



Summer 2015 Camps

Education & Activities

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ALMANAC

Preparing for Summer Camp Away

Many emotions arise when a child leaves for camp.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Julie Kaminski remembers the language from her desperate letters to her parents: “I love you. I want to come home now!” She recalls penning a dramatic plea to be rescued from residential summer camp more than 40 years ago. Today, Kaminski is preparing for her daughter’s first camp experience away from home this summer.

“Looking back, I can see how going away to camp helped me become more self-sufficient, self-confident, self-reliant and taught me how to get along with so many different kinds of people,” said Kaminski, a Cabin John, Md. mother of two children. “Of course I didn’t think that at the time. I was extremely homesick even though it was my idea to go to sleep away camp in the first place.”

A child’s first residential summer camp experience can be fraught with emotions that run the gamut from excitement to terror. While glee at the thought of a summer filled with sports, swimming, crafts and new-found friendships can be the dominant feeling, the thought of an extended period of time away from home can cause sadness and anxiety for both parents and their children.

An American Camp Association study showed that 96 percent of children who attend sleep away camps experience homesickness at some point during their stay.

While these emotions are normal, parents can help children tame the pre-camp jitters. The life-long lessons gained from such camps make it worth the effort.

“Becoming comfortable with your child being away at summer camp, perhaps the first extended separation you have had, is a matter of trust,” said David Kaplan, Ph.D. of the American Counseling Association in Alexandria, Va.

“Trusting your child that they can handle themselves without your supervision. Trusting that they can handle relationships with other children. Trusting that they can get up in the morning, take a shower, wash their clothes, and change their sheets without your prodding.”

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT HOMESICK-NESS is normal and many campers experience it, can help children accept and cope with their emotions.

“Expecting to miss home and feel somewhat anxious helps children feel less surprised and overwhelmed when it occurs,” said Barbara Meehan, Ph.D. executive director, Counseling and Psychological Services, George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

A child’s apprehension can be eased when parents share their own camp experiences, particularly positive memories.

“Don’t let your child get caught up in your own anxiety about leaving for camp,” said Linda McKenna Guly, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Marymount University in Arlington, Va. “Kids sometimes worry about the parents they left behind. Be positive, but not sad that your child is leaving.”

Meehan says that developing a few self-soothing activities like playing outdoors or



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Summer camp experiences can help children become self-confident and self-reliant.

reading is one strategy for helping children deal with feelings of missing home. Identifying people with whom young campers can share their emotions is another means for dealing with homesickness.

“Talking to a camp counselor and even peers can help ease the difficult feelings and often they will learn they are not alone,” said Meehan.

Encouraging a child to make friends and become involved in camp activities will put the focus on the positive aspects of camp. Packing letters and stamped envelopes and developing a plan for letter exchange can help a child feel connected to their families.

“Isolating and avoiding what feels hard can often worsen anxiety and homesickness,” said Meehan. “Remind your child they are stronger than they feel in the moment and that engaging in camp activities can be helpful.”

There are times however when a child might not be ready for residential camps. The American Camp Association reports that while most cases of homesickness subside, there are cases — if a child is not eating or sleeping, for example — when it could be time to seek help. “Consult with camp professionals about resources if your child’s anxiety worsens or persists,” said Meehan.

57 Different Summer Camp Choices

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE ALMANAC

A lump of brown clay sits on the potting wheel. Water is added as the wheel begins to turn, teenage hands cup around the clay to begin forming the sides, then start in the middle and work outward.

“This will be a bowl or a cylinder,” said Glen Echo summer camp pottery instructor Linda Johnson. Pottery pieces are bisque-fired in an electric kiln over a four-day period, then glazed, and finally reduction-fired at more than 2000 degrees.

“Pottery is one of those crafts you can spend your whole adult life studying,” Johnson said. She has been teaching at what is now Glen Echo Park Partnership for Art and Culture since the early ’70s when the camp began. Most of Glen Echo’s camps are one week, but pottery is an exception as a six-week course-with two three-hour morning sessions a week

Camp programs begin June 15 although not everything is offered each week. Sessions range from visual arts such as draw-



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE ALMANAC

A pottery student works with a mound of brown clay on a potting wheel in a Glen Echo pottery class.

Glen Echo offers wide selection of arts in wide open spaces.

ing, sculpture, and photography to the performing arts such as magic, clown arts, puppetry, music and Irish dance. Glen Echo offers 108 camp sessions with 57 different types of camps and enrollment of close to 1,200.

Meredith Forster, Education Program Manager, says one of the most popular classes is clay animation where the class jointly invents a story line, develops clay characters, a dialogue and then creates a video.

“WE KEEP EXPANDING what we offer,” Forster said. “For instance, this summer is a new partnership with Under the Sea to have a Discover Nature summer camp by creating an aquarium from our former stables.” Aquariums and touch tanks will focus on the Chesapeake Bay.

