



## **Easterseals looking to expand services at Wisconsin Dells camp for people with disabilities**

John Gittings; Wednesday, January 8, 2025

A Wisconsin Dells camp for people with disabilities is looking to broaden its services to accommodate more people this year.

The Easterseals Wisconsin Respite Camp and Camp Wawbeek, located just north of Wisconsin Dells near the border of Adams and Columbia counties on Highway 13 and Wawbeek Road, served more than 2,200 Wisconsin residents in 2024, including more than 40 from Sauk County, according to new Respite Camp director Lauren Daniels. She expects that number to increase, and is hoping to increase services and activities for campers this year.

Easterseals Wisconsin Respite Camp and Camp Wawbeek offer weeklong sessions from June to September, in which the camps host people with different forms of disabilities each week. Daniels hopes to increase independence for campers, as well as enhance their quality of life and allow them to feel “free to be themselves.”

“We provide accessible activities that are inclusive for all,” Daniels said. “The nice thing is that we try to be very personal. Families and caregivers can be confident that their loved ones are in a safe environment and are well cared for here.” The Respite Camp serves people with disabilities as well as their family members and other caregivers who may need a break from the responsibilities of caring for their loved ones.

Camp leaders and counselors take pride in providing services for people with disabilities, Daniels said. The camp serves people from age 3 to 60 and above, and has services for people with intellectual challenges, physical limitations, and who are on the autism spectrum, among others.

“During the summer, each week, we serve a different age group,” Daniels said. “That’s kind of how we devise our plan for camp. We try and make sure there is an opportunity for everybody.”

Some campers at the Respite Camp and Camp Wawbeek fall into multiple disability categories and can sometimes attend more than one weeklong summer session, Daniels said. Most campers attend one session, she said, which allows the camp to serve as many people with disabilities as it can.

Camp activities include zip-lining, wall climbing, archery, fishing, swimming and canoeing.

After registration, which is available at [eastersealswisconsin.com](https://eastersealswisconsin.com), campers are placed on a waitlist and are accepted based on staff availability, Daniels said. On some weeks, or weekends

during the fall, winter, and spring months, the camps can host up to 50 people. The camp is usually open two weekends a month in the offseason, she said.

“We try to make sure we can include as many people as possible,” she said, adding that many of the campers from year to year are returnees. “We do our due diligence in hiring as many staff as we can, so we can welcome new campers each week.” The Respite Camp and Camp Wawbeek partner with local businesses, including Chalet Lanes bowling alley, Tommy Bartlett Exploratory and the Wisconsin Ducks to provide more activities for campers, Daniels added.

This year, rates for Camp Wawbeek are \$537 for weekends from January through April and \$1,274 for summer weeklong sessions. Respite Camp rates are \$638 for January through April weekends and \$1,751 for weekly summer sessions.