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# Nebbe's Nature Nest : a summary of an animal assisted therapy camp

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## Nebbe's Nature Nest : a summary of an animal assisted therapy camp

### **Abstract**

Two graduate students conducted a small animal assisted therapy camp. The main goal for this camp was to enhance and promote the campers' socialization skills and self-esteem through the use of animal assisted therapy. Two pre and post measurement scales were used to evaluate the children's loneliness and self-concept. The campers participated in a one-week camp lasting approximately three hours a day. To meet desired lesson goals, the campers engaged in direct animal contact and specific animal assisted activities. The following is a complete description and reaction to the animal assisted therapy camp led by Trisha (Hobbiebrunken) Ames, Nicole Whisler, and Dr. Linda Nebbe.

NEBBE'S NATURE NEST: A SUMMARY OF AN ANIMAL  
ASSISTED THERAPY CAMP

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A Research Project

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,  
and Postsecondary Education  
University of Northern Iowa

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by

Trisha L. Ames (Hobbiebrunken)

December 2006



## Abstract

Two graduate students conducted a small animal assisted therapy camp. The main goal for this camp was to enhance and promote the campers' socialization skills and self-esteem through the use of animal assisted therapy. Two pre and post measurement scales were used to evaluate the children's loneliness and self-concept. The campers participated in a one-week camp lasting approximately three hours a day. To meet desired lesson goals, the campers engaged in direct animal contact and specific animal assisted activities. The following is a complete description and reaction to the animal assisted therapy camp led by Trisha (Hobbiebrunken) Ames, Nicole Whisler, and Dr. Linda Nebbe.

## Nebbe's Nature Nest:

### A Summary of an Animal Assisted Therapy Camp

**“Animals are such good friends-they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms.” - George Eliot**

#### Literature Review

Animal assisted therapy (AAT) or animal assisted activities (AAA) provide direct contact and interactions with an animal for possible therapeutic benefits. AAT is when an animal is utilized to provide positive treatment outcomes for an individual or a specific group of people. AAA uses an animal as a social buffer for the target group in order to promote positive interactions (Thigpen, Ellis, & Smith, 2005).

Research has shown several positive impacts on children in animal assisted therapy settings. Positive animal-human relationships can improve overall physical and mental well-being (Chandler, 2005). Animals have been shown to decrease arousal levels in children and have also provided social support to aid in the reduction of stress levels (Parshall, 2003). For example, one study demonstrated how the presence of a dog significantly reduced stress levels in children undergoing a physical examination (Chandler, 2005).

Animal assisted therapy has demonstrated the importance of an animal-child relationship as a way of promoting socialization. According to Filiatre, Millot, and Montagner (as cited in Thigpen, Ellis, & Smith, 2005) direct animal

contact positively correlates with developmentally appropriate communication skills. Another study found that having a pet can compensate for lower amounts of social interaction between humans for people living alone (Thigpen, Ellis, & Smith, 2005). This information was of interest and seemed relevant since both children in the camp come from only child families. Research has also found the usefulness of animals acting as teachers in the socialization process (Thigpen, Ellis, & Smith, 2005). Animals can provide direct feedback to a child about his or her behavior. Depending on the child's behavior; the dog will respond appropriately. For example, if a child is yelling or is too aggressive, the dog will most likely move away and avoid contact with the child until there has been a decrease in the child's behavior (Thigpen, Ellis, & Smith, 2005).

Several other benefits have been reported from an animal assisted therapy setting. The following ideas provide examples of the benefits recorded in an animal assisted therapy setting. One study found that pets can provide situations for a child to learn responsibility, trust, and compassion for others (Ascione & Weber, 1996). It has also been reported that animal-human interactions provide a decrease in depressive symptoms and an increase in motivation (Chandler, 2005). Research stated that children with learning disabilities benefit from animal-human relationships (Chandler, 2005). Children who have been diagnosed with emotional and behavioral problems have improved social relationships with peers from learned interactions with animals (Chandler, 2005).

Based on the supportive research for animal assisted therapy with children, we conducted our own small animal assisted therapy camp. Our main goal for this camp was to enhance and promote our campers' socialization skills and self-esteem through the use of animal assisted therapy. We used two measurement scales to evaluate the child's loneliness and self-concept. The two scales are titled, Self Concept Scale for Children (SC) and the Children's Loneliness Questionnaire (CLQ). The measurements were administered the first and last day of camp for pre and post evaluations. The campers participated in a one-week camp lasting approximately three hours a day. A variety of specific animal assisted activities were used to meet each of the lesson goals. Direct contact with a variety of domestic and wildlife animals was allowed for the campers each day. The camp also provided the campers opportunities to communicate with peers, leaders, and educators in an unfamiliar setting. The following is a complete description and reaction to the animal assisted therapy camp led by Trisha (Hobbiebrunken) Ames, Nicole Whisler, and Dr. Linda Nebbe.

Our setting for the camp took place on Dr. Nebbe's twenty-two acre farm. This ideal location provided several different surroundings: a prairie, timbers, two ponds, and a wildlife rehabilitation facility. The program offered an assortment of domestic and wildlife animals. Our campers were chosen based on their needs, ages, and love for animals and nature.

