

WINTER WEEKENDS

Sign up Now!

Join us for one of our special winter weekends at Camp Wawbeek. It's your chance to see old friends, make new ones, and experience a whole new season at camp!



WINTER TEEN WEEKEND

February 24th - 26th, 2006

Eligibility: Anyone aged 10-18 who has a physical disability.

Camp in the winter! Yes! Come to camp and explore our 400 acres in the snow! We will go sledding and tobogganing and explore the wonders of winter. Then we will go inside and listen to all sorts of cool music. We will be making our own music video and having a dance on Saturday night. And because it just wouldn't be camp without swimming, we'll be making a trip to one of the local indoor water parks too!

TRAIL BLAZERS WEEKEND

March 10th - 12th, 2006

Eligibility: Teens and young adults aged 16-40 who have a mild to moderate cognitive disability and no physical disability.

"Out of This World" is the theme for this weekend when our Trailblazers will leave their home planet and explore the galaxy! Come to Camp Wawbeek for our adventurous fun-filled weekend. We will be visiting Tommy Bartlett's Exploratory, gazing at the stars with our telescope and if weather permits, we will fly through the air on our travine ropes course. On Saturday night we will dance under the stars in our Neon Dance Hall. Come meet some new friends and maybe see some old ones!

For more information, or to see all upcoming Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp sessions, visit our website at www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com or call Aurora at 800.422.2324 ext. 124.



Easter Seals Wisconsin

101 Nob Hill Rd., Suite 301
Madison, WI 53713
www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com
Creating solutions, changing lives.

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Network News

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• Services for children and adults with disabilities in Wisconsin •

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FARM FAMILIES GIVE BACK TO EASTER SEALS

Jeff Purvis got a taste of agriculture growing up on his family's hobby farm in Indiana. However it wasn't until after Jeff had spent a number of years in the army and then in heavy construction, that a car accident left him with back injuries, changed the course of his life, and led him, and his wife, Debbie, into farming.

"After the accident, they said my construction career was over," Purvis says. "It took six months of being off work for me to believe it. When I realized I'd have to do something else, I started looking into agriculture, wondering if I could utilize the empty buildings on my farm in Spencer. That's when I found out about the Easter Seals FARM program." Easter Seals and their FARM partners, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the University of Wisconsin-Extension worked with Jeff to help him develop a custom calf raising operation that has grown substantially since it began with 80 calves in May of 1999. "I just can't say enough about them. If it wasn't for them, I'd be in the unemployment line, or welfare line, one of the two," Purvis adds.



So they were very receptive when Paul Leverenz, Vice President of FARM & Vocational Services for Easter Seals, spoke to them about an idea that he'd been mulling over for more than a year. He had wondered how Easter Seals could give FARM clients a chance to give back to Easter Seals. "They just sort of ran with it," says Leverenz.

The basic idea – raising a calf or calves and donating the proceeds to Easter Seals when the animals are sold to market – works well because farmers can tailor it to fit their operation and the time and funds they have available. Several calves were donated – some by past FARM program clients and some by people who had very little knowledge of the program. The Purvises took a group of 9 calves that they will raise to about 600 pounds. Deb Purvis was able to get the milk replacer and feed needed for the calves donated by Vita-Plus. Another FARM program client, Keith Posslet, is raising another calf to about 1500 pounds, covering all costs himself. Depending on market fluctuations, the 'Calf Project' could raise more than \$8000 to support the Easter Seals FARM program.

"We were very happy with the way that Jeff and Deb Purvis and Keith Posslet embraced the idea," says Leverenz. "And it was fun to see several of the board members get involved as well, purchasing calves for the project. We've never tried anything like this before, and are excited by the great beginning the project has had."



