

SUMMER CAMPS

A WINNING COMBINATION OF EDUCATION AND INDEPENDENCE

It may be the middle of winter, but now is the time to register your child for a summer camp, whether to develop a specific interest or to simply have fun, meet other kids and create lasting relationships. Camp can be a formative time for children, a time to develop independence, freedom of expression and movement, explore a different setting, swing a tennis racquet, and eat meals that might not always be perfect, but will be memorable.

Top: Climbing wall at Camp Tecumseh
Bottom: Arts and crafts at the McAllister Recreation Center summer camps

For a traditional “sleep away” camp, Camp Tecumseh YMCA in Brookston has programs for boys and girls, ages 8 through 15 years old. Overnight camp is available to kids in one-week increments, but kids can stay longer if the family chooses, says Scott Brosman, senior associate executive director. There are about eight to 10 campers in a cabin, or group, with two senior counselors, who are 18 or older, and have at least finished their freshman year in college, he says. The resident summer camp at Tecumseh is large by many standards—about 465 kids attend the camp each week during the summer.

The activities are diverse, from athletics, to arts and crafts, to drama and horseback riding. And as the activities are diverse, so are the campers, notes Brosman. On a given week during the summer, he says there are children from 21 different states at Tecumseh, and some international campers as well, but the vast majority are from Indiana and Illinois.

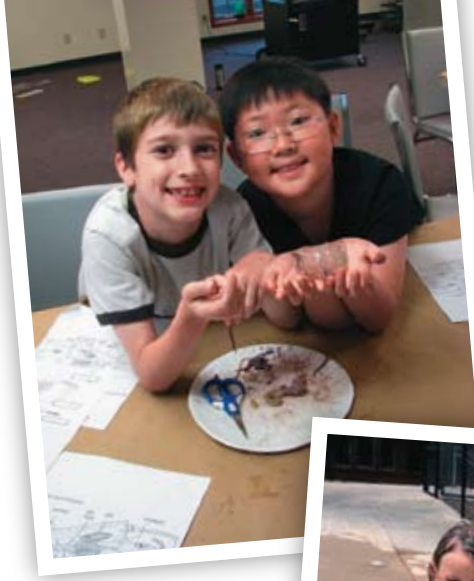
One of the obvious but perhaps most important lessons from attending a sleep away camp is learning how to live with different people.

“One of the main draws for kids to come to camp is to meet new people and learn social skills, learn to live together in a group, to compromise on different things,” Brosman says.

Tecumseh is an independent YMCA camp with its own board of directors, yet the camp retains its YMCA affiliation.

“The YMCA is a Christian organization, and we have





Squid dissection is one of many educational activities available during the Zoo Discovery Camps at the Columbian Park Zoo.



Swimming at McAllister Recreation Center

carried on that tradition throughout the years here,” explains Brosman. “Our camp motto is the ‘I am Third Motto,’ which stands for God is first, the other person is second, and I am third.” Daily chapels are conducted every morning, and in a more private setting, devotions are done in the cabins in the evening. Brosman says the camp is non-denominational, but the goal is to instill a sense of honesty and responsibility in the campers.

Aside from the resident camp at Tecumseh, the group of camps also offers a day camp program, an equestrian camp and an adventure trip program, which is a travel camp for teen-agers, ages 13 to 16, including a white water rafting trip in Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia, notes Brosman.

While connecting with other kids and adults is one of the primary goals of attending a sleep away camp, making connections with animals and fully appreciating their value on our planet is one of the main lessons taught when kids attend camp at the Columbian Park Zoo, says Amber Frederick, education coordinator. The zoo has day camp for kids ages 3 to 13. Counselors at the camp try to instill a love of animals with many opportunities to touch the animals.

“By helping children connect with animals, we hope they are motivated to protect wildlife through their actions as adults,” explains Frederick. One of the concepts introduced is how the campers’ actions can have an impact on wildlife in different parts of the world because animals depend on natural resources for living that humans can diminish without realizing it. Through the experiences they have at zoo camp, Frederick and other educators hope kids will gain a new understanding of animals and will thus be motivated to conserve resources to help wildlife.

“We address little things kids can do right here in Indiana »



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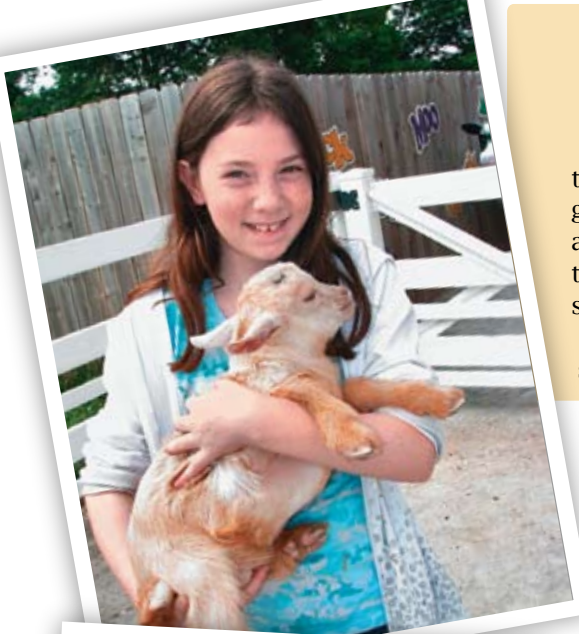
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to help wildlife in far off places—conserving energy, recycling — but the goal is to empower them and help them understand that they can have an impact, and that there is hope for this planet,” she says. The exposure to animals is always done in a kid-friendly, fun way, both in a classroom setting and on the zoo’s grounds.