### Rationale

Two children participated in an animal-assisted therapy camp. The camp met five times for three hours during a one week time period. Our campers participated in various activities, worked directly with a dog, had training in wildlife rehabilitation, and worked with wildlife animals that were a part of a wildlife rehabilitation program. Our camp also provided opportunities for the campers to work with a variety of animal experts. The campers also took field trips to various places within the community. The field trips were used to inform and teach the children basic knowledge concerning the care of animals and the environment. Most of the program was held at Dr. Linda Nebbe's house outside of Cedar Falls, Iowa. Special issues pertaining to each camper were noted and addressed by his and her individual counselor throughout the program whenever possible. The goals of the program were to have the students recognize the following ideas:

- (a) To see the importance of every living thing
- (b) To create an awareness of the environment
- (c) To understand self and others better
- (d) To understand how all living things are related
- (e) To promote self-esteem and self-worth
- (f) To understand basic care needs of self
- (g) To become more sensitive to the environment and all living things

- (h) To promote skill development in trust, confidence, and rapport
- (i) To openly express feelings
- (j) To develop the value of responsibility
- (k) To promote skills demonstrating empathy and understanding
- (l) To enhance communication skills

### *Time Line*

Our camp took place June 6 through June 10, 2006. The camp was five days, Monday through Friday. The campers were picked up between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. The actual project was three hours long, starting at 8:45 a.m. and ending at 11:45 a.m. The campers were returned home each day between 11:45 a.m. and 12 noon.

### *Our Campers*

Nicholas is an only child of two university professors. He is also going to be in the third grade. Nicholas has a vast knowledge of domestic and exotic animals and their environments. This is not his only strength; he is extremely intelligent overall. He does seem to struggle developing relationships with his peers and lacks general social skills for a child his age. The main goal for Nicholas during this program is to develop a relationship with his peer and also with an individual dog.

Raelyn is also an only child of two working class parents. She is going to be in the fourth grade. She is extremely full of energy and is curious about life.

Raelyn has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and regularly receives medication for this disorder. She is an extremely caring and compassionate person toward people and animals. Raelyn also struggles to maintain relationships with her peers and can quickly become frustrated when things do not go her way. The main goal for Raelyn during this program is to develop a relationship with her peer and to establish a higher frustration tolerance.

### *Pre-Evaluations*

#### *Measurements.*

- (a) Self-Esteem or Self-Concept (Lipsitt, 1958)
- (b) Loneliness (Ascher & Wheeler, 1985)
- (c) Life space measurement (Barker & Barker, 1990)

*Assessment Tools.* The first assessment tool used was the Self-Concept Scale for Children (SC). The SC describes 22 adjectives focusing on the child's feelings about himself or herself. This 5-point scale is one of the only self-report measures used for children in third grade and up. Higher scores on this scale reflect higher levels of self-concept or self-esteem (Lipsitt, 1958).

The second assessment tool used was the Children's Loneliness Questionnaire (CLQ). The CLQ contains 16 questions focusing on the child's feelings of loneliness, social adequacy or inadequacy, and possible social placement among peers. Several questions were included throughout the test to help keep the children relaxed and comfortable while expressing their feelings.

This test can also be used to identify constructs related to loneliness (Asher & Wheeler, 1985).

The final assessment tool used was the Life Space Diagram. The Life Space Diagram looks at how the child views his or her world, especially his/her relationships. From the diagram, we were able to make predictions about the child's relationship to his or her family, friends, school, or any other setting the child interacts with. This measurement tool was used to see if the children would include their relationships with animals in the diagram (Barker & Barker, 1990).

### *Sessions*

A typical day consisted of several different increments: a lesson, an activity, direct animal time, and dialogue with process time. A lesson took place each day, where we worked towards several desired goals for the campers. A specific activity was selected to meet the assigned goals for each lesson. Each camper had time to work directly with a variety of animals while being supervised by the leaders. Opportunities to dialogue and process were used throughout the entire day, taking advantage of opportune moments, down time, and transport time.

### *Lesson Plans*

#### *Lesson topics.*

- (a) Nurturing
- (b) Communication

- (c) Self-Understanding
- (d) Respect
- (e) Responsibility
- (f) Uniqueness
- (g) Empathy

*Activities.* All of the activities used during this animal assisted therapy camp came from *Nature as a Guide: Nature in Counseling, Therapy, and Education* written by Linda Nebbe in 1995. The first activity used during the camp was titled, Sensory Hike on page 178. This activity was used to create an awareness of the environment, to become more sensitive to the environment and all living things, and to demonstrate the importance of our sense of hearing.

The second activity used during the camp was titled, Scavenger Hunt on page 185. This activity was used to see the importance of all living things and to understand how all living things are related. The third activity used during the camp was titled, Taking Apart a Nest on page 123. This activity was used to understand basic care needs of self, to promote skills of empathy and understanding, and to utilize problem solving skills. The final activity used during the camp was titled, Uniqueness on page 141. This activity allowed the campers to openly express feelings, to promote self-esteem and self-worth, as well as to better understand self and others (Nebbe, 1995).

### *Post-Evaluation*

#### *Measurements.*

(a) Self-Concept or Self-Esteem (Lipsett, 1958)

(b) Loneliness (Asher & Wheeler, 1985)

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## Daily Event Schedule

### Day 1

*Goals.* To introduce children to each other and camp leaders. To introduce and train children in Wild Life Rehabilitation. To introduce and discuss rules for camp.

*8:45-9:30:* Everyone introduced themselves and participants got to know one another. We all sat in a circle and each person talked about whom they are, our relationships with animals, our families, our grade levels in school, and what each person hoped to learn or do in the following week.

*9:30-10:00:* Dr. Nebbe instructed the campers and leaders to participate in the Life Space Diagram. The campers and leaders were grouped in to pairs, one leader and one camper. The pair was asked to sit with their backs to one another while completing the assessment tool. After a brief discussion of the assessment, the student leaders administered the Self-Concept Scale and the Children's Loneliness Questionnaire. The leaders read each statement aloud to the campers.

*10:00-10:15:* Dr. Nebbe and the camp leaders introduced and discussed the rules for the camp and the animals. The campers were told they would only be reminded of the rules twice before action would be taken. On the third reminder, the camper would be taken home immediately, parents would be notified, and camper would be allowed to return the following day.

*10:15-10:45:* The campers were introduced to the dogs who would be participating directly in our camp. The dogs were Farley, Gabby, Etchy, and Monroe. The campers were told the life story of each dog and how they came to live at Dr. Nebbe's home. The campers were given instructions for appropriate behavior when working directly with the dogs. The campers were then introduced to the other animals in the home. After the brief tour inside the home, the campers and student leaders took a break and ate snacks.

