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Making Campers Feel Like Family



Each camper that attends Easter Seals Camp Fairlee becomes a part of the Fairlee family, but some members have been a part of the family for a lot longer. Jamal, who has Cerebral Palsy and uses a wheelchair, looks forward to coming to camp each year and has been coming for 26 years. Starting at the age of 6, Jamal has made his mark on the camp well into his adulthood and enjoys every minute of his experience.

"I wish camp was every day of my life. For me, camp is about doing things I've never done before like the zip line," Jamal says. "I love Camp Fairlee. It is designed for people in wheelchairs. They don't discriminate against any disability. Camp gets better each year."

Like most parents, Jamal's mom, Bernadette, was nervous the first time she dropped him off, but it has become a tradition. Now, she is comfortable planning trips knowing that he is swimming, taking part in activities and socializing with friends that he will continue to keep in contact with throughout the year on Facebook.

"The first time I dropped him off I was a nervous ninny, but at the end of the week when he didn't want to leave, I knew he was fine so I was comfortable," Bernadette recalls. "I usually enjoy my time of respite. I have somewhere to go while he is away so my mind is not always on him."

Jamal is grateful for every minute he spends at camp. "Camp Fairlee has changed my life and helped shape who I am. They make me feel at home," Jamal says. "I love that place to death."



EASTER SEALS CAMP FAIRLEE

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Easter Seals Camp Fairlee, outside of Chestertown, Maryland, is the only camp in the region that provides a typical residential camp experience for children and adults with disabilities year-round. Fairlee offers week-long camp sessions throughout the summer, Travel Trips throughout the year, and weekend respite/retreat programs from August through May. Learn more about Camp Fairlee services at www.de.easterseals.com/fairlee.