

Summertime • Summertime • Summer

Summer Activities Resources

It is never too early to begin planning for summer fun. This resource list for 2004 presents summer camps and other activities for children with disabilities and special health care needs. It is also one of our most popular publications. If you know of some activities that we missed, please share with us. Send E-mail to plukinfo@pluk.org, or telephone 406.255.0540 or 800.222.PLUK [7585].

Montana Resources

▲ National Camps for the Blind

Hayden Lake, Idaho

National Camps for Blind Children®/Adults is affiliated with Christian Record Services. This project began in 1967 with a single camp at Kulaqua in High Springs, Florida. The camping program has been such a success that we now operate two dozen camps at various locations across the United States and Canada. Since its creation, over 43,000 campers have attended these unusual camps.

Visit <http://www.christianrecord.org/site/blndcmp/scamp.php> or telephone Ed Horan at 406.538.3803

Transportation is available along I-90, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Missoula.

▲ Camp Huff 'N Puff

Montana

The ALA of the Northern Rockies sponsors two camps for children with asthma ages 7-13. One is a week-long camp at a Luccock Park, a Methodist Church camp in Livingston, Montana, and the other is a weekend camp co-sponsored with a hospital in Sheridan, Wyoming. Both camps are attended around the clock by a physician and nurses. All camp staff are volunteers with the exception of camp counselors. Campers requiring medication receive

careful attention to their medical routines and their prescribed medicines are dispensed by nurses.

Children 7-13 yrs, Cystic Fibrosis, Asthma, Respiratory Disease

Telephone the American Lung Association of Montana at 800-LungUSA (800.586.4872), or visit <http://www.lungusa.org/northernrockies/programs.html>

▲ Camp Mak-A-Dream

Missoula, Montana

Camp Mak-A-Dream is operated by Children's Oncology Camp Foundation and is a medically supervised, cost-free camp for children (ages 6-13), teens (ages 14-18) and young adults (ages 19-25) with cancer and their siblings (ages 6-17). The facility is located approximately 65 miles east of Missoula, Montana on I-90 at the Gold Creek exit, just ¾ of a mile south of the Interstate.

E-mail camp@montana.com, telephone 406.549.5987, or visit <http://www.campdream.org/>

▲ Charles Campbell Children's Camp

Billings Montana

Volunteer staff provides nursing, professional food preparation, and supervision of all activities. Lions members and many other caring individuals with your child's interests at heart guide daily

activities. Volunteers provide activities such as fishing, hiking, swimming, crafts, training for counselors and all those other things that are essential to a successful camp.

Visit them on the Web at http://www.billingslions.org/ccc_dir.htm

Any child age 6-18 who has a physical disability

Contact Doug & Sue Hanson

P.O. Box 23342, Billings, MT 59104

Telephone 406.652.0438 or send E-mail to campbellcamp@msn.com

Registration Deadline: July 10, 2004, Camp Dates: July 18-23, 2004

Beartooth Mountain Youth Camp, 10 miles south of Red Lodge, MT

▲ Christikon Camp for the Developmentally Disabled

Billings Montana

<http://www.christikon.org>

18 yrs and older, Developmentally Disabled

Winter: 406.656.1969

Summer: 406.932.6300

Send E-mail to info@christikon.org

▲ NEW! Rocky Mountain Hemophilia and Bleeding Disorders Family Camp

A nationally acclaimed camp for Montana and Wyoming families impacted by bleeding disorders.

RMH & BDA, PO Box 3468, Bozeman, MT 59772

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Evaluating Camps

Request brochures from camps that fit your needs. The brochures will give you information about dates, costs, camper's ages, and activities. Remember, though, it's the staff that brings the camp to life. Contact the camp director to ask specific questions. Use your discussion to get a feel for director's personality and philosophy. Here are some topics to discuss:

- ▲ **Camp Philosophy and Goals:** Some camps encourage a competitive environment, while others foster cooperation and interdependence. Be sure the camp's atmosphere is compatible with your child's personality.
- ▲ **Staff Background and Training:** Ask about the director's education and certification. Find out the ages of the counselors and how they are chosen and trained.
- ▲ **Counselor-to-Camper Ratio:** The American Camping Association recommends one counselor for every eight campers, but a lower ratio might be better.
- ▲ **Problem Handling:** Get specific information about camp rules and how problems are handled.
- ▲ **Parent Visits:** Ask if parent visits are allowed, both at day camps and residential camps.
- ▲ **Special Needs:** Find out how special needs are handled. For example, if your child is taking medication, ask who dispenses the medicine and how the schedule is ensured.
- ▲ **References:** Always request references and contact past campers.

