

Let's talk CAMP! You might wonder...why is camp so important for special needs kids? Well, the need to have fun in the outdoors, experience making new friends and being challenged is even more profound for kids facing challenges. The range of services provided in structured camping experiences such as these listed below are not only fun, but provide much needed ongoing assistance with therapies designed to help kids reach their full potential! I've witnessed such dramatic impact that therapy makes while visiting Bay Cliff. A teen camper who lost his leg and arrived at camp in a wheel chair, with the goal of being able to walk on his new prosthetic leg. In six weeks, he went from wheel chair to walking with one crutch. His bigger goal? To get back on the football team with his friends. Watching his determination, I've NO DOUBT that this young man will do it!

Did you know that Major Project supports more than 15 camps in Michigan for special needs kids? I've listed 12 camps below that we do the majority of camper approvals for. It should be noted that there are other camps that are supported and they are utilized on an individual basis and need. Most camper applications will come through the various camps, but this information should help do two things:

1. Provide our members a focused outlook of the therapeutic camping experiences their donations make happen throughout our state.
2. Give lodge chairmen a better understanding of what each camp offers in the form of physical and occupational therapy and support.

- Bay Cliff Health Camp – “Bay Cliff is a place apart...where children and adults with physical disabilities learn to believe in themselves, strive for fuller lives, and realize their dreams. We also are a place that offers a warm, friendly environment and excellent facilities for guest programs promoting health, wellness, education and youth development.” Bay Cliff is located in Big Bay, Michigan...approximately 30 minutes NW of Marquette in the Upper Peninsula. As one of the oldest camps in the state with very humble beginnings, Bay Cliff's mission at first was to feed the undernourished children in the upper peninsula. Then polio hit, and they changed their purpose to help children through therapy. After polio ran its ravages, they began to include other disabilities. The children spend seven weeks of intense physical and occupational therapy designed to meet their specific challenge, plus a healthy dose of camp fun, making this a truly remarkable camp. If you ever have a chance to visit Bay Cliff with the Michigan Elks Association for Elks Day (held in July each year), this is something you will want to add to your bucket list! The day is truly inspiring, uplifting, positive and FUN!! www.baycliff.org
- Bloomfield Scamp – What is SCAMP? A Special Camp for special kids! SCAMP is a 5-week summer program that seeks to provide an exciting and therapeutic summer program for individuals with disabilities ages 3-26 in the Metro Detroit area. Bloomfield SCAMP was founded in 1967 and was the first summer camp in their area to provide a summer program for individuals with disabilities. During the early years, SCAMP served as many as 400 campers and has touched the lives of many in our area. In the early 1970s they worked with Clarkston to help start their SCAMP. www.bloomfieldscamp
- Clarkston Scamps – An offshoot of Bloomfield Scamp – this is another 5-week summer day camp in a different location providing recreational and social opportunities under the supervision of highly trained staff. SCAMP supports students with a wide range of special needs including autism/spectrum disorders, physical disabilities, cognitive and emotional impairment. SCAMPers attend this program from Clarkston and surrounding areas. Daily

activities include games, music, art and motor skills, field trips and special on-site visits by entertainment groups. SCAMPers enjoy hiking, swimming, boating and fishing and are challenged to grow in abilities and self-esteem and to be the best that they can be! www.clarksonscamp.com

- Coleman - Near Midland, Michigan, this relatively “new” camp was started about 8 years ago as a day camp for special needs kids with a focus on speech. The day camp runs from mid-June through the beginning of August.
- Northern Michigan Helping Hands – The goal of Helping Hands is to provide low cost rental of medical equipment, wheelchair clinics for maintenance and repairs, scoliosis screening for all youth in three counties, and more! Each summer, Northern Michigan Helping Hands holds a summer speech therapy day camp that is designed to assist children with their understanding and use of language. www.nmhelphinghands.org
- Central Michigan University Summer Speech Clinic - the summer speech-language specialty clinics were established more than half a century ago by the CMU Department of Communication Disorders, to provide services for children between the ages of 3 and 14 years with communication impairments. This unique program provides a combination of communication intervention, social skills instruction and recreation experiences for children who are communicatively challenged. More information can be found by entering CMU Speech Camp which will direct you to the summer speech clinic programs.
- Everyone Together of Gratiot County – Everyone Together Camp is a day camp that runs throughout July in Alma. They strive to create a structured, social environment during the summer where individuals with special needs spend time both with each other and their non-disabled Peer Buddies. Each day, the camp provides a theme ranging from “Ancient Greece” to “Space”! www.etgratiotcounty.weebly.com
- Camp Fowler – The Fowler Center’s motto is “Together WE can” and was established in 1957 and offers structured week long (and sometimes longer) camping experiences for children (and adults) with developmental disabilities and special needs. Camp Fowler offers many camping opportunities such as Therapeutic Riding and a four week transitional program for teens diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Camp Fowler is located in Mayville Michigan – east of Alma. www.thefowlercenter.org
- Camp Dakota –The Arthritis Foundation and the Lions Bear Lake camp staff organize activities that help campers build self-esteem, confidence, independence, all while learning more about their disease - juvenile arthritis - by providing daily therapy and activities for children dealing with this “old persons” disease. Campers learn different exercises and techniques to manage their disease as well as learn that they are able to do many of the same things other children get to do. Additionally, Camp Dakota offers camp experiences to campers with physical disabilities to experience a wide variety of activities and therapy offering rock wall climbing, horseback riding, gardening, a rope course that is wheelchair accessible, a zip line that has a special harness for children who are confined to a wheelchair and a tree house designed by U of M engineering students which is accessible by special lift chairs to give children confined to a wheelchair the experience of being in the trees! www.bearlakecamp.org

- Camp Midicha – Explorers Day Camp is a camp for children with juvenile diabetes. Camp counselors work one-on-one with campers to teach self-care and model appropriate diabetes self-management. More importantly, children learn that they are not alone in the world in coping with this disease. Most of the counselors are diabetic themselves, so there is the opportunity to learn many coping skills, how to manage their disease as well as develop great friendships! Located in Fenton, just south of Flint. www.diabetes.org (keyword Midicha)
- A.G. Bell Association for the Deaf – This summer camp program offers hearing impaired campers the opportunity to be fully mainstreamed into the camp experience with typical peers. MI AG Bell provides staff to the YMCA camp to train the camp staff on hearing loss, troubleshoot the student's equipment such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, provide daily language based activities for the students and to assist where needed throughout the two weeks of camp! www.miagbell.org
- SLD Center – SLD stands for Specialized Language Development. While not a typical “camp” the Major Project treats SLD as a camp with a specific dollar amount approved upon application and acceptance. SLD is committed to bringing the power of reading, writing and spelling to kids with dyslexia or other unique learning styles, enabling them to achieve their full potential through multisensory reinforcement, phonological awareness, structured phonics, rules of language structure and reading comprehension. www.sldread.org

So, I hope you will take a moment and think about how your lodge 50/50's, raffles, dinners, fundraisers, 365 banks, and donations are critical in making a HUGE difference! We have a lot of kids counting on us! Thank you for helping to make it happen at your lodge so that together we can continue to help make camp happen for these terrific kids!!!