

Camp No Limits helps build kids' confidence

Aug 22, 2008 09:27 PM

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COEUR D'ALENE -- A summer camp on the north end of Lake Coeur d'Alene has become a refuge for a unique group of children and their families.

Camp No Limits began with one woman's vision in Maine and now the camp is marking it's third anniversary in North Idaho, where 10 campers and their families come to have fun, relax, and share a common bond.



From a distance it looks like your average camp...kids shooting hoop, taking a dip in Lake Coeur d'Alene, trying their luck at catching something big off the dock. But if you look closer you'll notice some of these kids are missing one, two, or even three limbs.

They've battled injury, illness or congenital disorders but at Camp No Limits for four days they can just be themselves. "I get to build confidence, it's fun. I can show off my leg it doesn't matter if they see it or not or my fingers it doesn't matter," camper Sara

Hutzenbiler said.

This is 10-year-old Sara's third year at the camp. She's been coming from Billings, Montana since it opened and her mom Kathryn says she's seen a big change in her daughter, particularly when it comes to building self-confidence.

The campers participate in exercise classes, learn basic life skills training like tying shoes and how to use prosthetic devices are offered to campers to make life easier. That's something Carrie Davis of Camp No Limits understands. She was born without her left arm.

"I was a camper when I was a little kid. It was major anxiety," Davis said. "Will these kids accept me and my arm, and my prostheses?"

The camp is funded by some private donations but families pay \$350 dollars. In return, they meet in support groups where they can talk about challenges they face.

"You can't go to your neighbor's house and say hey, the kids at school were teasing my kid with prosthetics, they just don't get it," Bill Nash, whose son is participating in the camp, said.

The hardest part of it all for these campers and their families is when it's time to finally head home.

"You don't want to say goodbye to the friends that you've made and you don't want to say goodbye to this beautiful island," Sara Hutzenbiler said.

Right now Camp No Limits has four camps in North Idaho, Maine, California and Florida, but they're hoping to expand into Missouri next summer.