*10:45-11:45:* The campers and student leaders went outside to explore the animals and the environment. The children observed and learned about several different animals. These animals included: ducks, geese, bunnies, fawns, raccoons, wood chucks, cats, owls, starlings, a coyote, a ground hog, and a billy goat. As the campers toured the property and animals, Dr. Nebbe was training the campers to be Wild Life Rehabilitation volunteers. As we explored, the campers and student leaders gathered greens for the bunnies, wood chuck, and ground hog to eat.

*Student Leader Reflections:* The first thing we noticed was how comfortable our campers were with each other, the leaders, animals, and the environment. The campers were very eager to get started on the week's activities. Before the discussion of the rules, the campers were already displaying appropriate behavior for the special setting. The discussion of rules was simple when working with children of mature ability. Campers and student leaders successfully completed wildlife rehabilitation training. All members displayed patience, curiosity, eagerness, and empathy.

## Day 2

*Goals.* To create awareness of environment. To develop the value of responsibility. To understand basic care needs. To become more sensitive to environment and all living things.

*8:45-9:15:* The campers and leaders started the day by gathering the bunnies for release into the wild. The campers placed the bunnies into a covered basket and walked out to the prairie. Once the entire group had decided on a safe place, the bunnies were released gently by the campers into the wild. Both campers discussed their excitement during and after this activity. The campers also expressed concern for the animals, wanting to ensure the safety of the bunnies.

*9:15-10:00:* The student leaders then led an activity titled, The Sensory Hike. The two student leaders and two campers walked to an open area near the pond. The campers and leaders needed to be in a place where they would all be able to listen very quietly to the wilderness surrounding them. Each of the campers were asked to find a comfortable place on the ground, which was modeled by the leaders. The leaders quietly read to the campers to participate in a series of exercises. (see Appendix A).

*10:00-10:30:* The campers and leaders participated in a few basic dog grooming techniques with Etchy and Monroe. Each camper and student leader worked individually with one dog while Dr. Nebbe explained the life story of each dog. The campers were asked to move very slowly and quietly when working with the dogs. They were each asked to brush their dog, pet their dog, and give the dog a few treats for their great behavior. Each of the campers demonstrated appropriate behavior while interacting with the dogs.

*10:30-10:45:* The campers and leaders interacted while eating a snack. On this day, the campers were asked to try a very special treat. The campers were told the snack was made from something very common in nature and were

allowed to make several guesses as to what they were about to eat. After several failed attempts, the student leaders tried the snack first, which was toast with a mystery jam. Both of the leaders enjoyed the mysterious snack and encouraged the campers to try a small bite. Both campers did try and did not like the treat. Once everyone had tried a piece of the snack, Dr. Nebbe told everyone they had just eaten dandelion jam! The campers were quite surprised but preferred their regular granola bars.

*10:45-11:15:* The campers and leaders went outside to explore the prairie. The student leaders had planned and explained a small scavenger hunt for the campers. The campers were only able to complete half of the scavenger hunt items due to the limited amount of time. During this activity, the leaders stressed to the campers that it was extremely important not to destroy anything in the environment. In fact, the campers were not allowed to pick anything from the prairie unless they saw ten or more items exactly like the desired one. (see Appendix B).

*11:15-11:45:* The campers and student leaders engaged in some daily chores necessary for the wildlife rehabilitation animals. The chores included gathering greens for the geese, ducks, wood chucks, and the ground hog. The final chore for the campers and leaders was to bottle feed the four fawns. The fawns consumed the milk very quickly and were also introduced to some mulberry leaves.

*Student Leader Reflections:* During the bunny release, the campers expressed concerns for the animals and their safety. Dr. Nebbe informed the campers about the environment of release and how they would be protected from predators in this specific area. The Sensory Hike activity was used to specifically create an awareness of the environment in which the campers would be interacting for the week. As leaders, we were pleased to see the campers fully engaged during this activity. They were able to remain calm and quiet during the entire activity. This displayed their respect for the environment and their surroundings. The chore of gathering greens and feeding the animals was developed to promote the value of responsibility. The campers did not see this activity as a chore but rather a necessary responsibility. The campers were always willing and eager to gather the food for their special friends. This idea of responsibility carried into their specific time with the dogs. The campers were informed of the basic care needs for the dogs. Through discussions, the basic care needs of the dogs were related to the basic care needs of self.

*Day 3*

*Goals.* To openly express feelings and thoughts. To maintain the value of responsibility. To promote skill development in trust, confidence, and rapport. To understand how all living things are related.

*8:45-9:00:* The leaders asked the campers to describe how they were feeling, some of their thoughts, and reactions to the camp thus far. Both of the campers expressed enthusiasm and excitement about the camp and all of the activities. The campers explained how they looked forward to coming each and every day to explore new and exciting things.

*9:00-9:30:* The campers and the student leaders gathered greens to feed the geese, ducks, woodchucks, and the ground hog. The campers took their time picking out just the right type of greens to feed to the animals. The campers were told which type of greens each animal liked the most. After these animals were fed the campers were introduced to the Billy Goat, Ishmael. The campers fed dog biscuits to Ishmael while Dr. Nebbe explained his life story. The campers listened eagerly as they were told about how Ishmael came to live with Dr. Nebbe.

*9:30-10:15:* The campers, the student leaders, and the wildlife intern took the geese to the pond for a swim. The geese followed the noises and sounds that the campers, the student leaders, and the wildlife intern were making on the way out to the pond. The campers were amazed and astonished to see how well the geese followed them the entire way out to the pond. Once everyone arrived out to the pond the campers and the wildlife intern went on a canoe ride while the geese followed them out into the pond for a swim. The geese never once left the side of the canoe while they were out on the pond. The campers laughed while they watched the geese swim, dive, and do fancy tricks in the water. After the geese were done swimming, the campers took the geese back up by the house to put them in the yard.

