

Summer camp transforms Cache Valley into a wizarding world of magic and muggles

Elise Johnson | Posted: Wednesday, June 25, 2014 3:30 pm

For the past 14 years, students have left Cache Valley and entered the wizarding world of magic and muggles. This universe is complete with a sorting hat, magical candles, snitch searches, house points, and much more.

Welcome to Harry Potter Camp. Led by “Headmaster” Reed Olson, the camp this year lasts four weeks, though usually it is five, with a morning and afternoon session at Hillcrest Elementary School in Logan. Each year begins with a sorting. After selecting two houses they wish to take part in, attendees put both options in a hat and draw one. From there they are placed in their houses where throughout the weeks they can earn and lose house points. At the end, the house with the most points gets the house cup. Points can be earned through Potter-themed games such as finding the golden snitch, and can be lost for misbehavior. Each student is equipped with a robe and a wand, which they get to make unique for them.

Each week is divided into different themes. They include potions, astronomy, wand making, care of magical creatures along with others. During this time, the kids participate with guest lecturers. For potions, Utah State University professor Dr. Doug Harris comes and teaches the basics of chemistry all the while showing explosive chemical reactions. During Care of Magical Creatures, Willow Park Zoo brings in different animals, specifically those frequenting the magical world like owls and snakes.

During this camp at least one book from the series is completed. The kids sit around as Headmaster Olson turns off the lights and reads by lamplight alone. With distinct voices for every character and dynamic expressions, Olson captivates the participants’ attention. While reading he pauses to discuss the life lessons of the book.

Olson explains that he tries to “introduce the kids to the real meaning of what’s happening and tease out those life lessons that the Harry Potter series is just littered with that are just wonderful. The kids have a



Harry Potter Camp

Students at Harry Potter Camp have opportunities to earn badges like these for their various Hogwarts houses (Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff, or Ravenclaw).

great example of how to do things, like be loyal and be a good friend and follow through. Some of those lessons that kids need to learn.”

This camp also incorporates another important aspect to summer. “The most important thing is to have the kids still reading during the summer,” Olson explains. “I love the Harry Potter series because I can’t think of another series where kids would line up to pay a fee during the summer to come and read a book. So I love the book. It’s very well written and a beautiful story.”

The camp will be finishing the sixth book in the Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Next year they will be doing the seventh and final book of the series: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. For more information about the camp, visit harrypottercamp.com.

