



Success Story Heather Getty

Trailways Camper to Goodwill Employee

When Heather Getty attended Goodwill's Trailways Camp in March 2015, she'd never been camping before. In fact, the only nights she'd ever stayed away from home were occasional sleepover trips to her siblings' houses.

"Heather was actually on the wait list for camp, and we had somebody drop out just a few days beforehand," says Trailways Camp Coordinator Jesi Cason. "It was pretty short notice when we contacted her and her dad. I'm so glad she could attend!"

Heather was born with heart issues and other complications. She suffered two strokes during heart surgery when she was six years old, which resulted in a learning disability.

"Camp was a new experience for Heather," explains Jesi. "She doesn't really socialize a lot with other people her age. Most of her neighbors are seniors, so the camp provided her with peer interaction that she doesn't get on a daily basis."

Trailways Camp is a multi-day residential camp for adults with disabilities, provided in partnership with the Robert V. and Benjamin G. Miller fund. The goal of the camp is to help remove the social isolation that people with disabilities often feel by providing opportunities for fun, friends, and support.

Heather's dad, Alan, says the camp experience was great for his daughter.

"She basically enjoyed everything," Alan says. "The food, bingo, making birdhouses, hayrides, bunk beds, the talent show, and seeing wild animals up close. She really liked the counselors and other campers."

"It was a good fit," adds Jesi. "She's a sweet girl, and she got a chance to meet a lot of people her own age. She made some really good friends."

Since attending Trailways Camp, Heather has taken on a part time job at Goodwill's Punta Gorda Retail & Donation Center. She works weekends as a processor, and looks forward to another opportunity to attend Trailways Camp in the future.

"She wants to go back," says her dad. "The only disappointment was not catching a fish!"