EASTER SEALS NEWS

EASTER SEALS WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Candace Kriner, President of Century 21 First Realty, Appleton. Candace was born in Pennsylvania, attended Clarion University, and earned a degree in Elementary Education and Psychology. She taught school in Michigan in the early 70's and moved to Wisconsin with her husband, Jim when he was transferred to the area with General Motors. She's been in real estate for 22 years, 17 as the owner of her company, where she employs 30 sales associates. Candace and Jim have been married for 32 years. Her hobbies and interests include weekends in Door County, reading, decorating, art, and volunteering – currently for The Housing Partnership in Appleton, and now for Easter Seals. She got involved with Easter Seals due to Century 21 involvement on a National level. Century 21 First Realty has sponsored a Radio-thon and Bunko's Best! and they look forward to working with other local fundraising events.



Rod Ripley, Director of Strategic Tax Projects, Alliant Energy, Madison. "I originally became involved with Easter Seals by organizing a bowling event fund raiser for them at Alliant Energy," Rod says. "Our employees jumped at the opportunity to have a fun afternoon and do something good for a great organization. We raised over \$10,000 in our first year. We were extremely impressed with the team from Easter Seals and how they insisted on bringing an ambassador and numerous staff members to the event. The Alliant Energy employees really appreciated meeting one of the people who would benefit from the funds raised, and afterwards, we decided to make this an annual event. I also participated in the Easter Seals Golf Outing for Kids and had a chance to experience Camp Wawbeek. I was honored when the leadership at Easter Seals asked me to be part of this great organization as a Board member and I look forward to leveraging the success we've had at Alliant Energy with other companies."



Jeffrey R. Smith, President/CEO of Financial Design Group, Inc., Madison. Jeff is involved in a number of professional and civic organizations, including the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Circuit Riders, the Badger Midget Auto Racing Association, the Executive Register of Greater Madison, and the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors. Outside of work, Jeff's life revolves around his faith and family. He and his wife Karen, daughter Trisha, and son and daughter-in-law Joshua and Jessica, enjoy sporting activities, taking vacations together and supporting various ministries with their time and financial resources. Through his friendship with outgoing Easter Seals Board Chairman Bill Holley, Jeff learned about the Easter Seals FARM program. His own farm background and his experiences with his younger brother, who has developmental disabilities, spurred his desire to get involved with Easter Seals. He is excited about joining the Board and is particularly looking forward to working with the FARM program.

WINTER/SPRING 2006

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NURSING NEEDS

CAMP WAWBEEK AND RESPITE CAMP NURSES' 'WISH LIST'

If you're able to help with the donation of anything on the following nursing needs list for Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp, please contact Kelly Housman at 800.422.2324 ext. 111.

Sunscreen-#15
2"X 2" gauze bandages
Ace bandages-2" or wider
Band-aids (all sizes)
Alcohol wipes
Medical tape
Tweezers
Tympanic thermometer
Digital thermometer
Suction machine
Bacitracin ointment
5/10 ml syringes
KY Jelly

Golf Carts Needed

Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp are each looking for a new or used gas-powered golf cart for use by the camp nurses. If you have one to donate, or know someone who may, please contact Ken Saville at 1.800.422.2324, ext. 108.

Medical measuring spoons
Medicine droppers
Antibiotic ointment
Motrin
Advil
Tylenol
Fingernail clippers & manicure set
Dental floss
Q-tips
Lysol
Non-latex powderless gloves
Chux
Baby wipes
Cotton balls

The 'Wish Lists' for Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp are long and contain items from very small to very large. To view them, visit the Giving section of our webpage at www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com.

FACILITY RENTALS

WISCONSIN DELLS AREA EASTER SEALS CAMPS AVAILABLE FOR RENT



Planning a group meeting, retreat or family reunion? Did you know that both Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp are available for rental? The Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Respite Camp and Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek have hosted college groups, religious organizations, band camps, fraternities, sororities, student groups, educational groups and others. Both Easter Seals camps are located only five minutes from downtown Wisconsin Dells - host to hundreds of attractions, restaurants, and activities.

The Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Respite Camp has four fully-winterized cabins and a main lodge. Each cabin sleeps 14 people in single and bunk beds, for a total capacity of 54 people. Each cabin has electric heat and a bathroom. The main lodge, which

holds the kitchen and dining hall, is equipped with all the food preparation and serving utensils you may need. Freezer and refrigerator space, as well as an ice maker, are available for use.

Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek's focal point is the 'Castle', which was built in 1899 by the Upham family, and is officially registered as a National Historic Landmark. It boasts beautiful views from a curved sweep-around porch that overlooks towering pines and the acreage beyond. Also onsite is the new, fully accessible Gregory C. Van Wie Hall which houses a kitchen and dining hall, lounge area, two beautiful fireplaces, a large deck, and sleeping and bathroom facilities to accommodate 56 people! Miles of paved and unpaved hiking paths are located throughout the camp's 400 acres.

For additional information including costs, restrictions and available dates contact Easter Seals at 1.800.422.2324 or visit www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com.

EASTER SEALS FARM PROGRAM NAMED MERIT FINALIST FOR THE MUTUAL OF AMERICA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD



Paul Leverenz

In November, Thomas J. Moran, Chairman, President and CEO of Mutual of America, announced that the Easter Seals Wisconsin FARM program had been named a Merit Finalist for the 2005 Mutual of America Community Partnership Award. This prestigious national award follows another, the Good Grant award, which was presented to the FARM program in April of 2005 by the Donors Forum of Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, agriculture is a \$40 billion a year industry that accounts for nearly one in five jobs. The FARM program, an Easter Seals partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the University of Wisconsin-Extension helps farmers and agricultural workers accommodate a disability so they can continue to farm or develop an alternative agricultural occupation.

The Mutual of America Community Partnership Award recognizes outstanding nonprofit organizations in the United States that have shown exemplary leadership by facilitating partnerships with public, private or social sector leaders. Organizations are recognized

who work together as equal partners, not as donors and recipients, to build a cohesive community that serves as a model for collaborating with others for the greater good.

The Mutual of America Foundation will host a luncheon on April 26th, 2006 in Madison to present the award to the partnership agencies. Paul Leverenz, Vice President, FARM and Vocational Services will accept the award on behalf of Easter Seals. "For the past several years, Easter Seals and our partners have operated side-by-side serving people with disabilities and Wisconsin's agricultural community," said Paul. "Guided by a commitment to people and communities, in 2005, we have helped over 320 farmers and farm workers maintain their farms and rural way of life. Being named a Merit Finalist for the Mutual of America Community Partnership Award is a great honor."

SELF-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES CREATING ROADMAPS TO SUCCESS



Julie Jensen

Easter Seals Self-Employment Services is a new program that provides training and assistance in business development and self-employment for people with disabilities who would like to create their own opportunities or expand their current ones. Julie Jensen, Self-Employment Specialist with Easter Seals Wisconsin, can help people with disabilities who have encountered barriers in the traditional working world find opportunities through self-employment.

Julie works one-on-one with entrepreneurs to evaluate ideas from both a business standpoint (Is there a market for the product or service and can that market be reached? How much do I have to make in order to break even and make a profit?) and from the standpoint of issues presented by disabilities (Will my business income affect my disability income or other government supports? Can the design of the work site and equipment accommodate my disability?). Julie helps clients identify realistic business opportunities, assists them in business plan and financial statement development, and provides referrals to funding alternatives and other free business planning services.

Currently, Julie is working with clients who are establishing businesses as diverse as making soap and tutoring bowlers. At this time, the program is available in the greater Green Bay area.

A Wisconsin native, Julie's experiences as a business owner and as a Business Enterprise Services and Training teacher for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation have given her expertise in assisting people with disabilities aspiring to become self-employed, change their self-employment direction or to expand their business. She is excited and happy to be part of the wonderful Easter Seals team.

For more information on Easter Seals Wisconsin Self-Employment Services, contact Julie Jensen at 920.431.0843.

