Thursday @ RYPEN – by Jason Hogberg

On Thursday, we woke up around 8:00 and did our walk to the bridge. At 10:00 we had brunch and the thought for the day. After we finished our tasty meal, we split into our colour groups and did our chores. When our chores were complete, we started the cooperative games. These games tested your physical and mental strengths, and how you worked as a team.

The first task my team had to complete was the electric grid. There were two ropes tied horizontally between two trees. There was a 2 foot by 2 foot square in between the two ropes, and you had to get your whole team to the other side of the rope through that square - without touching the ropes! We completed that task and then went to standing on the stump.

In this game, you had to get your whole team on the stump and stay on for 5 seconds without falling off. We tried many times and usually got to three seconds and then fell off, but finally we managed to stay up for five seconds. Next task was the river crossing.

There you took two planks and a block of wood you had to use to get across the river. When your whole team was across the river, you had to pick one person to climb a tree, as high as they could, and tie a ribbon at that point. We had a rough start to this task because one of my team members let go of the block of wood, and it floated down the river – so we had to chase after it. When we got the block of wood back to where we had to cross, we were on the other side of the river in no time. When our whole team was across, we had to pick one person to climb the tree. That person was ME, and to make it interesting, I am scared of heights – so that was quite an experience for me! I was shaking the whole time I was climbing the tree, but I climbed as high as I could go, and tied the ribbon. Then, I worked my way back to the ground and it was quite a relief to be back on solid ground. When our whole team was back on the other side of the river, we went to our next task – the electric fence.

There was a rope tied in between two trees, about four or five feet off the ground. We had to get the whole team over the rope without touching it. I got put over the rope first, and then people were passed over the rope to me, and the last two people just climbed the tree and jumped over.
The final task we had to complete was the rope crossing. In this task, there was a 20 foot rope tied between two trees, and this rope was about seven feet off the ground. You had to get your whole team from one end of the rope to the other, without touching the ground. When we finished our last task, around 2:30, it was snack time!

After our quick snack, we had our smoosh race. There were two 2 x 4’s with hoops that you stuck your feet into, and you had to move as a team. When we were done with the smoosh race, we had team photos and free time.

During this free time, the sauna was going, so we would run into the lake and then go into the sauna. It was a lot of fun! We had supper at 5:30 and after we were done, we did our chores. At 7:00, we had our colour group time. This was the time when you really got to know your team members. After group time, we had a night time snack, and then sat around the campfire for charades, songs, cowboy stories and some poems. After the campfire, we had a bit of free time, and the lights were out at midnight.

Friday @ RYPEN - by Josh Regnier

On Friday we awoke to another beautifully sunny morning. We showered and cleaned ourselves up, and headed for the campfire. By that time, it was already about 8 or 8:30. At nine o’clock we went for the regular walk to the bridge. Those really woke you up, and the river was really cool to stop at. After another delicious bacon breakfast, we packed sandwiches and juice for our hike up the mountain. We started off, all in good spirits, however Ken stopped us after about a half an hour and told us we were on the wrong trail. So we turned around, found the right trail, and started up the mountain.

It was tough the whole way up. We stopped several times and halfway up, Ken told us another of his cowboy stories.

I’ve never been so thirsty in my life! When we finally reached the top, the view was **AMAZING!!!** You could see everything, and the lake couldn’t have looked more refreshing.

We ate our lunches, and put our names in an old ammo box. Me and Albert ran all the way down and with a few stops here and there. I fell once but I was OK.
We lazed around for a while before going to dinner. We had the best roast beef I’ve ever tasted, and some really good juice. Then we sat around the campfire singing and had a couple more cowboy stories before we went to bed.

It was a really good, eventful day! An excellent experience. I would recommend it to anyone who has the opportunity. Thanks Rotary!

Saturday @ RYPEN – by Albert Bedell

On Saturday morning, we woke up early and got ready for our last full day at camp. We were a bit subdued because we knew that we would be back home the next day and wouldn’t be seeing the people we had met for a long time. As soon as everyone was up, we started our walk and had breakfast. After breakfast, we got our “thought for the day” and set off to do our chores. With our chores complete we moved on to our activities which would be “Capture the Flag” and canoeing.

For capture the Flag, we were divided into two equal teams; my team won the “Rock, Paper, Scissors” match and we got to choose whether we wanted to attack or defend first. We chose to attack, which meant that we had to take several objects from the bridge back to our objective – the caretaker’s cabin. We started out and only managed to get one person in, but he was carrying 170 of the possible 300 points, so the match went to us. Next, we switched to defense and quickly came up with a plan to prevent any attackers from reaching their goal. We strung out along the narrowest point in the area and sent people out in front to flush out any attacking players we could find. Our plan worked and the attackers lost the round.

After we had all returned to camp, we had a small lunch and then went canoeing. We first got a short lesson from the instructor, then set out west along the shore to the end of the lake. We stopped at a small waterfall and found a secluded pond behind it. After our break, there we packed back into the canoes and raced back to camp.

That night, lots of us started packing for the morning and then went trying to soak up all the memories we could. We sang songs around the campfire and played a few games – then crashed for our last night at Gwillim (that’s Gwilliam if you can’t spell). The camp was one of the best experiences of my life, and I truly hope that other kids will be able to go to this camp and have as much fun as I did.
By Justin Black

When I walked over to the arena to catch the bus, I saw the Dawson Creek kids standing in a group, so that’s where I went. The kids from the other places were standing in their groups as well, and nobody from the different groups were saying anything or interacting in any way. When we got on the bus, everybody went to sit with the people who they knew, and there wasn’t too much talking going on between groups. When we got off the bus we were assigned to cabins, and I know I was disappointed when I wasn’t in the same cabin as my friends. After we had got our beds we had a little time to meet the other people but we didn’t really talk too much outside our group.

Later that night, we did a few activities to get to know each other. I thought these activities were very good at breaking the ice, because we all learned each others names and a little bit about each other. On our last day at Gwillim, things were a lot different.

Most of the morning was spent running around trying to get everybody’s e-mail before we had to go. When we got back on the bus, the groups weren’t just the school’s anymore – everybody was mixed together and I think we all were having fun together. When the bus pulled up to the arenas, I was glad to be back home, but I was definitely sad that I had to say good-bye to everybody that I had come to know over the last few days.

Since I’ve been home I have been talking to a few of the other kids from RYPEN with MSN and I plan to keep in touch. RYPEN was a great experience for me, and I would like to thank the Rotary club for giving me the opportunity!