

Camps for Scouts with (Dis)abilities

Occasionally, people ask whether boys with disabilities can attend council summer camps. The answer is a definite YES!

We encourage boys of all abilities to participate in camping experiences to the extent that they are able. Council summer camps have served boys and adults with various physical and mental challenges. When considering a summer camp, we encourage leaders and parents to discuss specific needs with the camp director prior to reserving a camp to pick the best camp for your situation.

Some things to consider when choosing a camp:

- 1) **Terrain.** The camp director can describe the terrain of the camp and any areas that may present access challenges. Only the boy, parents, and leaders can decide whether the boy can successfully negotiate the natural environment of a particular camp.
- 2) **Facilities.** Our newer facilities have greater access for persons with disabilities. For example, the new Miller Aquatics Center (2009) has an elevator specifically to assist our guests with mobility challenges. On the other hand, Camp Steiner's facilities were primarily constructed in the 1930's, 40's and 50's. In some cases, these facilities are not as easily accessible. As they are renovated, they will be retrofitted to become more accessible.
- 3) **Medical Needs.** Some camps are more remote than others. If access to medical care is a factor, then this should be addressed before making a camp reservation.
- 4) **Time at Camp.** Camps vary in length of stay. Day camp participants return home every night. Boy Scouts stay an entire week at camp. The length of stay can be modified to meet the needs of the boy.
- 5) **Troop Leadership.** While our camp staff will assist youth with camp programs, the troop is responsible to help a boy move from area to area and carry out the daily troop and personal tasks.

Additionally, parents and leaders can help the camp director understand a young man's needs and the ways in which programs and activities can be reasonably adapted (within the ability of the camp) to the needs of the young man. By contacting the camp director before camp, you provide an opportunity for him to provide the camp staff this information as needed so that they are better prepared to help a young man take advantage of camp programs.

Our goal is to provide a camping experience for every boy, including those with special challenges. Parents and leaders ultimately must decide what camping experience is within the ability of a Scout. Council summer camp staff will work diligently to see that every boy receives the support and assistance that he needs to have a fun and successful summer experience.

