

Reaching Out to Others

(This is the fourth in 4 articles on the "Four R's" that we stress at Camp Champions)

As you might have seen in a previous article, we focus on the "Four R's": showing Respect, taking reasonable Risks, Reaching out to others, and taking Responsibility. This article talks about what we do to stress reaching out to others.

We have spent a meaningful amount of time and energy on living this part of our mission lately. Specifically, we want to be able to model "reaching out" to our campers in a real and obvious way. With this in mind, we have made numerous changes to live this out better.

To begin, we have established a scholarship program for campers who might not otherwise be able to afford camp. We closely guard the identity of these campers so that very few of us know who they are so that they can have the same camp experience as everyone else. We provide camp terms at a meaningful discount to these scholarship campers with the hope that they will be able to become "Champions" in their communities and their schools and help make these places better by their presence. (We have had a few parents ask if they could contribute to this program. If you have an interest, we would love to hear from you).

During orientation, we did a lot of reaching out. We invited the Boys and Girls Club of Marble Falls to attend a day of camp for free. Our counselors got an opportunity to practice their instruction and camper skills and the Club got a great day of fun. We also provided several occasions for counselors to go into town and volunteer at the Club during work periods. Finally, we dedicated all of our staff for half a day to do various projects in town for 9(?) different non-profit organizations, including the Humane Society, the Marble Falls Soccer Foundation, a music school, the community theater, and ???. The counselors found the entire experience fulfilling and fun.

Starting this next year, we plan to incorporate some element of service into our camper reunions. Each year, we come to the major cities in Texas to get together with our campers and have fun. Our intention this year is to have a blast while also reaching out.

Of course, we also reach out during camp. Each day, we encourage our campers to help and encourage each other. A boy that knows how to ride a horse or a girl that knows how to ski can do a lot to pass that skill on to a cabinmate.

Our senior camper program is designed to teach the older campers (those going into 10th-12th grade) to work with younger campers as mentors and leaders. This program includes a spring retreat held near the camp. During this retreat, we talk with our campers about giving back to the camp community that they have enjoy for so long: "as a camper, you have enjoyed a wonderful magic show, now we will help teach you to be the magicians." We believe that one of the greatest lessons that we can teach a child is that "it is not about you". People who give readily to others live to fullest and most joyous lives.