

Camp Opportunity to celebrate 25 years at event

Camps
REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF REPORT

SANTA CRUZ — Camp Opportunity, a privately-run summer camp for at-risk youth in Santa Cruz County, will celebrate 25 years during an open house event Sunday from 1-4 p.m. at the Happy Valley Conference Center, 2159 Branciforte Drive in Santa Cruz.

All former campers and counselors are invited to the event.

Camp Opportunity, established in 1989 by Bob Slassor, has campers from families facing issues such as substance abuse and family violence and all are at risk of abuse or neglect.

Executive Director/Camp Director John Skinner started as a camper in 1989. According to organizers, he has never missed a summer of camp and works together with about 50 volunteers.

The camp runs on a one-to-one counselor-to-camper ratio, and each camper is matched with a counselor who stays with them 24 hours a day for the entire week, and many of them return year after year, organizers said.

The camp is run in two sessions. The first, in June, is for campers from 8 to 10 years of age. The second, in July, is for campers 11 to 13. There are

about 35 campers in each session. Campers are referred to the camp through Santa Cruz County Human Services.

The camp is run similar to a traditional summer camp, with morning flag-raising ceremonies, cabin inspections, arts and crafts, photography, dance, swimming, hiking, archery, campfires and more. An important part of camp are the Discovery classes, which are self esteem classes and workshops that campers and counselors attend together each day.

All funding for the camp comes from private donations and fundraising events throughout the year. The amount raised

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each year is \$40,000 to \$50,000. Only one percent of the money raised goes toward administrative use. The campers receive a T-shirt, stuffed animal and a memory box.

Former campers and counselors who want to learn more about Sunday's open house event should call Bernice Robertson at 427-2737.

For information, visit www.campopp.org.