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University of Lethbridge Sport & Recreation camps add services to meet community need

Sport & Recreation Services summer camps at the University of Lethbridge are rapidly filling up in advance of the first week of offerings and with some additional services available for parents this summer, are proving more popular than ever.

Summer camp season at the U of L kicks off July 4 and continues through the week of August 21, a week longer than usual. What has also been extended are the hours of operation, allowing parents more flexibility with drop-off and pick-up times for their children.

“The big new thing this year is our extended care program. Parents now have the ability to drop off and pick up their children outside of regular camp hours. That means they can drop them at 7:45 a.m. and then pick them up again until 5:15 p.m.,” says Spencer Pommells, the University’s Youth/Intramurals supervisor.

“We think that this will give more parents in our community the opportunity to get kids involved in our camps even though they may work an earlier or later shift. We felt it was necessary to provide this service and it’s something we’re really looking forward to.”

Pommells is new to the U of L this year after graduating from the University of Windsor with a degree in social work, specializing in youth development. He says he was associated with camp programs at Windsor and they used a similar model – as do U of L science camps.

“My experience in Windsor was very positive with this as parents often have difficulty organizing the pick up or the drop off with their schedules, so we’ve gone ahead and organized it and the feedback has been very good,” he says.

In total, there are eight weeks of camps being offered throughout the summer with a breadth of activities. For the sport inclined, everything from badminton to basketball, swimming, soccer, mountain biking, ringette, gymnastics, climbing, fencing and martial arts are available. And, it doesn’t end there.

“We have the staples with our basketball, soccer and multi-activity camps but we’re also able to offer art and drama camps, adventure youth and leadership camps as well,” says Pommells. “I went down to the Fine Arts building yesterday and took a look at the theatre facility we have here at the U of L and it’s pretty spectacular. For the kids to get to utilize that is a great benefit.”

As for staffing, the majority of camp leaders are University students.

“We try to use as many of our students as possible and I think this year, we’re looking at 90 per cent of our staff being U of L students, including a lot of Pronghorns student-athletes,” he says. “For our drama and art camps, we’re using students from the fine arts who are specialized in those areas, while the karate and fencing camps are year-round instructors in those programs, so they have a great deal of expertise.”

Summer camp registration for children aged 6-17 is ongoing and available by calling 403-329-2706 or visiting communityprograms.ulethbridge.ca. Fees vary per activity with the extended care program available for an additional \$40 per week.

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/u-l-summer-camps-add-services-meet-community-need>

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