*10:15-10:30:* Dr. Nebbe instructed the student leaders and the campers to come inside to visit a new animal friend that was in a dog kennel. The campers were shocked and excited to see a baby coyote in the kennel. Dr. Nebbe explained that the coyote needs to be placed outside in a pen so it can live in nature while it grows up. Dr. Nebbe educated the campers on coyotes and how important it is to wear heavy duty gloves while picking them up and placing them somewhere else since they have very sharp teeth. The campers, student leaders, and Dr. Nebbe took the coyote outside and released it into a pen that had tree branches, leaves, grass, water, a natural environment.

*10:30-10:45:* The campers and student leaders then took a break and had snack inside. While eating snack, the campers discussed some of the things that they did thus far throughout the morning and how excited they were for the upcoming events. They also discussed some of their sad feelings about it being mid-week and only having 2 days left.

*10:45-11:15:* The campers and the student leaders then went back outside to finish up the second half of the scavenger hunt. The student leaders instructed the campers of the items that they needed to find out in the prairie. The campers cooperatively worked together and found almost all of the items on the scavenger hunt list. The student leaders processed and discussed with them the importance of the activity and each item on the scavenger hunt list. (see Appendix B).

*11:15-11:45:* The last activity involved meeting Dr. Nebbe's veterinarian. The veterinarian came out to check on an owl that was brought out to Dr. Nebbe's house earlier that morning. The campers observed just how carefully the veterinarian looked over and handled the animal. The veterinarian educated the campers on the importance of her job. She also discussed how her job consists of healing and caring for domestic and wildlife animals.

*Student Leader Reflections:* During check-in, the campers were comfortable sharing their feelings, thoughts, and reactions about the camp. The campers expressed enthusiasm and excitement about the camp and activities. The chore of gathering greens and feeding the animals was developed to promote the value of responsibility. The campers did not see this activity as a chore but rather a necessary responsibility. The campers were always willing and eager to gather the food for their special friends. During the canoe activity, the campers displayed trust and confidence toward the student leaders and the wildlife intern. We were amazed at how relaxed the campers were with getting in and canoeing around the pond. As student leaders, we were a little nervous about the campers swimming abilities. Therefore, we required the campers to wear life jackets whenever working around the pond. Several activities contributed to the goal of understanding how all living things are related to one another. The Scavenger Hunt provided discussion about the relationships of items found in the environment to other living things. The campers worked together well during this time. Each camper displayed knowledge about different items or things found within the environment. The campers seemed to want to learn from each other as well as the student leaders.

*Day 4*

Goals. To openly express feelings and thoughts. To maintain the value of responsibility. To enhance communication skills. To see the importance of every living thing.

*8:45-9:00:* The student leaders began by asking the campers to discuss how they were feeling about camp. The campers rated their feelings on a one to ten scale with ten feeling great and one being not good at all. The campers each expressed high numbers and were very excited about the rest of camp.

*9:00-9:15:* The campers and student leaders headed outside to complete their daily chore of gathering greens for the wildlife animals. This was a fantastic job for our young campers because they were very eager to gather all of the food for the animals. They made it sort of a competition to see who could gather the most food in their bucket. This was defiantly a friendly competition between the two children and each child would help the other with the picking.

*9:15-10:00:* The student leaders instructed the children to take apart a nest. The children were asked to look at all the different materials the bird(s) had used to build the nest. The campers were instructed to examine the nest very closely and pay attention to how the nest had been put together. Once the campers had completely taken apart the nest, they were asked to put the nest back together. The campers had blank looks on their faces when asked to complete this task. The student leaders reminded the campers that in the beginning they were instructed to pay very close attention to how the bird nest had been put together. This stimulated process questions between the campers and student leaders. The campers were unable to complete this almost impossible task but we do think they understood and appreciated the hard work a bird goes through when building a nest. (see Appendix C).

*10:00-10:30:* The campers and student leaders went inside the house to have their daily snacks. Snack time was also used on this day to discuss termination of the animal camp. Dr. Nebbe had each of the student leaders discuss with the children about their future and what they willing be doing the next year. This was discussed because each of the campers had mentioned how they each wanted to participate in camp again next year. Dr. Nebbe and the student leaders agreed that it was necessary to share with the children that there might not be another camp the following year.

*10:30-11:00:* The campers, student leaders, and Dr. Nebbe headed outside to find the dogs. The campers were going to walk with the dogs on leashes. Dr. Nebbe and the student leaders helped the campers prepare Monroe and Etchy for

the short walk around the driveway. This was a new activity for both the campers and the dogs. The campers had never walked a dog on a leash before and neither of the dogs had been walked on a leash at their home. The campers, student leaders, Dr. Nebbe, the dogs, and the geese all went for a walk three times around the driveway.

*11:00-11:15:* The campers bottle fed two of the baby raccoons. Twenty raccoons were in rehabilitation during this time and our campers only worked with two of the youngest. The student leaders, Dr. Nebbe, and the wild life intern instructed and helped the campers with the bottle feeding. Once the feeding was complete, the campers played with a few of the older raccoons.

*11:15-11:45:* Our day concluded with a special field trip to one of the camper's homes. This camper also has a wide range of different animals at his home. With permission from his mother, the student leaders and campers toured and observed all of his animals. The camper's list of animals included: several different types of chickens, wild and domestic ducks, fish, turtles, frogs, cats, and Madagascar hissing cock roaches.