Another new class this year is fused glass featuring how to cut and design glass.

SEE GLEN ECHO, PAGE 4

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Summer at Massanutten

Each year, Massanutten Military Academy offers a five-week intensive summer school program, an opportunity for students to get ahead in their learning, make up for bad or failing grades, or increase their knowledge and participation in their JROTC leadership skills. Massanutten Military Academy offers the safety of a structured learning environment, as well as the fun of a summer camp through a combination of

classroom time and weekend activities. The program is offered June 27-Aug. 1, 2015. Credit for academic courses is transferable to the student's current school. JROTC leadership credit equals one high school course credit.

STEM CAMP Massanutten offers STEM Summer Camp, two two-week camps running from June 29-July 10 and July 20-31, open to students grades 7-12. This sum-

mer camp offers students the chance to explore the many facets of STEM education including hands-on experiences. Upon completion of the STEM Summer Camp, students will receive a certification of completion. Massanutten Military Academy offers the safety of a structured learning environment, as well as the fun of a summer camp through a combination of classroom time and activities. Visit www.militaryschool.com/summer-school-2015.asp.

Marymount Technology Institutes for Ages 14-18

Marymount University has summer programs for teens ages 14-18 who are interested in technology. Gain technology skills and hands-on experience; create a mobile app or take part in a cyber competition in health care; meet fellow students who share your excitement about technology; network with technology professionals about career possibilities.

Summer Technology

Institutes' 2015 Programs:

GenCyber, July 5-17, 2015. This two-week residential program is designed for students ages 16-18. Students will have hands-on experiences in cybersecurity with a focus on defending the nation's critical assets.

Making Mobile Apps, July 13-17, 2015. This week-long institute is for students in grades 8-12 who want to explore a possible career in the development of mobile applications, one of the most dynamic sectors in the booming technology field.

Cybersecurity in Healthcare, July 20-24, 2015. This week-long program is designed to provide technology-focused students in grades 9-12 with knowledge and hands-on experience in cybersecurity, and introduce them to the many career opportunities in this growing field.

Participants in each institute will work closely with Marymount University faculty and students. They will also hear from guest speakers who are IT professionals.

The daily program will include classes taught by MU faculty and many hands-on activities to apply newly acquired knowledge.

The sessions will take place at Marymount's Main Campus and Ballston Campus in suburban Arlington, with easy access by road or Metro. Free MU shuttles provide service between the Ballston Metro Station (Orange line) and Main Campus. Optional housing for high school students is avail-

able in residence halls on Main Campus, under close supervision of MU's residence life staff and students.

DC Institutes for High School Students

July 6-18, 2015; Students will arrive at Marymount on Sunday, July 5. Programs will begin on Monday, July 6 and run through Saturday, July 18.

CJ 209 - The Criminal Justice System: Gain real-life perspective on the exciting criminal justice field. Visit various museums, meet with an FBI field agent, and probe various aspects of the criminal justice system - from laws and enforcement to the courts and corrections.

MGT 185 - The International Business Experience: Learn to succeed in a diverse and global business environment with exposure to international marketing, finance, and economics. Take part in a business simulation and experience the decision-making that goes on in an international business enterprise.

Live in a residence hall on Marymount's Main Campus in suburban Arlington. Space is limited and priority will be given to rising high school seniors.



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Glen Echo Offers Wide Selection

FROM PAGE 2

Photography classes have added digital classes to the traditional black and white film classes taught in the large darkroom with enlargers and film developing trays.



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE ALMANAC

A peek through the window of the Glen Echo working Denzel carousel about to open to the public. Campers in Carousel of Animals Camp session build their own carousel character, and their creations are displayed outside the carousel after their session.

Anja Caldwell teaches fiber arts for 6-14 year olds. In three days campers can learn to make a small original doll, body first then adding clothes they have knitted. "We teach special skills for small hands." One group decided to invent a play with their doll characters.

Stocking hats are always popular, even in the spring when temperatures turn warm along with short sweaters that one camper refers to as "her cloak." Caldwell says these provide immediate reinforcement because when a student uses the sweater form she can be usually finished in several days.

A menagerie of tigers, ostriches, prancing horses circle the original 1921 Denzel working carousel at Glen Echo. In the Carousel of Animals summer class, students build their own large carousel animal out of paper maché in a week, and their creations are displayed outside the original carousel after their camp session is over.

One of the employees injects that every year two boys come from Israel to visit relatives and attend camp. Last year they made a wolf and a fox carousel animal and then had to figure out how to get them back home on the airplane. Others made a giraffe, unicorn and blue octopus.

From the parking lot, take a walk over the bridge spanning a gorge with winding creek, a path through the woods and past the carousel, candy corner, and to the stone carving yurt.

