

Orland Park Day Camp Offers Fun-Filled Summer *Age Specific Programs Available*

ORLAND PARK, IL – With the end of the school year in sight, parents are looking for options to keep their grammar school aged children occupied. The Orland Park Recreation Department Day Camp Program offers a number of options for grammar school children.

“We have three age specific divisions within the Day Camp Program,” said Orland Park Recreation Operations Manager Irene Buikema. “The curriculum in each is tailored for that particular age group,” she added.

All three camp programs visit the village’s Centennial Park Aquatics Center every Monday and Thursday afternoon. Pool visits are included in the program fee.

Summer Buddies is designed for campers in first through third grades and is overseen by Program Coordinator Mercedes Free. Three day or five day camps are offered Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

“Buddies follows a different theme each week, around which all of our games, crafts and activities revolve,” Free explained. “For example, during Anything Goes Week, we have pajama day, crazy hair day and mismatch day,” she added.

Summer Buddies campers remain with their groups and counselors all day and Fridays bring field trips to destinations within the Chicago area.

“Many of our counselors are teachers or education majors who have years of experience working with children,” Free said. “They make the summer fun and educational at the same time,” she said.

Roberta Flondor oversees the Voyagers Camp, offered for girls and boys entering fourth grade in the fall.

“Voyagers is designed to meet the needs of the children who are too old for the primary grade camp but not quite ready to take on the challenges of Adventurers, our camp for the older kids,” Flondor explained.

“Voyagers offers age appropriate activities in sports, games and crafts, along with full day field trips and swimming at Centennial,” Flondor described. Campers begin the day with their core group and counselor and may spend the rest of the day enjoying activities with campers from other Voyagers groups.

“Last year was our maiden voyage for Voyagers and our campers had a blast,” Flondor said, smiling.

Jeanne Weaver is responsible for the older campers’ program, Adventurers, designed for children entering fifth through seventh grades in the fall.

“A large portion of our program allows campers to make choices within their camp day,” Weaver explained. “I think this is an important aspect of our program as our campers are older and need to be able to make some choices during their day. It’s their summer,” she said.

Campers are able to choose among sports, crafts and other activities. Sports may include knockout, volleyball or kickball while crafts include making items. Other activities may include making Gak, participating in a spoons tournament or making a lava container.

“Adventurers also participate in group events such as the Rube Goldberg Competition or Adventurer Idol, our own version of ‘American Idol’, complete with karaoke. We celebrate the end of summer with a dance with a DJ,” Weaver said.

Five day a week adventurer campers go on mini field trips several times during the camp session. Five day campers are able to practice specific sports, create things on a sewing machine or work on more detailed projects.

The Recreation Department also offers Before and After Camp Pals, designed for working parents who need to drop off their children before camp begins or pick them up after the camp day ends.

“The village’s day camp gives parents peace of mind, knowing their children are safely occupied with age appropriate activities,” Buikema said.

Three week day and five week day sessions are available for Summer Buddies and Adventurers.

Voyagers offers three day camp with a wait list having been created for those interested in five days. Whether the Recreation Department offers five day camp for fourth graders will be decided closer to the start of the day camp season.

The first session of camp is June 14 to July 9 with no camp on July 5. Session two is offered from July 12 to August 6.

Registration is available at the village’s Loebe Recreation Center, 14650 South Ravinia Avenue and at the Sportsplex, 11351 West 159th Street. For more information, call the Village of Orland Park Recreation Department at 708/403-7275.