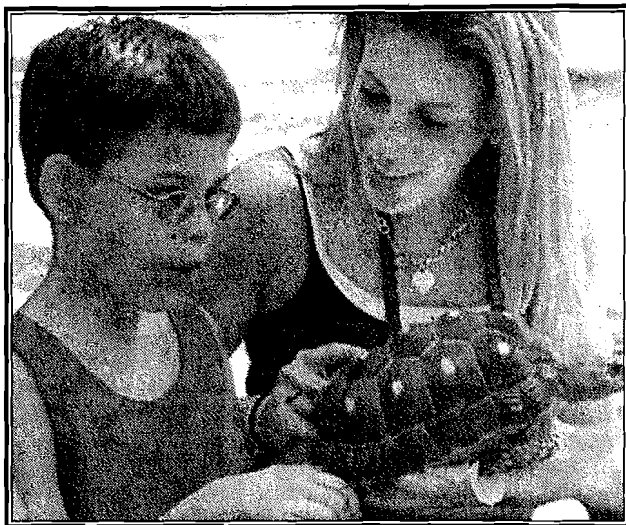


City Suburban News

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EDUCATION & BACK-TO-SCHOOL NEWS

Camp Brings Fun & Joy to Blind & Visually Impaired Children



Starting its seventh season August 20, Camp Little Rock will bring the special joy of camp life for dozens of blind or visually impaired children.

When Tina and Rocco Fiorentino tried to find a day camp for their blind son Rocco, they were turned away – several times. They tried four different camps, but each time they were told Rocco was too high a liability risk to be on their camp grounds. After much frustration and disappointment, they decided to develop a camp in South Jersey that would accommodate children like Rocco so they, too, can experience the fun that camp life offers.

In the year 2000, the Fiorentinos, through the non-profit organization they established, The Little Rock Foundation, opened Camp Little Rock on the beautiful grounds of the YMCA Camp Ockanickon in Medford, New Jersey. Partnering in the Foundation with Donna and Rick Forman, whose daughter Sydney has a rare congenital eye disease in both eyes called Sclerocornea, the camp is another extension of support the Foundation offers families of blind and visually impaired children.

Camp Little Rock will enter its seventh season and bring the special joy of camp life for dozens of children. It will be open for one week—from Monday, **August 20 through Friday, August 24** from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. except for the extended hours for the Wednesday Night Talent Show and the Thursday Night Sleepover. The only day camp in the tri-state area that offers blind or visually impaired children the opportunity to participate in a day camp program, Camp Little Rock provides such activities as fishing, archery, boating, swimming, horseback riding, karate, low

ropes challenge courses, hiking, nature walks and many other camp related activities. The sleepover night is always special for the kids and includes a campfire and hayride, complete with s'mores, camp songs and boom fire. Camp Little Rock now supports children who also have cerebral palsy and other disabilities. It is fully funded by the Little Rock Foundation and there is no cost to campers.

"We have been so fortunate to work with the staff of Camp Ockanickon and our wonderful volunteers," explained Tina Fiorentino. "The children look forward to coming year after year. It's always a highlight for us to watch Rocco and all the children who benefit from the outdoor experiences of camping just like every other child who enjoys camp life." Donna Forman knows the advantages of her daughter Sydney has had by going to camp. "All year long, Sydney talks about Camp Little Rock. She tells family and friends about it and can't wait for the next summer to continue these adventures."

Over the years there have been improvements made to the campgrounds including the installation of 1100 linear feet of boardwalk to create pathways from one activity to another, so the children in wheelchairs and those who use canes can travel independently and safely. In 2007, there are many new activities including yoga, drum circles, flower arranging, cooking and expanded water safety instruction.

The Little Rock Foundation has made a commitment to reach out to the community and make a difference in the lives of blind and visually impaired children. The Foundation provides two Family Resource Centers, one in Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. There are scholarships programs, community events and outreach programs.

Camp Little Rock is located at the YMCA Camp Ockanickon, 1303 Stokes Road, Medford, NJ 08053. To register and apply, visit The Little Rock Foundation's website at www.tlrf.org.