

- [Home](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Travel](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Homes](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Place ads](#) | [Newspaper services](#)



67° F
Latest forecast

Top headlines

[Pace: Regrets, but no apology](#)

[School scores stagnant](#)

[Bond denied for arson suspect](#)

[Record warmth expected today](#)

[New: Another Dan Ryan mess](#)

Images in the news



- [The day](#) | [Photo page](#)
- [Dan Ryan woes](#)
- [Bush in Latin America](#)
- [Paris Hilton in town](#)

Sponsored by [Ritz Camera](#)

The latest from ChicagoSports.com

- [Cubs](#) | [Sox](#) | [Bears](#)
- [Bulls](#) | [Fire](#) | [Blackhawks](#)
- [Columnists](#) | [Forums](#)

Please [register](#) or [log in](#) Subscribers: [Get the Advantage](#)

Search:

[chicagotribune.com](#) >> [Living](#) >> [Magazine](#)

SUMMER CAMP

S'more the merrier

SUMMER CAMPS ABOUND FOR EVERY KIND OF KID, FROM ATHEISTS TO PRE-CRIMINOLOGISTS. BUT THE TRADITIONAL, STEEPED-IN-NATURE-AND-BUGSPRAY VARIETY REMAINS KING OF THE FOREST.

By Lisa Black

Lisa Black is a Tribune staff reporter
Published February 25, 2007

Summer camp has changed little over the years at Phantom Lake.

The kids sleep in rustic platform tents, barely separated by worn screens and canvas from the dark stillness outside.

Thirteen-year-old Evan Warner, attending the camp in Mukwonago, Wis., for his fourth year last summer, e-mails a poetic missive to describe life away from his home in Wicker Park:

"It smells like trees and grass and nature in general here," he writes. "When nobody is awake you can hear lots of different bird calls and the sound of leaves rustling in the wind.

There is nothing creepy except when a lot of people are in the boys' bathroom--it smells strongly of body odor."

Three hundred and fifty miles and several worlds away is the Powerchord Academy, a rock 'n' roll camp at Washington University in St. Louis. Elias MacRoberts, 15, from Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, persuaded his mom to let him go last summer.

Campers there focus exclusively on practicing and performing--Elias' fingers were aching by Day 3 from playing his guitar for eight hours a day. They also record a CD, make a music video and potentially meet up with a favorite band.

"A lot of the people there were really, really good and have been playing since they were 6 or 7," says Elias, a guitar player with his own band, The Function.

Campers sleep in air-conditioned dormitories, and while there is no swimming or hiking, they do walk about a mile a day to get from one building to the next.

And here's something you don't hear often about camp: "The food was amazing," Elias says. "If you wanted a pizza, you could just say, 'Pepperoni pizza,' with whatever extra ingredients. They would just start making it for you. It was like a big restaurant with everything. They even had sushi."

With programs catering to every youngster's passion and need, a camp is just as likely to meet on a boat dock or in a college science lab as among tents in the wilderness.

[Lower Blood Pressure](#)

Doctors agree, it's a safe and natural way to Lower Blood Pressure
[www.resperate.com](#)

[Hoodia Diet: Seen on 60 Minutes](#)

New Hoodia Diet Patch Promises Fast Weight Loss, No Hunger! 1 Week Free
[www.curbyourcravings.com](#)

[\\$310K Mortgage <= \\$999/Mo](#)

Loan rates near 40-year lows. Think you pay too much? See new payment.
[LowerMyBills.com/HomeLoans](#)

CHICAGO top jobs

PRINTING
MEGA PRINTS
[read more & apply](#)

SALES
[read more & apply](#)

QUALITY CONTROL
[read more & apply](#)

JR. ACCOUNTANT
[read more & apply](#)

RESTAURANT MGR / ASST MGR
FOX'S
[read more & apply](#)

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
[read more & apply](#)

Search Chicago jobs

All Chicago jobs
[Post resume](#)
[Post a job](#)

powered by **careerbuilder**

SHOP CHICAGO FASHION

ZIP Code: powered by **shopLocal.com**

Most viewed

Most e-mailed

In the past hour

1. [Ravinia surrenders to cicadas](#)
2. [Jeni canceled Chicago dates before death](#)
3. [Dan Ryan woes trickle over to Kennedy](#)
4. ['Go Tell It on the Mountain' is new Chicago book pick](#)
5. [U. of I. ends use of Chief logo, name](#)

[More most viewed](#)

Now, with the ground still frozen, many parents already are searching for the perfect summer camp for their child, scouring Web sites and brochures, even hiring camp consultants to narrow the choices. Other parents started last fall to secure a bunk in a camp with a red-hot theme or a select group of campers.

