

Memories made during Camp GLOW mountain retreat

By Greg Larry

Special to the Review

ACCIDENT – Special bonds and memories were made in the mountains of Garrett County Aug. 10-14.

For the second straight year, the Hickory Environmental Education Center in Accident was the site of Camp GLOW (God Loves Our World), which allows adults with developmental disabilities to enjoy getaways in the country.

The week was sponsored by the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Office of Special Needs Ministry.

"God has given gifts to each one of us," said Deacon William Fleming, who directs that office. "It is such a blessing because we get to share whatever gifts we have with each other."

The archdiocese held four Camp GLOW retreats this summer, the first three at the Monsignor O'Dwyer Retreat House in Sparks, in northern Baltimore County. Its western run was held in a complex that sits between Northern Garrett High School and Northern Middle School, amid woods and abundant wildlife.

At the Hickory Environmental Education Center, 22 adult campers got to see an apiary with honey bees, take nature walks, visit a planetarium, make arts and crafts, play bingo and enjoy a visit from a clown.

Asked if he was enjoying his trip to mountain Maryland, camper Kirk Brown joyfully replied, "Yes, I'm coming back next year."

Asked what he most enjoyed, camper Phillip Beijan, of Columbia, said, "I like taking the walks."

Jane Dehitta, 20, a Community College of Baltimore County graduate and parishioner of Church of Resurrection in Ellicott City, and her sister, Sara, were among the Camp GLOW volunteers.

“They enjoy life in such a beautiful way,” Dehitta said, of the campers. “It is not like we are watching videos or playing with technology. It’s just like we are in nature and we spend time hanging out with each other”

Sharon Hoover, instructor assistant at the Hickory Center, was among the staff hosting the group.

“They are learning about nature,” she said. “I love the fact they are out in nature and they are smiling and asking questions. They are enjoying themselves.”

Grace Gary, 23, a parishioner of St. Bartholomew in Manchester, was a return volunteer.

“This is my seventh year,” she said. “I’ve been doing it for a long time. I love to watch the campers interact with one another. There is such love and caring for one another.”

Fleming, director of special needs ministry for 10 years and a parishioner at St. Andrew by the Bay in Annapolis, described Camp GLOW as a wonderful opportunity for participants and volunteers.

“It is just fun to be able to be ourselves with each other,” he said. “They are getting to be outdoors and learn new things at the same time. It’s a blessing.”

Also see:

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