



*Meghan and
Meara Plasited*



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The NOAH Camp Experience: Perspectives from a Kid Camper and a Parent Camper

A Mom's NOAH Camp Experience

By Meghan Plaisted

I first learned about NOAH Family Camp when my daughter was a toddler, years before she was at an age to attend. "What a cool experience," I thought – and then I was amazed to learn that this camp for the entire community takes place in my own small state of New Hampshire.

Fast forward a few years, when I learned that a parent must attend camp with their child... I admit I cringed a little. I had attended several overnight summer camps when I was a kid; I have fond memories of those camp experiences and would love for my daughter to experience that too, but, well, I'm in my 40s now, and I enjoy my creature comforts (read: I've gotten soft)! Also, sharing a cabin and a bathroom with total strangers for four nights as an adult?!

But then, how could I deny



my daughter the chance to connect with other kids with albinism? As a NH resident, I don't even have the excuse of it being "too far away."

We had to do it.

We did it.

And I am so very glad I made that choice!

When we arrived at NOAH Camp in 2023, we met staff members first. Meara had never met an adult with albinism in person. All of her cabin counselors were people with albinism. Carol, the head counselor of Meara's cabin, was so welcoming. Meara connected with two cabinmates, sisters from Illinois, and they somehow bonded almost immediately. They were "camp besties" for the entire five days. This was

so heartwarming to see! Two years later, at NOAH Camp in 2025, they reconnected immediately, and it was like no time had passed.

Camp has separate daily schedules for the parents and kids. The kids sleep in cabins by age, and they move through the daily schedule with their cohort. Arts and crafts, adaptive sports, and the low ropes course are just some of the examples of daily activities. At the 2023 camp, Paralympic medalist Marybai Huking taught the kids how to play goalball, and Casey Greer ran drama groups for the students in preparation for a show on the last day of camp. Maria Lepore-Stevens ran the adaptive sports activities in 2023, with her partner Eric joining her in 2025. In 2023, Kathi Garza, TVI, ran a session for the kids where she taught them about the anatomy of the eye, and the campers made model eyes out of candy (and of course, ate them afterward!).

The adult programming

included Q&A sessions with NOAH Executive Director Karen Bly and co-founder Lee Laughlin; these had an “ask me anything” type of vibe, and I learned so much from this. Parents could attend presentations by Adaptive Physical Educators, TVIs, and O&M specialists, with opportunities to ask questions. NH Fish & Game visited both summers, doing presentations on two species local to camp: black bears and moose. We even learned Ukrainian egg decorating (a.k.a. Pysanky). Mine was not the most impressive, but it was fun to try my hand!

Kids and adults alike get to tie-dye their NOAH Camp t-shirts, and some amazing staff members work their magic to launder them and have them ready to wear for an all-camp photo. On the beautiful Merrymeeting Lake, free swim occurs daily in the afternoon. On the last full day of camp, there’s a water balloon, slip ‘n’ slide, splash fest for all to enjoy. Another highlight is when “Boston,” one of the counselors, DJs a fun karaoke party for all campers. And of course, camp isn’t camp without evening campfires with s’mores!

As a mom, one of the best parts of the camp experience was learning to step back

and facilitate my daughter’s independence. Homesickness and sharing living space were some challenges that came up, and it was pretty awesome to see the self-advocacy my daughter developed in navigating those experiences over her two camp summers. Camp gave her the opportunity to learn and practice using those skills in situations outside of her usual routine and environment—and among other kids with albinism.

A Kid’s NOAH Camp Experience

By Meara Plaisted

I’m the only person with albinism in my town, and before I went to NOAH Camp



in 2023, I had only ever met one person with albinism. But when we first got there, I bonded with two friends almost immediately. At NOAH Camp 2025, I reconnected with them again.

Making friends at NOAH Camp is easier than in “the real

world,” because we easily share some characteristics. For example, me and this one kid both abhor the Sun, have blonde hair, and use sunscreen for recess. At school with kids without albinism, it’s different. They don’t mind the Sun. I use sunscreen for recess, but they don’t.

We watched movies in the cabin, where it is easy to make more friends. The dining hall’s food is amazing. I wonder if the chef has won a cooking show or something! I read a lot, and people in books disrespect camp food often, but I’m pretty sure our camp was lucky. I was usually the first one at the lemonade station. Whoever made that lemonade deserves an award!

I enjoy the swimming, karaoke, and arts and crafts at NOAH Camp. For swimming, there’s a big lake with a shallow waterfront and a very deep area. There are life vests and pool noodles. During karaoke, if you don’t like singing, you can watch other people sing. My favorite things I made at arts and crafts were this box I covered with Squishmallow drawings, and a tic-tac-toe board that used little rocks as pieces. 🍷



*Andrew and
Megan Pitt*

Our Experience with NOAH Family Camp 2025

By Megan Pitt, LMHC-D, New Parent Program Director

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I am the parent of a child with albinism. I also run the New Parent Program for NOAH. This past summer, my family—my husband Andrew, our son Ernie (11 with albinism), and our son Benjamin (8)—attended NOAH Family Camp in New Hampshire.

