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For detailed camp descriptions and dates, instructor bios, and registration information, visit our website at www.thelittletheatre.com and click on "Education" or call the business office at 703-683-5778, ext. 2. Camps run from Jun. 6 - Sep. 2. Camps fill up fast, so don't delay.

> The Little Theatre of Alexandria • 600 Wolfe Street • Alexandria, VA 22314 Michael Page, Camp Director • Roland Gomez, Governor of Education



Preparing for Sleep Away Summer Camp

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL THE CONNECTION

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 precamp 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 HOME-SICKNESS 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 memo-

"Don't let your child get caught up in your own anxiety about leaving for camp," said Linda McKenna Gulyn, 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 selfsoothing activities like playing outdoors or 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.

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From Colonial History to Future Entrepreneurs

Campers can explore diverse interests in specialty summer camps.

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

his summer dozens of elementary school-aged children will travel back in time to the Colonial Era where, among other things, they'll learn to spin cotton into cloth for garments.

Learning how to run a lemonade stand like a Fortune 500 company and use the profits to invest in the stock market will be on the agenda for other local children. Both activities are offered by local specialty camps aimed at giving children opportunities to explore their interests in a way that they cannot during the school year.

"During the school year, there is so much emphasis on testing that the creative and collaborative nature of children gets lost."

— Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D.

"I think summer camps are a great way to promote thriving if it is done right," said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria and a camp consultant. "During the school year, there is so much emphasis on testing that the creative and collaborative nature of children gets lost. A great camp can create space for our children to flourish."

SPECIALTY CAMPS offer young campers a chance to focus on a specific area of interest such as cooking, financial literacy and even gaming.

For example, Spark Business Academy, a Northern Virginia based organization that teaches financial literacy to young students, is offering its Future Millionaires Camp in Arlington. Students learn about money concepts that range from setting up a lemonade stand that makes a profit to understanding the stock market.

"The name is definitely tongue in cheek," said Chuchi Arevalo, the organization's founder. "We teach personal finance, leadership and innova-



Photo courtesy of Visit Fairfax

Camp Washington at Mount Vernon gives campers a glimpse of early American life.



Photo courtesy of Mason Game & Technology Academy

Students in the Mason Game & Technology Academy Summer Camp will be offered classes in Game Design, Creation and Entrepreneurship, Minecraft and Cyber Defense.

tion. We give them life skills that they aren't learning in school and promote financial literacy that is fun even for students in first and second grade."

RISING FIFTH- and sixth-grade students will get a chance to take a trip back in time this summer at Mount Vernon's Camp Washington. During each of the three one-week sessions, campers explore the history of George Washington's estate and learn about his legacy.

From farming and spinning fibers into cloth to making ice cream and meeting the estate's heritage breed animals, hands-on activities will give campers a glimpse of many aspects of early American life at Mount Vernon.

"The summer camp is designed to help engage students while having fun," said Melissa Wood, spokeswoman for Mount Vernon. "[It] gives kids the opportunity to go behind the scenes and experience history in their own backyard."



For More Information

Game and Technology Summer Camps

potomacacademy.gmu.edu/mgta/summer/

Future Millionaires Bootcamp/ Stock Market Acres

moneynewsforkids.com/

Camp Washington and more at Mount Vernon

www.mountvernon.org/plan-yourvisit/calendar/events/campwashington-summer-day-camp-atmount-vernon/

YOUNG GAME DESIGN aficionados can spend the summer with Mason Game & Technology Academy's (MGTA) camps. Students take classes such as Game Design, Creation and Entrepreneurship, Minecraft and Cyber Defense.

"We run our classes at Mason in Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William," said Vera Lichtenberg, Director of the Mason Game & Technology Academy at George Mason University.

"We also do a great deal of community outreach to train teachers, engage underserved students, and generally, help students realize that Game Design is a STEM field that not only engages those who love technology, but also those on the artistic side: writers, music composers [and] designers.Ó

MGTA is part of the Mason Computer Game Design Program and the Community Outreach Youth Program for the Virginia Serious Game Institute.

Summer Camps Education & Activities

Academic Camps Combine Education and Fun

Local camps help students maintain school skills in a relaxed environment.

