



CAMP NOT-A-CLOT 2024 RECAP

By Becca Shaheen, Children's MN Program Coordinator



Another spectacular year of Camp Not-a-Clot has been completed! 2024 was our third year holding the HFMD Bleeding Disorder Camp at YMCA Camp Ihduhapi in Loretto, MN. Within year three, we are truly seeing an amazing synthesis of Camp Ihduhapi and Camp Not-a-Clot traditions. 2024 was our biggest year yet, with 83 campers from Children's Minnesota, Mayo Clinic, Sanford South Dakota, and Sanford North Dakota.



Some of the broad goals of camp include building community, gaining self-confidence, learning more about bleeding disorders, and working towards developing independence in managing one's bleeding disorder. This all occurs while enjoying summer camp games and activities and experiencing nature.

This is what Not-a-Clot 2024 looked like:

In true summer camp fashion, the week started out HOT and sunny (nothing that a dip in Lake Independence couldn't fix) and then settled into absolutely gorgeous summer weather the rest of the week.

After getting all settled in and oriented on Sunday, we started out Monday full speed ahead with a number of campers enjoying morning run club and waking up with a polar plunge. Monday marks the start of camp "achievements" or the rotation of 4 activities that campers select. This year's achievements included swimming, boating, archery, arts and crafts, sports, nature club, and more.



Monday also marked the beginning of our weeklong Olympics theme.

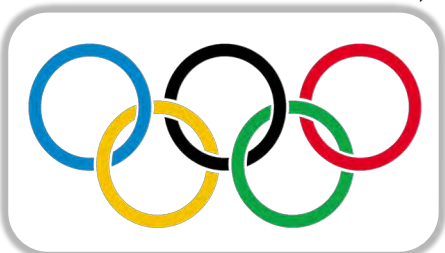
HTC staff ran the all camp game in which cabins received a big score sheet with a list of stations and challenges to complete for points. Stations included games like "discus," "shotput", and "volley ball," and fun educational stations like a physical therapy equipment safety relay race, a station to choose the best course of action for an injured Olympic athlete, and a station to learn about medication half-life.



Tuesday evening tradition at camp Ihduhapi includes cabins hiking out to different camp sites to cook over a fire, bond as a cabin, and enjoy Ihduhapi's beautiful acreage. This year, the two oldest cabins canoed out to the island within Lake Independence for their cookouts! These cabins had surprise guests from the nationally renowned "Gut Monkey" facilitation and programming group. The Gut Monkeys led the older teens in great conversation and activities related to transitioning to independence while out on the island.

Wednesday was a busy day! We hosted a number of special healthcare guests including RN's, Genetic Counselors, Hematologists, and an Adolescent Gynecologist, to run our annual girl's group and period program. This is a great way for girls of all ages to learn what to expect when it comes to menstruation, and an opportunity to ask the experts questions, and even learn from one another.

Wednesday tradition at camp is Theme Day, and Ihduhapi had additional Olympic games programming and contests. Wednesday afternoon a group of campers went to the horse barn, and group of campers completed the incredible high ropes course, and other groups of campers





played in special sports tournaments. We ended the day with the campers' all-time favorite game Capture the Flag! There is BIG energy during this game and campers look forward to it all week long.

Thursday after achievements, it's already time for closing campfire! Closing campfire is always fun and emotional. After a torch-led procession through the woods, each camper adds a stick to the fire and shares with the group kind words, shout outs, and good memories from the week.

The Health Center:

The health center at camp is a busy place full of lots of learning opportunities. Campers can work with their team to learn the steps of self-infusion (and can be celebrated on "The Big Stick" if they poke themselves for the first time) and self-injection. Campers are hugely encouraging and supportive of one another while learning these skills.

Campers continue to earn bracelets (bronze, silver, and gold this year!) for completing bleeding disorder questionnaires with health center staff. 2024 was our second year of "The Big Branch" challenge which is earned for showing significant independence in understanding and managing one's own bleeding disorder. It is a huge feat!

It is so great to see a clinical space transform into a vibrant place to learn and develop, and we are so proud of what campers learn each year!



Camp Not-a-Clot is an incredible special place for children and teens with bleeding disorders to relate to one another, learn from another, and grow together. This year, many moments of camp were well documented by an amazing videographer (more information to come soon!!) and we are so excited to share some more of the magic of camp with you later this year.

Thank you HTC staff, volunteers, HFMD Staff, Ilduhapi staff, families, community members, and campers who make this week possible!

