

2014 YOUTH RALLY in San Diego, California



San Diego State University – 2014 Campers

AN IDEAL SETTING The Youth Rally was back in San Diego this year for a fun-filled week of learning, growing, and the creation of life-long friendships and memories! San Diego State University (SDSU) has long been a favorite site among campers and counselors alike on account of the immaculate (and air conditioned) dorms and an adjacent in-ground outdoor pool. As expected, the weather was magical. Sunny and warm days followed by cooler nights, never a raindrop in sight, set the perfect scene for the experience of a lifetime.

THEY COME FROM ALL OVER This year's Rally hosted 113 campers between the ages of 11 and 17 from 34 states, Canada, The UK, Belgium, Ecuador, and Venezuela. Notably, 31 campers were experiencing the Youth Rally for their very first time! The Youth Rally volunteer team of 53 counselors, 13 counselors-in-training, and 16 specialty-trained registered nurses assembled on campus two days prior to camper arrival for their annual orientation and team-building session so that they were well prepared for camper arrival on Monday.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS During their five days of camp, campers with 54 different diagnoses had the opportunity to learn more about their own diagnoses as well as those of other campers and counselors. They participated in intimate rap sessions discussing their own diagnoses and management techniques while sharing their life experiences, concerns, and innovative ideas for living an independent life.

FUN, FUN, FUN On fitness day each participant had the opportunity to learn the importance of health and exercise while sampling some of the many activities available at the state-of-the-art SDSU Aztec Recreation center. Of course it wouldn't be a San Diego Rally without a trip to the infamous Mission Beach and Belmont Park where they had access to rides, amusement games, plenty of junk food, the sandy beach and Pacific coast, a bonfire with s'mores, and for the first time, our very own (adaptive) surfing instructor. The week was topped off with a talent show, a fashion show, and a beach-themed dance and graduation ceremony complete with caricaturist and airbrush tattoo artist. Nobody got much sleep, but who can sleep when there's so much fun to be had and experiences to share, and friendships to nurtured and cherished for a life time? It is expected that all but those 21 campers who graduated will join us again in 2015 at the University of Colorado at Boulder, CO. Many of those same graduates will be submitting applications for the 2015 counselor-in-training leadership program. In the meantime they have formed lasting friendships, found lifelong mentors, and thanks to modern technology and social media, they will be able to communicate all year long!

The Youth Rally Committee greatly appreciates your support in providing sponsorship so that these teens could again attend the Youth Rally without further financial burden on their families. Without your support, the Rally could not continue.

Thank you for allowing us the privilege of providing an environment for these teens with special needs to grow, learn, have fun, and realize that they are truly never alone.



To see pictures and video from this year's Youth Rally visit our official media page at www.rally4youth.org/photos.php