Notes on Camp

May 1, 2005 By Nick Burns

For HIVer kids and their families, camp needn't mean an antiseptic Wet HAART American Summer. POZ hiked over to some veteran camp directors, scoping advice on the perfect juvenile adventure. Also drop by www.thebody.com/treat/camps.html for 21 bitchin' bunking spots. Kumbaya!

MEDICAL MATTERS

Most camps offer on-site medical staff; others rely on hospitals. Pill time should be supervised by a trained professional, not a volunteer who doesn't know Viread from Velamints.

STAFF TO CAMPERS

"Regular camps offer one counselor for every eight campers, but that's not enough for special needs," says Patty Hillkirk of Camp Dreamcatcher, which has one counselor for every two.

PARENTS BEWARE

The campfire's swell, but heads up if your pioneer's immune system precludes swims in Lake Bacteria. Check with your doc.

STATUS STUFF

Camp Hope kids must be positive to attend but needn't know their status. "We want kids just to be kids," says director Kelly McCann. But others, such as Camp Heartland, insist that kids know their status in case HIV talk crops up at the campfire.

NODS TO NEGGIES

Some camps cater only to HIVer children, while others welcome all kids from HIVer families. Cathy Robinson-Pickett of Florida ASO Friends Together, says, "Siblings may feel like they're being punished for not being sick if they can't go, too."

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