

Quest West News

The Newsletter for Camp Quest West

In This Edition:

Online registration
Win a free trip to camp
Local camp fair update, Dragons Rule!
Staff Update
New Evolution game
Spring puzzle
Camp director's corner

Encounter with Reality

Kids Camp: Sun July 12-Sat July 18
\$450 first child until May (\$500 after)
\$50 sibling discount
\$50 friend referral rebate
Ages 8-15.
CIT (Counselor in Training) 16-17

Family Camp: Thurs July 16-Sun Jul 19
\$75 family registration fee
Plus the price of meals
\$120 adult
\$80 child 8 and up
\$50 child 4-7
3 and under eat free
Tent camping with showers, pool, meals,
meeting lodge. Four cabins are available
on a first come, first served basis - \$100
additional.

Online Registrations Going Strong

Registrations are well underway. I am happy to announce that we already have 15 campers signed up! Yay! Go campers!

As a reminder, space is limited and our Early Bird Special is running out May 15th. So hurry and make sure you get the best price possible. Also, check out the discounts we are offering; you might qualify and save some more money....

these days probably welcome to most of us parents.

For those unfamiliar with our *new registration process* it is extremely easy and fast: Log on to our website www.campquestwest.org choose 'registration' and then simply opt for the registration form that applies to you, depending on the number of children you would like to register. The forms are very simple and quick to fill out. At the end of the form you will automatically be directed to Paypal for easy online payment.

Just as in past years, we are requesting a *Health Form* for each camper. This can be done at a later date if you are running into a time crunch when registering.

For any questions regarding the registration you can e-mail me at RajaShanti@juno.com."

---Gloria Kaczmarek, Registrar

Win a Free Trip to Camp

If you're 10-13 years of age and design the back of the Camp Quest West 2009 T-Shirt, you could win a campership to Camp Quest West this year.

Tell us what color the shirt should be and use two other colors in the graphic.

Eligibility: Kids 10-13 years old.
Judging based on simplicity and how well the graphic illustrates our 2009 camp theme "Encounter with Reality".

Deadline: 10 April 2009

Submit your design by email:
west@camp-quest.org

or snail mail:

Camp Quest West Contest
50 W Edith Ave #2
Los Altos, CA 94022

Be sure to include a phone number where a parent can be reached.

Winner to be announced April 19, 2009

Dragons Rule!

Camp Quest West has been busy getting the word out at local camp fairs. Camp Fairs are run by magazines, city government or non-profit groups.

Generally, camps rent or reserve a table and the

sponsoring agents advertise to parents so that people looking for camps can



connect up with camp staff and find out about services that might be right for them. Camp Quest West had a booth in San Jose, Reno & San Francisco. Next month, we'll be in Fresno (Apr 2) and Sacramento (Apr 18). If you'd like to help out, let us know. It's super fun - and we'll even let you spin our Big Wheel of Science!

Here's what Rob Ruether had to say about his experiences at our booth in San Francisco:

"We're basically wooing families, trying to share with them the fun of camp activities. These are families that are interested in progressive growth for their children. We're all about cherishing inquiring minds and piquing curiosity."

When asked about which science question

he found most interesting, Rob described asking a 6 year old where rain came from



- did it come from rivers, mountains or clouds? Well, there's no fooling today's kids, the child immediately

informed Rob that rain came from rivers and described how water evaporated, formed clouds and produced rain!

One of the main benefits of running the Big Wheel of Science was giving out cool stickers to all participants. They could choose from monkeys, dragons, lizards, snakes & other fascinating critters. When asked which sticker proved to be the most popular, Rob indicated that, hands down, dragons ruled the roost!

Thanks to all of the volunteers who are make the Camp Quest West table successful!

Meet Camp Counselor Josh...

I always really cared for the younger kids. My mom tells me that when I was two, I was helping a baby to sit up by putting pillows all around it. As I've gotten older, I've somehow maintained my connection with the kids. When I worked at a local country club some of the most fun I had at work was making sundaes with the kids, or running around with them on the putting green...

That being said, I can't tell you how much I look forward to going to camp this summer and hanging out with the kids. I hope my experience benefits them, as I am sure this experience will benefit me. I look forward to meeting everyone this summer, and making some new friends.

Staff is Rising To The Top!

