

## Orenda Springs Winter Camp

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, **10 youth from Parks and Recreation Community Centers**, were able to participate in a unique program, as part of their February Break from school. In collaboration with the Syracuse City School District, and through many generous donations to “Send a Kid to the Woods”, **6 youth were able to spend the day, and 4 youth spent 2 days and 1 night, at Orenda Springs Experiential Learning Center, in Marcellus, NY.** John Powers, owner of the center, was the coordinator of all camp activities for the two days.

The 6 who opted to spend just the day, started their experience learning about the equestrian program the center runs. They learned about the horses, including grooming, cleaning stalls and proper horse care. They retrieved 2 horses from the pasture and brought them back to the stalls. There, they brushed the horses and cleaned out their shoes. They were then able to take turns riding the horses around the barn area. The kids, who were not riding at the time, were cleaning the horse’s stalls. Once all kids rode the horses, and all stalls were clean, they would then take turns climbing on the rock wall, before breaking for lunch.

In the meantime, the 4 Parks youth who chose to take part in the overnight, along with about 15 other kids from different areas of Onondaga County, hiked their equipment through the woods, on sleds, to a Yurt. The Yurt is a large “cabin/tent” like shelter that is heated. This is where most of them would spend the night.

Once both groups had lunch they met up in the woods, where they took part in a variety of “trust” games, to prepare for the ropes elements. Both groups participated in a low ropes element, which focused on learning a variety of “Life Skills”, such as cooperation, perseverance, and team work. The overnight kids stayed to do more high ropes elements and the day kids hiked back down to the pond, where they fed the fish, a large amount of large trout, raised by the owners, before leaving for the day.

The kids who stayed the night participated in a variety of activities throughout the evening, and into the next day...including a night hike, campfire, and more games/activities. Some kids spent the night in the Yurt, while other brave adventurers slept in tents outdoors. All the participants had great experiences and learned quite a bit as well. Parks and Recreation looks forward to working with Orenda Springs again in the future, as it was a great opportunity for the kids to learn, have new outdoor experiences, and have fun along the way.

For a gallery of photos from the **Orenda Springs Winter Adventure Camp**, visit:  
<http://www.orendasprings.com/images/wintercamp2.17.09/index.html>

