

A little help from Dr. Nature

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Young students learn of natural remedies at Pioneer Day Camp

By ELIZABETH RUDD
OF THE TRIBUNE

MOSCOW — Rosemary Ricks had a “headache” Tuesday morning that could only be cured with the help of her fellow day campers and a naturally occurring remedy.

Ricks’ headache was one of a couple fake illnesses that Pioneer Day Camp Director Nicole Campbell assigned to a group of eight children to teach them about the area’s medicinal plants. The day camp is being offered for the first time this year through the Moscow Parks and Recreation Department, Latah County Parks and Recreation and Friends of Phillips Farm.

“They are going to be learning about medicinal plants and how to use them,” Campbell said of Tuesday’s planned activities.

The remedy for Ricks’ headache was found in the bark of a willow tree, which Campbell explained acts as a natural pain reliever. The children also hiked through the park in search of yarrow — a fern-like plant with white flowers — to cure another camper who “cut his arm” and needed its leaves to stop the bleeding.

“It was fun trying to figure out how to cure it,” Ricks said of her make-believe headache.

The children searched for the remedies after Campbell and her co-instructor, Chelsea Rose, described the plants and drew a picture of them. Ricks, 9, of Moscow, said it was interesting to learn that plants can cure various injuries or ailments “and it’s cool to try it on yourself,” to cure a headache.

“So if we had a headache at base camp, the willow here would cure it,” she said.

The day camp is for children going into second grade through sixth grade. Monday was the start of the first week-long session that will wrap up Friday with a second session next week. The intent of the camp is to make use of the park and teach children about the

Tribune/Kyle Mills

Children explore nature as they walk the trails Tuesday at Phillips Farm north of Moscow as part of a Pioneer Day Camp. The weeklong camp returns the kids to the pioneer days and how people survived the outdoors during that time.

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Tribune/Kyle Mills

Nicole Campbell, camp leader, gathers campers in the shade to give them a real-life scenario and how to problem-solve it with what they can find in the surrounding environment as part of Pioneer Day Camp Tuesday north of Moscow.

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area where they live and how to survive on it, Campbell said.

"The goal is to learn how to live off the land like a pioneer," she said.

That includes learning how to make tools and objects by hand, learning about the land and native plants and building a shelter. The children have also made maps of the area, hiked, gone on a scavenger hunt and sung songs, Campbell said.

"We have a really great group," Campbell said. "We're having tons of fun."

Camper Luke Zimmer said his favorite part of the camp has been making shelters on the paths in the forested area. He's made shelters in the woods before, but they weren't as good as the ones he's made at camp



Nicole Campbell



Luke Zimmer



Rosemary Ricks

this week.

"You learn how to use materials from the wilderness to build stuff," he said.

Zimmer, 9, of Moscow, is at the camp with his younger sister, Cate, 7, and two of his friends. He said he's learned a lot about building shelters, but also about how it's important to drink a lot of water in the heat. He also

enjoyed learning about the medicinal plants.

"It was cool because I didn't know any of it before," Zimmer said.

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