weather conditions.

Campers and staff are housed in modern log cabins equipped with full bathrooms, electricity and showers. Medical staff members are on duty 24 hours a day at the camp's health center. Each cabin houses nine campers and a minimum of three counselors. The head counselor in each cabin is either a teacher, a psychologist, social worker or child/youth professional. The other two cabin counselors are college students or recent graduates.

Camp instructors break camper tasks into manageable chunks and present them in a logical sequence.

Recreational activities, which de-emphasize competition and stress cooperation and sportsmanship consist of horseback riding, a high ropes course, rock climbing, swimming, kayaking, fishing, various team sports, drama, arts and crafts, water skiing, rocketry, tennis, music, pottery, sailing, computers, overnight camping, go-karting, dance, stained glass, canoeing, martial arts.

All campers participate in the Kodiak academic program. Parents of campers can choose between two options:

- Individual and small group academic tutoring coordinated with the camper's school; older campers can earn academic credits over the summer
- Individual and small group instruction in a variety of educational and cultural activities including drama, watercolors, instrumental music, sketching, stained glass, martial arts, first aid, photography, website design, pond study, aerobics, tree identification, outdoor survival skills, pottery, jazz dance, birding and sports clinics

Campers improve their social skills via everyday activities and, in a more focused way, through a drama program that employs role-playing and improvisation to deal with difficult social situations under the guidance of professional instructors.

In addition to its regular program, the camp offers a Leader-in-Training (L.I.T.) program to campers 16 and older and a junior counselor program to L.I.T. graduates. Counselor program participants get instruction in basic psychology, child development, camper management and teaching methods and theory.

To learn more about Camp Kodiak, contact:
Camp Kodiak
4069 Pheasant Run
Mississauga, ON, Canada L5L2C2
Phone: (905) 569-7595; (toll free) 1-877-569-7595
Fax: (905) 569-6045
E-mail: info@campkodiak.com
<http://www.campkodiak.com/>

Deaf Kids' Kamp

DKK provides a free-of-charge camp experience to deaf children ages 6-17 who reside in the U.S. and Canada. DKK is the lone camping facility west of the Mississippi River that caters exclusively to deaf children.



Usually with a 1:2 counselor to camper ratio, the camp ordinarily accepts a maximum of 30 campers each summer and a minimum of 15 counselor staff. Campers engage in activities that include arts and crafts, archery, theater, swimming, hayrides, horseback riding and outdoor living skills. The camp includes no competitive sports and features exposure to deaf culture with deaf role models presenting various programs.

DKK campers are sponsored by clubs, organizations, individuals, businesses, foundations, sign language classes and Sproul Ranch, Inc., a non-profit organization based in Lancaster, CA.

For more information about Deaf Kids' Kamp, contact:
Deaf Kids' Kamp
Sproul Ranch, Inc.
45446 7th Street East, Suite 21
Lancaster, CA 93535
Phone: (702) 247-6905; (toll free) 1-800-346-6444 (Voice/TTY)

Fax: (702) 871-6466
E-mail: deafkidskamp@earthlink.net
<http://www.deafkidskamp.com/>

The Fowler Center for Outdoor Learning



The Center is an outdoor recreation and education facility for children,

teens and adults with developmental disabilities and mental impairments that include autism, schizophrenia and emotional disturbance and associated disabilities ranging from closed head injuries in accidents to spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, epilepsy and HIV/AIDS.

The Fowler Center was founded in 1957 by special education teacher John Fowler and his wife, Reta, to provide a summer camp experience for nine boys with mental impairments. In the past three years alone, the Center has provided that experience to more than 10,000 children, teens and adults.

The Center maintains a 1:4 staff to camper ratio. The "Super Camp" session in the summer program and spring sessions is designed for campers needing additional time to complete a project as well as physical assistance with dressing, eating and hygiene. The Center's staff determines eligibility and aids parents in finding an appropriate session.

Four counselors sleep in each Camp Fowler cabin and are available 24 hours a day to monitor and meet special needs.

