

Rebel Quest Expands this Summer with Nine Weeks of Fun and Learning

Contributed by Andrew M. Abernathy
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OXFORD, Miss. – Summer should be more than watching television and punching the snooze button, and for students enrolled in the University of Mississippi's Rebel Quest 2009 program, this summer promises plenty of fun, learning and physical activity.

Nine different weeklong athletic and enrichment camps for second- through seventh-graders are scheduled throughout June and July. Offered by the UM Division of Outreach and Continuing Education, the camps are open to residents of the Lafayette-Oxford-University community and surrounding counties.

Rebel Quest not only allows children to make new friends and have fun with them but also provides a meaningful and affordable summertime option, said Jason Wilkins, director of pre-college programs.

"Keeping children active in the summer and interested in learning are the goals of Rebel Quest," Wilkins said. "Moreover, we provide a safe and supervised environment for the participants to achieve these goals and enjoy themselves."

The program has a flexible enrollment option that allows participants to enroll in each week separately up until two days before the desired session begins. Camps run weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The fee is \$125 per week, which includes lunch each day at Johnson Commons cafeteria on campus and swimming in the Turner Center pool.

This year's camp activities are built around various themes such as "Rookie of the Year" (sports-oriented activities), "A Bug's Life" (nature discovery in the Oxford-Lafayette County area), "Dragonball Z" (Japanese language and games) and "Night at the Museum" (arts and crafts).

Most sessions are held at the Turner Center, with activities led by professional teachers as well as Ole Miss students from the Department of Health, Exercise Science and Recreation Management.

Last year, the inaugural season of Rebel Quest ran four weeks. This year's program was expanded because the feedback from last year was so great, Wilkins said.

Several participants in last summer's Rebel Quest day camps enjoy outdoor fun as part of the program's blend of educational and athletic activities. This year, Rebel Quest is being expanded to nine weeks. UM photo by Ryan Whittington.

Mitchell Diggs, UM associate director of media and public relations, plans to enroll his fourth-grader, Carter, in Rebel Quest for the second time.

"I like that there is a lot of individual attention paid to each child," he said. "Rebel Quest offers lots of interesting and educational activities in an environment where you do not have to worry about your child."

Oxford does not have many summer options for school-age children, said Diggs, who added that he thinks the program has been beneficial for his son.

Julie Davis, librarian at the UM Law Library, said her son Ian also benefited from last year's program. "It was everything I had hoped it would be," she said.

"He was exposed to so many different things and liked how hands-on the activities were. I think he probably enjoyed swimming every day the best."

For more information, contact Jason Wilkins at 662-915-6614 or jewilkins@olemiss.edu, or go to <http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/youth/rebelquest/>. A registration form and list of frequently asked questions are available online.

