Summer is right around the corner and the phones at our office have been ringing off the hook. We are getting calls about everything from teens wanting summer jobs to parents looking for summer camp opportunities for their children. We can’t help the teens with paying jobs, but if they are looking for volunteer opportunities that will help them build a resume. We have a plethora of day camps we can help them plug into and let them build stellar resumes (while having fun, but “shhhhh…” I don’t stress that as much as the responsibility or workload).

For youth, the possibilities of memory making summer programs are endless. For our 9-13 year olds there are a multitude of day camp opportunities. These daylong, weeklong camps focus on specific topics such as science, babysitting, citizenship, business, and more. For our 5-8 year olds we have two opportunities: a day camp and a three-day overnight camp. We are offering our day camp two weeks before school starts to help that age group start getting back into the school schedule mode and used to days away from home, but in a setting where they are having fun and accidentally learning something. The overnight camp will be July 15-18 at Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Camp in Reidsville, N.C. There they will do many of the things our older youth do, but in a closer counselor to camper ratio and making it a more one on one atmosphere for the campers.

The piece de resistance for our summer program has to be our weeklong overnight camp for 9-14 year olds. We will travel to Betsy Jeff Penn 4-H Camp in Reidsville, N.C. on buses July 22 and return July 27. Our campers get to climb rock walls, swim in a pool and a lake, canoeing, horseback riding, work on ropes courses, do arts and crafts, shoot arrows as part of archery, hike, and so much more. Once upon a time, I went to camp in the summer and I must say it was one of the best experiences of my life. I had to start taking care of myself, make decisions, set goals, and it was done in a safe nurturing environment where I was set up to succeed. The experience gave me confidence, allowed me to try things I would have never tried with my parents, and learn about the kind of person I wanted to be. Youth who go to camp come back exhausted, more confident, and better able to handle social situations, and ready to take on more responsibility.
Camp is a week they will never forget and in some cases will want to relive year after year. The cost of our weeklong camp is $350 this year, which includes transportation, lodging, meals, camp store cards, and t-shirts. It really is a bargain if you think about it. Each year we also have youth who need a little help making this dream happen. If you are someone who would like to help a deserving child, whose family cannot afford this opportunity attend camp, please call us at the 4-H office at 671-3276. We are always looking for donors who are willing to help sponsor a child or offer a partial sponsorship to make this dream come true.

Summer is about growth and having fun. Robeson County 4-H is offering the programming to make that happen. Now the only thing we need to help make this a summer never to forget is a little help from you. Don’t you want to make this the summer that you help make a youth’s life go from better to best?

For more information, please contact Shea Ann DeJarnette, Extension 4-H Youth Development agent with North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, at 671-3276, by E-mail at Shea_Ann_DeJarnette@ncsu.edu or visit our website at http://robeson.ces.ncsu.edu.