

EDUCATION

McCort student lauded for service

David Holbay, a student at Bishop McCort High School, spends one week every summer as a junior counselor at Camp PARC.

This camp, however, isn't just any average summer camp: It has a very specific audience and mission. Camp PARC - which stands for People Always Responding with Compassion - aims to provide a week of interactive social experiences for people with mental disabilities.

David has been volunteering as a junior counselor at Camp PARC for six years. The camp places heavy emphasis on the formation of relationships between campers and counselors.

Each summer, David is assigned two campers - who range in age from 12 to 84 - and becomes their caretaker for the week. He says that sometimes campers lack the mental capacity to perform everyday functions such as showering. In these cases, it becomes the junior coun-



THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM

Kayla Washko

selor's responsibility to assist these campers. Others, he says, merely need to be reminded of what to do.

Each year, the camp is given a different theme. All of the activities that campers participate in revolve around this theme.

The 2007 theme was "Charlie Brown's Seasonal Celebration." The camp is held during the last week of July every summer at Laurel Hill State Park.

David says that volunteering at Camp PARC has helped him learn how to interact with people who are different from him.

"These people don't have as much freedom as we do in their mental capacities," he said. "It really makes you realize that we should be grateful for what God gave us and that we shouldn't take life for granted."

To students looking to get involved with community service, David says that Camp PARC is "a great way to experience life."

He says that it has greatly impacted his view on his personal conduct and attitude.

David was recognized by The Challenge Program for his involvement with Camp PARC in 2007, when he received the Most Community Service award at an assembly held at Bishop McCort High School.

Camp PARC is a nonprofit organization located in Davidsville. It has been reaching out to people with mental disabilities since 1960 and is currently operated by Ed and Judy Risch.

For more information about the camp and how you can become involved, visit the Web site, www.campparc.org, or contact The Challenge Program.

This article is part of a human interest series that will feature past recipients of The Challenge Program's four award categories: Most Improved, Best GPA, Most Community Service and Best Attendance. The Challenge Program is a nonprofit organization located in Johnstown that provides financial incentives to students for successes they achieve while still in high school. The Challenge Program also aims to provide a bridge between high-school students and the local business community.

539-1409. They also may be submitted in person or by mail to 425 Locust St., Johnstown, Pa. 15907-0340.

ness Development Center will host a financial statements seminar series beginning at 9 a.m. For more information or to register, contact the center by

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Oct. 22

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