

Review: *Camp Kitaki offers fun*

BY BETH BRENNAN

Ring! That was the last bell of the school year and summer has just begun. There are so many things to do, such as swimming, rock climbing, or hiking with friends.

What if I told you that it was possible to do all of that and more at a summer camp located here in Nebraska!

YMCA Camp Kitaki at Louisville, Neb., is an overnight camp running for 10 weeks each summer for kids aged 7-17. I have had the opportunity to attend eight summers and highly recommend the excursion as a summer favorite.

Camp Kitaki features exciting activities for each age. For the younger to middle aged campers, Kitaki offers a pick of three out of many clubs to partake in each morning.

Within these clubs, campers can participate in water sports, run-around games, arts and crafts, and activities like fine arts and photography.

Older campers, however, spend time on the ropes-challenge courses or making the trek to places like Platte River State Park. This offers a variety of activities for any age group.

However, the camp provides other activities outside of clubs, such as archery, rock climbing, horseback riding, and sports like gaga ball and nine square. These activities

allow campers to expand their social circle and find something they like to do.

In addition to the accessibility for all ages, the camp offers different lengths of campouts. For the little campers, Adventure Mini is an “introductory program” featuring a three-day, two-night stay to give a feel for what camp is about.

As campers move up the age ranges to 15 years, they then will be able to sign up for Leadership Camp, the pinnacle Kitaki experience. This is a two-week long program where during the first week, campers stay at Kitaki, while the second week is at Kitaki’s sister camp in Minnesota, Camp Cut Foot Sioux in the Chippewa National Forest. This is a unique way to allow campers to receive how much they want out of the camp experience.

As scary as it sounds leaving your child in the hands of someone else, parents should not be worried about their children’s care in Kitaki.

Kitaki counselors are college-aged, CPR certified, and have undergone extensive training to issue proper physical, mental and emotional supervision and aid to each and every camper.

Not only that, Camp Kitaki has a 24/7 nursing staff trained to treat complications from illnesses to minor injuries, including an emergency action plan on standby for a more severe situation.

Camp Kitaki sticks strong to one of its

core values: safety. Before each campout, counselors hold a cabin meeting to discuss rules of camp and how each camper can demonstrate safety themselves.

Two of these policies are the rule of three and consent. The rule of three, statistically proven to reduce the risk of abuse, requires staff and campers to travel around camp in groups of three. The rule of consent asks that everyone asks for consent before giving hugs and borrowing items.

These rules ensure all campers and staff are comfortable during their time at camp.

This camp, however, does not hold just one set fee. Camp Kitaki is flexible with any financial situation, making it possible for any kid to attend camp. Camp offers tiers A, B, C, and financial assistance, such as the annual fundraiser Strong Kids Campaign, raising money to send less fortunate kids to camp.

This shows Camp Kitaki is nondiscriminatory to finance and wants to give each kid a chance at making memories.

During the past eight summers I have attended, I have made lifelong memories and friendships that I will never forget.

From exciting activities to friendly staff who are committed to providing a safe and adventurous atmosphere to everyone, YMCA Camp Kitaki is a place I would 10/10 recommend for any family with children who want to experience a summer full of magic.

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