

## A Great Day at Camp Cool Kids & Teens

Typically *Camp Cool Kids & Teens* has many of the same campers who return every year. Parents often tell us how thankful they are to have this camp so they have a safe place for their children with disabilities to go during the summer. Most of the campers are so excited to have the opportunity to swim at the pool at the Aquatic Center. For many, spending time at the pool and interacting with their peers is a rare opportunity. This summer, several foster children who had significant behavior problems attended the camp. They did very well with our low camper to counselor ratio and had the chance to enjoy a summer camp setting. All parents need a break but especially those who have children with disabilities and/or behavioral issues. Camp Cool Kids & Teens provides a low-cost, safe environment with fun, age appropriate recreational activities.

Sam, age 14 came to Camp Cool Kids for the first time over the Christmas break. He is currently in a special school for kids with severe autism who have aggressive behavior. Sam has not been in a regular public school in 8 years so his exposure to typical peers has been minimal. He can be very aggressive and is unpredictable.

The counselors at camp were nervous about Sam coming but we all felt he deserved the opportunity to try. What we witnessed was amazing!! Sam played with the other campers appropriately. He talked to them and watched what they were doing. He swam with them at the Aquatic Center and loved every minute of it. The best part was watching him wrestle with some of the boys. They laughed and laughed and Sam seemed to have "lost" the autism for a couple of minutes. It was heartwarming.

Sam did great for the 3 days at Camp Cool Kids. His mom and dad cried because he had never been able to participate in camp. It was wonderful for Sam but was also such a blessing for those of us who saw him there.

Thank you for helping Sam and so many kids like him.

Camp Cool Kids & Teens is a **United Way of Forsyth County** Community Grants recipient.