

Girl Power Zoo Day - Daytime Branch's Newest Community Service Project

Under the leadership of Sherry Feldman, 18 Daytime Branch volunteers, in collaboration with Camp Victory Texas, enjoyed a "Zooper" Girl Power Zoo Day that reunited child sexual abuse survivors and their counselors from their camping experience last spring.

NCJW volunteers watched and participated as camp counselors, known as "Mama Lions," re-connected with campers, "Little Buddies." Volunteers were inspired as they watched the Little Buddies renew their bonds with their Mama Lions while making bracelets, having their faces and arms painted, decorating cupcakes, and singing and dancing. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful lunch generously donated by James Coney Island.

After watching the girls, ages 7-11, "come alive" as they blossomed under the love and energy they experienced during this reunion with their counselors, every volunteer walked away knowing NCJW made a huge difference in the girls' lives.

Camp Victory Texas volunteer staff provided training for NCJW volunteers. Camp Victory Texas, founded by Katrina Stilwell, is a three day two-night intensive camping and recovery experience for child survivors of sexual abuse. In addition to the reunion celebration, NCJW provided funding for one girl to attend the camp next year.

As excerpts from the letter below indicate, NCJW's initiation of this event was clearly greatly appreciated. Daytime Branch will be formulating plans for next year's reunion.

"Dear NCJW Daytime Branch,

We can't say thank you enough. But we think that the looks on the girls' faces after the First Annual Girl Power Day at the Zoo said it all and conveyed that it was worth it! ... (Planning for) this event started over a year ago, (was chaired) by Sheryl Feldman and an amazing cadre of women from NCJW...

...As you all know, good organizations are living, breathing bodies, with personality and trials and tribulations. Every success has some blood, sweat, and a bunch of tears behind it. So to have you all take the oars and pull, pull, pull, to pull together an AMAZING event like that is truly appreciated, by us and by the girls who attended. ... we could not have imagined a better time (than we had at the reunion).

Each one of you who supported the event whether in presence or phone calls or energy and prayer: Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We are already looking forward to next year's event,

*Sincerely,
Katrina Price Stilwell, President and Founder*

And a big ROAR from all of the Mama Lions at Camp Victory Texas, Inc.!"