

Community Organization

Organization: Muscular Dystrophy Association

Goal: “To give kids a chance to discover new interests while gaining self-confidence, making lifelong friendships, and experiencing the independence of being away from home”

Population Served: The camp is for any child age 6-17 who has been diagnosed with any one of forty-three muscle diseases covered by MDA



Personal Growth

Understanding:

- More closely experienced the challenges individuals with these conditions face on a daily basis
- Recognized the importance of providing a fun and safe environment for children to form relationships and gain new experiences
- Despite their physical limitations, these children have the same goals and ambitions as anyone else
- Providing a little help can go a long way

Personal Awareness:

- Gained awareness regarding the hard work and challenges of the care givers for these individuals
- Appreciated the value of encouraging others to try new things and form new relationships

Career plans:

- Re-enforced my passion for taking on the responsibility of caring for others and making a positive difference in their lives

Community Impact

What is the Muscular Dystrophy Association Summer Camp?:

- It is a one-week long camp designed specifically for children diagnosed muscular diseases where they can spend time away from home, make new friends, and get to experience the fun that any other classic summer camp would provide

What do the children gain?

- Self-confidence: the camp provides a fun and safe environment for the campers to be able to express themselves and be comfortable in doing so
- Friendships: the campers are able to form meaningful relationships with others who face very similar challenges as them and also with the camp counselors and other staff
- Independence: provides opportunities for the campers to make their own decisions and break away from their typical daily routines that they are used to at home

What activities does the camp offer to help achieve its goals?

- Classic summer camp activities such as capture the flag, campfires, board games, archery, paintball, mini golf, chair hockey, boat rides, fishing, and many more!
- Campers are provided with many different options throughout the day so they can decide for themselves what they and their other friends want to do during the week
- The “team” mentality: campers are assigned to a specific cabin with about 10 total campers and their counselors for the week with whom they work together with and compete against other cabins in various competitions and activities



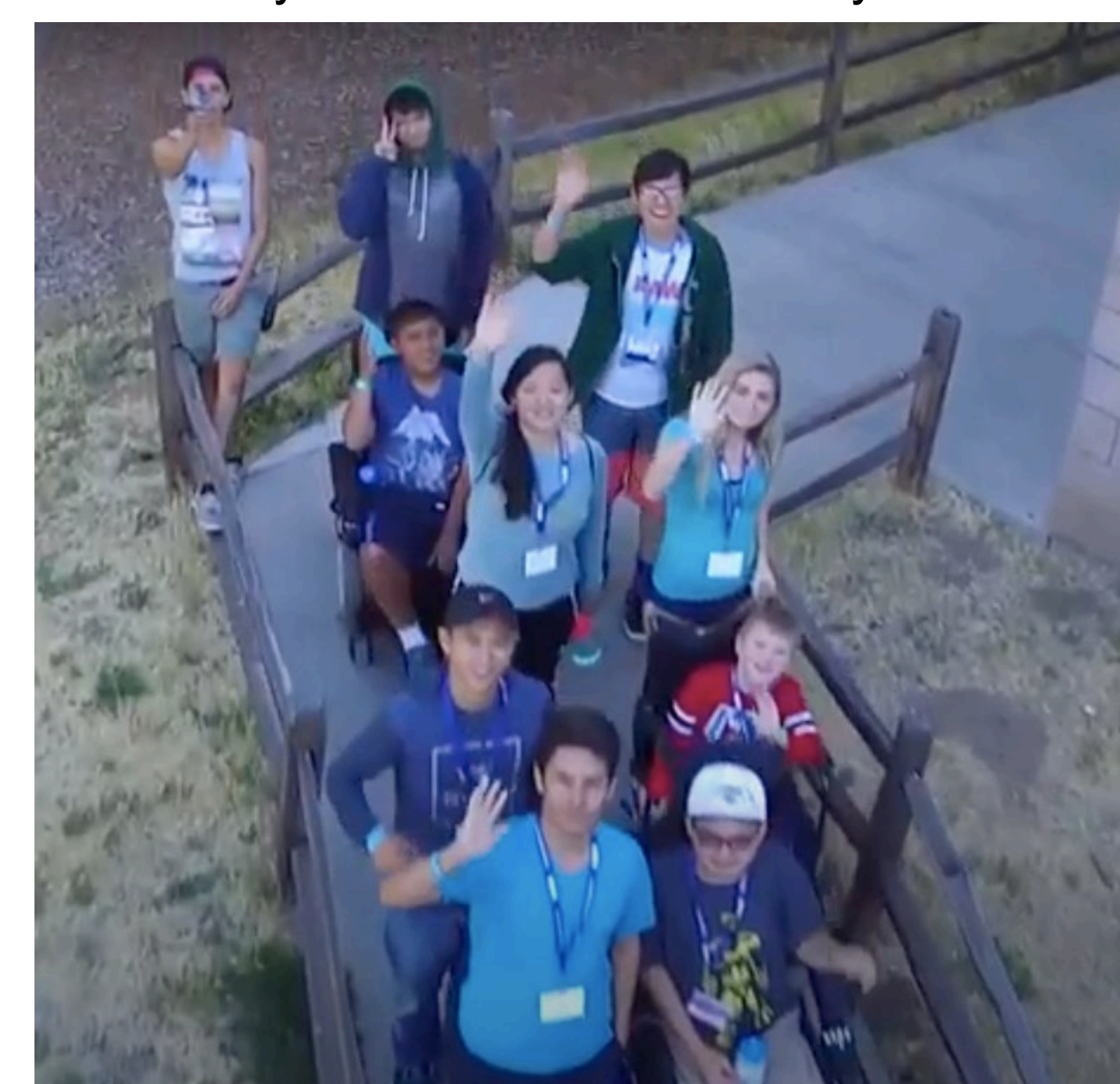
Challenges and Rewards

Challenges:

- Being ready to help with other counselors and campers who needed a higher level of care, no matter how busy you were
- Being able to run on little sleep as some campers required multiple turns throughout the night
- Ensuring the campers and other counselors were getting the right amount of help throughout the week
- Addressing the personal care needs of your camper in an efficient manner to give them the greatest opportunity to have a fun and memorable experience

Rewards:

- Forming meaningful relationships with the campers and understanding their unique challenges
- Connecting with other counselors and staff who share similar career ambitions to serve and help others
- Seeing the campers make new friends and grow closer to each other throughout the week
- Learning about the unique limitations that individuals with different muscular diseases face and how they successfully address those on a daily basis



Academic Learning

Future Related to Medical Learning:

- Obtained unique insight to better understand treatment and management of different muscular diseases
- Continued to learn how to connect with individuals of different backgrounds to gain their trust and form strong relationships with them
- Developed interest in continuing to serve individuals with disabilities in the future

Outside the Classroom:

- Provided basic health needs to individuals with physical disabilities
- Worked as a team with campers and other counselors to ensure a fun experience while addressing proper safety and care needs
- Experienced the difference that volunteers can make by having a positive and encouraging attitude to give the campers a memorable summer camp



Thanks

- Thank you to the Muscular Dystrophy Association for organizing the camps and making it all possible
- Thank you to True Friends – Camp Courage for providing the specialized campgrounds for accessibility and safety during the camps
- Thank you to all sponsors who provided funding, meals, donations, volunteering and more to help ensure a positive experience