> BY MARILYN CAMPBELL The Connection

ne summer Ana Lado created a summer camp activity for students at her neighborhood pool. The Marymount professor set up a picnic area, and included activities and books. Her plan was to engage the students and give them the opportunity to read and build reading skills while still enjoying fun activities traditionally associated with summer.

"I got six kids who were older to read to six kindergartners. I chose kids who had potential, but who were at risk," said Ana Lado, Ph.D., professor of Education at Marymount University in Arlington. "Reading with a kindergartner or first grader for 15 minutes got the students reading and built their confidence."

This summer Lado and her colleagues at Marymount are offering "3E: Explore, Enrich, Enjoy," one of several area camps with an academic component. Their goal is to enable students to brush up on, gain or maintain academic skills in a relaxed environment.

Marymount's 3E camp enables campers to choose what they focus on at camp. In addition to traditional camp activities, the camp will include academic projects like exploring science through nature and electronic gadgets, studying math by making boats, language arts by writing their own stories and fine arts by creating plays and cartoons.

For those who want an in-depth review of a school subject and the chance to participate in hands-on summer camp activities, academic camps fill both needs.

"[Academic camps] supplement what students are getting during the school year and allow them to experience subjects and topics that they're not getting in public school," said Dan Stalcup, Associate Director for Fairfax Collegiate, a Herndon-based organization that offers summer programs for students entering third through ninth grade.

Programs at Fairfax Collegiate run the gamut from filmmaking and robotics to engineering and classic children's literature. For example, third and fourth grade students can learn to craft their own short stories during a Story Writing course in Alexandria, Chantilly and Ashburn.

Campers who enjoy reading and want to delve into award-winning novels by authors such as Madeleine L'Engle or Rebecca Stead can take "Reading Newbury Winners" with sessions in Chantilly, Ashburn, Fairfax, McLean and Reston. Students can spend two weeks reading books that have been



Photo courtesy of Marymount University

Kara Dedon, a Marymount University graduate student, will be the director of the school's camp.

awarded the Newbery Medal for excellence in literature for

Fifth and sixth graders who love math and want to hone their analytical and logical thinking skills can spend their time engaging in chess, Stratego and

other mind-bending activities in the "Brain Games" camp, which will be offered in Chantilly, Reston, Herndon, McLean, Alexandria and Oakton.

Future detectives might enjoy taking a forensic science class in Alexandria, Chantilly, Herndon, Ashburn, Falls Church and McLean. "Students learn about the science in criminal justice, like blood-

typing and fingerprinting by actually doing the experiments and seeing them in action,"

"Students get a lot of personal attention because the classes are small, and the instructors either have or are pursing a degree in the topic they're teaching," said Stalcup. "They're all very passionate about the subject they're teaching."

Academic camps might be a good fit for students who are curious about a particular area of study. "Many parents want something that is both fun and educational, meaning it will help their child keep [busy] and develop skills needed during the school year," said Tina M. Morris, Child Development Programs Consultant at George Mason University. "I think both parents and



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COLLEGIATE

A fifth grade student learns about the structure of the human heart during a Human Biology and Anatomy at Fairfax Collegiate.

educators realize that summer vacation does not have to be a break from learning."

The decision to send a child to a camp that focuses on reading, science, math or another school subject instead of a purely recreational camp is a personal one, says Lado. "There are some kids who can visit their grandparents in Maine all summer and they come back to school in the fall and pick up where they left off," she said. "Then there are other kids who can't pick up easily. Those are the kids who would benefit from an academic program."

Students appreciate the ability to focus on one subject in a relaxed atmosphere in an academic camp. "If kids are taking a subject at a fast-clip pace, but they don't do well, they miss key skills. The next year they

"I think both parents and educators realize that summer vacation does not have to be a break from learning."

— Tina M. Morris, Child **Development Programs Consultant at George** Mason University.

move to a higher level class, but the same problem still exists," said Lado. "When they take a week or two during the summer and immerse themselves in a subject, they go stronger into the next school year. In camp, it's the only thing they're doing academically and they can concentrate on it. '

For example, The Madeira School in McLean is offering summer programs in Trigonometry and Geometry. "These courses are intended for advancement into higher level math classes, and based on our classes taught during the academic year," said Ashley Smith, Associate Director of Communications

at Madeira. "A student who is interested in math and wishes to advance to higher levels will benefit, as well as students who need a refresher or a better understanding before moving ahead."