PAUL KARCH ACCEPTS CHAIRMANSHIP OF EASTER SEALS WISCONSIN BOARD



In November, 2005, Paul Karch, Vice President of Administration for Appleton (formerly Appleton Papers), was elected chairman of the Easter Seals Wisconsin Board of Directors. Paul grew up in Baraboo and met his wife, Anne, while attending college and law school at Harvard. They've been married for 25 years, and have three children, Rachel, Lydia, and Chas.

Paul became involved with Easter Seals 10 years ago when his daughter Rachel began to attend Respite Camp. "Taking care of Rachel (who has severe cognitive limitations and autistic behaviors) is a full-time challenge as she has no awareness of safety, is given to temper tantrums when surprised by changes in routine or overwhelmed with

everyday sounds, and is very energetic," Paul says. "Before discovering Easter Seals Respite Camp, Anne and I spent almost all of our time and energy getting through our daily obligations of work, keeping a home and taking care of Rachel. We had very little time for each other or our other children. We were also psychologically exhausted from the continuing challenges Rachel posed for us. Getting a weekend break when Rachel went to Respite Camp gave me my family back. We were and are able to spend time with the other kids, to go places Rachel wouldn't like or tolerate, and to sleep in. Although we originally sent Rachel to Respite Camp for us – for the respite – Rachel loves camp. We were so grateful to Easter Seals for what we received that I asked how we could give back. I have been on the Board for 6 years and look forward to serving as Chairman."

INNOVATIVE GIVING

WATERMANS PROVIDE CAMPERSHIPS

Long-time Wisconsin Dells residents Turk and Judy Waterman have been generous supporters of Easter Seals for a number of years. But it wasn't until Turk visited Camp Wawbeek after last summer's Golf Outing for Kids, and was able to meet a number of campers, that he and Judy decided they would like to get more personally involved. Working as a team, the couple cut firewood, sold it to local campers, and donated the proceeds to Easter Seals. Calling it the 'Turk and Judy Project', they were able to present a check to Easter Seals for over \$5400, funds that they have asked be earmarked to provide camperships for Camp Wawbeek.



"When Turk and Judy say they want to help, they really help!" said Chris Fessler, Easter Seals Wisconsin CEO. "This went way beyond writing a check – Turk and Judy really put themselves out there! The whole idea showed tremendous initiative, hard work, and generosity. It was an exemplary effort and we couldn't be more grateful."



CANEPA FAMILY DONATES NEW SOUND SYSTEM

Chris Canepa of the Canepa School of Dance presents a new portable sound system to Ken Saville, Vice President of Program Development for Easter Seals Wisconsin and to a number of Camp Wawbeek campers. The Canepa family has been supporting Easter Seals for nearly 50 years, donating the proceeds from their annual recital to Camp Wawbeek and Easter Seals programs.

Be an Angel of Change!

RESPIRE EXPANSION PROJECT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Imagine you were caring for a child or an adult in your home who has multiple disabilities and cannot care for himself at all. Or imagine your loved one has highly disruptive behaviors and cannot be left alone because he could harm himself or others. These are the situations for the families served at the Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Respite Camp. Their loved ones have physical and/or developmental disabilities so severe or complex that they must have one-to-one supervision twenty-four hours a day. These families become physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted.

Easter Seals fields calls daily from highly stressed parents, siblings and other caregivers of people with severe disabilities. Often they have been turned down (or turned out) by other programs because their loved one's needs are too great.



*"Respite Camp gave me my family back."
- Paul Karch*

All respite programs provide a desperately-needed break for these stressed families. But most respite care is in-home and lasts just a few hours, barely enough time for a caregiver to catch their breath. The Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Respite Camp, on the other hand, is the only program in Wisconsin that offers overnight, out-of-home care for two weekend nights or a full week in the summer. The program gives family members enough time to catch up on sleep, to see friends and enjoy hobbies. Of course, the camp sessions are also fun and recreational for the campers. Swimming, nature walks, singing, crafts and other programs are stimulating and build skills. In a recent survey of Respite Camp families, 82% reported that their loved ones demonstrated increases in life skills or behavior as a result of participating in Respite Camp programs.



