

'KIDS CAMP'

provides an inside look at fair

By TAMMY MALGESINI
EO Media Group

Fun @ the Fair Day Camp — the name says it all.

Often referred to as simply “Kids Camp,” the special program for students entering first through fifth grade in the fall offers a sort of backstage pass at the Umatilla County Fair, said Angie McNalley, fair director.

“It gives kids a good behind-the-scenes view of what their big sisters and brothers and cousins are doing in 4-H and FFA,” she said. “Also, they get to do things regular fair patrons don’t get to do.”

Tammy Wagner founded the special day camp in 2012 after presenting the idea to the fair board. The camp was initially developed to offer an option for parents working at the fair or involved with kid’s older siblings in 4-H and FFA. McNalley said the camp provides activities and is fully supervised Wednesday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

McNalley said the camp was an instant hit. Because of its popularity, it was expanded and open to the general



Ben Lonergan/EO Media Group, File

Fun at the Fair Camp participants perform “Baby Shark” on Aug. 9, 2019, at the Les Schwab Stage at the Umatilla County Fair, Hermiston.

public, up to 40 children. The program has even been recognized with an award from the Oregon Fair Association.

“We could probably take 200 children if we had the resources,” McNalley said. “It’s always very, very popular.

Parents are very happy we have it.”

The day camp is designed for kids who do well in large groups as they participate in various activities on the fairgrounds. The camp is staffed for the size of the group, which includes assistance from middle school and high school students, who serve as volunteers earning community service experience in the process.

In addition to hanging out in the animal barns, participants get a chance to pet and interact with the animals. Also, campers get an opportunity to meet the fair’s secondary act performers, often getting private shows. Time is also spent engaging in science experiments and arts and crafts activities, as well as attending shows, viewing exhibits and roaming the fairgrounds to see everything the fair has to offer. Also, campers will even get to perform on the fair’s Les Schwab stage on Friday.

Sponsored by Family Health Associates, the cost is \$75 per camper. The fee includes a camp T-shirt, fair admission and a one-day carnival wristband for unlimited rides, which can be used while with their family after the camp ends either on Friday or Saturday.

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