So far we have 6 counselors for the 2009 camp. They are a diverse, enthusiastic group who will bring interesting skills and excitement to this year's camp. One of our counselors comes with cooking skills and would like to teach cooking; we should have some tasty campfires. Another has suggested we do a talent show; who knows what we may discover. But most importantly, our counselors bring an eagerness to help develop critical thinking skills in our campers.



We are still seeking more counselors, so if you or someone you know has great enthusiasm about working with children and is a freethinker, we'd love to hear from you. Do you have some special skills or interests to share with young people? We are especially seeking a lifeguard and a nurse. You can go to the Camp Quest West website to get an application to volunteer to be a counselor. You may email our Staffing Coordinator at joycelawyer@earthlink.net.

— **Joyce Sogg, Staffing Director**

New Evolution Game

Portland Parent Group Plays Camp Quest Evolution Game!

Sylvia Benner is one of the leading forces behind the Secular Parenting Meetup of the CFI community in Portland, OR. Her son is also a Camp Quest West regular.

Last month, they celebrated Darin's birthday with all kinds of evolutionary activities including having the children design their own animal -super cool!

Among other games, they used one from the Camp Quest West handbook called "Trade or Say Sayonara" where children are given tokens of different colors (genes) and they have some time to trade them - just like bacteria trade their genetic material. Then, a random environment is pulled out of a hat and those with the right genes for the environment survive while everyone else has to say sayonara.

According to Syliva, "we spent some time talking about how Darwin's ideas were different from Lamarck's - that organisms don't adapt to the environment, species are adapted by the environment via natural selection."

"This evolution game really drove the point home about how it's the environment that does the selecting. Many people are confused about this. It's not that the mouse in a dry environment adapts to deal with the dryness, the mouse that's not adapted die and the ones with dry-adapted genes survive. The children also got to see that there's not really a notion of good or bad genes. One gene might be good for one environment and bad for another - it's really the luck of the draw in terms of what environment you get."

What was really exciting about the event was that these ideas about natural selection acted as a springboard for discussions about moral questions like eugenics and even modern medical procedures for scanning embryos for various defects.

Portland's Secular Parenting Meetup hosts a twice monthly rational Sunday school for youngsters and a "Tween talk" for older children along with a Tween Movie Night and the occasionally family potluck. If you're in the area and would like to check them out, contact Sylvia Benner at SMBenner@msn.com.

Camp Director's Corner

Someone recently asked me about this year's camp theme: "Encounter with Reality". After all, isn't that what we do every day?



Those of you who know a little about Camp Quest's history might know that Camp Quest Ohio staff will tell you they have an invisible unicorn traveling the grounds. According to Camp Quest West staffers, the unicorn didn't make it this far west. Instead, it is an Invisible Bigfoot who roams the grounds. While the prize proffered to any who can prove the Invisible Bigfoot does not exist remains unclaimed, our campers continue to be skeptical about the existence of the Invisible Bigfoot. How do we know what's real?

To me, it all comes down to evidence. Some previous staffers had dreams about the invisible Bigfoot and there's always a footprint found somewhere. Is that good evidence? What about the fact that my mother, who's been around for a long time and is an authority about just about everything is convinced the Invisible Bigfoot exists?

Of course, there's a lot more to reality than just questions about the Invisible Bigfoot. What about history? When you

find an old Egyptian tablet claiming a mermaid rescued the king's ship - what do you conclude? Were there really mermaids? What other explanations are possible and what kind of evidence exists? For that matter, how do we know the tablet's really old and not just our friend Jeff playing a trick on us?

And what about inter-personal relationships? If you tell your friend she's your best friend but avoid her during recess and tell other kids she's dumb, is that really evidence of a healthy friendship?

This year at camp, we will re-create Emily Rosa's experiment debunking therapeutic touch. I love this experiment because Rosa was the youngest person published in the Journal of the American Medical Association and I think it's important to remind kids that you don't have to be a grown up or have fancy equipment to do science. I also like it because it gives us the opportunity to talk a little about statistics and how to figure out if something is just due to chance. I think it's kind of sad that so many adults are frightened of statistics when, at root, it's as simple as flipping a coin - an idea that's easily shared with youngsters.

So, in short, this year we're going to be asking a lot of questions about all kinds of things and finding ways to figure out what's real. We're gearing up for an Encounter with Reality!

Spring Puzzle

