



Reconditioning Stay for Everyone with Intellectual Disability on the Principle of Eunice Kennedy Shriver Camp



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Opinion Article

Summer outdoor camps are traditional in Czech Republic environment, whether they were created in the early days of our republic (in the twenties of the last century) as scout or tramping camps, YMCA camps, than in socialist period as pioneers camps, sports camps, trade union. The summer and winter camps were organized by schools including special schools, insurance agencies, business companies, sports clubs, etc. Outdoor camps in nature are therefore traditional even among persons with various types of disabilities, either as integrated or separated, or focused on specific approach in rehabilitation. Currently official format for persons with disability is – recondition camp. This format is determined with principles oriented on health and well-being and complex reconditioning activities of persons with disabilities is supported by insurance companies, municipalities and ministry of social matters. Specially from aspect – challenge to ask financial grants.

Currently, summer recondition stays in nature oriented towards the support of people with intellectual disabilities are decreasing. There are more reasons, and they are not just financial reasons because different companies can be asked for different projects, grants, aimed at supporting the lives of people with disabilities. But that's a lot of work which seems to be the main reason: difficulty of preparation in all aspects, searching finances and funding uncertainty, lack of positive awarding, lack of attention, searching for appropriate locality, volunteers training. Therefore, it is necessary to respect several groups that regularly organize recondition outdoor camps. This is the reason we would like to present (and praised) the camp led by Hana Kratochvilova: mother of her son with disability, leader of Special Olympic club, social care worker and member of the municipality she lives.

The principles of the stay are in accordance with principle of SPMP (Sdružení pro Pomoc Mentálně Postiženým – Association for Helping the Mentally Disabled) from which grant support is requested. Principles of Eunice Kennedy Shriver Camp and philosophy of Special Olympics (SO) are accepted, of course. Seventy participants who attended integrative outdoor camp for sport and education activities were organized either by SPMP-Praha or sports Federation Wirtus, or Czech SO (SO-CZ), or they came directly from families. Registration in any institution is not request – just intellectual disability.

Typical for outdoor camps with Czech Special Olympics is participation of students/ volunteers. Those students are Erasmus program students trained by Brno University. They participation makes additional backgrounds, atmosphere refreshment, attractiveness and effort to understand each other regardless of language limits. The camp reported here was attended by a student of the PhD program at the University M'sala in Algeria, Ishak Torki, recently on internship at the Faculty of Sport Studies, Masaryk University in Brno. In accordance with Czech regulation foreign students may work directly with persons with disability only under supervision (prof. Hana Válková, APA and sport psychology university professor).

In Special Olympics Program, these outdoor camps talk about the principles of Eunice Kennedy Shriver Camp (EKSC) which were started in the 1960, before Special Olympics movement were officially founded (1968) [www.specialolympics.org/about/history/camp-shriver]. In 2008 SO-CZ in cooperation with Sport-Academic Centre in Olomouc University received grant support from SOI, primarily for the confrontation of know-how. Next years the Centre did not apply for another grant of this type as because

the principles corresponded commonly in Czech environment, in sub-urban camps format, too. Since that time outdoor camps in sub-urban format are realized every year during holiday time for participants with intellectual disability either or special or inclusive variants in regular basis. Sub-urban camps are camps located in the urban inner city with prevalence time in nature, children have a program similar with outdoor camps, but they return home every late afternoon.

The fourteen-day camp described here (July 23 – August 6) which was organized by Hanka Kratochvílová, took place for the fifth time in the beautiful nature of Vysoké nad Jizerou. Vysoké nad Jizerou is a wonderful town and a very touristic place located in the Northern Region of the Czech Republic. The town is situated about 130 km away from the capital of the Czech Republic (Praha), in a hilly landscape of the sub-Krkonoše Mountains, and the highest point is the hill of Kozákov, which is 744 meters high (Wikipedia).

Natural environment the town is home to an impressive selection of attractions and experiences, making it well worth visiting. This town is known as a ski resort, it is a popular destination for skiing, with several ski resorts in the area. Also, the town is surrounded by beautiful hiking trails, cycling path-ways, which are perfect for exploring the local countryside.