Beyond these basic questions, discuss with the director any issues of special concern to your child, such as:

- ▲ The camp's experience with children with special needs.
- ▲ Group size and age mix for activities.
- ▲ The ratio of structured to unstructured time.

You know which accommodations in your household and at school help your child succeed, so address these with the camp director. By keeping your child's strengths, needs, and interests in mind throughout your camp search, you'll be able to choose a summer camp that addresses your concerns and is fun for your child. ❖

June 11-13, 2004, Free, Camp on the Boulder, near McLeod MT

<http://www.nhfyouthworld.org/camps/montana1.htm>

▲ **Montana Youth Retreat for Children with Diabetes**

The American Diabetes Association Montana Youth Retreat is a resident camp located at Camp Mak-A-Dream

in Helena, Montana. It provides a safe summer camp experience that allows an opportunity to live with peers who also have diabetes. Campers learn diabetes self-management. A few of the activities include fishing, nature hikes, climbing wall, rope course, swimming and arts and crafts. Camp is offered for children ages 8-17.

Contact Mary Hernandez at 800.766.8596

▲ **Eagle Mount Montana**

Eagle Mount provides recreational opportunities year-round for children and adults with disabilities in Montana.

Eagle Mount Billings: 406.245.5422,
<http://www.eaglemountbillings.org/>

Eagle Mount Bozeman: 406.586.1781,
<http://www.eaglemount.org/>

Eagle Mount Great Falls: 406.454.1449,
<http://www.eaglemount.net>

▲ **Missouri River Expeditions**

Montana

Customized outdoor adventures for people with disabilities.

We can accommodate persons needing individualized supports and have drift boats modified to provide safe and comfortable trips for persons using wheelchairs. We can also make arrangements for transportation in vehicles with wheelchair lifts meeting current ADA Standards and arrange for trained personal care attendants or nurses to accompany individuals if needed.

Tim Plaska-Outfitter, Missouri River Expeditions, 3 Lava Mountain Court North, Clancy, MT 59634

406.449.6446 or 406.447.3152,
tim@MissouriRiverExp.com, <http://www.missouririverexp.com/>

▲ **MSDB Summer Skills Programs, Montana**

The Summer Skills Program focuses on learning Independent Living Skills in a personalized and caring environment. The students always enjoy the opportunity to interact with other visually impaired students from other regions of Montana.

Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, 406-771-6000

http://www.sdb.state.mt.us/outreach_for_the_blind_and_visua.htm

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▲ Recreational Adventures Vacation Experiences (RAVE)

RAVE offers vacation programs for people with disabilities from shopping the Mall of America to sea cruises.

Contact Jim Uecker at 406-252-1927 or juecker@abs.wtp.net.

You can also contact the Regional Services main office at 406.652.5443.

▲ Therapeutic Riding Programs in Montana

Therapeutic riding is a form of therapy using horses to assist children and adults with disabilities to foster their physical, psychological, and social well-being.

Billings STAR Riding Program: 406.245.7227 (Answering machine will ring 8 times)

Eagle Mount Bozeman: 406.586.1781

Butte Special Riders: 406/494-2692

Bitterroot Therapeutic Riding: Corvallis, 406/961-2999

Eagle Mount Great Falls: 406.454.1449, <http://www.eaglemount.net/>

Helena Riding Academy: 406.447.6101

SAMS Riders: Kalispell, 406.752.6716

Danmore Stables: Stevensville, 406.777.3008, danmorestables@hotmail.com

National Association (NARHA): 800.369.RIDE [7433], <http://www.narha.org>

▲ Lightfoot Cycles

Darby, Montana

Lightfoot Cycles specializes in bicycle design and offers nine different models as well as a variety of options for customizing the best bike for your needs. The company Web site is crammed with information and photographs plus testimonials from U.S. and international customers.

