

Pennsylvania Vent Camp at Camp Victory

Jack Freedman, West Chester, Pennsylvania, jackfreedman1@comcast.net

This summer I went to Camp Victory, a vent camp near Scranton and Harrisburg in Pennsylvania. It was a long drive. It took five hours.

Camp was from Sunday to Thursday. I did not bring shoes because it was summer. Mom and Dad brought medical equipment and taught the nurses how it worked. Two of my nurses were Ellen and Emily. Some of the helpers were Lori and Brian. Brian poked on my nose and made me laugh.

I cried Sunday and Monday nights because I missed my Mom and Dad, but not on Tuesday or Wednesday. I woke up at 7:00 am and had breakfast at 8:00 am every morning. I yelled, “Wake up, everybody its morning!” Sometimes I made Tarzan sounds to wake everybody up.

I liked to hang out in the activity room. One time I was pretending to eat chips and use two remotes while I was watching “Lilo and Stitch.” I had fun swimming in the pool with my respiratory therapist, Tomi. I swam with a float. We swam in the rain because it rained for three days! Kelly, a girl in a neighboring cabin, swam with me.

On Monday night, there was a talent show. My friend, Mason, and I hung out in the rain, having fun relaxing on the porch. I knocked over trash cans with my wheelchair. I had a good time.

We had a carnival in the cafeteria on Tuesday night, and I stayed up late. Kids were getting rides in a dog sled. I watched them. Emily helped me throw a ball at a throwing ball game as Ellen watched. I tried to hit the piñata but it was too hard for me. We had a big thunderstorm after the carnival. I was afraid of the storm, and I didn’t cry, but I felt like it.



The rain finally stopped on Wednesday. It was a beautiful day. We did lots of playing in the soccer fields. I tried to push the ball with my chair but it hurt my toes.

At night we had a luau. DJ Big Dog played music in the cafeteria but it was too loud for me. Stephanie (who took care of Mason) danced with me. We did the “Hokey Pokey” with Brian.

Thursday, another beautiful day, was when Mom and Dad and Cara picked me up. The pond outside had a fountain in it. I really liked that. I was happy. I want to go to camp every year! ▲

To learn more about the Pennsylvania Vent Camp at Camp Victory (www.campvictory.org), held annually the last week in June, go to www.hmc.psu.edu/ventcamp.

Jack is 11 years old and was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) when he was 6 months old. He has a younger sister Cara, age 6. Jack uses BiPAP® S/T with ADAM™ nasal pillows interface at night and when he is ill. The CoughAssist® helps him clear airway secretions. Jack worked with his teachers at school on this story using REACH Interface Author™ onscreen keyboard (www.ahf-net.com) to write.