

Camp's Over!

REWIND CAMP!

“Camp’s over. Rewind camp.” That’s what Ben, an 11-year-old with autism, said to Dr. Jane Wegner, Director of the Sertoma-Schiefelbusch Communication Camp, a month after camp had ended. It was his way of saying he wanted to return.

It also echoed the sentiment of his co-campers and staff after a wonderful two weeks of fun and learning last July.

In its fifth year, the Sertoma-Schiefelbusch Communication Camp is a collaborative effort between the Lawrence Sertoma Club and the Schiefelbusch Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic at the University of Kansas.

The 2005 event at the Douglas County Fairgrounds brought together 66 youth, with and without communication challenges, for communication skills improvement – disguised as summer fun. Some of the children had hearing loss, autism, cleft palate, or Down syndrome. Others had speech-language challenges unrelated to another condition.

The children ranged in age from 4 to 12, according to Dr. Wegner, a Lawrence Sertoma Club member and Director of the Schiefelbusch Speech-Language Hearing Clinic at the University of Kansas. “The children commu-

nicate using pictures, speech, and sign language. In addition to improving communication capabilities, camp is an opportunity to make and renew friendships and to interact with others.”

Morning and afternoon sessions were staffed by students and faculty from the Clinic. Assistance with activities and preparing materials was provided by 15 undergraduate counselors and 2 high school volunteers, while 15 practicum students in speech-language-hearing supplied speech-language intervention. Additional support came from 7 faculty members.

The Lawrence Sertoma Club, which celebrated 75 years of service last year, funds scholarships for campers with communication challenges, stipends for the counselors, and supplies and materials. Two years of matching grants from Sertoma International have been instrumental as well.

Campers took full advantage of the “Summer Fun” theme as they explored activities ranging from fishing,



I spy!



A new meaning of togetherness



2- and 4-legged friends



What a great foursome!



Crafty creations



Communicating in Kansas

games, gardening, and hiking to sailboat races and a bus trip to DeAnna Rose Park.

Each day began as campers previewed the schedule with their student speech-language pathologist. A large group activity followed with singing and signing the camp song, "You've Got a Friend in Me," and with a review of the camp rules: Be nice to your friends, help each other, and stay with your group.

Activities focused on a different daily theme. Standard activities involved movement, a special guest, snacks, arts and crafts, small group interactions, and making a page for the campers' scrapbooks. Special guest speakers included a KU women's basketball coach, a baseball player, and members of the fishing club.

From all perspectives, the two weeks were very successful. Family members commented that the program facilitated interactions and friendship, while campers reported their favorite moments were eating snacks, painting, riding the bus to DeAnna Rose Park, making an

aquarium, sailboat races, and friends.

The Lawrence Sertoma Club's sponsorship raises awareness of communicative disorders and provides a meaningful focus to the club, according to Club President Thomas Howe. "All of the members find it very rewarding. Our primary fundraising project is our annual Sertoma 48 Bar-B-Q with which 60 Schiefelbusch Clinic students assist, so it is a true partnership. Additionally, we have leveraged the camp for our Bar-B-Q sponsorship levels by creating a "Send a Kid to Camp" level.

University students assisting with the camp appreciate the opportunity to learn along with the campers. "The experience was wonderful," a student stated. "It has made me realize this is the right path for me in life."

Lawrence club members know that their continued generous support of the camp is the right path to making a difference in their community. Plans are under way to "rewind camp" yet again this summer – and to once more hear, "You've Got a Friend in Me." ♦