Lightfoot Cycles believes in quality, as stated on the company Web site: "We do not compromise quality to cut the price. We do not compromise safety to cut the price. We provide features to enhance daily utility. Our cycles are carefully hand built on a small scale." The company also offers custom variations (of their standard models) for riders with special needs. The variations include: single-sided controls, hand-power conversions for many models, safety pedals, asymmetric crank lengths for riders with limited leg strength, extra stability for those with balance difficulties, seat belts or safety harnesses, hand/foot hybrid tandems, wheelchair-carrying tandems, electric motors for those without the strength to pedal, and trailer tandems.

Telephone 406.821.4750 or visit <http://www.lightfootcycles.com>



Preparing Children for the Summer Camp Experience

"Summer camp is more than a vacation for children," says Bruce Muchnick, Ed.D., a licensed psychologist who works extensively with day and resident camps. "As a parent, there are a few things to consider to increase the opportunity for a rewarding camp experience for your child." Some helpful suggestions provided by Dr. Muchnick and the American Camping Association include:

▲ **Consider camp as a learning experience.** This is an opportunity for your child to explore a world bigger than his/her neighborhood and a chance for you and your child to practice "letting go." Letting go allows children to develop autonomy and a stronger sense of self, make new friends, develop new social skills, learn about teamwork, be creative, and more. This time also allows parents an opportunity to take care of themselves so that they will feel refreshed when their child returns home.

▲ **Get ready for camp together.** Decisions about camp — like where to go and what to pack — should be a joint venture, keeping in mind your child's maturity. If your child feels a part of the decision-making process, his/her chances of having a positive experience will improve.

▲ **Talk about concerns.** As the first day of camp nears, some children experience uneasiness about going away. Encourage your child to talk about these feelings rather than acting on what you think his/her feelings may be. Communicate confidence in your child's ability to handle being away from home.

• **Have realistic expectations.** Camp, like the rest of life, has high and low points. Not every moment will be filled with wonder and excitement. Encourage your child to have a reasonable and realistic view of camp. Discuss both the ups and downs your child may experience. Your child should not feel pressured to succeed at camp, either. The main purposes of camp are to relax and have fun. ❖

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National and Online Resources

▲ *American Camping Association*

Database contains over 2,000 accredited camps — accreditation searches pre-sort your camp options, and identifies which programs offer a solid foundation of health, safety, and program quality.

Telephone 800.428.2267 or visit <http://www.ACAcamps.org>

▲ *Austine Green Mountain Lions Camp, Vermont*

Collaboration between the Vermont Lions and the Austine School for the Deaf, for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and their hearing siblings.

Telephone 802.258.9502 (Voice/TTY) or visit http://www.austine.k12.vt.us/camp/camp_info.htm

▲ *Building Bridges Camp*

Children 5–17 yrs., and Adults Augmentative/Alternative Communication (Training opportunity for Professionals)

If you are interested in more information on the Building Bridges Camp 2004 please email nray@bridgeschool.org. The dates for the Building Bridges Camp 2004 are: June 28–July 3, 2004. 650.696.7295, http://www.bridgeschool.org/camp/camp_campprog.html

▲ *Very Special Camps*

Very Special Camps is an online resource for individuals — with one or more of a wide range of special needs — to effectively obtain information about related summer camp programs.

Database focuses primarily on non-specialized camps — also lists camps accommodating individuals with special needs including; ADD, AIDS,

asthma, behavioral disorders, cancer, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, learning disabilities, MS, and physical disabilities.

<http://www.veryspecialcamps.com/>

▲ *Camp Confidence, Minnesota*

A year-round center for persons with developmental disabilities, specializing in recreation and outdoor education. All ages, abilities.

Brainerd Minnesota, 218.828.2344, <http://www.campconfidence.com>

▲ *Camp Courage, Minnesota*

CourageCamps offer safe, accessible, natural environments where children and adults with physical disabilities, sensory and language impairments, and other disabilities or illnesses discover abilities they never knew they had or they thought they had lost. Check out the web site to see the wide variety of camps (includes sessions for kids with Asperger Syndrome and kids using AAC).

