



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

The Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History is one place your kids can have a hoot this summer.

HELLO MUDDAH, HELLO FADDAH ...

Indoors or outdoors, a summer camp to fit every hobby

Camps

By **STEVE HAHN**
Sentinel correspondent

Imagine yourself standing before the Monterey Bay, surfboard in hand, preparing to spend the entire afternoon amongst the aqua-blue waves. You catch a whiff of pride as you remember the ease with which you programmed your first video game that very same morning. Now imagine turning to your friend, who has spent his morning creating a Web site, and inviting him into the cool, refreshing waves for a surf.

Sound like the lifestyle of two Silicon Valley tech gurus?

Well, this summer ID Tech camp and Ed's surf camp are determined to extend these opportunities to a new generation. Children aged 11-17 are welcome at the weeklong summer camp, one of a growing number of non-traditional camps offered in the Santa Cruz area.

Karen Thurm Safran, vice president of ID Tech camp, hopes the camp's mix of physical and mental activities inspires new passions in the young campers' lives.

"We get kids who may not think they like technology, they may be more athletic," she said. "It's a good way to introduce them to technology. By the end of the week they're probably going to realize they love it and wish they had more time to work on their projects."

However, a deeper understanding of



Children blossom at the Life Lab Camp at the UC Santa Cruz farm.

technology and surfing is only one in a long list of benefits offered by local summer camps this year.

Suzanne Dyer, a programs specialist at Cabrillo College who started the Summer Academy 11 years ago when she realized there was a drought of programs for children transitioning between middle and high school, attempts to give students a taste for the world of higher education by bringing them to the Cabrillo campus and

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■ Complete list of available summer camps in the area. **PAGE B2**

exposing them to college-level faculty.

"One thing I've heard from parents and students is that these kids come to a

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Science camp exploration mixes a little learning with some fun.



SANTA CRUZ STYLE

Camps

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more mature environment than they're used to," she said. "They are responsible for their behavior. There are no grades or evaluations at all so they get from this program whatever they put into it."

While alternatives to the summer camp of yesteryear are growing in popularity as admittance to colleges becomes more competitive and technology surrounds our lives with increasing frequency, their breed is far from extinct.

Kennolyn Camps has been offering the traditional camp experience in the Santa Cruz Mountains since 1946. Andrew Townsend, director of Kennolyn summer camps, conceded he has had to respond to the growth of alternative camps by offering specialty courses, such as surfing, circus performing and equestrian arts. However, he still believes his camp provides a unique experience

for campers yearning to escape the bustle of modern life.

"We try to offer fun things the kids don't get to do elsewhere," he said. "We don't have video games or television, so kids get to reconnect to a simpler lifestyle in this complex life we live in."

Reconnecting to nature doesn't have to take you to remote locations in the mountains, however. The Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department takes advantage of the abundance of natural beauty within the city limits.

Jill Bates, 26-year park veteran and coordinator for the summer camp program at SCPRD, emphasized the new appreciation children have for the Central Coast environment after spending time at one of the many camps the department offers.

"We're focusing on team building exercises while having fun outside a school setting," Bates said. "Something where they can get dirty. It's getting back to nature within the city limits."

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