

Kids say: Camp Building Bridges a Huge Success!

(by JoAnn Webster)

Camp Building Bridges, a camp for 12-16 year olds, who have a parent or grandparent with Alzheimer's or other dementia type illness, was held July 6 - 12, at a YMCA campground in southern Oklahoma.

The camp was a dream come true for one mother, whose son was 7 years-old when she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's six years ago. Tracy Mobley has lobbied hard as an advocate for young people with Alzheimer's and their families and refused to be discouraged when many said that a camp for kids was an impossible dream.

On July 8, I sat in a small room at Camp Classen and watched as the dream became a reality as Tracy welcomed 10 kids from 9 states. The kids arrived in Oklahoma on Sunday, and settled in to learn about a disease that had drastically changed their lives.

Tuesday was set aside as an Education day to hear that there were people and resources available to help them cope, and that other kids were experiencing the same feelings, fears, frustrations, and some times anger that they were experiencing.

During the course of the day we talked about the basics of Alzheimer's and frontal-temporal dementia, the treatments available, the role of the Alzheimer's Association in providing services, safe return and how to find support, for themselves and their family. A counselor and social worker talked with them about coping skills and emotions, and they had a cooking class. As the day passed, we began to answer questions and the kids began to share how they had dealt with a similar situation in their family. It was evident the kids were becoming a support group to each other.

There were lots of breaks, and time to play, food and just "hanging out"; there were tears and lots of laughter. A television station from Oklahoma

City covered the day as a news story, talked to several kids, and provided great coverage that was aired in several areas.

Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday, the kids participated in the regular camp activities: boating, swimming, horse back riding, and an overnight camp out, having a week without Alzheimer's and the cares associated with it. Six of the ten kids had not had previous contact with Alzheimer's Association chapters.

Some of the commMarket#17 Ments from the kids and their parents are given below:

This program has given me some ideas on how to better deal with helping my dad.

I learned alot and want to come back next year.

This has all been very helpful, GREAT sessions!

Thanks for doing this for us. It has helped a lot.

My son went and LOVED it! The pictures of him smiling were incredible!! He had so much fun, learned a lot, and made "lifetime friends".

I am sitting here after looking through the pictures on the YMCA Camp Classen web site. It is so obvious that the kids are having a wonderful time.

This is what my daughter needs. She is 13 years-old and her dad (my husband) is 48 and has been diagnosed with FTD



Ten kids attended the first Camp Building Bridges camp in Oklahoma. Pictured above are the kids, educators and sponsors.

and EOAD since 2006. It has been very, very hard for her as there is nobody in our area that she can talk to.

She has been able to connect with Tracy's son via email. It would be great if she could be able to connect with others her age that live in and around our area.

Tracy I just wanted to THANK YOU for the doors you are opening for these kids.

An email to me from a parent after the camp indicated that the kids were staying connected through phone calls and email.

Plans are already being made for a camp experience again next year. The Oklahoma and Arkansas chapter has agreed to be the umbrella organization for next year's camp, with Tracy and Allen Mobley leading the effort. It would be ideal to have several regional camps throughout the country, but we will plan to enlarge Camp Building Bridges to accommodate more kids (in one location) and then expand it in the future. We will keep you updated on plans through this newsletter.

Join the fight against this worldwide epidemic on World Alzheimer's Day, September 21st

In honor of World Alzheimer's Day, Sunday, September 21st, the Alzheimer's Association is asking people across the globe to turn their attention to this disease and visit www.actionalz.org to learn more and make a donation to support research and care service programs for those touched by the disease in the United States. For every dollar donated, the Alzheimer's Association's national board of directors will match it dollar-for-dollar, up to \$250,000.

"The number of people affected by Alzheimer's is growing at an alarming rate, and the increasing financial and personal costs will have a devastating effect on the world's economies, healthcare systems and families," said JoAnn Webster, Early-onset coordinator. "We must make the fight against Alzheimer's a global priority. It's up to every one of us to learn more about the disease and join the fight."

Currently there are more than 26 million people across the world living with Alzheimer's and that number will quadruple by 2050. This means by mid-century more than 100 million people will be living with this degenerative disease that kills brain cells and eventually the person.

The Alzheimer's Association's commitment to raising awareness and funds on World Alzheimer's Day is part of an accelerating worldwide effort to find better ways to treat the disease, delay its onset, or prevent it from developing.



Tulsa and OKC Memory Walks Need You!

The 2008 Tulsa and Oklahoma City Memory Walks are already on their way to being a success. But, we can't do it without your partnership!

We need your help to create and fill teams of 10 for this year's event. The OKC walk takes place on October 25 at the AT&T Bricktown Ballpark, and the Tulsa Memory Walk is set for October 4 at Oral Roberts University. By logging on to www.okcmemorywalk.com or www.tulsamemorywalk.com and signing up to walk, you can make a difference in the fight against Alzheimer's disease. Here are the winning steps to success: **Click "Sign Up to Walk"; Choose "Start a Team"; Create your profile.**

Email co-workers, family members, friends and neighbors to be a member of your team. After you've recruited your team, each participant should send e-mails through the website to everyone on their own e-mail list, Christmas card list, etc., asking them to support their efforts.

In Tulsa, there are two teams for early-onset and early stage folks and their families. You can register for either team at www.tulsamemorywalk.org.

Early-Onset Forget US Not. Jenelle Schatz, and Shirley Sillman co-captains.

Early Stage, Any Age. Dudley McCubbin captain. Call the Tulsa office 918-481-7741 or 918-481-7746 for details.

We can MOVE a nation to end Alzheimer's one step at a time. For more information on being a Memory Walk volunteer, contact the Central OK Regional Office at 405-319-0780. In Tulsa contact Paul Langston at 918-481-7840.