*Student Leader Reflections:* The Nest Activity provided a great understanding of the importance and appreciation of all living things. The campers were able to see how challenging and time consuming the creation of a bird's nest can be. We also discussed the use of many different materials found from the environment within the nest. The biggest challenge of the activity came when the campers were instructed to put back together the nest the way they originally found it. This activity promoted appreciation for the hard working bird. We then related this discussion to hard working people and how the impossible can be accomplished with a little hard work. The campers displayed excellent communication skills during the discussion of camp termination. Each camper explained how they wish to continue involvement in wildlife rehabilitation and how they will share their knowledge of animals with others.

### Day 5

Goals. To maintain the value of responsibility. To understand self and others better. To promote self-esteem and self-worth. To enhance communication skills.

*8:45-9:15:* The leaders started with a brief discussion about the termination of camp. The leaders discussed with the campers what they liked and disliked about the camp. The campers were also asked if there was anything they wanted to do that they hadn't done yet. We asked the campers to express how the

camp has helped each of them. The campers responded by explaining how they learned to walk a dog on a leash, take care of animals, and be kind to others. Both campers expressed extreme enjoyment on meeting one another. The campers were also asked what happens now that camp is over. One of our campers said she was going to be sad that she would not see the other boy everyday. The young man suggested they exchange phone numbers for further contact.

*9:15-9:30:* The student leaders had the children complete the assessment scales again to measure growth. The campers decided that they would read each assessment silently to themselves. The student leaders agreed and the campers proceeded with the assessments individually.

*9:30-10:00:* The campers and student leaders went outside to complete their daily chore of gathering greens for the animals. The campers really seemed to work together during this time. One camper in particular was very specific to the items she picked for the animals. She knew certain greens were liked more by the animals and she was eager to find these specific greens.

*10:00-10:30:* Dr. Nebbe and the wild life intern got the ducklings ready for release at the pond. The campers and leaders walked with the dogs, geese, and ducks to the pond. Once at the pond, the geese jumped in quickly for a swim. Dr. Nebbe and the wild life intern situated the campers and ducks into the canoe. When ready, the student leaders pushed out the canoe. The canoe paddled out to the island in the middle of the pond. The campers and Dr. Nebbe felt this would be a safe place to release the ducklings. The campers helped Dr. Nebbe dump the container to release the ducks on the island. The canoe quickly left the island once the ducks were released so that the ducks did not follow the canoe. The campers then enjoyed a short canoe ride with the geese following their every move. The geese were diving and splashing around as the campers watched.

*10:30-11:00:* The student leaders and campers went inside for a snack. Dr. Nebbe took time to discuss with the campers their responsibility as trained volunteers of wild life rehabilitation. One important message stressed to the campers was how they knew more about wild life animals than the rest of the general public. Dr. Nebbe focused on how important it is going to be for the campers to educate their peers and adults on caring for wild life animals. The campers were also given information for the Wild Life Rehabilitation organization in the Cedar Valley area. The campers were encouraged to remain active within this special organization and be involved to the best of their abilities.

*11:00-11:30:* The student leaders instructed the campers to participate in an activity titled, Uniqueness. (see Appendix D). This activity was used to summarize the goals of the camp. The main goal of this activity was for the children to realize the uniqueness in themselves, others, and their environment to which they interact.

11:30-11:45: Camp concluded with the final feeding of the raccoons and fawns. Each of the campers were asked to bottle feed a baby raccoon and a fawn. The campers also fed the fawns the mulberry leaves used from the uniqueness activity. The campers and students leaders were also allowed to take two of the older raccoons into the yard for "raccoon playtime". The campers ran as the raccoons chased them. The campers and leaders were also challenged to keep the raccoons from not climbing the trees. This was an extremely fun activity and interesting end to our camp.

*Student Leader Reflections:* The student leaders were not surprised by excellent communication skills used by the campers. Both seemed to stand out in this area, which was great because it was an original concern of the leaders. Both campers had been selected to work on social issues during this camp. We felt the campers demonstrated immense progress throughout the week in the area of communication. The main activity of the day was Uniqueness. We really wanted to use this activity to promote self-esteem and self-worth within the campers. This activity was designed to help the campers recognize the uniqueness within themselves, others, and their environment to which they interact. The campers were asked to self identify strengths of the leaf that could represent themselves. Throughout the week, the campers and leaders openly discussed awareness of each other, self, and the environment. Overall, we were amazed at the commitment level, energy, empathy, and eagerness displayed by our elementary school campers. They displayed appropriate behavior and maturity at all times.

### Results

<i>Children's Loneliness Questionnaire (CLQ)</i>	
Items (2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 19, 23) filler items that are not scored	
Items (6, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24) these items are reversed scored and then added to the other 7 items left on the questionnaire	
<i>Potential Range (16 to 80) [Higher scores reflect more loneliness]</i>	
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Time</i>	Items reversed scored= 10
	Total of other 7 items= +15
	25

<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Time</i>	Items reversed scored=	9
	Total of other 7 items=	+11
		20
Nicholas' loneliness decreased from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> time of assessment		
Nicholas appears to be low on the loneliness scale. In some situations Nicholas may feel a little lonely.		
<i>Self-Concept Scale for Children (SC)</i>		
Items (10, 17, 20) are considered negative and must be reversed scored before added to the other positive items		
The remaining 19 items are positive.		
<i>Total range of all items (22 to 110) (Higher scores reflect higher self-concept/self-esteem)</i>		
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Time</i>	Total of just positive items=	73
	Total of negative reversed scored items=	+11
		84
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Time</i>	Total of just positive items=	72
	Total of negative reversed scored items=	+10
		82
Nicholas has a fairly high self-concept/self-esteem.		