About 10 million children and 1 million adults attend an estimated 12,000 summer camps a year, a number that includes both residential and day camps, according to the American Camp Association. Camp directors have had to compete with and adapt to not only the myriad programs available to kids, but also to such outside forces as shifting lifestyles, shorter attention spans and even terrorism.

After the Sept. 11 attacks, parents became more protective, leading at least one Jewish camp to install an electronic gate at its entrance. Parents have begun keeping children at home longer, waiting until age 10 to send them to camp rather than 8, says Jill Tipograph, an independent camp consultant.

Families also are asking for shorter sessions, often so they can enroll their children in more than one program, says Tipograph, who charges \$500 and up to help families narrow the choices.

Camps have grown very expensive, with the most exclusive ones typically costing \$7,000 or more for a seven-week session.

The expectations of parents, in turn, have escalated.

"Fifty years ago, if you came home from camp healthy and happy, that was enough," says Keith Klein, director of Camp Laurel in Readfield, Maine, which enrolls about 20 to 30 children a year from Chicago's wealthier suburbs at a cost of \$10,000 each for a seven-week session.

"Today, that's a given. You also come back much better at tennis, horseback riding, lacrosse, or able to slalom on waterskis or windsurf," he says.

Or analyze a crime scene.

The Applied Technologies in Conservation Genetics Forensic Summer Camp, at Central Michigan University, stretches the word "camp" to modern-day limits while tapping into the popularity of television crime-solving shows.

[continue >>](#)

Jump to page: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [Next page](#)

Copyright © 2007, [Chicago Tribune](#)

[more most viewed](#)



Find places and events on [metromix.com](#).

quick clicks:

[Music](#) | [Movies](#) | [Events/Best Bets](#) | [Reader Reviews](#)

Videos from CNN, Tribune, CLTV and WGN:

Ads by Google

Camp Fitch Swim Camp
 Competetive Swim Camp on Lake Erie Customized Instruction -Ages 8 &Up
www.campfitch.com

Canada's Finest Camps
 For Memories that Last a Lifetime Camp Kandalore and Onondaga Camp
www.canadiansummercamps.com

Camp Olympia Summer Camp
 Private Texas summer camp est. 1968 Boys & Girls, ages 7-16. Join us!
www.campolympia.com

North Dakota Summer Camps
 A guide to youth summer camps & wilderness programs in North Dakota
www.camppage.com

Marine Biology Teen Camps
 Marine Bio Summer Adventures Abroad Hands-on Studies, Service, Scuba
www.academictreks.com

Site index

News

- Local news
- Nation/world news
- Opinion
- Columnists
- Politics
- Religion
- Special reports
- Photos
- Video
- Multimedia
- Obituaries
- Health
- Education
- Weather
- Traffic

Business

- Your money
- Stocks
- The Digital Page
- What's ahead
- Business tech
- Technology
- Wireless/ Networking
- Columnists

Sports

- Chicago Bears
 Super Bowl coverage
- Bears
- Bulls
- Blackhawks
- Cubs
- White Sox
- Colleges
- High school
- Golf
- Soccer
- Columnists

Travel

- Flight tracker
- Travel deals
- Fall colors
- Midwest getaways
- Follow the sun
- Skiing
- Cruising
- National Parks
- Resourceful traveler
- 10 for the road
- GeoQuiz

Entertainment

- Arts
- Critics' reviews
- Dining
- Food
- Horoscope
- Leisure
- Lottery
- Movies
- Music
- Theater
- Shopping
- Television

Today's paper

- In the community
- Registration
- Subscription
- Contact us
- Send a news tip
- What's in it for you?

Classified

- Find a job
- Find a car
- Find real estate
- Find an apartment
- Shopping
- Find a mortgage
- Dating
- Pets
- Place an ad
- How to advertise

metromix.com | ChicagoSports.com | [Subscriber Advantage](#) | [Site tour](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

Local Tribune sites: [Chicago Magazine](#) | [CLTV](#) | [Hoy Chicago](#) | [RedEye](#) | [Satisfaction Magazine](#) | [WGN Radio](#) | [WGN TV](#)



FREE to subscribers!
[Sign up now!](#)

Daywatch

The day's top stories e-mailed to you each weekday.

365 Day Archive

A free archive search of a year's worth of Chicago Tribune stories.

The Info Desk

Exclusive access to Tribune experts for help with homework or research

The Entertainment Expert

Advice for making the most of a special night out.

This month's featured offers include:

Subscriber Advantage members can enjoy special offers such as win a free trip to Paducah, Kentucky and 2-FOR-1 admission to the Elmhurst Art Museum, courtesy of Chicago Tribune Subscriber Advantage.