

Jean Walker's goal: fun for handicapped kids

By Anne R. Lehmann
special writer

As coordinator of Bloomfield SCAMP, the Oakland County summer day camp for physically and mentally handicapped children, Jean Walker, 56, wears many hats.

In the summer you'll find her, whistle around her neck, directing school buses loaded with wheelchair-bound children to West Hills Middle School in West Bloomfield Township.

The rest of the year she works from her small cluttered office, in that same building, fund-raising, recruiting, publicizing to assure that she will be able to give her kids the most wonderful summer possible.

Her work at SCAMP began 18 years ago, first as head of the waterfront and seven years later as its director. This energetic Bloomfield

Hills resident, wife and mother of three, talks about herself as a perennial camper; a lover of the outdoors who since her early Girl Scout days has been involved in camping life in some way.

That's pretty surprising considering she grew up in the New York metropolitan area. Yet after earning a bachelor's degree in physical education from New York University, she moved to the Midwest to teach swimming and earn a master's in administration at the University of Illinois.

WHEN WAYNE State University offered her a position as a physical education instructor, Detroit became her next stop.

While raising her children, she taught swimming part time, developed a swim program for the hand-

Play bingo to help SCAMP

To allow more needy, handicapped children to attend the Oakland County day camp this summer, SCAMP is holding a BINGO bash, 7:30-10:30 p.m. Monday, April 30, in the cafeteria of West Hills

Middle School, Lone Pine Road east of Middlebelt, West Bloomfield. All proceeds will go directly to the camp. For more information, call SCAMP coordinator Jean Walker at 540-5278.

capped and in 1982, accepted the position to head the SCAMP waterfront. It is as a result of her hard work and commitment that the camp has grown and evolved into the remarkable program it has become.

SCAMP — a name which evolved after originally being called Summer Camp, then S Camp and finally SCAMP — draws from 40 school districts and caters to physically, mentally and hearing impaired children. The six-week program is staffed by 180 volunteers and professionals, creating an almost 1:2 ratio between counselors and campers.

Walker believes in stretching these kids who range in age from 3-26, and has piloted innovative pro-

grams as well unique opportunities. They are offered overnight camping, enjoy puppet and clown shows and venture out on field trips to such places as the Nature Center at Belle Isle, Cranbrook Science Museum and more. This year, according to Walker, the staff will even include a librarian/storyteller.

In recent years special services including occupational, physical and speech therapy have been offered as part of the program. "Having fun is the major focus of SCAMP, but we also strive to maintain academic skills through the summer," says Walker.

costly and consequently Walker has taken on the role of primary fundraiser. "There are only 400 spots available at SCAMP which are filled on a first-come, first-served basis," says Walker. "We could easily double that amount, but each year we turn away people largely because of lack of funding."

An annual Valentine's brunch helps defray the \$225,000 operating costs of SCAMP. In an effort to raise additional funds for scholarships, SCAMP is holding a BINGO bash 7:30-10:30 p.m. April 30 in the West Hills Middle School Cafeteria. All proceeds will go directly to the camp.

"Like all non-profit organizations, we are always looking for new ways to raise money," says Walker. "We figured we would create a fun evening for our supporters and friends,



Jean Walker

after all, isn't that what SCAMP is all about — having fun?" For more information, call Walker at 540-5278.

Confab on county's beauty

The Oakland Parks Foundation is sponsoring a conference Friday, April 27, on methods of protecting the county's most significant natural areas.

Entitled "Protecting the Natural World: Opportunities in Oakland County" the event will take place from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Oakland University's Oakland Center. Kerry Kammer, often referred to

as the father of the Michigan Land Trust Fund, will speak at the opening breakfast. An awards ceremony recognizing more than 30 groups involved with protecting the natural environment will also be included.

Oakland University is at the corner of Squirrel Road and Waiton Boulevard in Auburn Hills. For more information, call 335-2771.

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