

July 10-14, 2013 Camp Newsletter

**Adventure
AMPUTEE
CAMP**
challenge by choice



a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation

Nantahala Outdoor Center

Adventure Amputee Camp

Welcome to our 19th Annual Summer Camp

It is hard to believe that the 19th year of camp is in the books and what an incredible five days it was!

Adventure Amputee Camp 2013 began as Campers and Counselors arrived safely from all across the country at the **Nantahala Outdoor Center**.

Several campers were dropped off by their parents at base camp while the majority came by our bus from Atlanta. The bus of eager campers arrived with a noisy honk and was greeted by counselors as campers stepped off into a week of excitement and adventure! This year there were 10 new campers and 23 returning campers.

The campers glowed as they reunited with old friends and also met new faces that they would create unforgettable memories with throughout the week. Campers found their cabins, unpacked, dressed in their swimming gear and headed to lunch. The week's meals were prepared yet again by the team of kitchen angels who worked tirelessly to keep us full and hydrated! After the campers were fed, we headed to the Nantahala River. This year, the camper's ages ranged from 10-17, which meant we were all able to be on the "Big River" for a wild ride. Keep in mind the weather had consisted of major rain days before and the river was really

moving! Even the river guides told us that it was going to be a wild ride! Campers were ready to start off with a rush, and that's what they got!

After paddling, lots of laughing, and even a chilly swim, campers were treated to a taco dinner at NOC's on-site restaurant, Relia's. The evening's activities began with the opening ceremony of the annual Camp Olympics. Campers found their teams, played creative get-to-know you games, and the competition to win the golden leg had begun. What an exciting first night!

Day 2—Waynesville Recreation Center

Thursday morning greeted us as busy as ever, and the campers had a huge day ahead of them. In the morning, the kitchen angels were as angelic as ever and prepared a hearty breakfast to fuel the kids (at least until lunch!). With their bathing suits packed, the campers boarded the bus for the drive to the Recreation Center in Waynesville, NC. The kids were separated into their Camp Olympic teams, and spread out to tackle the rec center in full AAC force. Unfortunately, the rain kept us inside for most of the day, so our plans to play soccer were moved inside to the basketball court. The

first group of kids played a pickup game of soccer, and even though some rockets were shot at the goal, no limbs went flying!

On the other side of the court, Tyler Hyatt and Brian Vincent from the **Amp1 Basketball** were coaching basketball drills



and motivating the kids to reach for their dreams. Tyler is the founding member of this first professional standup amputee basketball team. Amp1 began when he graduated college and wanted to continue to play the game he loves - basketball. Tyler's story showed the kids that with a little determination, passion, and commitment, anything is possible, even playing professional basketball as an amputee. Brian kept all of the campers and counselors entertained with his quick wit and hilarious personality. Kim Dell of **Freedom Innovations, LLC**, one of Amp1's sponsors, helped bring Amp1 to us, and made sure each camper re-

Day 2—Waynesville Recreation Center, cont.

ceived a free Nike athletic bag, complete with signatures from our two stars!

Meanwhile, the pool was full of first time explorers as a group of our older campers got the chance to experience scuba diving firsthand with the folks from **Bermuda Scuba**. The campers learned about breathing underwater, and they got to use an underwater propeller to speed them along the pool floor. One camper exclaimed, "It was like flying...

underwater!" Then for about an hour before lunch, everyone got to enjoy the pool, from hanging out in the deep end to setting waterslide records.

At lunchtime, Aimee Copeland, a person who recently became an amputee, spent some time talking to the campers. Her effervescent personality was contagious, and smiles were abounding by the end of lunch. Aimee's positive perspective on life with disability left us all realizing that there are no limitations except those that are self-imposed. She was even kind enough to bring out her bionic arms for the campers to check out!

After lunch, a small group of campers went disc golfing with our celebrity professional disc golf player/counselor, Mike. This activity was back by popular demand from last year, and fortunately, the rain had subsided by the afternoon. Mike was able to give individual instruction to each camper, and a few added a disc to their collection!



Toward the end of the day, we were all ready for a quick rest before our second annual camper vs. counselor dodge ball game. Shea Taylor, the world's only certified amputee mixed martial arts competitor, stopped by to lead an open discussion with the kids about living with disabilities. He answered questions from the campers, but through the discussion, it became clear that Shea was learning as much as they were. Following the discussion was a self-defense demonstration. Before he left, he donated six boxing gloves that he has used in competitions. What a generous gift after traveling so far to come hang out with the campers!