<i>Children's Loneliness Questionnaire (CLQ)</i>		
Items (2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 19, 23) filler items that are not scored		
Items (6, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24) these items are reversed scored and then added to the other 7 items left on the questionnaire		
<i>Potential Range (16 to 80) [Higher scores reflect more loneliness]</i>		

<i>1<sup>st</sup> Time</i>	Items reversed scored=	13
	Total of other 7 items=	<u>+12</u>
		25
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Time</i>	Items reversed scored=	9
	Total of other 7 items=	<u>+12</u>
		21
Raelyn's loneliness decreased from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> time of assessment		
Raelyn appears to score low on the loneliness scale. However, Raelyn will verbally express experiences and feelings of loneliness. One assumption might be that her loneliness is related to being an only child.		
<i>Self-Concept Scale for Children (SC)</i>		
Items (10, 17, 20) are considered negative and must be reversed scored before added to the other positive items		
The remaining 19 items are positive.		
<i>Total range of all items (22 to 110) (Higher scores reflect higher self-concept/self-esteem)</i>		
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Time</i>	Total of just positive items=	80
	Total of negative reversed scored items=	<u>+09</u>
		89
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Time</i>	Total of just positive items=	70
	Total of negative reversed scored items=	<u>+12</u>
		82
Raelyn scored fairly high on the self-concept/self-esteem scale. However, her score dropped a few points the second time because of one answer on the scale. The question was number six which reads as: It's hard for me to make friends at school. This first time she said, that was not at all true about her and the second time, she said that is always true about me. We were not sure if she misread the question or if she felt more comfortable later in the week to be honest. We think further assessment would need to take place to truly understand her feelings.		

Photo Collage

*Documentation of Program for Children*



Risk-Management Protocol

<u>RISK</u>	<u>PREVENTION</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
Dog or Animal Bite	Move Slowly, Be Gentle Keep out of dog's face Supervise Children	First Aid, Clean Bite Possibly Call Doctor Apply ice Inform Parents
Bug Bites	Wear Bug Spray	Apply Topical Cream
Bee/Wasp Stings	Don't pester bugs	Apply ice, Call Child's Doctor, Inform Parents

Poison Ivy	Know surrounding area, watch where stepping	Apply Anti-Itch, Call doctor, Inform Parent
Exposure to Animal feces or urine	Handle with Caution and know this can occur, Use towel when handling animals	Clean with soap and water, Antibacterial wipes, Extra change of clothes
Sunburn Lotion	Wear Sunscreen Spend less time in sun	Apply Aloe Vera Inform Parents
Minor Injuries	No Running, Walk to Areas	First Aid Inform Parents
Bad Weather	Check weather forecast, Have backup rain site	Seek shelter immediately, Bring umbrella, Listen or watch weather forecast for updates
Allergic Reactions	Handle new items cautiously, Possibly wear gloves, Cover arms and legs, Try not to touch face	Call Child's Doctor, Inform parents
Drowning	Wear a life jacket when working in or near water	Basic CPR, Basic swimming skills
Lost	Have a map of property Have a compass, Have cell phones	Don't Panic, Get up high to look for house Have a central meeting place
Ticks	Cover head, arms, and Legs, wear bug spray	Don't Panic, Gently remove tick from area

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Appendix A

Sensory Hike

*Objectives:* To involve all of the senses as the participants are learning to become aware, to observe, to feel, and to develop a personal contact with the natural environment.

*Setting:* Outdoors in a comfortable setting. This activity is specific to the setting, so doing it more than once in different settings is desirable.

*Materials:* Participants might relax more if they wear older clothes, or if they have newspaper or something to sit on.

*Special Considerations:* Time: About 30 minutes. Group Size: One to ten individuals (With more than ten there may be undesirable interference from member in the group).

*Process:* Have group sit comfortably on the ground, spread apart so no one is touching anyone else. (The facilitator might be prepared for those who object to sitting on the ground by having sit-upons available. If the facilitator sits on the ground, this will aid in establishing the tone.)

It may be necessary for the facilitator to explain that this is a sensitivity experience with natural surroundings, not with other people. A serious intent is important. If the participants do not feel like doing something they are asked to do, then they can quietly refrain without comment, thus respecting the rights of the other group members.

The facilitator follows a script as follows:

*WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED, OPEN YOUR EARS AND HEAR THE BIRDS, WIND, VAST SILENCE, WATER, LEAVES, WILDLIFE, AND HUMAN SOUNDS LIKE AUTOMOBILES AND AIRPLANES. WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED, CONTINUE LISTENING FOR A MINUTE OR SO. DO NOT MAKE ANY NOISE OR SPEAK. EXTEND YOUR EARS AND LISTEN VERY CLOSE. TRY TO HEAR SOUNDS YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD BEFORE. (30 SECONDS)*

*WITH YOUR EYES STILL CLOSED, PUT YOUR HANDS ON THE GROUND AND GENTLY FEEL THE TOP. WHAT IS IT LIKE? IS IT SOFT, CRUNCHY, COLD, AND WARM? PUSH YOUR HANDS UNDER THE TOP*

*COVERING OF THE GROUND. DOES IT FEEL DIFFERENT? WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE? WARMER OR COLDER?*

*WITH YOUR EYES STILL CLOSED, PICK UP A BIT OF THE EARTH OR GROUND NEAR YOU. FEEL IT. KEEPING YOUR EYES CLOSED, SMELL IT. HOW DOES IT SMELL? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT SMELL? WITH YOUR EYES STILL CLOSED, SMELL THE AIR AROUND YOU. FEEL THE AIR ON YOUR BODY, ON YOU FACE (30 SECONDS)*

*NOW OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT THE GROUND WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN SITING. WHAT IS THERE? WHAT ARE THE COLORS? TEXTURE? WHAT IS IT MADE UP OF? SQUINT SO THAT EVERYTHING IS BLURRED TOGETHER AND OBSERVE THE COLORS...AND THE TEXTURE...AND THE MOVEMENT. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PART OF THE ENVIRONMENT? WHAT LIVES IN THE EARTH? WHO GOES THERE? WHAT HAPPENS THERE? (SHARING THE ANSWERS MAY INTERRUPT THE MOOD OF THE EXPERIENCE)*

