

ACT KIDS CAMP #11 HAD IT ALL!

Clouds, light rain, heavy rain, fog, and then sunny skies surrounded the 11th ACT Kids Camp held July 6-10, 2005. A total of 31 campers and 15 volunteers survived it all, with the help of smiles, good cheer, good food, and new friends. Once again, the camp, based at the Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC), was successful in meeting the mission of the camp – to allow kids with limb differences to share, explore, and believe in their unique abilities.

This year marked the first FIVE-day camp with the addition of two new activities: horseback riding, and an afternoon at a pool. For many years, campers and volunteers have been asking for the camp to be longer. Thanks to the magnificent funding raising efforts of two camp supporters, Phyllis Frohlich and Julie Suttles, and the countless donations of others, we had enough in the kitty to add the day and activities.

To recap the camp activities: Wednesday was rather hurried with the arrival of all the campers, room assignments, lunch and heading off to the two rivers. The Nantahala River and the Tennessee were wet, cold and fun in a duckie or in a raft. That evening, after dinner, we introduced ourselves and played a get-to-know-you game. Does anyone remember who had grandkids?

Thursday was, shall we say, rather wet. But the ever flexible and creative NOC staff were up to the challenge and by dividing the group, only the older campers, got totally, absolutely, soaking wet while on the ropes course. The rest of us stayed relatively dry by going mining and hanging out at the base camp, until the sun came out around 2 pm. The ropes course is challenging enough in good weather, so hat's off to the senior campers for their fortitude. Every camper was challenged to achieve something on the course – climb, swing, help lift, or cheer. Dinner and a movie wrapped up the great day!

Now to Friday – the new activity day. Right near NOC is the Double Eagle Ranch, and were we glad. The folks there entertained us with games, arts and crafts, bunnies, cats, dogs, and of course, horses. Campers, and some counselors, took turns riding the horses and for some, this was a new adventure. There is nothing like the sure, steady walk of a horse and I am sure we have some folks who are new fans of the big creatures. We hurried back to camp for a delicious lunch, a quick change into our swimwear, and we were off to the Nantahala Village pool. We were very fortunate to have been invited to use the pool at this beautiful facility. The day had turned quite warm and it was a great way to spend the afternoon. We now have some new and improved swimmers in the group. This activity is sure to be repeated. For the evening, the older campers were treated to pizza and bowling in Franklin, after a very windy, very long ride to Franklin. Next year – take the highway! The younger campers went to Bryson City and ate a lot of pizza too.

Finally it was Saturday – the water-ski day! The day was absolutely beautiful. Sun, little wind, and lots of volunteers from the Knoxville water-ski group (Eskimo Escapes) and the Patricia Neal Innovative Recreation Center. These enthusiastic volunteers have created a spectacular day for the camp for the past five years. Bringing out all the toys (tubes, skis, inflatable kayaks, jet skis, and fast boats) every camper got to do something new, and challenging, and exciting. Some campers are fish, and some probably swallowed a few. It was great to see so many campers ski and swim and have just plain fun in the water. The day ended with a bar-be-que dinner donated to us by

some of the water-ski members. It is hard to find a way to say a big enough "THANK YOU" to them.

And then it was Sunday and it was time to pack-up, clean-up, takes pictures, get recognized for achievements (listed below) and head out to Atlanta, Knoxville and other points for home. How did those five days go so fast?

We know you all have your favorite new friends and memories. We hope you will share those stories and pictures with others, and do what you can to keep the camp going. It is a year-to-year effort to raise enough funds, so any effort you can make to help would be great. Take care, believe in yourself, and look forward to next year. Dream of the new things you want to achieve and you will.

(P.S. Someone left a sleeping bag. Call me if it is yours. 540-545-7238)

This year's camp awards are as follows:

CAMPER NAME	AWARD
1. HALEY	MOST CONSIDERATE
2. RYAN	BEST MALE CLIMBER
3. ALEX	BEST POOL ACROBATICS
4. ASPEN	MOST COURAGEOUS MALE
5. GAITLEY	BEST NEW FRIENDSHIP
6. KALEIGH	BEST FEMALE CLIMBER
7. JEKWAN	BEST RAPPER
8. ANDREW	BEST WIPE OUT
9. ANNA	MOST LIKELY TO GET MARK'S WALKIE TALKIE NEXT YEAR
10. SAHARA	CAMP MOTHER
11. SCOTT	MOST LIKELY TO GET IN TROUBLE LESS
12. GABRE	MOST IMPROVED MALE SKIER
13. NATHAN	BEST COWBOY
14. KAITLIN	BEST NEW FRIENDSHIP
15. MARY LI	MOST OUTSTANDING NEW CAMPER
16. JACOB	BEST SORRY! PLAYER
17. JANA	MISS CONGENIALITY
18. DARIUS	MOST IMPROVED SWIMMER
19. FRANKLYN	BEST HAIR
20. LEE	MOST AQUATIC
21. TIFFANY	MOUTH OF THE SOUTH
22. JADE	MOST IMPROVED RETURN CAMPER
23. ASHER	MOST FEARLESS
24. MICHELLE	MOST IMPROVED BOWLER
25. CASSIE	CAMP ARTIST
26. ANDRE	BEST FORWARD FLIP
27. JAMES	MOST STYLISH
28. ASHLEY	STAIR MASTER
29. MATTHEW	MOST DIFFICULT TO THROW OFF THE TUBE
30. KATIE	MOST COURAGEOUS FEMALE
31. DELICIA	MOST IMPROVED FEMALE SKIER