When choosing an academic camp, parents should look for camps that are not all work and no play. "I want to make sure it has a healthy balance of recreational and educational enrichment activities," said Morris. "If the campers are enjoying the activities and the counselors are skilled, the program should, as a natural effect, promote the building of positive relationships with their peers and their counselors."

SCHOOL Notes

Sophia R. Labas and Joshua Smith-Sreen were named to the dean's list at Boston University (Boston, Mass.) for the fall 2015 semester.

Seventy-seven middle school students from Fairfax County Public Schools have been named to the 2016 All-Virginia Middle School Honor Choir. Sandburg Middle School students named to the honor choir include Madison Maddox, Sereena Denham, Emma Brown, and Trevor Hilko (alternate). The group will perform on Saturday, April 30, at the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts in Virginia Beach.

Quintin Frerichs and Reese Frerichs were named to the dean's list for the fall 2015 semester at Washington University in St.

Ben Frerichs is a member of the Carleton College baseball team for the 2016 season. Carleton is a member of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) and NCAA Division III. Frerichs, of Alexandria, attended St. Stephens and St. Agnes School.

Brad Gregory Davis graduated from Missouri University of Science and Technology (Rolla, Mo.) in December 2015. Davis earned a Master of Science in engineering management.

Ashley Deck, Margaret Heltzel, Andrew Hohman, and Cameron Pattisall qualified for the fall semester 2015 dean's list at Ohio University's Athens campus.

Lindsay Sopko, of Alexandria, was named to the fall 2015 honors list at Mary Baldwin College.

dean's list at Mary Baldwin College (Staunton, Va.) include Shantelle Jennings and Phoe-

Andrew Hepburn Webb, class of 2017, has been named to the dean's list at Christchurch School for the first marking period of the school year. Webb, son of Ann and William Webb of Alexandria, has also been part of the JV

Christchurch School class of 2016, was a member of the 2015 Crew Team in the fall season. He is the son of Debra Rog and John Ambrose of Alexandria.





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Questions? Contact Director Vera Lichtenberg at vlichten@gmu.edu or call 703-993-9889.

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Sail Away the Summer

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

my Zang says this year all of the Flying Scots were painted in the fall and are looking beautiful. "We're now doing the bottom paint and then will check all of the boats to be sure they are ready to sail." Zang is the Director and Owner of the Youth Sailing Day Camp at the Washington Sailing Marina. This year sailing camp begins May 31, the Tuesday after Memorial Day and ends the week of August 15-19th. "There won't be many kids the first week because some schools are still in session, but we'll have it anyway." The classes run from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 pm.. and are open to rising third graders through 15 years of age.

Zang says the Sunfish is for beginners and the Flying Scot for intermediates. "But we're going to continue the Skippers Club this year for those kids who have received their Sunfish license and are ready for a less structured class. It's more like a club, more get out and play games and have fun on the boat." She says this really started by accident two years ago and became so popular that they have added another class this year. It is a small class of nine kids who have mastered sailing with instructors hopping on and off.

Sailing campers can move to the intermediate stage with a skipper or crew li-



Sailors rig the Sunfish in preparation for beginning the day's lesson at Youth Sailing Camp at the Washington Sailing Marina.

cense. The Flying Scot is a 17-foot boat with five campers plus an instructor. It is a bigger boat than the Sunfish with two sails and heads out to the river. "Some kids learn better with the constant reinforcement of an instructor or they like the immediate feedback."

"The advanced class sails a Hobie Cat that is harder to sail or some students choose racing 420's." Four weeks out of the summer, Adventures on a Big Boat is offered on Catalina 25. "The bigger the boat, it reacts differently."

Classes are already more than 50 percent full for the summer. "Last year we had the best summer ever in my 24 years here or even the 56 years the camp has been in operation." She continues, "we had just over 1,200 kids. Fantastic. It was due to my staff. If the kids are having fun, they want to sign up for more weeks." Zang es-

timates that more than 50 percent of the camp attendees come back, often bringing a friend.