The trip to Waynesville would not have been complete without the camper-counselor dodge ball game. The campers started strong with a few consecutive wins, but the counselors found their strength and literally fought tooth and knee to come out victorious in a few matches at the end...of course it would-

n't have been possible without a few "recruits" from the camper team.

Camp Olympics:

Each year it becomes more and more integrated into our camp activities. This year, we kicked the games off with dividing into teams using animal sounds to find your teammates. We had Team 'Merica, White Shadow, and Team Goobers. Wednesday night we played several get to know you games so each camper could immediately begin to know their teammates on a deeper level. We learned that among us we have dirt bike riders, dog whisperers, and world travelers. Each day activities, good behavior, helpfulness, etc. are rewarded with team points toward the Golden Leg trophy. Head counselor's track points as we go through the week but no numbers are revealed until Sunday, at the culmination of Olympic activities.

Day 3—Ropes Course, Zip Lining, Horseback Riding and Tennis

Friday of camp has always been an exciting one and this year was no different. We woke up to a few raindrops that stopped as breakfast began and it was all action and go, go, go! Campers divided into groups for the day's activities, rotating between ropes course,



tie dying, scavenger hunt, and tennis. The scavenger hunt was one of our new events this year, requiring groups to set off with their list and a camera to check off as many items as

they could. They had to find everything from a bird nest to a green truck to a slug! Our other new event was tie dying t-shirts! This was a huge hit with our campers who showed off their new shirts proudly on Sunday for camp Olympics! Thanks to our dedicated **OPAF**

First Volley Tennis volunteers who come back year after year, we had another toasty year on the courts! As

true campers do, they braved the blazing sun and had a great time perfecting their tennis skills. As we do every year, everyone got all geared-up in helmets & harnesses to head



to the ropes course. It never gets old to see how proud of themselves each camper is from their accomplishments on the Alpine tower and ropes course. From lily pads and spider webs to a 35-foot catwalk, these elements

and more were a great test for the kids! This is a camper favorite event for sure! What a workout the adventure course is! It seems to challenge campers and counselors alike at all levels! This day really allows the counselors to watch the campers encourage each other, work together, and grow through each activity!

Day 4—Fun on Fontana Lake

It's Saturday – so it must be lake day!!!! Lake day is another one that campers look forward to each year. The morning is a flurry of activities packing lunches and preparing for our day at the lake. Our bus driver, Marvin from **Premier Transportation**, got us to the lake in record time this year just as the sun was beginning to appear for the day! We were met by Al with the **Eskimo Escapades** and **Patricia Neal IRC** to help load up our boats and head for our beloved cove.

Campers are kept busy with tubing, jet skiing, water skiing, canoeing and wake boarding. Somehow the 6 hours fly, by faster each year, and we return to the docks for a delicious dinner by Joe and Kelli Thompson. To allow time for our food to settle, the campers show off their talents in our annual talent show. Their acts range from singing to hula-hooping and telling jokes. We may have the next Kevin Hart or Adam Levine among us! Again this year, the AAC Camp director

was presented with a generous donation from the Eskimo Escapades Foundation to help camp continue to grow in the years to come. We are fortunate to have amazing people supporting our camp! When all the goodbyes had finally been said, the kids were loaded onto the bus for a movie on the ride home. The chatter on the bus this year was constant, as campers knew they would have to say goodbye to their new friends the next day.

Day 5—Camp Olympics and Award Presentation

We kicked off Sunday morning with a neck and neck race for the trophy. We woke up thinking the weather was less than cooperative with its pouring down rain, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise as we headed up to Kleinrath to conduct our games indoors. Each camper and counselor alike was wearing his or her tie-dyed T-shirt from Saturday and we were quite a sight to be seen! We kicked off the competition right away with popping balloons, head counselors risking their lives as human landmarks during the potato relay race, and an intense game of hot potato. We followed large group games with a few smaller team games, competing against each other as a team. They kept balloons afloat doing whatever it took, EXCEPT use their hands. Campers and counselors quickly learned how important it was to work together as a unit through communication. We replicated human sculptures, making squares, triangles, stars, and circles in a race against each other, played our own rendition of musical chairs, giving each player a paper plate to stand on, and brought back the game of four corners to bring everyone back together as a whole. This put head counselor, Kelly's, life in danger once again as she bravely stood, eyes closed, in the midst of all the chaos as campers frantically ran from corner to corner. Each team held a