Campers and staff explore the new accessible playground at Respite Camp, which was built in October, 2005 with community help.

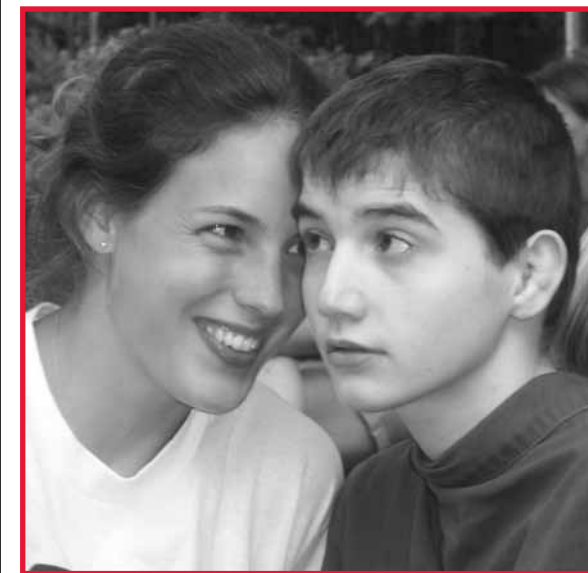
Currently, the Easter Seals Respite program serves 300 families each summer and over 225 during the school year. But almost every session is filled to capacity and many have waiting lists. Because the need for quality respite care is so critical, and because that need continues to grow, the Wisconsin Elks and Easter Seals Wisconsin are working together to expand the Respite facilities in order to meet that need. In the fall of 2005, the Elks broke ground on a new building at Respite Camp for an expansion that will allow Easter Seals to serve as many as 200 additional families each year.

Your help is needed to make the Respite Expansion Project a reality!

EASTER SEALS INTRODUCES NEW PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS WITH AUTISM

Easter Seals Wisconsin is proud to introduce a new program for children ages 7-18 with Asperger Syndrome (AS) or other autism spectrum disorders. The first 3 day session was held January 20-22, 2006 at the Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Respite Camp in Wisconsin Dells.

Individuals with AS can exhibit a variety of characteristics and the disorder can range from mild to severe. Persons with AS show marked deficiencies in social skills, have difficulties with transitions or changes and prefer sameness. They often have obsessive routines and may be preoccupied with a particular subject of interest. They have a great deal of difficulty reading nonverbal cues (body language) and very often the individual with AS has difficulty determining proper body space. Often overly sensitive to sounds, tastes, smells and sights, the person with AS may prefer soft clothing, certain foods, and be bothered by sounds or lights others do not seem to hear or see. It's important to remember that the person with AS perceives the world very differently. Therefore, many behaviors that seem odd or unusual are due to those neurological differences and not the result of intentional rudeness or bad behavior, and most certainly not the result of "improper parenting".



By definition, those with AS have a normal IQ and many individuals (although not all), exhibit exceptional skill or talent in a specific area. Because of their high degree of functionality and their naiveté, those with AS are often viewed as eccentric or odd and can easily become victims of teasing and bullying.

Approximately 1.5 million Americans are believed to have some form of autism. Easter Seals Wisconsin recognizes that a growing number of families throughout our state have a child with AS or autism and are looking for community support. The Asperger/Autism Spectrum session was designed to give parents a much-needed break from caregiving while providing a fun and safe environment for children and teens that have an autism spectrum disorder.

The weekend focused on the unique social and emotional needs of this population, and was filled with activities that promoted positive social interactions and relationship building – areas that are especially important for individuals with autism and Asperger Syndrome.



AmeriCorps Member Profile

DANIELLE WAKEFIELD
A 2005 graduate of Edgerton High School, Danielle will be attending UW-Whitewater in the fall of 2006. Eventually, she would like to transfer to a college in Seattle, and major in Special Education or Speech Therapy. Danielle first worked at the Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Respite Camp in the summer of 2005 before joining the AmeriCorps program.

