



Abstract No. 1.4 Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 12:00-12:45

Title: Camp Abilities: educational sports camps for children with sensory impairments

Presenter: Lauren Lieberman, The College at Brockport, State University of New York, USA

Co-presenters: Pam Haibach

Main focus: Mainly practice, Both congenital and acquired deafblindness

Abstract: Camp Abilities: Educational Sports Camp for Children with Sensory Impairments
Camp Abilities an educational sports camp for children who are visually impaired or deafblind started in 1996 by Dr. Lauren J. Lieberman at The College at Brockport in Brockport, NY. The purpose is fourfold: 1) To empower children with sensory impairments to become active and involved in sports and recreation, 2) to train future teachers how to teach children who are visually impaired or deafblind, 3) to conduct much needed research in the area of physical activity and children with sensory impairments and their families, and lastly, 4) to educate the community about the high levels of skills and abilities children have in the area of sport and recreation.

Camp Abilities in Brockport started off as a single camp with 27 campers doing the sports of goalball, beep baseball, track and field, tandem biking, judo, swimming, and gymnastics. The recreational activities that were taught were rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, basketball, soccer, kickball, horse back riding, rollerblading, and Showdown. The children were taught how to participate and excel in each sport with the necessary modifications. The counselors are taught systematically how to modify each sport and activity to meet the needs of each child.

The camp now hosts over 55 camper each year who leave with a sense of pride and empowerment. The counselors leave with the feeling that they are the experts when it comes to teaching children with sensory impairments. This program has been so successful that it has now been replicated in four places in NY state, in 19 other states and now in 7 countries.

In addition to the thousands of children that have learned sports and the thousands of counselors who have gone on to be successful teachers, Camp Abilities has been host to over 70 research projects with over 60 articles published to date. Articles span the area of physical activity, sport, recreation, physical education, motor skills, socialization, communication, and instructional strategies. Camp Abilities was also the impetus to more than five books on this topic from "Everybody Plays" through The American Printing House for the Blind (APH), to "Going PLACES" through APH, to "Physical Education and Sport for Individuals with Visual Impairments or Deafblindness" through The American Foundation for the Blind, and "The Gross Motor Development Curriculum" through APH, and "Possibilities: Recreation Experiences of Individuals who are Deafblind" through APH among many others.



Participants in this presentation will learn about the Camp Abilities model. They will also learn about how they can bring the model to their country and their town. The Camp Abilities model can be replicated in any country as long as there is a skilled and qualified director and a safe and conducive host site. The book “The Camp Abilities Start-Up Manual” will be available for those who wish to start their own camps. For more information attendees will be directed to our web site www.campabilities.org for videos, our mission, history, and accomplishments.