Cooling Off With Summer Fun
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Have you ever felt like you are stepping into an oven when you walk outside? With days that reach into the triple digits, I find myself reflecting on my youth when I thought things were cooler. However, after a recent discussion with friends, I have found things probably weren’t cooler; I was having so much fun outside I really didn’t feel the heat. That leads me to think about how I spent my summers as a child.

My main activity that I looked forward to from year to year was summer camp. Now many of you who know me may not believe this, but my parents sent me to overnight camp with the nuns, for a month at a time. It was the most fun I could imagine. There I learned about arts and crafts (something we never did at home), became an archery instructor, learned to swim, and actually became a lifeguard. As a matter of fact, as I reflect on my time at camp, I can’t help smiling thinking of the fun I had as a camper and the hard work I put in to work my way up to Head Counselor for three years. At camp, I learned skills such as swimming, building a campfire, and cooking outside, but that was the small part. The big lesson was gaining self-esteem and confidence, learning to make decisions, and taking on responsibility. It was the place that taught me work can be fun and can be fulfilling and everyday is an education.

You can imagine my pleasure when I found out as part of my position with 4-H that I have the opportunity to introduce almost 80 youth a year to the fun of overnight summer camp. We don’t go for a month, just a week to Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Educational Center in Reidsville, N.C. There in the foothills it is a little cooler and the planned water activities in the pool and lake help keep things cool as well. Our youth have the opportunity to do traditional camp activities such as horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, and archery. They also have the opportunity to do some newer things such as rock wall climbing, ropes courses, and GIS navigation. There is so much fun packed into each day our youth are exhausted when their heads hit the bunk and they sleep well in their cabins before getting up early the next morning to do it all again. The funniest part of all is on Sunday before they leave and find out there are no cell phones, video games, or T.V.; you would think the world ended. On Friday, when we return they are crying and wondering how they will live without their new friends and their new fun activities and not a single one of them complains about the heat.
If you would like to help your child make cool memories and forget the heat this summer, there is still time. We leave July 24 and will return July 29 for our weeklong overnight 4-H camp. The cost for the week, which includes transportation, all meals, a store card, T-shirt, and accommodations, is just $300. We still have a few slots left. If overnight camp is not quite your thing, we also offer several weeklong day camp programs.

For more information about our camps, please contact Shea Ann DeJarnette, Extension 4-H agent with North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, at 671-3276 or by E-mail at Shea_Ann_DeJarnette@ncsu.edu. You can find a copy of our Summer Fun Programs online at http://robeson.ces.ncsu.edu. If you just want to enjoy the fun of summer camp, you can enjoy it with us through our blog at www.robeson4-H.blogspot.com.