

Adventure Amputee Camp 2008 Bigger and Better Than Ever!!!

Who can believe that it is another year gone already?! We wait all year for it and then it goes by in a flash. The 14th annual Adventure Amputee Camp was bigger (we had the most campers ever – 37) and better (along with the usual, we added tennis)! Let me start out this letter with a HUGE “Thank-You” to all our sponsors. Without you, nothing as magical as this camp could happen; so please know that counselors, campers, and families are deeply grateful for your support.

One theme this year was, “How will you give back?” It is the sponsors who set the example for us and we are trying to carry that message forward. We did have one camper who raised over \$200 by collecting aluminum can tops. Way to go Haley! I know that we will have campers and counselors looking to find ways to contribute to future camps or other worthy causes through fund raising and/or volunteering.

So what did we do? Well - we arrived on Wednesday and got right into the swing of things with a wonderful lunch and a quick change for the river. One group of campers headed for the Nantahala River which is fast and very cold. The other headed for the Tuckaseegee, which is slower and warmer (more time for water fights). It rained a bit but who cares when you are already wet. If it has to rain at camp this is the day for it. After dinner, we laughed our way through a great get-to-know you activity, and then had time to catch-up with old friends and make new ones.

Thursday started out rainy and may have put the damper on the new tennis activity but the resourceful folks from the *O and P fund* who were organizing this were able to teach us tennis skills in a large room. We did a little sun dance, and lo – the sun came out. For the rest of the day all the campers got to try their skill at tennis. Whether in a wheelchair, on one-foot, or two, we had all sorts of fun as we learned that this is a sport for everyone - and the prizes weren't bad either! The campers also spent time on the ever-popular *NOC* ropes course. The 40' level saw a little bit more action this year as some of our campers are really excited to see just how much fear a person can take. Though totally safe, it will make you shake to look down from 40 feet with nothing between you and the

ground but air (and a harness/rope and the ever-watchful eyes of the fantastic NOC staff).

Friday we were skillfully divided into groups to enjoy a round of activities including horseback riding, gem mining, hanging out, and some campers and volunteers participated in a physical therapy research project. The physical therapy students who conducted the research were amazed at the stamina and good-nature of all the participants and want to thank everyone again. We then had time for the most requested activity of the camp – SHOPPING at the NOC stores. I still can't figure out why that is so wonderful but it seems as if there is never enough time to shop. One of the NOC employees treated our campers to ice cream. Thanks Becky! The afternoon found us enjoying the really warm weather and fantastic setting of the *Swain County pool*. It is a wonderful facility and under the instruction of some of our volunteers a few campers learned to swim! Everyone got to enjoy something at the pool: the slide, the water park area, the kiddy pool, or a water gun fight.

The evening concluded with a new and wonderful event: A Pirate Party! *Ye Notorious Krewe of the Peg-Leg Pirates* from Florida hosted a wonderful pirate party and all of the campers had the chance to win pirate treasure, have their picture taken with Pete the Pirate, and took home a wonderful goody-bag of pirate stuff. We are very fortunate to have made the connection with this philanthropic organization and hope they will be back for years to come.

Saturday is the much anticipated water ski day. It is hosted by the *Patrician Neal Innovative Recreation Cooperative* and the Knoxville based *Eskimo Escapades* and held at the *Fontana Village Marina*. These water-ski folks have been part of our camp for about 10 years and it is really wonderful to see these friends each year. They have watched campers grow up and we have all witnessed some amazing progress with waterskiing ability. The day was absolutely perfect with sunshine, light breeze, lots of yummy food provided by the wonderful camp kitchen angles, and tons of laughter. We concluded the day with our annual b-b-q sponsored by Kelly of the *Eskimo Escapades* and once again, sang Happy Birthday to her. We hope to join her in many more birthdays!

The talent show ended the evening and I must say, America has talent, and a lot of it is right here at camp. Singing, poetry, the evil hat-dancer, and some unusual body noises, resulted in applause and quite a bit of laughter. Can't wait to see what talent next year will expose.

Our last morning was a bit drizzly and that matched our moods. We ate another wonderful meal, cleaned up, packed, took the group picture (it is getting harder to get everyone into the frame), and said our good-byes. Hard to believe it was over that fast. But hey – next summer is right around the corner, so work on your talent, give back to someone or something this year and we'll see you soon!!

End of camp Awards: These awards are given by the volunteer counselors to each camper based on some special skill or behavior that was demonstrated during camp.

Camper	Achievement Award
Sean	Most likely to be seen on Extreme Sports
Nathan J	Most amazing flip
Reggie	Most courageous
Ryan	Outstanding film making
Jeremy	Most motivational junior counselor
Eric	Best performer
Nathan H	Most likely to save the world
Blake	Best new camper
Darius M	Most outstanding physical strength
Ben	Most likely to be the next Bill Gates
Mitchell	Most likely to be a pirate
Katie	Most creative
Haley	Outstanding songwriter
Lacie	Most inspirational
Tiffany	Most fashionable
Raquel	Most likely to overcome her fears
Felicia	Most beautiful smile
Tatiana	Most likely to make you smile
Tyler	Most flexible
Jake	Most talkative
Luis	Most adorable
Darius B	Most likely to be a stand-up comedian
Asher	Most outstanding ninga moves
Malik	Most likely to cooperate
Lee P	Most aquatic
Matthew R	Most outstanding game playing
Michael	Most outstanding dribbling champion
Jayla	Most outstanding splasher
Sharnea	Outstanding bravery
Tania	Outstanding love of animals (even bugs)
Shay	Outstanding determination
Sushma	Outstanding Yahtzee player
Chrissy	Most helpful
Molly	Outstanding shopping
Emily	Best bed time stories
Kaleigh	Most likely to become a professional athlete
Kay	Most likely to be a famous poet

