

Summer camp at Northpoint

by Mark Ball

In a word - methodical. That's how Sophia Jordan would describe the red team's domination over the other colors.

The second grader from Pinebrook Elementary credited her team's planning and execution after taking home bragging rights at the closing ceremony for the first week of Color Wars at YMCA's Camp Northpoint.

"We had to concentrate. First we would talk about it and then we would decide," Jordan said.

Teammate Malina Sanchez gave credit to her counselors during her acceptance speech.

"They are nice and I like them," Sanchez, a second grader at Autumn Lane Elementary, said. "The counselors would cheer us on and I think that is how we won."

Robert Oliveri, second grader at Quest Elementary in Hilton, was able to relive the deciding moment when he climbed the cargo net and touched the wall. On this day there was no doubt that the red crew was a winning team. Erin Berns, Northpoint's camp director, said learning how to work together as a team is what this camp is all about. To that end, campers get instruction on how to work with others, on conflict resolution, and managing responsibility.

"We want our kids to learn to work with anyone toward a common goal, whether they are building the largest balloon tower or being caught in a trust fall," Berns said. The week-long Color War featured kickball games, beanbag golf, dressing in team colors, relay races and building the tallest straw tower. Each team got points based on how they performed in each competition.



It's Sharks versus the Minnows, as camp members try to run from one side of a field to the other without getting touched.



The staff and children get together around 3:45 p.m. for closing ceremonies at the flagpole, led by **Rocco Vasta**, camp coordinator. It's a rousing ceremony with singing, shouting and lots of movement. Rocco displayed an amazing amount of energy to stimulate crowd response, and respond they did, with much enthusiasm. According to Erin Berns, Camp Director, the current location has been used for three years. It has loads of space and provisions for indoor and outdoor activities. Around 300 children attend and over 40 camp counselors work with them. The camp opened the last week in June and continues until August 31.

Camp Northpoint, which is located on North Greece Road about two miles north of Latta Road, sees about 300 campers per week. Many return from year to year. For some of the more veteran campers there are opportunities for promotion. Northpoint has a Leader in Training program in which campers can prepare to become counselors.

Anjelica Brooks, a Greece Odyssey student, has been coming to camp for eight years and is now in the leadership program. For Brooks it is a chance to work with her friends and give back to a camp that has meant a lot to her.

"This camp has made me a well rounded person," Brooks said. Kids aren't the only ones who return from year to year. Scott Steinberg has been working at the camp for a decade. Steinberg is a guidance counselor in the West Irondequoit school district. He appreciates the focus on teamwork, whether it be the individual color teams, or the large group. Steinberg said teamwork is even enforced when cleaning up. And although school isn't in session, Steinberg said these campers are learning a lot.

"It is nice to teach in such an active environment," Steinberg said.



The 50 foot climbing tower is an imposing sight at YMCA Camp Northpoint in Greece. Here, team work is displayed as 8-year-old **Alicia Dioguardi** is being guided in her climb by Tower Special Assistant **Jackie Martin**. After reaching ground Alicia said: "I like the challenge of it. I wasn't scared."



Head Guard **Jeff Sadowski** playfully exhibits an unusual form in exiting the water slide.

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