

THE AMBLER GAZETTE

Sesame/Rockwood Camps emphasize exercise with FitMondays (video)

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At 9:15 a.m. Monday morning, hundreds of people of all ages gathered together to start their week off with some exercise.

And that's the way it's been each Monday morning this summer at Sesame/Rockwood Camps in Blue Bell, as the program has launched FitMondays to increase campers' interest in exercise.

To begin each week, the joint camps — Sesame Day Camp for ages 3 to 7 and Camp Rockwood for ages 8 to 14 — gather around the basketball court for a giant group exercise session, with each week featuring a different type of fitness.

The idea to begin a campwide focus on the importance of fitness developed during the winter, according to camp owner/director Howard Batterman, who said he did a lot of reading about obesity and diabetes in children.

"We want to make sure that we can do our part in exercise and turn the kids on to something they can carry throughout the fall, winter and spring until they come back to camp next summer," he said.

In order to get campers excited about exercising, the camp selected a variety of unique fitness options.

FitMondays kicked off the first week of camp with everyone gathering by the lake for some yoga, and campers participated in Jump Rope for Heart the following week. Other FitMondays programs have included Zumba, martial arts and a "fitness frenzy" of fitness drills.

This week, a favorite camp activity became a serious workout.

Darren Smith, a teacher in the Souderton Area School District and the camp's former special events director, returned to lead both campers and counselors in an exercise version of Nibble-t-Bibble.

Much like in the game Simon Says, participants are told to do a certain motion, such as touch their toes or jump in the air, but only when a specific command is given. Instead of "Simon Says," Nibble-t-Bibble participants must listen for the command "Order."

Smith led the camp through a version of Nibble-t-Bibble at a cardio pace, getting the campers and counselors to stretch out and get their heart rates going.

So far, FitMondays have been a hit among the approximately 650 campers.

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"I think they've loved it," Batterman said. "I think yoga was a little difficult, but the other activities [were] fast-paced. ... They really love to get that exercise every Monday to get things going."

"They've been fun," Jesse Weiner, 12, said. "I've been moving around a lot, and it's good exercise."

Jesse said he would like to try Zumba again in the future.

"They were fun," Sophia Schwartz, 10, said, noting by doing FitMondays, campers are "getting a workout and starting the morning good."

"I really like them because they're a lot of fun," Sofia Himmel, 10, said. "You need to stay healthy to do all the stuff during the day they have scheduled during camp."

"It gets your blood flowing so you're not tired," Jenna Prywitowski, 10, said.

Batterman said he hopes that excitement continues once camp wraps up in a few weeks' time and that campers will pursue some of the fitness programs they've been introduced to through FitMondays.

And to encourage exercising all year long, Sesame/Rockwood Camps will be keeping campers informed on the latest fitness trends throughout the school year.

"We're going to be sending them updates on other types of exercise through our electronic newsletter throughout the winter," Batterman said.

He also said he's hopeful future newsletters will include photos of children wearing their camp shirts at a Zumba class or participating in other fitness programs.

"They're getting the message that exercise, doing something regularly every day is really important," he said.

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Taryn Singer, 12, left, and Samantha Sullivan, 12, take part in the Nibble-t-Bibble exercise during Sesame/Rockwood Camps' FitMondays program Aug. 1.



Campers begin the morning with a camp favorite, Nibble-t-Bibble, during Sesame/Rockwood Camps' FitMondays program Aug. 1.

