



SuperCamp students participated in an exercise designed to push personal boundaries. SuperCamp is the flagship program of Quantum Learning Network.

OCEANSIDE

SuperCamp provides super learning tools to students

By Linda McIntosh
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Failure leads to success" isn't something Bobbi DePorter simply tells children in her SuperCamp. She's lived it.

She made several million dollars selling real estate and lost it overnight in a stock

options investment, but she didn't quit.

"It made me stronger," DePorter said.

The Oceanside resident went on to build a multimillion-dollar company, Quantum Learning Network.

This summer the education and training company is celebrating the 25th anniversary of

its flagship program, SuperCamp. The summer camp teaches accelerated learning techniques and life skills to thousands of students at college campuses around the world.

DePorter's upbeat attitude comes through at the camp and in the company's other learning programs.

"You've got to take risks. How are you going to learn when you're worried about making mistakes?" said DePorter, the company president.

That principle is behind the rock-climbing and trust exercises that are combined with vocabulary learning games and note-taking classes at the camp.

SuperCamp is one of the ideas that put DePorter on the “Fast 50” list of innovative talents in business by Fast Company magazine last year.

In 1982, DePorter cofounded SuperCamp with Eric Jensen and Greg Simmons. It began with notes she scrawled on a napkin in a restaurant.

DePorter took inspiration from Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian educator with whom she studied in the late '70s.

Lozanov applied accelerated learning methods to the fields of business and education. DePorter used these methods at the Burklyn Business School in Vermont, which she cofounded in the late 1970s.

“SuperCamp started as an experiment. We were teaching adults speed reading and note-taking, and seeing how fast they were learning and thinking there was a need for this for kids,” DePorter said.

The company operated out of DePorter's home, then moved into successively larger locations in Del Mar, Solana Beach and Oceanside.

It expanded to provide training and education programs for teachers and business people.

Last year, Quantum Learning Network moved into its

Quantum Learning Network

Where: 1938 Avenida del Oro, Oceanside

Information: (760) 722-0072 or www.qln.com

42,000-square-foot headquarters in Oceanside.

For the first SuperCamp, DePorter sent letters to dozens of friends and enrolled 64 teenagers. Since then, 45,000 students in fourth grade through college have participated.

The first year, campers met in a resort at Lake Tahoe and studied note-taking, test preparation, vocabulary, memory training and other ways to boost learning. The idea was to teach better study habits in a relaxed environment with plenty of fun mixed in.

Among DePorter's first campers was her then-teenage son, Grant.

“He told me, ‘This better be good,’” she said.

Today, her son is one of the success stories of the camp.

He recalled doing memory games at camp and going home afterward able to learn large numbers of vocabulary words at one time.

In 1987, he founded Harry Caray's Restaurant Group in

SuperCamp 2007

Where: Cal State San Marcos

Junior Forum: Students entering grades six through eight; July 20-29; \$2,395

Senior Forum: Students entering grades nine through 12 and Leadership Training Team for Senior Forum graduates entering grades 10 through 12; July 8-17; \$2,395

Information:
www.supercamp.com

Chicago, where he says he still uses some of the memory techniques he learned at camp.

He plans to send his preteen daughters to SuperCamp this summer.

The camp has changed a bit over the years, but the fundamentals are the same.

“Every class and activity and outdoor challenge helps kids discover their own power and motivation,” DePorter said.

That includes exercises where students climb a 30-foot pole and jump off a platform to catch a trapeze 8 feet below.

“It reminds them of the challenges of life,” she said.

Campers are challenged on a variety of fronts. Those having trouble memorizing vocabulary words are shown new ways to learn them. They play mystery word games and per-

form skits that create pictures in their minds of what a word means.

For the word “garrulous,” which means talkative, campers might stage a skit about a gorilla talking on the phone.

An important part of the process is that everybody around is cheering.

“Kids are surrounded with people who want them to succeed,” DePorter said.

She tells the story of SuperCamp in her book, “The Seven Biggest Teen Problems and How to Turn Them Into Strengths.” The book takes parents through the experiences of SuperCamp.

Each chapter addresses a different challenge, from turning lack of focus into organized study strategies to turning low motivation into goal achievement.

“She believes in what she's doing,” Grant said. “She was the inspiration for me to be an entrepreneur. I watched her thinking process and how she looked at the world and saw the upside.”