"Getting involved in my community through AmeriCorps has allowed me to see just how many people and families are struggling in today's society," says Danielle. "By using the knowledge that we have and the strength of the AmeriCorps group as a whole, we are able to better the lives of many families. Whether by helping to construct a playground for kids with disabilities to play on, or doing something as small as wishing parents a well-rested weekend after they drop their child off at Respite, AmeriCorps is helping to change lives, one day at a time."

Danielle's parents, Daniel and Laura, live in Edgerton. She has an older sister, Bobbie, a twin, Deanna, and two dogs, Tucker and Sam.

To learn more about Respite sessions visit www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE - CAMP WAWBEEK STYLE!

Attention Campers! This is your chance to choose the subject of this summer's special session! This one week session will take place at Camp Wawbeek from July 9 - July 14, 2006, and is open to campers ages 7-18.

Vote online before March 15th for your favorite specialty week:
www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com

Keep in mind that the details of each session are subject to change, and that campers themselves will be choosing and designing many of the activities!

#1 BAM! Cook Your Way Through Camp

Be your own Emeril and BAM! cook your way through camp! Help plan menus, shop, cook, and most importantly EAT all your camp meals! Cook Your Way Through Camp activities could include: *Iron Chef* style cook-offs, *Food Fests* with new foods you can try, or wear!, a *Dells Grub Crawl*, eating appetizers in one place, main dish in another and dessert at yet another delectable location in the Dells - all organized by you! And for the final dish, there could be a *Food Frenzy*, where food takes on a whole new meaning, not to eat, but to slide, glide and fly into; *Jello Shoot*, here we come!



#2 Make Your Own Movie

Create your own cinematic masterpiece! Make You Own Movie week puts *you* in the director's chair! Campers will be responsible for every aspect of making their own film including script writing, casting, scenery, costumes, make-up, directing and editing, using professional film-making equipment. Then - attend a Hollywood-style premiere, and watch as your film is added to the 'vault' of Camp Wawbeek blockbusters!

#3 Reach for the Stars Astronomy

If you've never seen the night sky away from city lights, you'll be amazed by what awaits you! At Camp Wawbeek's Reach for the Stars week, you and your fellow campers will spend all week sleeping in so that you're able to stay up late and explore the night sky with binoculars and telescopes. You can learn about planets, make friends with the 'man in the moon', discover the myths and legends created around the constellations - or make up your own! The week could be capped off with a trip to a planetarium and a final night of sleeping under the stars!



RESPIRE EXPANSION

The beautiful wood building being built by the Wisconsin Elks will be nestled in the woods on the northeast side of camp. Although it will have the same rustic look as other camp buildings, it will have many upgraded features. In addition to 24 sleeping rooms, the 10,000 square foot facility will have 6 fully accessible bathrooms, 2 fully accessible shower rooms, a basement storm shelter, and a very large activity room with cathedral ceilings and abundant windows.

"We have an unspoken rule in our house not to mention the word 'camp' more than a day before his stay begins else Matt is packing and going to the van every morning for the entire week leading up to camp! He loves camp and can't wait to go back."
- Tiger Thurber

While the Elks are providing funding for the building itself, it falls to Easter Seals to fund the remaining aspects of the Respite Expansion Project - beds, laundry facilities, paving and landscaping, as well as the physical utilities needed to support the greater number of campers. Programs will also be upgraded to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse populations being served at Respite Camp. Even with careful planning and the generous help of the City of Wisconsin Dells, Easter Seals must raise \$400,000 in order to see this project through. And to do that, we need *your* help.



Your generosity is needed and appreciated.

Please help us provide critical respite care to more families!

Donors to the Respite Expansion Project will receive an 'Angel of Change' bracelet.

I want to be an Angel of Change.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

My one time gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Please accept my pledge of \$ _____

which I will pay over _____ years (1-2).

I understand you will contact me to arrange a pledge fulfillment schedule.

