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### Camp HONOR (Hemophiliacs Overcoming New Obstacles Resourcefully)

The Arizona Hemophilia Association began a summer camping program for children with bleeding disorders in the summer of 1994, and is now enjoying its sixteenth season.

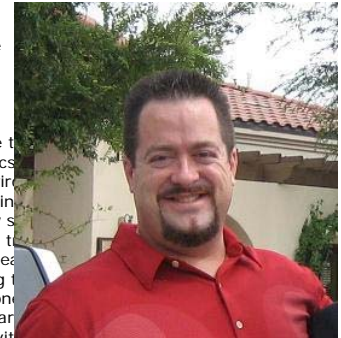
This is our first Camp HONOR E-Newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading the articles from our Camp HONOR Assistant Director, Andy Blackledge, our campers and volunteer staff.

Special thanks to our camp counselors, medical staff and volunteers. Because of our dedicated staff Camp HONOR has been a successful Arizona Hemophilia Association program.

### CAMP HONOR 2009 by Andy Blackledge

Camp HONOR 2009 was one of the Arizona Hemophilia Association's best camp years yet. Around 60 staff members consisting of Arizona Hemophilia Association staff, Phoenix and Tucson Hemophilia Treatment Center staff, and many community volunteers (who graciously donate a week of their time) came together to create a home away from home for nearly 120 children with bleeding disorders and their siblings. Since the Arizona Hemophilia Association has also committed to assisting the HIV community, some campers and staff from the Bill Holt Pediatric HIV Clinic at Phoenix Children's Hospital were also in attendance.

This was the 16th year the Arizona Hemophilia Association has held camp in Arizona. Some goals of Camp HONOR are to educate about hemophilia, and allow campers to challenge their own limitations. The acronym "HONOR" stands for Hemophiliacs Overcoming New Obstacles Resourcefully. Our campers were able to try activities they never would have done before, in a safe and nurturing environment. The facility in Mayer, AZ provides some great staff and a great facility in order to make camp a reality. At over 4,000 feet in elevation, such a heat wave. Temperatures hovered in the high-80s, and dropped at night to the 60s and below. The river valley setting, hills, and tall Cottonwood trees provided the perfect environment for camp. Campers requiring medical attention were transported to the state, as most of the two Hemophilia Treatment Center staff members were at camp during the week. Kids could learn about clotting factor, and many summoned up the courage to infuse themselves for the very first time while at camp! During the week, campers participated in a variety of daily adventures, including climbing a rock wall, sliding down a zip line, jumping from a 25-foot telephone pole (protected by full-body harnesses and belay ropes), paint ball shooting, practicing archery, fishing, canoeing, creating art, and swimming. Campers got to learn about nutrition and fitness during some special cabin activities as well. Between activities, the whole camp came together to eat great food and to learn new things. Let's not forget the songs your children learned at camp. You're welcome for those musical gems that you can't get out of your head.



Our theme this year was "Hemophilia Around the World." Since we're called HONOR, our campers were treated the first night of camp to a presentation on what honor means in other countries, and how honorable citizens are recognized. Following the presentation, cabin groups created flags representing honorable traits and other characteristics that define their membership, and got to explain what their flags represented to the rest of the group. Our primary evening program was educating our campers about the realities of bleeding disorder care in other parts of the world, thanks to the World Federation of Hemophilia's camp program called "Hemophilia Around the World." Since only 30% of the world's people with bleeding disorders have access to clotting factor, it was a real eye-opener. One evening was filled with a talent show that contained memorable moments and lots of laughter. The final night was our "Parade of Nations" dinner and dance. We found time to squeeze in our pinecone ceremony for campers and staff to reflect on the week and to dedicate memories made during the week to loved ones and new friends.

Our campers had time to explore activities away from their cabin groups in the "campers' choice" time slots. Our Youngest and Middle Unit campers got to camp out under the stars or in tents for a special overnight program. Our Oldest Unit campers were treated to a two-night trip away from camp to explore Northern Arizona University and to have some seeds planted about their future after high school. They got to participate in NAU's ropes course and learn some leadership skills from Leading Edge's talented Patrick "Big Dog" Torrey.

