

Camp Get-A-Way (CGAW) celebrated their 20th Anniversary this year and what a celebration it was! For the past 20 years Camp Get-A-Way has given families a place to spend a few days away from life's daily trials and tribulations; spending time outside in nature, among the beautiful surroundings and the serenity of the trees, animals and the lake.

Camp Get-A-Way was founded by 5 Parent Advocates from the Western region who have children with emotional and social struggles and with support from the NYS Office of Mental Health. One of camp's goals was to empower and support families whose children struggle with an emotional, behavioral, or mental illness. Coming alongside these families, Camp Get-A-Way Board members, staff and volunteers seek to create a safe camp experience where families can just be families.

Some of the activities for families include fishing, arts and crafts, canoeing, rope courses and swimming. Parent activities include coffee hour, parent training, and the opportunity to share and learn about new resources. This year

a dinner celebration was held to celebrate the 20th Anniversary on August 23rd at Camp Bristol Hills. Families from the August session of Camp were present. Nancy Craig, FTNYS Director of Community Systems & Engagement and Pam Brannan, Western Region Parent Advisor FTNYS, sat at the head table alongside the Board President, Ken Tangle, and past and present Board members and volunteers. They were among the five parent advocates who created Camp-Get-A-Way and were honored at the dinner for their dedication to families! There were pictures of camp staff and volunteers from years past and memorabilia including the 2010 award Camp Get-A-Way received from "What's Great in Our State" along with a proclamation from May Mental Health Awareness month. The Camp Mascot, a Big Brown Bear, was also sitting on the table. After dinner hour, Jean Sadowy, Director of Child and Family Services, WNY OMH Field Office, hosted the Parent Coffee Hour and listened to families' viewpoints while sharing information on Office of Mental Health programs. Children buzzed in and out afterward as families worked together to complete a scavenger hunt.

Camp Get-A-Way is a true gem in our state; a place where families can get away, relax, and experience non-judgmental support from other parents, a legacy created by five parents.

Never underestimate the power of a parent!

To read more about Camp Get-A-Way go to the website at cgaw.org.