For further information about the Center, contact:
The Fowler Center for Outdoor Learning
2315 Harmon Lake Road
Mayville, MI 48744

Phone: (989) 673-2050
Fax: (989) 673-6355
<http://thefowlercenter.org>

Shady Oaks Camp



The camp provides outdoor recreational activities for children and adults with cerebral palsy and similar disabilities. Most campers are children of members of Parents Association for Cerebral Palsy Children, Inc. while others are referrals from various organizations. The minimum age of Shady Oaks campers is four years old. There is no maximum age.

Founded in 1947 and located in Homer Glen, 35 miles from downtown Chicago, the camp was designed specifically for individuals with special needs. Shady Oaks has expanded from its original three buildings to seven dormitories, two staff houses, including an infirmary, and a large dining hall, director's quarters, groundskeeper's quarters, a heated pool and a recreational facility donated by the Ford Foundation.

Shady Oaks provides eight weeks of camping for 65 male and female campers. Activities include movies, swimming, songfests, handicrafts, parties and specially adapted games.

In addition to in-camp activities, field trips enable campers to visit the Brookfield and Lincoln Park zoos, major league baseball games, museums, theaters and other destinations in the Chicago area.

For further information about Shady Oaks, contact:

Shady Oaks Camp
16300 Parker Road
Homer Glen, IL 60491

Phone: (708) 301-0816
Fax: (208) 730-4127
E-mail: soc16300@aol.com
<http://www.shadyoakscamp.org/camp.htm>

Summit Camp



Summit Camp's main focus is on boys and girls with ADD, Asperger's and concomitant learning disabilities with or without mild social and emotional problems.

Campers live in spacious, self-contained cabins equipped with cubbies and closet space for each camper. Cabins have hot water at all times supplied by individual hot water heaters.

Summit all-weather facilities include:

- A recreation hall that doubles as an indoor gym featuring a basketball court, space for indoor hockey and a theater
- A creative arts center housed in three A-frames with fully equipped studios for ceramics, arts and crafts and woodshop
- A camper kitchen that houses the culinary program and adjoins an indoor science lab, puppetry room and drama workshop
- An historic log cabin that houses the nature program
- An air conditioned health and fitness center offering indoor day and evening programs
- Two classrooms, two air conditioned computer labs and a music room
- A canteen housed in a log cabin that also houses the snack bar and game room

Summit's outdoor facilities include three all-weather tennis courts, softball diamonds, a track for go-karts and rollerblading, mountain biking trails, an in-ground

trampoline, junior basketball court, an all-weather floor hockey rink, camping sites, climbing and rappelling, a regulation soccer field and a lakefront tree house.

Two fully equipped air conditioned computer labs feature state-of-the-art IBM clones with color monitors and color printers. All campers participate in computer lab programs a minimum of twice a week.

Summit's own camper website is operational all summer. All campers can send and receive email.

To learn more about Summer Camp, contact:
Summit Camp
18 East 41st Street, Suite 402
New York, NY 10017
Phone: (212) 689-3880; (toll free) 1-800-323-9908
E-mail: summitcamp@aol.com
<http://www.summitcamp.com>

Talisman Summer Base Camps



Talisman camps' short-term, high-impact three and six week sessions attract children ages 9-13 with ADD/ADHD and behavior or emotional problems. With its enrollment limited to a maximum of 50 campers, the camps' boast an "extended family" environment with a 2.5:1 camper-to-staff ratio.

The camps' program employs a combination of outdoor adventure experiences, collaborative group activities and group discussions to help improve campers' individual and group communication skills.

A mini camp program is a truncated version of the longer three and six-week sessions and is offered to children ages 8-11 who may not yet be prepared to spend at least three weeks away from home.

For more information about Talisman, contact:

Talisman Summer Programs
126 Camp Elliot Road
Black Mountain, NC 28711
Phone: (828) 669-8639
<http://www.talismansummercamp.com/basecamp.html>

Adaptive Adventures

Adaptive Adventures was conceptualized and created in



1999 by a group of physically challenged individuals who saw the need to increase awareness and participation in sports and recreation for the disabled. The organization is considered a national leader in adaptive cycling, water-skiing and winter sports.

