You mean there's more to CAMP than fun and games?

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The mission of the Children's Association for Maximum Potential (CAMP) is to strengthen and inspire individuals with special needs—and those who care for them—through Recreation, Respite, and Education.

Disclosure

a. Brandon G. Briery, Ph.D., has no relationships with commercial companies to disclose.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this presentation the participant will be able to:

1. Identify opportunities and services available through special needs camps.
2. Identify benefits associated with participation in such programs.
3. Learn how they (as healthcare volunteers) and their patients (as campers) can become involved in these programs.

A Brief History of Special Needs Camping

- Camping as an organized community activity saw its rise near the beginning of the 20th century
- “Deinstitutionalization” of persons with disabilities saw its rise in the 1960's
- Camps for individuals with special needs began to be founded in the 1960's
- Camps for individuals with special needs make up the fastest growing sector of camps in North America today

Models of Special Needs Camping & Opportunities in Texas

- Direct Service Model
  - Camp CAMP (Hill Country) — Moderate to severe, children and adults
  - Camp Summit (Dallas Area) — Moderate to severe, children and adults
  - Texas Lions Camp (Hill Country) — Mild to moderate, children
- Partner Group Model
  - Camp Aranzazu (Rockport, TX)
  - Camp For All (Burton, TX)
  - Camp John Marc (Meridian, TX)
  - Peaceable Kingdom (Killeen, TX)
- Hybrid Model(s)
  - Texas Lions Camp/VisionWorks Camp Discovery (Hill Country)

History of Special Needs Camping Research

- Many studies in the 1980's and 1990's (and beyond) used camps as a “sample of convenience,” but did not actually study the benefits of the camps themselves
- A few studies in the mid- to late 1990's and 2000's began to examine these benefits in special needs camps
- In the early to mid-2000's the American Camp Association began a research program, but initially excluded individuals with special needs
- After several years of collecting data solely with general population camps, ACA began to support using the tools it had developed with special needs camps as well
- The Children's Oncology Camping Association - International (COCA-I) began conducting a multi-site, collaborative research program among its Member Camps in the late 2000's
What is CAMP and who does it serve?

CAMP is a 501(c)3 Not-for-Profit Organization that provides the following programs for individuals with special needs and their families:
- Summer Camp
- Respite Weekend Camp
- Parent’s Night Out
- Teen and Adult Day Adventure

Benefits & Components of CAMP

Personal Hygiene

Social Skills and Table Manners
Style and Fashion Sense

Appreciation for the Great Outdoors

Occupational and Daily Living Skills Acquisition
Benefits / Components of Camp

- Peer Identification/Networking
- Independence/Control
- Safety
- Leadership Development
- Creative Development
- Problem Solving Skills Development
- Self-efficacy/Self-esteem
- New and Unique Environment
- Parent and Sibling Benefits

Challenges

- Separation Anxiety/Homesickness
  - On the part of parents
  - On the part of CAMPers
- Health and Other Considerations

Closing Comments

- How can I help?
- Spread the Word
- Volunteer
- Fundraise

What can I expect?

- Heated/Air Conditioned Cabins
- Indoor Plumbing
- Bunkbeds
  - Bring your own linens!
- Communal living
- Cafeteria-style meals (hot and prepared for you!)

What not to expect!

- A lot of “down-time”
- A lot of privacy
- A lot of time to make phone calls
- A fully “bug-free” environment
- Hotel-like accommodations
  (e.g., no in-room coffee pots, refrigerators, microwaves, or maid service)
What else can I expect?
Your heart to be warmed...
Your eyes to be opened...
Your skills to be broadened, strengthened, and challenged...
Your life to be changed!!

Relevant Publications:

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