

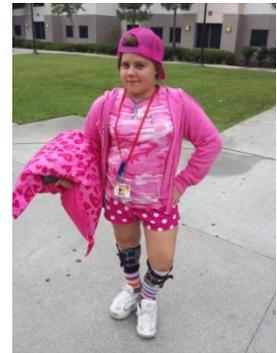


The Youth Rally Experience by Cynthia Newton (2014)

There is a pretty good chance that if you are reading this, you are a WOCN or would like to become one. Please listen up! If you are ever given the opportunity to participate as a volunteer WOCN with the Youth Rally... jump on it! Being a member of the Youth Rally Volunteer Team is an unforgettable experience in beautiful surroundings, held in San Diego this last summer. This is a rare opportunity to reach your full

potential as you help other young people reach theirs.

Youth Rally is a 5 night camp for kids, age 11 through 17, living with any disease/condition of the bowel or bladder system. Some of the conditions include Spina bifida, VATER syndrome, imperforate anus, Hirschsprung's disease, Crohn's Disease, bladder or bowel exstrophy, ulcerative colitis, cancer, FAP, and necrotizing enterocolitis. Just as the diagnoses vary, so do the management techniques. Some campers can manage their conditions without any intervention, while others need oversight or teaching. Nurses assist campers with any problems they may be experiencing and can offer suggestions and techniques to improve the management of their medical condition.



Sending a child to camp is a tremendous act of faith by parents. Their faith is repaid by the joy in seeing their child thrive in a fun and positive community. The Youth Rally spirit remains with each child throughout the year... and all want to return!

Imagine the joy of seeing a young camper on a roller coaster for the first time in their life, or teaching a young camper to swim, riding the waves in the ocean! And of course, as often happens with campers away from home, one can witness the transition from being a kid to a teenager in one week. The counselors are young adults who have "graduated" from camp and help these youth with teenage issues, personal hygiene, medical management, treatment choices, but most importantly, lessons in attaining positive self-esteem and independence.

The absolute dedication of the administrative staff, many of whom also share similar conditions, was such a pleasant surprise. This team is a well-honed machine, working tirelessly throughout the year and especially during the week of camp. The camaraderie and support of one another and to the campers was touching and amazing.

I discovered a new love for myself, an acceptance of things I cannot change. I examined my own self-esteem along with the kids. No one was abnormal there...everyone was normal...each in our own

individual way. There was such a wonderful feeling of acceptance by everyone that week, with a tremendous sense of caring and love...and always a willingness to help others.

Working with Laura Phearman, WOCN extraordinaire was such a pleasure. She has dedicated hours of energy and service to this organization and I was tickled to have the opportunity to work beside her. Hearing her stories over the years and seeing pictures at our Iowa affiliate meetings certainly piqued my interest. It was fun to see her in her element, and she was awe-inspiring! We are so lucky to have her in our Iowa WOCN Affiliate membership!

If you are invited or have the opportunity to participate in Youth Rally (July 13th-18th, 2015 in Boulder, CO)...DO IT! You will never regret it. I pray that I have the opportunity to return.

Please take any and every opportunity to provide financial support that will help to keep this awesome organization thriving. Scholarships are provided so that every camper can participate. Funds cover registration, flight costs and personal items as needed! Donations from companies are appreciated.

This was an unforgettable experience! Volunteer to improve your life, and theirs!

(for more information on how to join the Youth Rally nursing team, check out the "Volunteers" page at: www.rally4youth.org)