Telephone 763.520.0504, send E-mail to camping@courage.org, or visit <http://www.couragecamps.org>

▲ *Diabetes Camping Association*

Diabetes camp is one of the best experiences that a child with diabetes can have. Camp is a place to learn self-confidence, independence from mom and dad, to be with other kids with diabetes, and simply to have a great time. It's also an excellent opportunity for mom and dad to take a break from diabetes. Almost all camps provide financial assistance to kids who are unable to pay the full camp fees.

Telephone 510.937.3393 or visit <http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/camps/index.htm>

▲ *Diabetes Camps*

<http://www.diabetes.org/communityprograms-and-localevents/diabetes-camps.jsp>

The American Diabetes Association is proud to be the largest provider of camps for children with diabetes in the world. Each year more than 10,000 children benefit from camping programs provided through American Diabetes Association funding.

▲ *Easter Seals Camp Stand By Me, Washington*

Camp Easter Seals operates day, respite and residential camps beginning in June for children and adults with physical and developmental disabilities located 11 miles west of Purdy, WA.

To learn more, contact Easter Seals in Vaughn at 253.884.2722 or in Spokane at 509.326.8292. http://wa.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=WADR_camping_recreation

▲ *National Easter Seals Camping & Leisure Services*

Camp Without Barriers for Children and Adults with Disabilities

As a veteran service-provider for children and adults with disabilities, Easter Seals meets the need for accessible camping with 140 camping and recreation facilities across the country. Day and residential camp sessions, as well as weekend and after-school programs, are available. (Hours, duration, activities, eligibility requirements, transportation availability and tuition vary from camp to camp.)

Telephone 800.221.6827 or visit <http://www.easter-seals.org/>

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▲ *KIDSCamps Database*

KidsCamps.com, online since 1995, continues to be the most popular and trafficked camp directory on the Internet with over 600,000 unique visitors per month, allowing millions of parents and children the ability to select the program of their choice.

http://www.kidscamps.com/special_needs/learning_disab_add.html

▲ *Muscular Dystrophy Camps*

Anyone ages six to 18, with a neuromuscular disease acknowledged by the MDA.

Camps in Montana: 406.655.9000

Camps nationwide: 800.572.1717,

<http://www.mdausa.org/clinics/camp.html>

▲ *NASA Space Camp*

The Space Camp and Aviation Challenge programs are specifically designed for blind, visually-impaired, deaf and/or hard-of-hearing attendees have attracted students from across the United States and around the world.

To learn more about the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program, contact Amy Newland at 412.371.7000, or visit the web site at: <http://www.spacecamp.com/wpsd/>

For details about Space Camp for Visually Impaired Students (SCI-VIS), contact Dan Oates at 304.822.4883, or E-mail: scivis@charter.net

Visit SCI-VIS web site at the Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired at: <http://www.tsbvi.edu/space/>

▲ *The Savvy Traveler with a Disability*

A website with mountains of information for the traveler with a disability. <http://www.savvytraveler.com/before/disability-resource.shtml>

▲ *The Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality (SATH)*

Another website with a wealth of information for travelers with disabilities. SATH's mission is to promote AWARENESS, RESPECT and ACCESSIBILITY for travelers with disabilities and the mature and EDUCATE the travel, tourism and hospitality industry on becoming more accessible for persons with disabilities.

<http://www.sath.org>

Summer Fun for Everyone

Making the most out of summer vacation is a challenge for all parents. The cry of "What shall I do now?" is frequently heard, especially in families with a special needs child. Keeping easily bored children occupied and amused when school is not in session can tax even the most inventive parent. Ideally, summertime is a relaxed and beneficial period when children have more time to explore, experiment and grow mentally and physically. The following are some suggestions for keeping cool and having a happy summer with all of your children. ❖

▲ *SOAR Camps for Learning Disabilities & ADHD*

Providing adventure based wilderness programs and experiential education services to individuals and families dealing with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Disorders.

