

Camp Mohawk – Wargrave can be proud!

Ask most people in the village about Camp Mohawk, and you'll probably get the reply "Oh isn't that something to do with scouts from London?" This used to be true, but following a difficult period a decade or so ago the camp underwent a major transformation: since then something very special has been developing quietly on Wargrave's doorstep.

Camp Mohawk is now a day centre supporting local families with children who have special needs. Visit the Camp today and you'll find a delightful woodland location, with impressive facilities (but still much to do) and most importantly, a highly dedicated and enthusiastic team who have a real drive and determination to make a difference. Over the last five years they have steadily developed the infrastructure to provide both indoor and outdoor facilities tailored to children with special needs. Camp Mohawk now has a growing reputation for excellence and has developed a strong professional relationship with the local authorities in Wokingham, and Windsor & Maidenhead.

Facilities within the camp are extensive: Indoors there are sensory rooms, a soft play area, a quiet room, a computer room, an art space, a medical room and a specialised washroom. Some refurbishment is scheduled this winter which will improve space utilisation and add a new music room. As you would expect from its location, Camp Mohawk's outdoor facilities are exceptional and include a campfire ring, heated outdoor swimming pool, adventure playground, garden (with plants that stimulate the senses), some outdoor musical instruments and, of course, several acres of woodland to explore. Activities during the summer months include bushcraft, forest school, rock climbing and falconry. The camp also hosts 'Hawks' youth group throughout the year, and runs workshops for special interest groups. On quiet days during term time, the camp is also used for school visits, as part of the 'Forest School' initiative.

Camp Mohawk operates a membership system with just a nominal joining fee for all families with children who have special needs: a broad range of both physical and mental disabilities is catered for, including wheelchair bound children and autism. However please note that anti-social behaviour problems that are not special needs related are outside the Camp's scope.

Camp Mohawk owes its continued existence wholly due to the generosity of individuals and funding bodies. Some local authority funding has also been secured to run specific projects for young people, and companies occasionally help by sending a work party of employees for a corporate 'charity' day. The biggest funding challenge is meeting the everyday running costs that are not project based, and any unrestricted donations (whether large or small) have a big impact.

2012 promises to be a very exciting year for Camp Mohawk regarding its links to Wargrave, as it plans to formally separate from its sister charity in East London (which evolved from the former scout group and is now a skills centre). It will become a wholly Wargrave based registered charity in its own right.

There are a number of opportunities for locals to get involved with the camp: a new local board of trustees will be required, and there is a small but growing team of local volunteers who help with site maintenance and refurbishment, providing skills such as gardening and building trades. Additional staff are taken on during the school holidays, the posts are paid (you won't get rich but will make friends and have happy memories to last a lifetime!)

Luke and the team are working hard to make Camp Mohawk something that Wargrave can become very proud of. If you'd like to get involved, either bodily or financially, then Luke, Kate or Matt at Camp Mohawk would love to hear from you. Call 940 4045, e-mail camp_mohawk@hotmail.com or alternatively contact Keith Douglas who runs *'The Friends Of Camp Mohawk'*.

Phil Simpson; Wargrave resident and Camp Mohawk volunteer.



The Camp Mohawk management and support team, 2011 season. Kate, Hannah, Nick, Kate, Matt and Luke.



A busy family day at Camp Mohawk. With their children enjoying structured play and learning activities, parents use the opportunity to relax, share experiences and network.



Supervised archery is very popular at Camp Mohawk, the young people respond well to the inherent trust and responsibilities.