*NOW LET'S EXPLORE THAT PART OF THE ENVIRONMENT AT EYE LEVEL. LOOK AT IT AND SEE WHAT IS THERE. NOTICE THE COLOR...TEXTURE...MOVEMENT. WHAT LIVES THERE? WHO PASSES THERE? WHAT HAPPENS THERE? SQUINT SO IT IS BLURRED AND AGAIN NOTICE THE COLOR...TEXTURE...MOVEMENT. THINK ABOUT HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL?*

*NOW LIE ON YOUR BACK AND LOOK UP. WHAT DO YOU SEE? NOTICE THE COLOR...TEXTURE...MOVEMENT. WHAT LIVES THERE? WHO PASSES THERE? WHAT HAPPENS THERE? SQUINT SO IT IS BLURRED AND AGAIN NOTICE THE COLOR...TEXTURE...AND MOVEMENT. THINK ABOUT HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL.*

Find a High Place to look down or in a tree

*LOOK DOWN. NOTICE THE COLOR...TEXTURE... AND MOVEMENT. WHAT LIVES THERE? WHAT HAPPENS THERE? SQUINT SO IT IS BLURRED AND AGAIN NOTICE THE COLOR...TEXTURE...AND MOVEMENT. THINK ABOUT HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL.*

*FROM THIS VINTAGE POINT, LOOK AROUND YOU, AT EYE LEVEL. IS IT ANY DIFFERENT THAN EYE LEVEL ON THE GROUND? NOW LOOK UP. NOTICE THE COLOR...TEXTURE...MOVEMENT. NOW SQUINT. HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM LOOKING UP AT THE GROUND?*

*Process Questions:*

Content

1. What did you see that you had never seen before?
2. If you were an animal seeking shelter, who and where would you be?
3. If you were an animal seeking safety, who and where would you be?
4. If you were an animal looking for prey, what would you be your best position?
5. Where do people pass?

Personalization:

1. How did you feel about the different observations?
2. How were your feelings different? Why?

*Appendix B*

Scavenger Hunt

*Objectives:* A scavenger hunt is a fun way to create thoughtful observation as well as self-discovery.

*Setting:* Outdoors, in an area with defined boundaries

*Materials:* Pencil and paper; bag

*Special Considerations:* Time: Variable, 20-45 minutes Group Size: Adaptable, can work in partners or small groups, or be done as an independent exercise by an individual

*Process:* Before beginning, emphasize to the participants that they are not to destroy anything in the environment. If there is something they can not bring back, they can make a note of it and its location.

*Items to Find (Partners):*

- Example of opposites
- Something showing change
- Something that smells good
- Something you dislike
- Something that scares you
- Something used by an animal
- Something ugly
- Something beautiful
- Something that represents power
- Something that represents love
- Biggest sound you hear
- Tiniest sound you hear
- Something that reminds you of yourself
- Something sad
- Something that is a home

\*Use some natural objects and create music together

\*Decide on an improvement you would like to make in the environment

*Process Questions:*

Content:

1. What items were difficult to find?
2. How did you feel when you were doing this?
3. Did you and your partner usually agree?
4. How did you feel if you did not agree?
5. How did you usually resolve a disagreement?
6. How did it feel to compromise, to resolve an issue?
7. What did you become aware of that you were not aware of before?
8. What items were easy to find?

Appendix C

The Nest

*Objectives:*

- Participants will be able to tell how a bird's nest is composed.
- Participants will be able to tell what materials compose a bird's nest.
- Participants will recognize the wonder of this "natural" phenomenon.
- Participants will draw a parallel between the special "talent" of birds and special things that they can do.

*Setting:* Outside is best but the inside will work well with this activity.

*Materials:* Bird's nest, Newspaper

*Special Considerations:* Time: 30 minutes Group size: one or more

*(Never take a nest or home of any animal out of the natural habitat.*

Possession of birds' nests is illegal. Before you collect nests or use this activity, check with a Conservation Officer. Usually a Conservation Officer will give you permission. *Be sure to tell participants that possession of birds' nests or feathers or any part of a wild animal is illegal. They should not collect or possess birds' nests.* Any nests collected should be picked up from the ground, collected from fallen trees or gutters, or collected in the fall after the birds have flown south for the winter. When you collect a nest, put it into a large paper bag and spray it carefully with an insecticide. Store the nest in the paper bag in a safe place.)

*Process:* Have the participants look at the nests, noting differences (if more than one nest is used), materials used, construction, size, shape, and so on. Have each group cooperate in carefully taking apart one of the nests. Look for:

- Construction patterns such as mud on the bottom, woven or cemented together, layers, etc.
- How each nest is made to protect young
- Interesting things found in the nest
- Evidence of the birds' lifestyle (bits of food, foreign materials)

If more than one group is involved, have the groups share briefly what they have found. Information to share with the groups:

- It takes a bird two to eight days to build a nest. Some birds build two or three nests per summer.
- The birds use their beaks and feet to build their nests.

- Some birds use a nest once; some use their nest year after year.
- The nest of the bald eagle may weigh up to 2,000 pounds.
- Some birds build no nests.
- Some birds lay their eggs in another bird's nest.

When the discussion is finished, tell the groups: "Now that you have taken your nest apart, I want you to put it back together just like it was!"

*Process Questions:*

Content:

1. What did you find composed the nest?
2. How did the bird get the nest together?
3. How do you suppose the bird did this?
4. Could you make a nest like this?

Personalization:

1. How did you feel when you were asked to put the nest back together?
2. Think about your own body. What things can you do that are very special, that other animals cannot do? That other people cannot do as well?

## Appendix D

### Uniqueness

*Objectives:* Discovering the uniqueness in something as common as an apple or a leaf emphasizes the uniqueness of every person.

*Setting:* Ideally if a leaf, pebble, or natural object is used, a natural setting outdoors is best. This activity can be done anyplace, though. Natural objects can be brought indoors.

