

Adapted Camp Opens Doors

Step into Adapted Fun & Fit Camp at Spring Hill RECenter, and you gain a greater appreciation for opportunities that many take for granted. Here, campers with developmental disabilities joyfully play and learn together in a program that promotes fitness, wellness and social skills.

"There aren't that many camp options out there for teenagers and young adults with disabilities," said adapted program specialist Nicole Woodward.

With childlike exuberance, participants in this week-long, half-day camp had fun playing games, swimming, creating nutritious snacks and meeting new friends when it was offered last summer, for the first time. The popular camp also introduced students to activities many had never tried before, such as yoga, aqua Zumba and diving.

"I like swimming in the deep end," exclaimed 19-year-old Nate of McLean. "It was awesome!"

"I like cardio, because it's fun," 14-year-old Jessie said with the enthusiasm of a cheerleader. "I love my friends, and Kelly. She's my new friend."

"It's the little moments that make this so rewarding, like seeing the expressions on the kids' faces as they were jumping off the diving board for the first time," said recreational therapy student Kaitlynn Temple. "You could tell the campers were really enjoying themselves and having fun. That makes all the planning and coordinating worth it."

Parents also noted other positive influences of this unique camp ranging from independent living skills to nutrition education.

"One mom told me that every time her kid came home, he'd share the recipe of the healthy snack we made for that day," Temple recalled. "She said he's never been excited about healthy food before."

Perhaps the greatest measure of a camp's success is the feedback from its participants. "One camper was

crying on the last day because she was sad it was over," Woodward said fondly. Now she can smile because Adapted Fun & Fit Camp is back again for the 2018 season.

Fairfax County Park Authority offers a wide variety of camps for kids of all abilities, interests and age groups. To learn more, turn to the Camps section.



"Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened!"

- Dr. Seuss