The not-to-be-missed green food coloring/corn starch/water all-camp slime fight started out the week (sorry for the stains!). The Polar Bear Swim happened every morning for brave campers who wanted to get in a morning swim in the cool air and heated pool. Cups of hot chocolate stood ready for the thirsty swimmers. National Running Day happened on Wednesday during camp, and a few hearty campers and adults got out of bed and ran as a group around the horse pasture. It also happened to be backwards day, so some put shoes on wrong feet and turned their clothes around. It's always fun to have dinner for breakfast and breakfast for dinner. The AHA's Melinda Cadena brought a group of 7-year-olds and their parents to camp for a day to get a taste of what camp is like for next year's first-time campers. Members of AHA's Board of Directors also came up for a day to help out.

Camp is great because nobody has to explain hemophilia or vonWillebrand's disease. Kids just get to have fun and act like normal kids. No P.E. teachers hovering around little Billy in case he gets a bump. We manage to squeeze in some education about the real world in a fun way. As the campers grow, they come to treasure the relationships and contacts they've made. They learn why it's important to stay in school. They also return as leaders of the hemophilia community. One of the best parts of camp is seeing the growing numbers of counselors who were once campers at our camp. They come back, eager to share their knowledge and experience with the younger generation. Our Counselor-In-Training (CIT) program helps campers aged 16 and 17 to bridge the gap between camper and counselor. The AHA's Jessica Casper spearheads this responsibility and coordinates the recruitment and training of CIT candidates.

The Arizona Hemophilia Association is committed to Camp HONOR for Arizona's youth in the bleeding disorder community. As you may have guessed, camp doesn't just happen when the kids show up. The dedicated group that forms the camp committee spends a whole year working on programs, recruiting staff, doing background checks, training staff, and making sure every little detail is arranged for your child's safety and enjoyment. The Arizona Hemophilia Association staff holds fundraisers throughout the year, like the Salsa Challenge, Hemophilia Walk, and Cruisers for Bruisers to raise the necessary funds to be able to pay for this awesome week. Your participation in future fundraisers is vital to this cyclical effort and result.

Some things you may not know about the Arizona Hemophilia Association are that it has organized and hosted the North American Camping Conference of

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Hemophilia Organizations (NACCHO) for the past 7 years. Sponsored by a generous grant from Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, NACCHO helps people running hemophilia camps across the United States and internationally to network and share best practices about summer camps for this unique population. The caliber and enthusiasm of these other hemophilia camps has improved thanks to the dynamic group of camping and experiential education professionals the Arizona Hemophilia Association brings together once a year. Camp HONOR is also the only hemophilia camp in the United States to be accredited by the American Camp Association. This year was another accreditation year for us, and required an inspection by the American Camp Association's staff. We passed with flying colors, thanks to the diligent work of Bayer's Chuck Boberschmidt and AHA's Alexis Christensen.

We're getting ready for next year! It should be another great one!

Andy Blackledge is an Account Manager with Accredo's Hemophilia Health Services, and volunteers as the camp committee chair and assistant camp director.

#### MY CAMP EXPERIENCE by Connor Verdugo



My experience at camp this year was so much fun! My favorite part at camp was archery because I improved a lot. I got 1 bull's eye and my team won a competition. My second favorite part of camp was the rock wall. This was my first time climbing on the wall. It was hard but fun. I loved the polar bear swim because you would get hot chocolate if you swam in the cold water. This year the food was a lot better than last year's food. I made a lot of new friends in my cabin YBC. My camp counselors were Erin, Chris, and Jesus. They were really nice. This year, I self infused my left arm and my right arm this year, I want to be able to do it on my own. I want to be a camp counselor one day. CAMP HONOR is the best!

#### MY FIRST CAMP HONOR EXPERIENCE By Emily Parenteau

Being new to the Hemophilia Treatment Center at PCH, I was unsure of what to expect at Camp HONOR 2009. Soon after arriving, however, I felt like I had been there for years. From the kids' enthusiasm to the dedicated staff, the camp ran like a well-oiled wagon wheel rolling through the hilly pastures of the Prescott Valley.