Telephone 828.456.3435 or visit <http://www.soarnc.org/>

▲ *Camp Taloali*

Camp Taloali is for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing campers of all ages. We are located in the foothills of Oregon's Cascades Mountains on 111 acres of level forested land of pines and firs with open fields bordering North Santiam River. Send E-mail to info@taloali.org, or visit <http://www.taloali.org>

▲ *TRAVELMED*

Provides support for travelers with medical problems and offers rentals and sales of adaptive equipment and accessibility products. Information is available in several languages.

Telephone 800.878.3627, 877.878.3627 or 888.878.3627, or visit <http://www.travelmedintl.com>

▲ *TRIPS, Inc.: Adventure Travel Resource*

Trips Inc. Special Adventures provides travel outings to adults of various abilities in a safe, respectful and fun atmosphere. Our trips are designed for people with developmental disabilities and special needs who require staff assistance for a safe and enjoyable vacation.

Telephone 800.686.1013, send E-mail to trips@tripsinc.com, or visit <http://www.tripsinc.com>

▲ *Summer Camps for Kids with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD*

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Visit <http://www.schwablearning.org/Articles.asp?r=285>

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Summer Play

There are so many more opportunities to explore and experiment with toys and different substances--water and sand in the backyard, outdoor recreational equipment, and yard toys. Since most children with special needs require constant reinforcement of what they have learned all year long, play is the perfect way to "work" over the summer, not only to maintain skills but also to learn new concepts in a subtle, fun way. Here are some hints to consider.

- ▲ Talk to your child's teacher before school is out and ask for two or three skills that the teacher feels your child should practice over the summer. If you don't understand what the teacher means, ask for a demonstration of the skills and the ways that the teacher would teach them. Also ask the teacher for suggestions of "fun" ways to practice the skills.

- ▲ Inspect your yard or the park areas which may be available to your child. Determine what opportunities there might be for playing with water, sand, soap bubbles, natural materials like pine cones, pebbles, feathers. Plan specific times for play with these special materials. The fun thing about summer is that a child can get dirty and be hosed off quickly.

- ▲ Arrange for a local teenager to baby-sit your child with special needs two or three times per week. Plan for these times to include special activities like walks to the park, trips to the library, finger painting sessions.

- ▲ Invite a small group of children your child's age to join you in the backyard to do a specific activity like making a combined mural, mixing up a batch of no-bake cookies, listening to a story and having a snack. Be sure to keep the group small and manageable. Hint strongly to the other parents that your child would appreciate a similar invitation to their homes. ❖



Schedule or No Schedule

The trick to making summer fun for a child with special needs is to provide just enough structure so that there is something to look forward to each day. There should be a balance between active and quiet activities and plenty of flexibility to change plans. If your child is spending summer days in a daycare situation, talk to the daycare providers about the summer schedule. See if there are things that you could be doing at home that would complement the daycare routine and be special

family activities as well. Some children become very tired after a hot day with lots of other children. The evenings are, then, better spent in quiet, soothing activities without the stimulation of other children. The real key to a happy summer for a child with special needs is to plan ahead a bit and think through how the vacation days will be spent. With some advance planning, summer days can be truly fun for all of the family. ❖



Computer Fun

Computers provide wonderful opportunities for children to play and learn at the same time. If you do not have a computer at home, investigate to see if your school system, YMCA, local college or vocational school has opportunities for children to use computers in the summer. Here are some ways that computers can be helpful to children with special learning needs:

- ▲ Children who have difficulty paying attention to school work are often highly motivated by using the computer. It seems to hold the attention of even the most distractible child.

- ▲ Children who have difficulty relating to others find quiet work at the computer to be a less stressful way to learn. Figuring out how a program works can be a good way for a parent and child or a group of several children to interact.

- ▲ The stimulating visuals, interesting sounds and opportunity to touch the computer keyboard or joystick keep the child alert and interested.

- ▲ Many children have poor handwriting skills or struggle to use a pencil or crayon. Learning to type and illustrate their thoughts and feelings on the computer helps them to succeed in an area that has always been a source of frustration for them. ❖