Out of the approximately 200 animals at the zoo, about 45 are considered “animal ambassadors,” which means that they are specifically trained to come in close proximity with people. The animal ambassadors are a big part of camp activities.

“They are animals that leave their enclosures on a regular basis for educational purposes,” she explains. “So the kids get a multisensory experience. We think that really helps to connect them.”

Kids can experience a long and fun summer at the McAllister Recreation Center camps, where 75 percent of the kids attend the day camp for eight or more weeks, says Jon Miner, manager of McAllister Recreation Center. Children can attend camp in week-long increments, but many attend much longer. The camp averages about 150 kids a day, separated into groups of 20 to 30.

“We’re an active camp; we are up and moving,” Miner says. “By the end of the day, we have been through a whole range of activities, and very physically active. I think that is what makes summer camp attractive to parents.”

High school kids can experience a more specialized summer camp experience in the area, and the 4-H camps, with workshops at Purdue University, are a popular choice. The 4-H camps offer mostly three-day workshops during the summer in such subjects as aerospace, agricultural communication (Ambassador workshop), band and chorus, says Dr. Carl Broady, extension specialist, 4-H Youth Development at Purdue.

“For example, for the aerospace workshop, we work out at the Purdue airport with the school of technology,” he says. “On the middle day, they get a chance to fly a small plane, of course with the instructors there. They also build model rockets, and fly those.” ✽



Get up close and personal with the animals during the Zoo Discovery Camps at the Columbian Park Zoo.



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Career prep and areospace workshops available through the 4-H camps give students many hands-on opportunities.

THINK AHEAD TO SUMMER 2011

A good summer often requires good planning, and that means registering your children early for a summer camp that best suits their interests.

At **Camp Tecumseh**, 12635 W. Tecumseh Bend Road in Brookston, Scott Brosman, senior associate executive director, encourages parents to think a year or two ahead and visit the camp the summer before you are considering sending your child, so parents can see what the camp is like during the summer when campers are there. Parents can still come during the year to visit the grounds, which are open for gatherings and meetings in the off season. You can register online for your child to attend Camp Tecumseh at the camp's website, www.camp Tecumseh.org or call (765) 564-2898 for information about visiting the camp and registration.

Amber Frederick, education coordinator at the **Columbian Park Zoo**, 1915 Scott Street in Lafayette, encourages parents to register their children early for 2011 because the camps begin to fill up by March. To register, go to the zoo's website, www.columbianparkzoo.org, click on Zoo Discovery Camps, and you will find a registration form to fax or mail in or call (765) 807-1540. One of the new camps for 2011 includes a week-long session on animal forensics. Most of the camps run in week-long increments, but kids can come for different camps as long as there is space, she says.

If you are interested in sending your child to the summer camps at **McAllister Recreation Center**, registration for summer 2011 is under way, and the camps usually fill up by the first week in May, says Jon Miner, manager of McAllister Recreation Center. Parents can download a flyer from the website, <http://www.lafayette.in.gov/mcallister>, and the form can be mailed in or stop by the office at 2351 N. 20th Street in Lafayette to register. Online registration should be available in March, notes Miner. Parents also can call (765) 807-1360 for information about McAllister.

"It's never fun to be put on a waiting list and be dependent upon a space opening up down the line," he says. "So we encourage families, once they have their plans firmed up, to register."

Typically, participants in the **4-H camps** at Purdue have been involved with 4-H previously, but students who have not been members of 4-H may still be accepted into the workshops, usually by recommendation of a teacher or counselor at their school, explains Dr. Carl Broady, extension specialist, 4-H Youth Development at Purdue. Students can register for the 4-H camps through the extension office in the county in which they live. Contact Broady at (765) 494-8435 for information on how to apply if your child has not been previously involved with 4-H. Funding opportunities are also available for the workshops, he notes. For a complete list of the 4-H workshops, go to <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu>, and click on the workshops link.



March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month...Know Your Risk!

As the second leading cause of cancer in the United States for both men and women, colorectal cancer is one of the most curable cancers, when detected at an early stage. That's why everyone 50 or older should be tested, and people with risk factors, like family history of the disease, might need to be screened earlier.

Colon cancer often has no symptoms...encourage your loved ones to get tested.

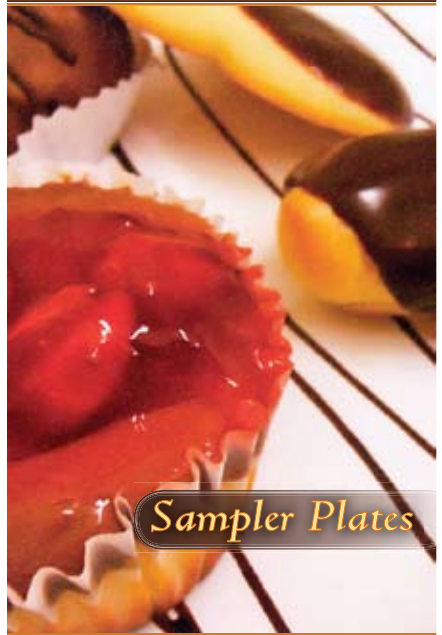
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