

4-H CAMP IS MORE THAN S'MORES

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Standing on the sidelines, one would think that 4-H summer camp is just about boys and girls swimming, kayaking, singing, fishing, laughing, and having fun with friends. And it is that, but it is so much more.

The true benefits of a summer camping experience for a child extend well beyond the craft-making, hiking, and flag-raising. They aren't tangible, but can be skills that last a lifetime.

Benefits of summer overnight camping include:

- ◆ Development of skills related to responsibility.
- ◆ Increased awareness of the environment.
- ◆ Opportunities to develop decision making skills.

- ◆ Opportunities to develop leadership skills.
- ◆ Opportunities to develop teamwork skills.
- ◆ Increased respect and tolerance for others.
- ◆ Increased knowledge of nutrition fitness and health choices.
- ◆ Increased social skills.
- ◆ Increased self-confidence.
- ◆ Increased sense of belonging.

For many children, the first overnight camping experience without family members can be a challenge. 4-H camp staff, volunteer adult leaders, and teen counselors are trained to address the issues of first-time campers. At the end of the week, the success of 'making it' the whole week is evident on the faces of the campers as

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they board the bus for home.

All Charlotte County 4-H camping experiences share the following goals:

- EDUCATION**..... Youth learn new skills and test new ideas in non-threatening environments. Special attention is give to individual interest and rate of progress.
- GROUP LIVING**..... Youth learn how to live and work with a small group of their peers, cooperatively making decisions that affect the group.
- ADVENTURE** Youth experience adventure and challenge not usually found in daily home life.
- OUTDOORS**..... Youth develop an awareness and appreciation of their natural environment and experience direct contact with the out-of-doors.
- SELF IMAGE**..... Youth accept new responsibilities in leadership, conquer fears, practice new skills and discover individual differences in an environment that reinforces the value of each person.
- INDEPENDENCE** Youth develop independence and self assurance.
- FRIENDS** Camp provides a place for youth to make new friends.
- RELATIONSHIPS** Youth develop meaningful relationships with respected and trusted adults and older teens.
- FUN**..... Youth have the opportunity to play and develop healthy leisure habits.

For more information on Charlotte County’s 4-H Camping Program, please contact us at 941.764.4345 or visit us online at <http://charlotte.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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