*Materials:* Natural objects that are found in numbers, so each individual can have one. We used Mulberry leaves so we could feed them to the fawns when we were done with the activity.

*Special Considerations:* Time: 30 minutes Group Size: Somewhere between 4 and 20 works best

#### *Process:*

- The group members sit in a circle on the ground or floor (or in chairs if the ground or floor is not suitable for the group).
- Each member of the group is asked to take a leaf from a branch.
- The participants are instructed to carefully examine their leaves, looking closely at the size, shape, colors, and odd markings.
- The participants are asked to introduce their leaves to the group in two or three sentences.
  - They may wish simply to describe their leaf.
  - They may wish to name their leaf.
  - Their introductions may be scientific, introspective, imaginative, or however they wish.
- The facilitator may wish to "model" the introduction. An example: "My leaf is named Genie. She is small and green. She is also a magic leaf, but I won't tell you why yet. I will save that for later."

After all of the leaves are introduced, the facilitator asks the members of the group to look at their individual leaves one more time, then put them into the center of the circle in a pile. After that is done, the facilitator asks the group to close their eyes and the leader mixes up the pile. The group then opens their eyes and each person finds the specific leaf held earlier. (Most of the group will find

their own leaves easily. If someone does not find the correct leaf, check the leaves of others in the group. Eventually, everyone will have the leaf previously identified. If not, point out that everyone definitely recognized that the leaf now held was or was not the right leaf.)

The facilitator points out that each leaf was unique and different, and that each leaf had important things about it. Some had been used for food, some for homes. All leaves cleanse the air for animals to breathe. Every leaf is important and unique and different...every leaf that is now, was, or ever shall be! Imagine all those leaves. Every worm, every blade of grass, and every person is also unique and different.

Finally, the facilitator tells the participants that in the future whenever the participant sees leaves, rakes leaves, see budding leaves it will remind them that they, too, are "special".

*Process Questions:*

Content:

1. How was your leaf unique, different?
2. What useful and important purposes did it serve?

Personalization:

1. Close you eyes for a bit and think about something about yourself that is really special.
2. Think about why you are important and how you would like to be important.

*Appendix E*

Parent Contract

Dear Guardian/s,

Your child has been selected to be part of a project conducted through the Counseling Education Program at University of Northern Iowa on the property of Dr. Linda Nebbe. This project will take place June 5, 2006 to June 9, 2006 (Monday through Friday). This project will be organized and directed by Trisha Hobbiebrunken and Nicole Whisler, who are both graduate students at the University of Northern Iowa in the School Counseling Program. The project will also be supervised by Dr. Linda Nebbe, who is a professor at the University of Northern Iowa, a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Wildlife Rehabilitator, and an Animal-Assisted Therapist.

This project will consist of five visits to Dr. Nebbe's home. A graduate student will be assisting your child, this student will set the schedule of the visits, provide transportation for your child, be a contact for you, and ensure a "positive" social and educational experience for your child. The duration of each visit will be three hours in length. Your child will be picked up between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Your child will then be returned home between the times of 11:45 a.m. and

12:15 p.m.; if the time frame needs to be extended it will be discussed before hand with parents.

During these visits your child will have the opportunity to work individually with dogs and will learn basic care-giving skills. The children will also have opportunities to work with the wildlife rehabilitation project, which will be supervised by Dr. Nebbe. Each day the children will participate in activities as well as working closely with a variety of animals.

There are several goals that this project hopes to accomplish:

- To teach your child skills which will have potential to be developed further and carried over into the child's daily life.
- To give your child an opportunity to expand an already existing interest.
- To enhance his/her self-esteem through a positive and successful experience.

At the onset of the project, your child will be given a contract (attached) explaining to him or her what will happen in the project and what our expectations are of him/her. If this contract is "broken" it is explained that your child will simply be taken home that day and can "try again" at the next scheduled visit. This will be done in a very positive and encouraging way. If there are three problem visits, then a conference is scheduled with the child if he/she really

wishes to be involved. A plan will be made to either continue or end involvement in the project.

To take part in our project, we need parental permission and your signature giving us permission to contact medical help if an accident should occur and we cannot find you.

Please sign below and return this form with child contract on the first day of camp.

I give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to take part in the project described above.

Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Our family doctor is \_\_\_\_\_; I give my permission for the student working with my child to contact this doctor, or any doctor if he/she is not available, in case of an accident.

Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any necessary allergy or medical concerns that we should be aware of:

*Appendix F*

Child Contract

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

To take part in this summer project at Dr. Linda Nebbe's home, I must follow the following rules. If I do not, I will be asked to leave and will immediately be taken home. If I am asked to leave and taken home, I will be given another chance on the next visit. I will receive no more than three chances.

1. I will be ready on time. If I cannot go that day I will let someone (whoever is picking me up) know.
2. I will wear long pants and tennis shoes each day. Something that I am able to get dirty!
3. Before each visit I will eat breakfast.
4. For each scheduled visit I will bring my own water bottle.
5. I will wait patiently for my turn or for the next direction.
6. I will listen to and follow directions.
7. I will stay with the group at all times.
8. I will do things the way I am told.

9. I will not mess around, exchange "looks", make under-breathe comments, make gestures, or silly jokes.
10. I will be respectful and polite to all people, animals, and things in the environment at all times. Even if they are not polite to me.
11. I will use appropriate language at all times.
12. I will use appropriate voices at all times. NO YELLING OR SCREAMING.
13. I will be quiet and gentle at all times.
14. I will treat others as I wish to be treated.
15. I will not take or use anything without permission.
16. I will use the equipment appropriately.
17. I will not interrupt or bother persons working.
18. I will not run at any time during this project unless asked to by the supervisors.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read this contract will abide by it. If there are any problems with it or grievances concerning its content, they can be discussed. If warranted changes can be made. Until such changes occur, the contract will stand as is.

Child's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Student's Signatures

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Supervisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_