

It's Summer Camp Time!

With school out and the long days of summer ahead, our children are getting ready for camp and are looking forward to all the fun and excitement this brings.

Brenna Hovatter, SOS Director of Volunteers and “all things camp”, is busy preparing everyone for a magical experience where they grow, learn, develop, try new activities, and discover who they are through new interests.

For many of our children, this is an experience of a lifetime. Hear what she has to share about what is involved in preparation for summer camp for our children.



Brenna Hovatter
Director of Volunteers

“At camp our children are not labeled as a foster child, their trauma is left behind and they blend in with other children, while forming some of the most genuine friendships.”

Q. What types of camp settings are offered for SOS children?

A. All our children between ages 5-15 attend summer camp in some capacity. This summer we will have children at local day camps, a camp focusing on teens, and sleep away camps featuring sports and art.

Q. How is it determined which type of camp is best suited for a child?

A. I work with the case management team and the foster parents to identify the program where our children will have the most success. We look at their maturity, behavior, sibling plans for the summer, as well as their interest in certain activities.

Q. What about older teens? How do they spend the summer?

A. Our older teens between the ages of 15 to 17 have the option to join the Work Force One program which provides them the opportunity to gain experience in various fields of interest. Others also attend summer camp or attend summer school to ensure they are performing at grade level.

Q. What are the steps you take to prepare the children for camp?

A. When a child is identified for their summer program the foster parent, case manager, and I each have distinct roles. I work with them to fill out paperwork and sign the children up for specific activities. Case Management works with the court and biological parents to gain permission for a child to participate in camp. The foster parents go shopping to make sure each child has everything they need. I help chaperone each flight to and from camp, and be present for visiting day. My summer is busy as I make four trips!

Q. What activities are part of the camp experience? Share any which are out of the ordinary which they would not typically get to experience.

A. One of the most special activities our children get to experience is “Circus” which includes flying on a trapeze or learning a silks or lyra routine. They have also have the opportunity to form a band with their new friends while learning to play and record a favorite song. Campfires, making smores, going to theme parks and riding on a roller coaster, or even taking an excursion to NYC to see a Broadway play are all part of the camp experience for some!

Q. How is summer camp funded?

A. Camp is funded a few different ways. All camps we work with offer some type of scholarship or discounted rate. We also have the generous support of our donors to help cover the cost.

Q. Any parting thoughts?

A. I love to be out on the street when our day campers come home to hear about their field trips, new games they tried, and friends they made. Our children who go to sleep away camp gain a sense of independence being away. The activities they are exposed to are one of a kind, and seeing them in pictures with smiles on their faces and their arms wrapped around their new friends is beyond gratifying!