Looking back over the years Zang says she makes constant adjustments. One of these is to have enough instructors to keep up with populations such as learning disabled. Zang is a special education teacher during the school year.

"A number of instructors return every year so we can fine tune their training which makes new instructors this year. "Although Zang has 65 staff on the rolls, on any one day she is juggling 40 sailing counselors, 70 boats and 130 campers in sailing classes. "I tell my instructors everything has to be in its place to make the camp run smoothly." Zang says, "I feel blessed and lucky. We are like a family."

Zang says she is going to four weddings this year of previous counselors—in Argentina, Richmond, Alexandria and British Columbia

Camp begins at 9:30 am with a half hour discussion on safety procedures and a look ahead at the plan for the day. Morning sailing is from 10-noon with an hour break for lunch, "and if it's really hot, I turn on the sprinkler." After a 15 minute recap of the morning lessons learned, they sail again from 1:30-3:40 pm. "The kids do it all. They put the boats together and take them apart." Zang says on the days they can't go out because it is too too windy they have come up with ways to occupy 130 kids on land by setting up stations where kids rotate from boat building, to flag making, to other things related to sailing. Zang adds there were only two of those non-sailing days last summer.

Photos by Shirley Ruhe/The Connection



Beginning Sunfish classes sail from the dock on a summer morning to practice the day's maneuvers.



Summer counselors at National Marina Youth Sailing Day Camp give the sailors a safety lesson each day before heading for the Potomac.

Summer Camps Education & Activities



The Little Theatre of Alexandria offers the largest variety of summer drama camps in the area for preschool to 8th grade level children. Classes run June 6- to Sept. 2.

Arts to Banish Boredom

By Jeanne Theismann Gazette Packet

lbert Einstein did it. So did Mark Zuckerburg, Denzel Washington, Lady Gaga and Sandra Day O'Conner. What do they have in common with millions of other children across the

They all attended summer camp. "In our summer camps we try to create a safe environment for kids to express their creativity," said Michael Page, the summer camps coordinator for The Little Theatre of Alexandria. "Most classes focus on performance while others work on storytelling through play. But they all help kids grow in selfconfidence while having fun."

According to the American Camp Association, research shows that camp experiences often increase a child's confidence, self-esteem, social skills, independence, leadership qualities, adventurousness and connection

First Lady Michelle Obama served as a summer camp counselor, an important role as children learn new skills and develop interpersonal relationships.

"We also have a new Counselor in Training camp for high schoolers," Page said. "This class is for students who are interested in furthering their education and getting a chance to work in a leadership role in a theatrical setting. We also try to find a nice balance for all of our campers – those who have been coming for many years and those who are just starting in theatre. It's a great experience for everyone involved."

A large variety of summer camp classes are available at LTA for preschool through 8 the Counselor in Training class open to 9 through Sept. 2. For more information or to register, contact Michael Page at mbpage1990@gmail.com or visit www.thelittletheatre.com.

Extended child care is also avail-

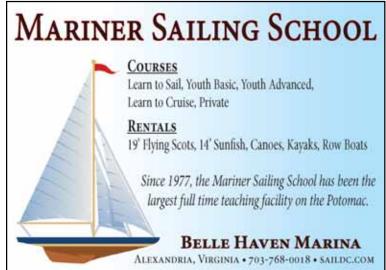
able from 8 to 9 a.m. and from 3:30 to 6 p.m. at a cost of \$10 per hour. Child care registration is done by phone after camp registration is completed. Call 703--683--5778, extension 2.

For budding Picassos, the Del Ray Artisans invites campers ages 8 to 14 to spend a week creating art with professional artist instruc-

All artist supplies, as well as lunch and snacks, are provided. There will also be a one-day-only gallery show held July 23 and July 30 to show off the students' work from their week of camp. The first camp session will be held July 18-22 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily followed by a second camp July 25 -

For more information, contact the Art Camp Administrator/Youth **Programs** Director Youth@DelRayArtisans.org.

"A camp experience is one of tremendous growth for any child," Page said.



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