The place of residence was on Pension AKTIV, well-maintained and equipped with modern amenities. Common areas such as lounges, dining halls, gym, and outdoor spaces are available for guests to relax and socialize. Important marker of the pension is warm atmosphere created by the staff. Customer satisfaction is given priority by the staff of Pension Aktiv, and every effort is made to ensure visitors enjoy a memorable stay. The staff is

helpful, considerate, and ready to respond to any concerns or needs. To ensure that visitors feel at home during their stay, they work hard to create a warm and welcoming environment.

Foods and drinks Pension Aktiv offers delicious dishes, in 5 time regime per day (with popular coffee breaks). Different meals and respects any diet restrictions vegan or meat also, as various drinks and sweets. But sweets were monitored, participants were educated in health nutrition.

Program was managed by 10 trained volunteers (nobody is paid with salary, but free accommodation and meal). Their minimal level of education was bachelor in the field of Adapted physical activity, PE teacher, physiotherapist, social care workers and PhD students. All of them were under the leadership of Hana Kratochvilova, social worker, mother of participant with ID, volunteer in Special Olympics club. The camp was well organized and managed from the first day to the last day.

The number of participants attended the integrative outdoor camp for sport and education activities was 44 (completely 70 with specialists, physiotherapist, assistants, volunteers). They came from SO or SPMP clubs, from schools or directly from families, but from different cities. First days was necessary to moderate activities for mutual introduction. Participants were very diverse, whether in terms of age (the youngest was 12 years old, the oldest 62 years) or in terms of individual cognitive, skills and fitness limits, interest orientation. Beyond this limits the exercise program was the main content. The classic daily program was as follows in the Table 1 and was attended by all regardless of age. The filling or load was modified due to limit indicators mentioned above.

Table 1: The framework of the program.

7:30 AM	Morning walking and some dynamic stretching
8:00 AM	Breakfast
9:30 AM	Sports activities
12:00 PM	Lunch
2:00 PM	Sports activities
6:00 PM	Dinner
7:00 PM	Handcraft, Drawing, Talking, Watching TV.
10:00 PM	Rest and good sleep

The objective of the camp was mostly sports oriented but with idea to improve well-being and re-conditioning of the participants and make them self-independent. Activities were selected with the idea – to be available for understanding of persons with intellectual disability, for match their capacities to make effort

and experience “I did it, I mastered it”. Some of these sports were as examples: athletics relevant to Special Olympics, fitness, yoga, martial arts, Semi-sports games, Nordic walking, swimming, free horse riding, walking in the forest, and enjoying the beauty of nature and the fresh air.

The assessed activities by measurement in format “competition” were modified into format “local, but international, SO day” (a foreign intern Ishak was there, after all), including the competitor’s and referee’s oath, including the cultural program and evenings award ceremony. So, for example, in the swimming competition, out of 44 participants in the camp 26 swimmers were able to swim and compete in 25 m distance (individual style “swim as you can”, without starting jump – measured manually on a mobile phone). Twelve (12) of them achieved time under 25 seconds. Other competition was in running over modified natural hurdles, in running at 50m and 100m (field natural path-way) and the results were remarkable, too. And what was noticeable, some “competitors” even required a repeated round so that to improve their results or “pinch” someone else.

The two evenings with awards were exciting, everyone received a performance award, but there were also many small material prizes of a diverse nature (it is amazing where Hanka get all, not only key-rings, crayons, but also stuffed animals, toys, hats, t-shirts).

After the distribution of gifts comes the performance show where each one tries to demonstrate and show what he/she is best in. Whether it is dancing, singing, art, drama-pantomime, or sports show. And then - it’s time for disco which is the best part of the camp in the sight of the participants where the participant enjoyed themselves by dancing or singing - individually, in pairs and together in the group. On different types of songs – both traditional and modern.

Last “gala evening” ended with a “disco”. As part of our SO events disco must be. It is known that if there was no disco, the event was not worth much. Sincerely time of the disco was the best part. The happiness and joy in the eyes of the participants were visible. Wide smiles, delight, and excitement on their faces. Great positive energy comes out from their bodies. Also, delightedness feeling great pleasure and satisfaction, often accompanied by a sense of gratification and enjoyment.