Since Ernie was born, we have attended several conferences and have always had positive experiences. We like to make connections with the albinism community and learn ways to better support our son. Conferences felt familiar and comfortable, but attending camp gave me pause. I would not describe myself as a “camper,” and while I appreciate the outdoors, sleeping in a cabin is not my first choice. Still, after years of our kids asking to attend NOAH Camp, we decided it was time to say yes.

NOAH Family Camp is held at Camp Lions Pride in New Durham, New Hampshire, and runs for a few days and nights. Camp Lions Pride is surrounded by lush forests



and mountains and the waterfront of Merrymeeting Lake. Parents bunk with other parents while children stay in cabins with kids their age, supported by camp counselors.

I was initially nervous, since neither of our children had ever experienced this type of separation. Also, due to their ages, the siblings would be in different cabins. To our surprise, both boys adjusted immediately. The environment was supportive, thoughtful, and welcoming, and our children felt comfortable. For parents, the bunking arrangement created a rare opportunity to connect away from daily routines and caregiving duties.

Each day at camp offered a full schedule of activities. Our children participated in

archery, sailing, and the ropes course. There were daily crafts and visits from special guests like Smokey the Bear and Guiding Eye Dogs. Campers had designated times to spend with their families and time to be independent. We swam in the lake, played Gaga Ball, and played board games. The entire camp community came together for meals and evening activities.

The laid-back atmosphere worked for our family. The unstructured time really allowed us to talk deeply with others. This was especially impactful for Ernie. Conferences offer valuable education and connection, but the environment of camp provided him with an opportunity to simply be alongside peers with albinism.

NOAH Family camp is offered every other year, alternating with years when the NOAH Conference is held. Even for families who don't consider themselves “campers,” this is an experience truly worth trying. 🌞



NOAH Camp 2025

By Doron Regev

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After landing in Boston's Logan airport on a warm July day, we began our scenic drive to Lions Camp Pride in New Durham, New Hampshire. By the time we crossed the state line into New Hampshire, the Sun and the heat were already in full effect.

It was the kind of July week where the Sun felt relentless, where you checked the UV index before you checked the time. As the parents of a child with albinism, those details matter more to us than most. And yet, as we pulled into the tree-lined entrance of NOAH camp, we felt something unexpected alongside our usual vigilance: relief.

Upon arriving at the campsite grounds, we were immediately welcomed by the raucous cheers of camp organizers and attendees. It was awesome to see how excited our two daughters were to be greeted. Stella, our seven-year-old daughter with albinism, smiled and danced as we approached



the registration table. Her nine-year-old sister Clara, who does not have albinism, immediately asked whether the friends she had met a year prior at the NOAH Conference in California were in attendance. Moments later, she took off across the campgrounds, and we knew she'd found them when the air filled with the happy screams of a reunion.

After picking up our pillows and linens, we made our way to the cabins. Stepping inside the bunk-filled rooms, long-dormant memories of our own sleepaway camp days came rushing back—

the creak of wooden frames, the promise of late nights and early mornings. But it was immediately clear this would be a different kind of camp, and a special one. Parents drifted along the campgrounds, trading introductions and tentative smiles, slowly settling into the idea that this place, for the next few days, would be home.

For one hot summer week in the woods and lakes of New Hampshire, the world was rearranged to fit children with albinism, instead of the other way around. Wide-brimmed hats and long sleeves weren't a curiosity there; they were the norm. Sunscreen breaks were built into the schedule like snack time. Counselors casually reminded kids to grab their sunglasses the same way other camps remind kids to tie their shoes.

What struck us most, though, was watching Stella blend in. For once, she wasn't "the kid with albinism." She

was just another camper, one among many pale faces, squinting eyes, and floppy hats. No explanations were required. No stares followed her. Surrounded by peers who share similar experiences, Stella seemed lighter.

The camp offered the usual lineup—canoeing, crafts, campfires, archery—but it also included workshops on self-advocacy and confidence. Kids learned how to explain albinism in their own words and how to ask for accommodations without apology. Those lessons felt just as important as learning how to paddle or roast a marshmallow.

As parents, we spend so much time protecting our child from the Sun, from misconceptions, from the exhaustion of standing out. This camp didn't erase those realities, but it softened them. It showed Stella that her needs are not a burden. It was also great to see the siblings of children with albinism absorbing these same lessons.

While our children were building new friendships and independence, we were building something of our own. The parents who stayed at camp found each other in quiet conversations over coffee, in shaded benches,

and during late evenings when the heat finally broke. We shared stories, worries, and hard-earned advice, and friendships formed quickly in that shared understanding. By the end of the week, we felt connected to a larger community that extended far beyond New Hampshire. NOAH camp gave Stella and Clara a sense of belonging, and it gave us the reassurance that, even under the harshest summer sunlight, there were places where our children could thrive.

– The Regevs: Doron, Lyndsay, Clara and Stella



Camp Photo by Tim Laughlin