YMCA Camp Twin Lakes

NEW PROGRAM OFFERING ANNOUNCEMENT

April 11, 2014

The Pioneers Program; “a special program for campers with special needs.”

YMCA Camp Twin Lakes announces the launch of the **Pioneer program** which is designed for children with **ASD** (Autism Spectrum Disorder), **CI** (Cognitive Impairment) and others who may have current challenges with social and/or emotional development.

Campers can experience camp at a level more applicable to their ability. Our campers have opportunities and activities that are not offered in most existing special education camps. Camp Twin Lakes is an Outdoor Camp full of adventurous activities that promote the building of trust, working as part of a group and friendship making.

Our certified staff are trained and experienced to truly understand your child’s needs. Our programs are modified for the individual needs of high functioning special needs campers where no one is forced to participate in the activities, but all are encouraged to try new and different things to achieve a feeling of accomplishment. Our hope is that your child will leave Camp Twin Lakes with a sense of independence, new friends, an ability to put his or her trust in others, and a sense of empowerment. Our dedicated staff works with a philosophy of “challenge by choice” where gentle encouragement is the key.

**WHERE:**

The program will operate at YMCA Camp Twin Lakes on the TWIN LAKES PARK FACILITY at 204 E. Little Elm Trail, Cedar Park. Hwy 183 just north of Avery Ranch Rd.

The Pioneer Unit will have an indoor base of operations in the Frontier Lodge. Daily drop-off and pick-up will be at this lodge which also provides a quiet and cool place as needed for the Pioneer campers.

Camp Twin Lakes is an OUTDOOR camp and the majority of our programs happen in the outdoors. Parents must evaluate if this is the appropriate setting for their child.

**WHO:**

The program is designed for boys & girls ages 7-17 that fit **ANY** of the 3 following criteria.

1. Have a current IEP (Individualized Education Program) with the school district
2. Has a condition which leads to an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and may exhibit characteristics over a long period of time that adversely affects a child's educational performance, social interactions or leads to inappropriate types of behaviour under normal circumstances.
3. Has had a traumatic brain injury (an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force) resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational or social performance.

**AND** who have the ability to consistently abide by A thru D below:

1. Follow the Camp policies and behaviour code which have been set for the safety and health of Campers and Staff.
2. Are able bodied enough to participate in the outdoor setting which includes: heat, uneven walking surfaces and long distances between activities.
3. Have Self Help skills so that they can take care of personal hygiene such as eating, drinking, toileting and washing.
4. Can participate in the activities in a minimum 4:1 camper to staff ratio.

**WHEN:**

The PIONEER PROGRAM will operate Mon-Fri from 9:00am-4:30pm for 10 weeks from June 9 thru August 15.

No one is forced to participate in the activities, but all are encouraged to try new and different things to achieve a feeling of accomplishment.  Our hope is that your child will leave Camp Blue Sky with a sense of independence, new friends, an ability to put his or her trust in others, and a sense of empowerment.  Our dedicated, professional staffs helps create a nurturing environment and will only challenge your children by choice. Gentle encouragement is offered.

**HOW:**

There will be TWO LEVELS of participation depending on the needs of the camper and the recommendation of the staff. - **Level One** campers will be integrated into the regular Age Units with the other (neuro-typical) campers who are in a ratio (leaders to campers) from 1:10-1:15 and participate in camp activities all day. - **Level Two** campers will be in their own exclusive group with a leader to camper ratio of 1:4 and periodically less if needed during stressful times that campers may go thru. They will progress thru the camp program at an appropriate pace for each day and to meet the needs of the individual campers. This program is NOT designed to be a one-on-one activity situation.

Upon the recommendation of the Pioneer Unit staff, campers may move between Level one and Level two.

**COST:**

The cost of the Pioneer program for:

* **YMCA members** is $295 per week
* **Non Members** is $345 per week.
* **All,** $35one timeregistration fee

**REGISTRATION PROCESS:**

1. Fill out the **Pioneer Application** (available April 25)
2. Complete an interview with the YMCA STAFF
3. A letter of intent will be e-mailed to those who are a good fit for the program.
4. Register at the Twin Lakes YMCA front desk and fill out the parent packet
5. Get ready to enjoy camp!

Questions?

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