



SUMMER EDUCATION

Schools take a cue from SuperCamp successes

By Nikki Davis Maute
USA TODAY

The summer approach to learning - focusing on teamwork to build trust, self-confidence and self-worth - is going to school.

The California-based SuperCamp organization, which has made a splash in the expanding education-for-profit camp field, is taking its quantum learning approach into more traditional classrooms this fall.

"We have teachers call us and ask what we did to their students during our summer sessions because they see such a change," says SuperCamp founder Bobbi DePorter.

During the last several years DePorter has introduced schools to the SuperCamp strategy for learning, which combines academic and confidence-building sessions.

"That's the area I expect that we will see a lot of expansion as more and more people hear about our SuperCamps or read my book," DePorter says. She is author of *Quantum Learning: Unleashing the Genius In You* (Dell).

That does not mean the summer SuperCamps - 10-day sessions held on college campuses - are ending. Plans for the summer are already in the works.

Started in 1982, SuperCamp has locations in California, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and abroad. Since its beginning, the program has served more than 35,000 campers.

What makes the parents pay the tuition for their offspring to attend the summer camps - a few for the second time?

"It's incredible," says Andrew Van Dyke, 17, of Monument, Colo. He's been to two and says his life has changed because of it.

"Before I went. I was really timid toward people," Van Dyke



Kids' 'awesome' lessons in teamwork, confidence

Malika Hadley Freyberg, 13, had an attitude about school.

But the Brookline, Mass., teen-ager took her dislike of school to camp this summer. "The camp was awesome, one of the best experiences of my life. But my attitude about school was still bad, and it was the last day," Freyberg says. "Then that last morning when we came together, and the bonding I felt was tremendous. I knew I could do it. I still have an attitude about school, but I know now that I can make it. I made a promise to the others."

Freyberg attended a SuperCamp session at Westfield State College in Westfield, Mass., and believes it's changed her life for the better.

"Picture a place where you don't have to worry about trusting anyone. Where you don't have to put on any facade. It was like utopia." Her father, Bernard David Freyberg, couldn't be more pleased.

"She is happy," he says. "She did not want to attend the camp. But she came home so happy about the camp, her worth and the goals she's acquired."

SuperCamper Jennifer Miller did not find utopia, but says she did find self-confidence and self-esteem at the Westfield camp.

"The camp showed me that I can do or succeed at anything I want," the 14-year-old Stanford, Conn. resident says.

By Mandana Marsh, AP

INTO THE WOODS: Malika Handley Freyberg, left, and Piri Miller travel by tightrope at a SuperCamp in Massachusetts.

says. "After experiencing all the things at camp, I'm motivated. I want to be a doctor."

There may be now way to measure improved motivation and self-esteem, but DePorter says campers have improved their scores on the SAT college admissions test by an average 70 points.

"That 70 is an average," DePorter says. "We've had several who upped their scores 200 points."

Others say money makes the difference.

"You'd better get super results for that amount of money," says Michael Casserly, executive director, The Council of the Great City Schools, Washington, D.C. "Unfortunately it certainly prices many inner city kids out of the running. I'd love to have those kind of resources. We could work wonders too."

DePorter responds that the program is in several schools and the

results are similar to those recorded at camp.

"We have great results with the schools we are in and they have no more money that before," DePorter says.

The camp teaches academic strategies, power reading, memory skills, writing, note taking and creativity problem solving.

Probably the most talked-about element is the ropes course, where campers learn to depend on each other to walk across tight ropes or scale a pole or tree.

"Everyone has fears from time to time," DePorter says. "Our ropes course helps students understand and overcome these fears, which are often their only barriers to better grades and academic success."

For some students, SuperCamp has become a family tradition.

"My brother and two cousins had been to earlier camps and they enjoyed it and I wanted to go," says

Stephanie Walz, 15, who attended a camp in Westfield, Mass. The Raleigh, N.C. resident says, "Last year I was a 'C-D' student. This year I will be a lot better."

Jeff Solomon, National Camping Association, says U.S. summer camps include 5,000 that are residential and 3,000 that are day camps.

"Many of the camps offer educational opportunities, but frankly SuperCamp is unique in its program and operation, and it provides a variety of locations," says Solomon. The association provides a free advisory service for resident camps. A member of NCA, SuperCamp can be reached at (800) 285-3276 or (760) 722-0072.