

ADVENTURE AMPUTEE CAMP 2007

The Empress has decreed that this was the best camp ever!

Thirty-one campers and a whole host of volunteers worked together to make this years' camp (lucky #13) a stupendous success. The weather was unbelievably cooperative. Remember the pouring rain when we arrived on Wednesday? It looked like we were not going to need the river to get soaking wet. But the sun came out just as we headed for our river rafting trips. Some campers headed to the Tennessee River and others to the Nantahala River. The excellent NOC river guides lead the way on these wonderful trips. Between floating, paddling, swimming and water-fighting, old friends were sopping wet, and new friends were made by dinner. That evening we played games, caught up on the news with each other, and were just excited to be together.

Our days always began with a hearty breakfast, provided by our dedicated kitchen volunteers, Ron and Phyllis, and all their helpers. Dieting is just not an option as we were treated to pancakes, French toast, biscuits and gravy and an assortment of other yummy stuff. We were well fueled each day for all that we had to do. Thursday was the day for the ropes course and we needed all that energy. The campers were greeted, as usual, by the wonderful NOC staff, who had games and a full day of climbing in store for us. So many of the campers achieved personal firsts, and so many others exceeded their expectations that it is impossible to name all the accomplishments, but to remind you of a few: the 40 foot swing was completed by every camper (and volunteer) who went up there; no one backed away from the challenge! The whole ropes circuit was completed by quite a few people, and all the campers who went up made it through at least two stations. The Alpine Tower saw quite a few folks reach the top, and many more climbing all over the sides. Some campers learned how to belay, and by doing so helped others with their encouragement and support. We were, once again, treated to ice cream at Slo Joe's. What a wonderful treat at the end of all that fun and work! Another delicious dinner and then, uh-oh, who brought the waterguns!!!??? That turned into an all-out soaking fun time.

Friday found us in a relaxed mode as we divided into groups to go horseback riding at the Nantahala Stables. We found out we have a few cowgirls in the groups as they were able to stay in the saddle even though the horse got a bit frisky. The scenery from horseback was beautiful, and we were all surprised to see how low Lake Fontana was at this time of year. The drought is really rough. Though we were glad for sunshine, we could tell the area really needs rain. So – we got some while we were riding, but it did not stop us from riding on! After a delicious lunch we were scheduled to go to the pool, but unfortunately the weather was cool and rainy, so we opted for Plan B: bowling! It must be quite a site to see the 50 of us marching/rolling/hopping into the bowling alley. Everyone tried bowling, and some folks even demonstrated skill! The ride back to NOC was a bit quieter as most campers and volunteers were pooped, but the delicious pizza dinner gave energy for ANOTHER water fight, and this one seemed to be campers vs. volunteers. Given the number of very drenched volunteers, it seems the campers have better aim.

Before we knew it, it was time for our big day on Lake Fontana. Though the day started out grey and cool, the Empress promised sunshine by the time we were skiing, and lo, just as we finished tying our pontoons together in the cove, the sun broke through. It stayed sunny all day, in the sky, and in the smiles on every face. Fontana Marina had new and spacious pontoons this year, and one with a toilet! We are really uptown! We really enjoyed the new boats. The waterskiing is under the expert direction of Al Kaye and the loving volunteers of the Patricia Neal – Innovative Rehabilitation Cooperative, and Eskimo Escapades of Knoxville. We have been fortunate to have these volunteers play with us for a number of years now, and are deeply grateful

for their commitment to this camp. Tubing was a huge attraction again this year, as campers tested their strength and balance against the expert boat driving of the volunteers who were trying hard to get a few campers to take a swim. Many campers achieved firsts with sit-skiing, with and without out-riggers! We have some expert kayakers and expert kayak-sinkers in the group. We also seem to have few campers who turned into fish! Too soon it was time to call it a day and we loaded up and headed back to shore for a dinner sponsored by our water-ski folks. Could it get any better?

It was a quiet ride back to camp, but it did not stay quiet for long as we had to hustle to get ready for the Second Annual AAC talent show. The talent in the groups is, can we say, amazing. Poetry, singing, theatrics, and whipped cream serving (don't ask) were on display from campers and volunteers. And – the MC and judges certainly had a flair for telling it like they saw it – which was, by the way, incredible. We know there is more talent in the group just waiting to get out, so keep this in mind and be ready for next year.

Speaking of next year, Sunday arrived in a hurry and we said our good-byes after the awards ceremony and camp picture. We are getting to be quite a big group. Any one have a wide-angle lens for next year's photo?

From all the volunteers with the Adventure Amputee Camp, we wish you and wonderful year, and we will see you next summer!

| Camper | Achievement Award |
|-----------|---|
| Jade | Most Poetic |
| Matthew R | Outstanding new amputee |
| Matthew S | Outstanding survival skills |
| Asher | Most Adventurous |
| Jovan | Most likely to win Olympic tubing |
| Khoebie | Most dynamic |
| Rashonda | Mouth of the South |
| Haley | Most likely to overcome any fear |
| Alex | Most determined to conquer the Alpine Tower |
| Shay | Fearless Flyer |
| Aspen | Most likely to smile |
| Gaitley | Most fashionable |
| Erik | Best new camper |
| Mitchell | Best actor |
| Kaleigh | Outstanding athleticism |
| Jayla | Most improved swimmer |
| Tania | Camp spitfire |
| Lacie | Most likely to climb to the top |
| Dylan | Most likely to be on ESPN |
| Scott | Most outspoken |
| Sushma | The little engine that could |
| Kayla Ann | Most likely to be junior counselor |
| Malik | Super soaker award |
| Nathan | Most likely to brighten up a room |
| Kaitlin | Best big sister and friend |
| Mary Li | Sky's the limit |
| Darius | Best bowler |
| Lee | Most aquatic (This award is now retired) |
| Katie T | Early riser award |
| Ben T | Best MC |
| Slaim | Most easy going |