

Lucky 13 for Camp Soar

By Diana Ades

To some, the number 13 is bad luck but to over 350 Special Olympics athletes, 13 was their lucky number at the 13th Annual Camp SOAR (Special Olympics Athletic Retreat) that took place at the LJCC June 10-14.

The brain child of volunteer extraordinaire Bob Bowler and former LJCC Assistant Executive Director Barry Schumer, Camp SOAR began as a three-day program to offer the Special Olympics' community a much needed program during the summer.

When the first camp took place in June of 2000, there were only 53 athletes and 35 volunteers that attended the activity filled camp. Jump forward 13 years, and the LJCC hosted over 350 athletes, 350 volunteers, and offered numerous sports and creative activities over a five day period.

Camp Soar planning takes almost an entire year with Bowler working endless hours to secure celebrity coaches, donations for food and supplies, entertainment, and many of the beloved professional sports mascots. After Schumer's departure from the LJCC, Stephanie Garner, LJCC Sports Director has kept that great connection with Bowler and the Special Olympics. Along with Bowler and the wonderful volunteers, she has been instrumental in the Camp's flourishing over the years. Garner assists Bowler with scheduling the athletic programs, as well as working with other areas of the Park and coordinating staffing.

Over the years, Dell Curry, Muggsy Bogues, David Thompson, and former Hornets and Bobcats Coach Paul Silas have offered their expertise in basketball while coaching the athletes. Mascots visit from all the area sports teams and entertainment from music to dancing are part of the week.

A special part of the Camp's ac-

tivities is the arts and crafts portion. Coordinated by Eileen Schwartz, and through the wounded Warrior Program, Camp Soar athletes and volunteers send letters, best wishes, and supplies to the brave men and women who defend our country.

The success of the camp is evident in the smiling faces and excitement of all the athletes. These special groups of athletes make friendships that live a lifetime. And because of the success of the Camp, conversations at the state level have sparked to have Camp SOARs in other areas of North Carolina.

Thanks in part to the Charlotte Bobcats and the Michael Jordan foundation's donation of \$10,000, the educational and fun programs continue to be offered to the Special Olympics population at no charge. The athletes and volunteers would not have lunch or snacks if it wasn't for the generosity of the Compass Group who has fed the campers since the very first Camp.

Additional thanks goes to Pepsi, Lance, Frito-Lay, Nabisco, Keebler, Family Dollar, and Harris Teeter for their generosity and support of Camp SOAR.

A new feature to the Camp is recognizing a volunteer who has gone over and beyond at the Camp. This recognition is in an award in memory of Bob Bowler's beautiful daughter who passed away due to complication while fighting breast cancer. Vickie was always involved in Camp Soar and even when she was sick; it didn't stop her from volunteering. Vickie was just as generous with her time, love and support as her father. She was extremely close to many of the athletes and her presence is always felt throughout the week.

Compass Group is the proud sponsor of this award and designed a beautiful plaque that includes a picture of Vickie and is



Muggsy Bogues and Bob Bowler with a camper.



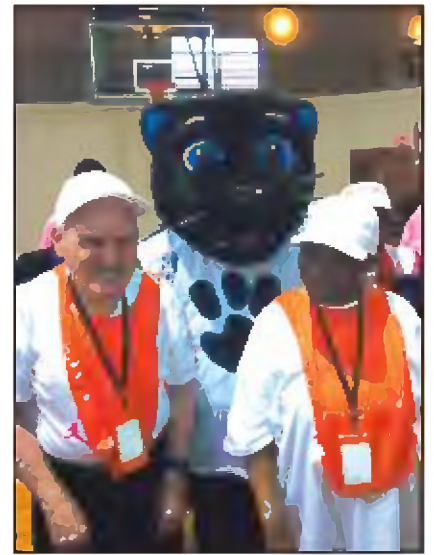
Some soldiers come to visit Camp Soar.

aply named the Vickie Ann Bowler volunteer of the year award.

This year's recipient received an actual replica of the award while the bigger award remains in the membership office at the LJCC. In addition, Compass Group generously gives a \$100 gift certificate to the honoree. This year, the Steering Committee chose Andy Tinson who has unselfishly provided medical assistance to the Camp since the beginning; first as a high school student wanting to go in the medical field, to now, where he is currently a certified EMT in North Carolina.

Compass Group, LJCC, the Charlotte Bobcats, and the many other sponsors made the number 13 a very lucky number to over 350 participants this year. These individuals will always think of 13 as lucky 13.

Camp Soar 2014 is scheduled for next June 9-13. ☆



Panthers' mascot, Sir Purr, with some campers.



Screening for Next Film Festival Selections Has Begun

The movie selection process for the upcoming 2014 Charlotte Jewish Film Festival began in May 2013, when the nine members of the film festival screening committee began their weekly meetings. Each week (and most recently twice a week), the committee members have met at the JCC to view the latest films from around the world that have been screened at over 100 film festivals in the US, Israel, Great Britain, and Australia. The films, produced in the US, Israel, France, Germany, Russia, the Czech Republic, and Poland, all have one thing in common: illuminating the Jewish experience.

Films that are considered for screening come from several different sources: programs from other Jewish film festivals or international film festivals held in Cannes, Jerusalem, and Toronto, articles in Israeli newspapers such as Haaretz and The Jerusalem Post, and newsletters from numerous film distributors. Particular at-

tention is paid to films with Jewish content and to Israeli films. The goal of the screening committee is to choose films that both educate and entertain the filmgoers. A wide assortment of films is sought: comedies, dramas, mysteries, documentaries, and films for children and young adults.

For the 2014 Charlotte Jewish Film Festival, which is also the film festival's 10th anniversary, the screening committee will screen approximately 26 films in their quest to find the best 12 - 15 films to include in the film festival. Almost 100 films have been considered since the screening process began. Each week the members of the screening committee meet to view the film together; after screening the film the committee members discuss the film in detail and consider how the film might impact the overall assortment of films that are selected. Finally each committee member ranks each film on several qualities, including the story content,



entertainment value, production value, Jewish content, and how likely it is that the film will appeal to the Charlotte audience (Jewish and non-Jewish). After all of the films in consideration have been screened, the committee members review each film again to construct a slate of films that will be appealing to a wide assortment of the local community. We look forward to presenting the results of our screening process at the film festival, which begins February 22, and we feel confident that there will be plenty of entertaining films to choose from. ☆

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