I worked in the clinic for several days and then accompanied the young adults to Flagstaff for a three-day program involving workshops and a challenging ropes course – a great opportunity for the "seniors" to spread their wings. Observing friendships form, campers infusing themselves for the first time, and non-stop fun was a welcome respite.

Activities were varied, something for everyone – fishing, horseback riding, swimming, paintball, ropes courses, arts and crafts, covered wagons, bugs, a fabulous staff at Chauncey Ranch, a bon-fire, wonderful counselors and a dedicated team from the Hemophilia Association.

Using the words of a hero of mine, Paul Newman, (a hero for his incredible dedication to making camp possible for thousands of kids with serious medical conditions), Camp HONOR lets children "kick back, relax, raise a little hell and just be kids", bringing their medications but leaving their illnesses behind. Camp HONOR is definitely on my list of favorites this year. A rustic, lively place filled with love.

Emily



#### CAMP WAS GOOD AS ALWAYS... By Dylan Scott



Camp was as good as always; the camp staff helped kids to infuse and even taught them how to do it by themselves giving them confidence in themselves. The campers and counselors became friends throughout all of the activities that they went thru. Camp was even better because of all the smiling faces that I saw having fun, (since this was my last year as a camper and soon to be my first year as a C.I.T.), since I will probably see the same smiles that I saw when they were enjoying the activities as when they are getting off of the buses and set foot on the camp grounds again. Camp has been a different experience every time I come.

The experiences that I took away from camp this year were to be more confident in others, which the kids that are going into the older group cabins will find out about. I also learned to keep trying if something is just out of reach, which is something that I learned at the ropes course at Northern Arizona University (N.A.U).

What I also took away from this year at Camp HONOR is that if something is difficult by you; it will be easier as a group. This is something all of us that went up to N.A.U learned.

I also took away that it is never too early to look at colleges and the more things you do that are a little out of your comfort zone help you grow as a person.

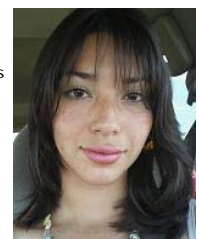
Dillon is one of Camp HONOR's oldest campers.

#### HONOR by Tirza Ibarra

HONOR! There is no other word that can embrace what this years' camp meant to me.

Hi, my name is Tirza Ibarra and I have been part of this amazing camp for nine years, four years as a camper, one as a CIT, and three as a counselor. I am part of the hemophilia community; I have two brothers who have hemophilia A, and a sister who is a carrier of this bleeding disorder just as myself.

This years' Camp HONOR was outstanding, starting from the staff members, the great food, each and every camper, the fun activities, and even better: my favorite cabin...YGA!!! This has been my first year being placed as a counselor for the youngest unit. At first I thought this was going to be just like a live 'Survivor' series, yet; right when my girls got off the bus I knew this week was going to be more like a happy ending story! My coworkers (CIT's and Counselor) were awesome, my beautiful girls made this year unforgettable. I am packed up and ready for next year!





**CAMP HONOR ROCKS by Bianca Garcia**

Bianca Garcia is eight years old and she is a first-time camper. Bianca waited patiently for two years for the opportunity to go to camp because the age for camper changed from seven years old to eight years old. Bianca really enjoyed Camp HONOR and she contributed two drawings of her camp experience. YOU ROCK Bianca!

**CAMP ANECDOTE by Eric Johnson of Tucson**

I had a dickens of a time at Camp HONOR this summer. The first real day of camp, at noon I sprained my shoulder and fractured my clavicle. It must have been a massive rock I tripped on that threw me into the air flying. I hit the grass while on my way to the tether ball court. I ended up in the infirmary, but in no time I was back at camp. When we get hurt, we get it taken care of, and we're back playing paint ball with the gun in our sling! I managed to have a great time, fractured clavicle and all. Camp HONOR is a wonderful place.

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