Please charge my ___ Master Card ___ VISA

Card # _____

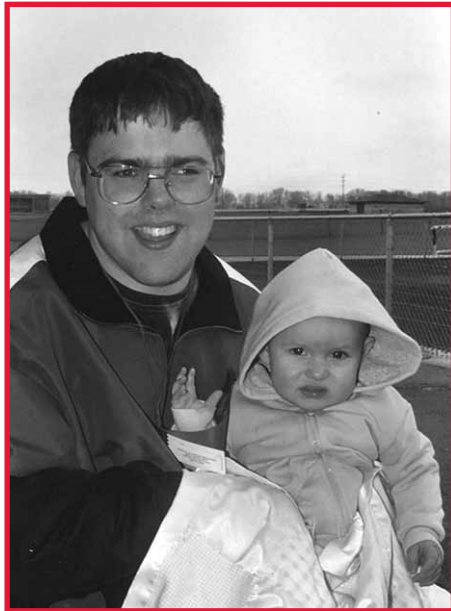
Expiration date: _____

Signature _____



Clip and return this form to:
Easter Seals Wisconsin
101 Nob Hill Road, Suite 301
Madison, WI 53713

OUR NEW AMBASSADORS - CAMP WAWBEEK



Ed with his goddaughter, Kora

Ed Kastern, a junior at the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh, has been attending Camp Wawbeek for 20 years.

Once he's earned his BA (in Radio/TV/Film), Ed hopes to work at a television station, where his goal is to work his way up to news anchor. He's also interested in acting. Because he feels that they are such great organizations, Ed would also like to stay involved with both Easter Seals and with Special Olympics.

Given only a 50/50 chance of being born alive, Ed arrived 9 weeks early, weighing in at 3 pounds 7-1/2 ounces. "He was a miracle baby," his mother, Mary, says. "And he's come so far in his life. The friends he's made at Camp Wawbeek have had a huge impact on Ed, encouraging him to set his goals high and to work hard to make his dreams a reality."

Ed believes his disability has made him a stronger person because he has to deal with day-to-day challenges not faced by others, and he's very happy that he's been given such tremendous support from family and friends.

They, in turn, are very proud of his accomplishments and determination. "Ed never gives up," Mary adds.

Ed's hobbies include bowling, wheelchair racing and basketball. He also enjoys Rascal Flatts and watching sporting events.

When he's not at school, Ed lives with his parents, William and Mary, their dog Archie, and their cat, Lulu. His siblings include Thea, Patricia, Taylor, Heidi, Christopher and Charles.

Ashley Parkhurst has attended Camp Wawbeek for 10 years, including last year's Make Your Own Movie session, where she helped write the film's script and had a small on-screen part, playing herself. "When I'm at Camp Wawbeek, my disability just melts away," Ashley says. "The people there don't really care what disability you have. Instead, you are accepted for who you are."

Although Ashley has lots of favorite camp memories (dressing the Build America team members up like girls with clothes from the skit closet, and having them participate in a modeling pageant, the 4th of July Carnival when the face painters decided to paint everyone's hair, too), her favorite part of camp is hanging out with old friends and meeting new ones from all over the world.

"Camp Wawbeek has been a gift from heaven," says Ashley's mother, Jenni. "And Ashley has gained so much from going there. She's seen others with challenges going to college and living on their own, and she's learned so much about the options available in life, about overcoming obstacles and gaining independence."

Ashley feels that her disability has made her a stronger and more determined person. And she feels it has made her more creative, too. Along with her other hobbies of music, reading and scrapbooking, Ashley writes both poetry and short stories.