Among the evening leisure activities “beading” (bracelets, necklaces, small jewellery) was leading which some mastered extraordinary. There was also interest in gluing boxes using the napkin technique. Supposedly for the jewellery or medals. The evening “athlete to each other” was also very successful. The participants presented themselves as individual or in pairs – small teams - what they want to demonstrate. It was interesting to observe how after the “seasoned performances” some firstly ashamed to be added gradually. And the end – most participant wanted to assert themselves. The evening had to be terminated strictly at 10 p.m. because to perform and show themselves again and again.

The more cohesive all-day program was oriented towards getting to know the SO Healthy Athlete Program consisted from

all-day physical activities as usual, a quiz about nutrition, a video with possible fitness tests, explanation of purpose and meaning the test and exercises ([www.specialolympics.cz//zdravý atlet](http://www.specialolympics.cz//zdravý%20atlet)). Those with interest had opportunity to try them out and learn how to train and how to apply at home. Another, more concentrated mono-thematic program concerned the “vitamin day”. It started with a tour of the farmers stands in the city square. Program continued by debating what our attendees knew about fruits, vegetable, healthy nutrition with using vitamins and farmers’ market system. Some of them knew a lot, some of them had been included in assisted job in farming and agriculture. This was followed by shopping (also pricing information), then evening drawings of fruits and vegetable either according to original design or from memory. Exhibition of creations with comments continued. And the next day – snack consumptions of vegetables.

In addition to participating in sports, the camp time was enriched by interesting visits to numerous cities and captivating places. The participant had the opportunity to see spectacular locations such as the magnificent Mumlava Waterfall and the refreshing natural bathing pool buried in the mountain. Our experiences also lead us to see the beauty of castles, the calm of churches, the vibrant urban centre of the Vrchlaví city, and the knowledge-filled museum there. As we strolled through parks and indulged in cozy coffee shops, we immersed ourselves in the unique charm of each place. These visits not only offered the participant with unique experiences, but also served as a springboard for them to learn about the country’s rich history, diversified culture, urbanism, and captivating geography of the country also, the participant delved into the traditions, savouring the local cuisine, engaging in joyful singing, and admiring the traditional clothing that beautifully represented the heritage of the region. Besides these trips, we discovered many things such as the history of the country, its culture, urbanism, geography of the country, and traditions like food, singing, and clothes.

During this camp, we tried to make the participants more active and engaging and avoid sedentary behaviour as much as possible. Due to this intention we considered to assess their *daily workload* as an added value of the camp and perhaps as an argumentative basis for the significance of these activities for those who still do not believe and do not understand of abilities of participants with intellectual disability. So, we tried to measure their steps and how many kilometres they walked daily throughout the day. Amateur recording by using Samsung health App on a smartphone was made. It can be pointed out that the “mileage” is quite high, the physical activity exceeds the recommended volume of 30 min. daily (almost 100 min. per day in the camp), but in terms of Kcal it is not too much. This means that, despite a certain level of satisfaction, the intensity could be a little higher during reconditioning camp, at least on some days. The data are demonstrated in the table 2.

Table 2: Survey of daily activity of the camp participants.

Date	Number of steps	Steps on km	Kcal burned	Active time min
23.7.	13.846	10.27	540	145
24.7.	12.125	8.93	480	129
25.7.	9.851	7.26	381	104
26.7.	13.206	9.57	522	142
27.7.	7.429	5.88	332	76
28.7.	10.285	7.5	402	112
29.7.	8.234	6.08	322	89
30.7.	7.439	5.46	294	78
31.7.	12.327	9.1	484	129
1.8.	5.669	4.36	230	66
2.8.	8.583	6.32	333	92
3.8.	11.278	8.25	446	120
4.8.	4.038	2.92	156	44
5.8.	6.45	4.7	253	69
Total Per camp	130.76	60.57	5.175	1.395
Day average	9.34	4.32	304.14	99.64



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