The organization offers sports and recreation opportunities for individuals with disabilities that can include, but are not limited to, amputations, paraplegia, quadriplegia, birth defects, cerebral palsy, head injuries, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, stroke and visual impairment. Adaptive Adventures staffers, instructors and volunteers provide instruction and mentoring as well as collaborative support to other organizations offering similar services to persons with disabilities. Via its website and database, the organization serves as an information resource for those seeking assistance.

Since its founding, the organization has hosted or supported more than 100 adaptive sports and recreation events and activities. Adaptive Adventures has developed strong working relationships with several Colorado parks and recreation districts, including Denver, Boulder and Fort Collins, rehabilitation centers, children's groups and other non-profit organizations.

Adaptive Adventures provides a list of questions to consider when evaluating the quality of an adaptive program. The organization strongly recommends "checking out" a service provider when traveling great distances "or when entrusting loved ones to someone else's care." The evaluative questions:

- Do you know anyone who has participated in the program in the past?
- Are the instructors well trained and/or certified in the activities that they are teaching?
- What kind of previous experience do the staff and volunteers possess?
- Who is responsible for training staff and volunteers?
- Does the program do a personal evaluation to assess your goals, objectives and needs?
- What type of adaptive equipment does the program provide?
- What condition is the equipment in?
- Does the service provider rent equipment for personal use (on/off site)?
- How accessible are the facilities associated with the program? Issues such as parking, ramps, shuttles and distances to be covered are all important.
- What are the costs to participate?
- Does the service provider offer any discounts or scholarships?
- Will the service provider provide references?

In addition, Adaptive Adventures advises, "Many parks and recreation programs, rafting groups, equestrian facilities and ski resorts are required to have accessible programming. Always ask for discounts for customers with disabilities such as discounted lift tickets, rental fees, lodging and other costs of participation."

To learn more about Adaptive Adventures, contact:

Adaptive Adventures
 PO Box 2245
 Evergreen, CO
 Phone: (303)/(877) 679-2770
 Fax: (303) 670-8290
 Joel Berman, Executive Director
 E-mail: joel@edaptive.org
<http://www.adaptiveadventures.org/>



Special Camp for Special Kids

Located at St. Margaret's Episcopal School in San Juan Capistrano, CA, Special Camp, with a 1:1 camper-counselor ratio, annually hosts 125 children with disabilities and around 175 counselors. Forty-five campers with a wide range of disabilities participate in each session. Approximately 15-20% use wheelchairs. A majority of the campers have Down syndrome, autism, and cerebral palsy or are developmentally delayed. Campers and counselors hail from Southern California and from throughout the U.S.

Special Camp consists of three one-week sessions along with additional days devoted to counselor training seminars and meetings.

The camp's arts and crafts center features approximately 10 ongoing projects in addition to a variety of special projects. An entertainment center contains a wealth of

costumes and props as well as video cameras to record skits, songs and camper news broadcasts. A physical education facility includes ambulatory and non-ambulatory activities. A games and reading center features a collection of more than 200 children's and young adult books in addition to 75 board games and puzzles, four computers and three video game systems.

Each week-long session, campers and counselors visit the Fran Joswick Therapeutic Riding Center, Monarch Bay beach, Edwards Theater, Chuck E. Cheese's, Planet Kids, the San Diego Zoo, Irvine Regional Park, Long Beach Aquarium, the Discovery Science Center, Sea World, Knott's Berry Farm, Legoland, Adventure City and Disneyland.

The camp has a fully qualified trained nursing staff on call on the campus or in the surrounding community.

Need-based tuition scholarships are available. The camp receives support from corporations, foundations and individuals that help to underwrite camp costs and provide tuition assistance. About 25% of camp applicants request tuition assistance each year.

For further information about Special Camp, contact:

Special Camp for Special Kids
31641 La Novia Avenue
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
Phone: (949) 661-0108 ext. 699
Fax: (949) 661-8637, (949) 489-4082
Contact: Kyle Garrity, Executive Director
<http://www.specialcamp.org/>



Don't miss our next national online discussion

Assistive Technology In Support of Learning Disabilities

Led by well-known experts,
Dr. Richard Wanderman,
Director of Research at both Schwab
Learning and the Frostig Center
and **Dr. Brian Friedlander**,
publisher of Inclusion Times, professor and
AT Specialist.



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