

Giant insects...poisonous snakes...complete darkness...burnt tasteless food. Who doesn't enjoy camp?!! I know that I do. Every summer, my school sends its first and second year students to the woods of northern Hiroshima to experience the great outdoors. The camp has no electricity, no hot water, and no flushing toilets. Many things can, and do, go wrong at camp. However, my second trip this summer taught me what an important experience camp is.

Last year, we survived the darkness, the cold showers and bad food, but no one wanted to return this year. This July we boarded buses again for 4 days of cruel and unusual punishment. However, this year, we would have to cook our own food: from preparation to clean-up. It seemed as if things would be even worse this summer. During our first afternoon, we cooked curry and rice over an open flame. It took forever! And, in the end, the curry was overdone and the rice underdone. We then had to wash our plates and pans in the river three times because our teacher said that our pots were not clean enough. Every student went to bed hungry and tired.

The next day, we woke up to find all the pans were covered with ants because one group had put their dishes back without cleaning them. No one wanted to cook again. Before we started, the teachers told everybody to sit down and talk about what had gone wrong. My homeroom teacher said to us, "If you don't work as a team, nothing will taste good." We discussed how to make everyone's work easier by cooperating. The cleaning was difficult because the pan was so dirty; the pan was so dirty because the curry was cooked too long; and the curry was cooked too long because our preparation was poor. If we all tried to think about each other's work from beginning to end, we might have a good meal. We asked our teachers and other groups for advice and started to make breakfast together. It was much better than the curry, and we finished quickly. By our last meal, thanks to teamwork, we were eating food as good as ... almost as good as our mothers make. We also had time left over to have fun, play games and enjoy the campfire. We all went home wanting to return next summer.

I think the camp was a success because we all understood how important other people are. Without the modern conveniences of home, we had to work together and help each other. No part could be done by one person, so each individual was essential. By learning to communicate, we got things done together easily and became closer friends. We also saw what others do for us. Every day we have wonderful meals prepared for us, we live in clean homes, and go to safe schools where we are helped to learn and grow. Camp taught me to be thankful of this.

Our friends, families and teachers are the people we rely upon, but we don't always remember their importance. By trying our hardest together, my friends and I now know not only what we can do as a team, but how much other people do for us. Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Our group's success this summer made me truly appreciate working together.