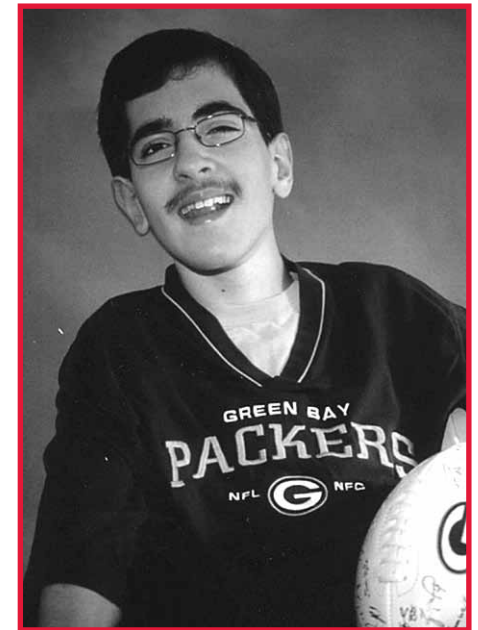
Ashley is a high school sophomore. She lives with her mother, Jenni, her stepfather, Scott and the family dogs, Sadie and Molly. She also has a younger brother, Zachery as well as two more dogs, Winston and Max, who live with her father, Tim, and stepmother, Denise.



Brad Riha has been making Camp Wawbeek a part of his summer for 10 years. "Camp Wawbeek is a nice vacation," says Brad. "It's nice to be with people that have challenges like myself so that we can support each other. It also gets you away from 'therapists, doctors and parents' for a short, enjoyable time!" His favorite memory from camp involves getting 'firehosed' on his birthday. "It was a very hot, humid day, and getting soaked by the firemen made me laugh and scream with pleasure!"

Brad feels his disability has strengthened his faith in God and his determination to succeed, and he is looking forward to his future with great anticipation. He's been accepted at UW-Green Bay, where he will begin in the fall of 2007. After college, he plans to attend law school at Marquette University. Though he hasn't yet decided which type of law he'd like to practice, he's narrowed the choices down to criminal prosecution or advocacy law. If for some reason he decides law isn't for him, his back-up plan involves computer science.

Brad is a huge Green Bay Packer fan, and is not particularly happy with recent staffing changes in the organization. He also enjoys reading, the computer, social events and watching movies.



Brad is a high school senior. He lives with his parents, David & Barb, his younger brother, Eric, their dog, Buck, and their cat, Tiger.



photo by Michael Mowbray

Megan Skaar loves dogs! While her family has a cat, Sassy, who she calls a pest, they also have a Pug, Dublin, and Megan has applied for a companion dog from the Wisconsin Academy for Graduate Service Dogs (WAGS). After undergoing extensive training that can last up to two years, a WAGS dog provides physical assistance, companionship, devotion and unconditional love to people with disabilities. The dog will be trained to become an extension of Megan's body, performing such tasks as pushing the handicap assist button to open doors, turning light switches on and off, bringing the telephone, opening and removing something from the refrigerator and even picking up a dime off the floor. "I can't wait to get him," Megan says.

When she was six, Megan appeared on the Animal Planet television show 'K-9 to 5' which profiles working dogs. The episode featured Megan with Murphy, a Yellow Lab, who worked with Megan during physical therapy. "My goal in life is to train companion and assistance dogs," she adds. "But any kind of job working with dogs would be good."

Megan learned about Easter Seals camps from her social worker, and she's been attending Camp Wawbeek for five years now, after having attended Respite Camp when she was younger. She enjoys swimming, the ropes course, hanging out with friends and the Kangaroo Court. Her twin sister, Bridget, comes to camp with Megan as part of the 'Bring a Buddy' program. "My favorite memory of camp is Bridget cracking an egg on my head."

"The impact Camp Wawbeek has on our daughter is incredibly positive," says Megan's mom, Amy. "Through their 'we're only allowing fun' attitudes, patience, willingness to work harder in their summer job than in any other job they'll ever have, love and understanding, they have gotten Megan to try new things where she discovered a 'can do' attitude. Attending camp has given Megan a feeling of normalcy. It is a summer event we look forward to each and every year."

Megan is in 6th grade. She lives with her parents, Bryan and Amy, sister Bridget, their dog, Dublin (the Pug) and their cat, Sassy (the pest).