Glen Echo Summer camp is located in Glen Echo, Maryland and serves the metropolitan area and well beyond. It offers a wide-open expanse with diverse activi-



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE ALMANAC

Linda Johnson points to finished bowls and cylinders that have been bisque-fired in an electric kiln over a four-day period, glazed and fired again at 2,000 degrees. Johnson has been teaching pottery at Glen Echo summer camps since the early 1970s when the camp began.

ties for ages 4-15. Camp runs from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. with extended camp offered until 6 p.m. Forster said, "the camp is handy for families because they can drop off their kids at the same time and one can take fine arts, one magic, and one photography." Then the next week they might move into music, calligraphy and puppetry.

Resident organizations occupy studios in

metal-roofed yurts dotted across the grounds while individual instructors share yurt space. This approach allows Glen Echo to expand their programs by adding classes like bookmaking and fiber arts. Forster said, "we have a wonderful venue and space."

All programs are produced in cooperation with the National Park Service and Montgomery County.

Summer Sailing Camp: Outside, Hands-On, Empowering

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Amy Zang has just returned from a week sailing the British Virgin Isles with nine members of her extended family ranging from her 78-year-old, legally-blind father to her brother's 4- and 6-year old children.

"I was the captain of the 46-foot catamaran, but I had to get used to it. It is the biggest boat I have sailed. You use the same sailing skills but adapt the technique when the boat is this large."

Zang is the Director and Owner of the Youth Sailing Day Camp at the Washington Sailing Marina. The Washington Sailing Marina camp offers six different youth sailing classes in the summer with the Sunfish for beginners and the Flying Scot for intermediates. The advanced class uses a Hobie Cat. The racing class sails a Collegiate 420 that is a fast, maneuverable boat allowing campers the chance to work on boat balance and roll tacks.

Adventures on a Big Boat sails a Catalina 25. This group has a picnic lunch under anchor on Thursdays and they, along with the intermediate boats, sail to Old Town for lunch on Fridays. Other groups get

smoothies on Friday "so everyone gets a treat."

Sailing students must be certified before moving on to the next level. Some campers come for one week and others move up the skill level over successive weeks at camp. Windsurfing is also offered.

The camp opens June 1 and runs weekly through Aug. 22, and is already over 50 percent full. The classes run from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and are open to rising third graders-15 years of age. She thinks children choose sailing for summer because "it is different, it is outside, it is hands on and they get immediate gratification." They walk away with a life skill that they can carry into adulthood, she says.

Sailing class is empowering, Zang says. Children don't have much in their lives that they can be fully in charge of. "I give them trust, here is a boat, and you can learn to sail it and they give trust back. They learn responsibility and it is a huge confidence builder for both male and female students. Sailing isn't about strength." She adds, "When kids come they love it and keep returning year after year." She said word of mouth is powerful and she has had a number of children for many years.

Classes are systematic, beginning with a

10-minute "chalk talk" about what they will be doing that day. Then on to a drill such as a figure eight on the water followed by docking. The routine gets instilled with a game like "stick, stick, capsize." Sailing students practice docking, sailing to the dock where an instructor awaits them. If they do a perfect docking, they get a paint stick and they sail back to a buoy not too far off, switch positions (crew moves to skippers position) and sail to the dock again. If they do a good docking they get a second paint stick, and from there they sail out into the lagoon where a safety boat is stationed. They hand in their two paint sticks and get to do a capsize, the reward for two good dockings.

She calls each day "controlled chaos" where she has to be mentally two steps ahead watching weather, keeping track of the boats at all times and supervising the instructors as well as tending to children who may need special attention. "Every single cog in the wheel has to work." Zang describes herself as a big communicator and sends group email updates to parents during the week. If there are specific things to pass along she emails the parents directly.

During the school year, Zang provides home-bound school instruction for students

with illness or special needs that keep them from attending traditional school.

At this time of year, Zang is interviewing staff, rescheduling returning staff, reviewing insurance policies and other business, organizing buses, getting boats ready for the season "putting a screwdriver to every screw, washing out boats and getting them in the water."

Zang offers bus service pickup from Bethesda. This year, a mom organized a group of 24 sailing campers from Chantilly so "I am sending a bus there to pick up the kids that week." Sailing students come from all over the metropolitan area and some are visiting relatives and attend sailing camp for a week or two. About half come with a friend although she tries to match everyone up with a buddy if they don't. "We have a lot of diplomat kids, too, a nice diverse population."

The staff includes more than 40 full-time summer counselors; many started in sailing camp themselves a number of years ago. "I have one counselor this year who started camp when he was 9." She has better than a 1-6 ratio of staff to campers.

"It's a good job for high school and college students, getting a tan, learning valuable skills and how to work with kids."