

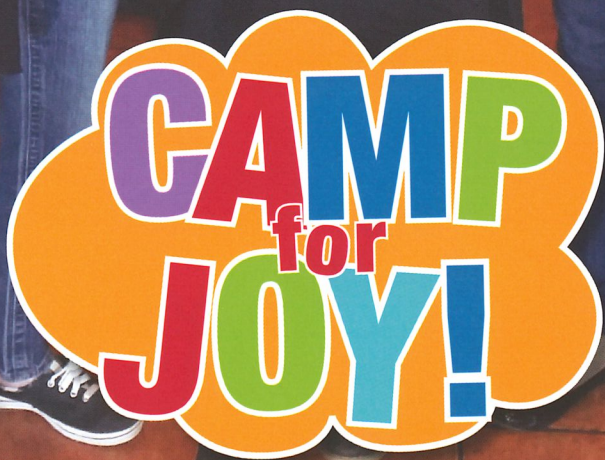
A STUDENT'S IDEA BECOMES A Beloved Tradition

CAMP for JOY! Beginnings

Like so many things at The Joy School, CAMP for JOY! started with an idea from a Joy School student and a passionate group of teachers that helped make it a reality. In 2012, Sami Nassar, a student in Lynn Negrin's second and third-grade class, had a dream to go camping with his classmates. Having a love for camping herself, Lynn encouraged Sami to write a paragraph explaining why he felt a class camping trip was a good idea that they could present to administrative staff. After the presentation, Shara Bumgarner, Head of School, agreed it was such a good idea that she suggested Lynn set up a faculty camp committee to help bring Sami's idea to life. Lynn partnered with Sarah Burden, a former Camp For All counselor, and Sarah reached out to her connections from camp to see what they could set up. In the Spring of 2013, The Joy School had its first CAMP for JOY! trip. Since then, it has become one of the most beloved and anticipated events of the school year.

Why Camp For All?

Camp For All has a unique mission: to provide a barrier-free camp to enrich the lives of children and adults with challenging illnesses or special needs. Camp For All understands the needs of TJS students, and it is ready and able to modify activities as needed, accommodate students and challenge them in a safe environment. In addition, Camp For All is located in Burton, Texas, a two-hour drive from school – the perfect distance to learn how to plan and pack for camp, ride the bus as a group and stay overnight.



Lynn, Sami and Sarah at a luncheon honoring Sami for his idea that spurred the CAMP for JOY! tradition.

Hear from CAMP for JOY! Leaders

To better understand the highlights of CAMP for JOY!, we asked Sarah and Lynn a few questions about their experience as camp co-leaders.

What is the best part of the camp experience?

Lynn: I think the best part of camp is that we are all learning and growing in real time together! When we leave the comfort of our familiar places and head out for an adventure, everyone who participates is going to grow.

Sarah: To me, the best part of camp is seeing our students shine in a new light, showing us a side of them we didn't necessarily see in the classroom before. They get to show off their strengths and conquer new challenges in a new way. I love the meaningful life experiences that happen for our students at camp year after year. From preparing for their first overnight trip to waiting in line for meals—everything is a practical life lesson. The camaraderie that occurs is something that no other school event gives us.

What is the best thing you saw at camp this year?

Lynn: Every year, I see students and staff members stretching beyond their comfort zones, challenging themselves in various ways, interacting and developing relationships with others not possible at school, enjoying the opportunity to interact with nature and experiencing the feeling of joy while participating in this fun school-wide event.

Sarah: I loved seeing some of our students step into leadership roles and take on responsibilities at

camp. It was cool seeing them be brave and shine in front of their peers, and it took a load off of us as coordinators as well to have their help.

Over the years of going to CAMP for JOY!, what was your most memorable moment?

Lynn: One of my favorite memories was a few years ago with a student. This student announced the day before we left for camp that he was a risk taker. I was intrigued by his description because this would not be a phrase I would use to describe him. However, at camp, he showed us he was a risk taker. Several times my classroom students and I were cheering as we watched this brave student do things that no other student in our group chose to do. It was a magical moment for everyone. I know it changed the way I looked at the student. This magic moment happened because camp provided an opportunity for this student to share a facet of his personality not explored in a school setting!

Sarah: My favorite memory of all our times at camp is probably our first year. There was so much nervous excitement and wonder if it would all come together and what it would look like for our entire school to be at camp for the first time. Not to mention the pouring rain while trying to load luggage onto buses Thursday morning, or the extended stay at camp on Friday due to a bus breakdown, or the many pillows and jackets left at school on Friday night because we were all too tired to remember. It was shenanigans and a memory I will never forget. Teamwork makes the dream work!

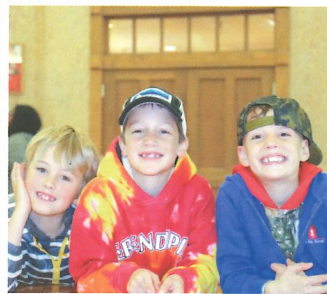
And finally, here are a few of our favorite CAMP for JOY! phrases that have emerged over the years:

**"TIME CAMPING isn't time spent;
IT'S INVESTED!"**

"Collect moments not things"

"There is no app for this!"

"THINK OUTSIDE...NO BOX REQUIRED"



CAMP for JOY!

