

Jodie's and Vicky's Story

Vicky Ryan and Jodie Sabin were synonymous with the running of Senior Camp for thirteen years. Jodie joined in 2003, whilst Vicky found her way onto a PHAB Camp at the suggestion of her science teacher, Tony Gray, in 1997 when she was just 17, and is now a Trustee of the Charity.

For many years our summer holidays invariably involved tasks such as fitting as many people into a phone box as possible, doing the YMCA in public, creating the biggest conga line possible and trying as hard as possible to get into another team's photo! And that's just the PHAB photo challenge, not to mention everything else that used to happen in the space of a week...

At least one of us has been present on every Senior Camp between 2003 and 2015 either as a volunteer, or as leaders; and more often than not at the same time – to the point where it is perfectly normal for us both to respond to being called either Jodie or Vicky ... Looking back over the camp reports it is incredible to think how much we actually did over those years, the number of children we took away and the amount of volunteers who supported us.

PHAB is very much a part of us and lifelong memories and friendships were definitely created. Being a PHAB volunteer and then leaders has taught us so many things that it's hard to even know where to begin.

Senior Camp 2010



Vicky Ryan

Jodie Sabin

Here are just a few of our highlights 😊

The children

One of the most rewarding things to see is how integrated the camps become as the week goes on and how children from all walks of life learn to get on and develop friendships, supporting each other in a way they have never had chance to experience before. And have fun! They have truly made the camps special

The volunteers

None of the camps would run without them and we have been lucky to work with lots of fantastic volunteers over the years, many of whom keep coming back for more! As a PHAB volunteer you need to be prepared for anything ... including finding yourself in situations such as egg roulettes, having another team choose an outfit for you to wear from a charity shop (think of gladiator outfits and male volunteers in flowery dresses, tutus and shower caps ...), being dressed up as a zebra using bin bags and having someone feed you yoghurt blindfolded ... and that's just the tip of the iceberg!

The PHAB photo challenge

Think ... one day ... one camera ... occasionally a big placard to carry around ... one mascot ... one list of challenges that your team has to complete – everything from being upside down, to a photo with a police officer to playing air guitar to doing a huge conga line with members of the public and the ultimate – getting in another team's photo for bonus points!

The trips out

Many of the trips have been new experiences for children and volunteers alike. Ice cream farms, football stadiums, snowdomes, birds of prey centres, laser quest, seaside, watersports ... the list goes on.

The themes

We've done a whole week in a year (complete with a last night Christmas party – in July!), tribal themes, superhero theme, space and many others ... it's safe to say we let imagination run wild and just occasionally got a bit carried away 😊

The PHAB water fight

No senior camp was ever complete without an epic water fight, even more spectacular when launched on an unsuspecting group of children!



There is no doubt that a PHAB camp is hard work. But in return what you get is worth every minute ... the smiles, the laughs, the friendships between all of the children, the anecdotal stories told year after year, the surprises, the challenges, the screams of joy on the quad bikes, the looks of amazement at holding a bird of prey, the sheer delight at getting the chance to go skiing or going on a tour of Manchester United. We are proud to have been able to give children the opportunity to do things they never imagined doing. Not least, there is the continuing friendship of some amazing volunteers and a sense that you really have made a difference – not just for the children but for the volunteers as well; because PHAB is truly an experience of a different kind. Here's to another 50 years of Birmingham PHAB Camps!