portion of the lead at some point this morning but in the end, it came down to the last event to determine a winner. Our culminating event was a Cheetos toss! And yes, it's probably exactly what you are thinking! We covered three counselors' faces and arms with shaving cream and then let the campers throw Cheetos at them! Whichever team was able to get the most Cheetos to stick got the post



points! And oh by the way, if they stuck to their faces, they were worth double! This year, when all was said and done, not only for their superior game skills demonstrated throughout the week, but their ability to work with each other, help out others, clean up, and overall just be awesome, team White Shadows came away with this year's Golden Leg award!! Congrats to their members on a job well done! They have raised the bar once again for future years! Who will it be next year?

After all the activities had come to an end, it was time to wrap up another fantastic year of camp. With campers bustling all around

we all met at basecamp for camp awards. Cabin by cabin, the counselors presented their campers with their camp awards that they had earned over the last five days. Each award highlighted a special quality or characteristic observed in the campers while at camp. In addition to their awards, each camper also received a number of take home goodies given to us by our friends: Eskimo Escapades, Patricia Neal IRC, and the Amp 1 basketball team. A big thanks to our friends for the gifts given to the campers. They loved them! Finally, it was time to give out the Ben Tobias Outstanding Camper Recognition.

The Ben Tobias Outstanding Camper Recognition was given out for the third year in a row. This recognition is given in honor and memory of a very special former camper who passed away. This honor was given to a camper who exemplified many of the same qualities and personality traits that Ben was known for; always lending a hand, a cheerful and friendly attitude, and a leader, to name a few. This year, Erik Bounasis, veteran AAC camper, received the camper award for demonstrating similar qualities during his time at camp. Erik continuously demonstrated a positive, helpful and caring attitude while at camp, as a camper and as a junior counselor. He

Day 5—Camp Olympics and Award Presentation, cont.

always went above and beyond what was asked of him and most times without even being asked. He was always willing to lend a helping hand, lead games, motivate and encourage fellow campers and make sure that everyone was having a good time. Congratulations to Erik in receiving this recognition.

With everyone fed and awards all given out, it was time for our last camp activity. Group picture! Campers and counselors alike, all wearing their new 2013 AAC t-shirt, huddled around outside of basecamp once again to take our group photo. We sure are one good-looking group!

Just like that, another amazing year at camp had come to an end. Campers and counselors said their farewells with tears in their eyes and heart felt hugs. Old friendships rekindled, new friendships created, and oh the memories made; memories that will last a lifetime. With joy in all of our hearts, we waved goodbye to each other with great smiles and promises to see each other again next year. What an exciting year this was at camp. Don't be too sad though, our 20th year of camp is right around the corner and we can hardly wait. Next year is going to be better than ever! You'll have to come and see for yourself, so stay tuned and keep in touch. Hope to see you again next year!

AAC 2013 Camper Achievement Awards

Camper	Achievement Award
Nathan	Best Human Juke Box
Brandon	Mr. Fantastic
Bradley	Most Pugly
Johnathan	Fear Crusher
Luis	Most Easy Going
Andrew	Best Camp Photographer
Miro	Best Bulgarian Opera Star
Darius	St. Darius
Alec	Best Dodgeball Moves
Jesus	Future Stand Up Comedian
Cassie	Early Riser
Erin	Perfect Pancake Maker
Kayla	Camp Diva
Lexi	Best Hugs
Elizabeth	Million Dollar Smile
Nicholas	Slide King
Chance	Slam Dunk Champion

Camper	Achievement Award
Cameron	Aquaman
Rachel	Miss Giggles
Pam	Miss Socialite
Troi	Miss Independent
Jahkee	Best All Around Athlete
Kendrick	Camp Clown
William	Master of the Alpine Tower
Sam	Future Para-Olympian
Emileigh	Miss Pretty in Pink
Deneise	Lovely Little Lady
Terry	Yeti Master
Erik	Dr. Digits
Colin	Wildlife Tamer
Sarah	Ms. Go with the Flow
Polina	Pop a Wheelie
Sharnae	Most Likely to Fall Asleep Anywhere at Camp

Adventure Amputee Camp, Inc.

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Many Thanks to all of our 2013 Donors

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