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Swashbuckling Not Only for Pirates

Submitted by George Platt



Big success Fencing Camp at the Lafayette Recreation Center Photo Jennifer Russell

between the action, special care was taken to use imagination to learn how swords figured prominently in history and fiction in both literature and film. The lessons also incorporated short lectures on historical or literary topics. Themes for each day of the camp included, "History of the Sword," "Pirates of the Caribbean," "Star Wars," "Knights of the Round Table" and "Lord of the Rings".

Head counselor and coach George Platt led the camp. He has over 30 years certified teaching experience as Maitre d'Armes or Fencing Master in addition to a Master's degree in European History combined with a lifelong interest in adventure, science fiction and swashbuckling.

Recreational Supervisor for the Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department, John Warsaw said, "The fencing camp at the Lafayette Community Center was a huge success. During these tough times a lot of camps are struggling for enrollments, but Fencing Camp was full with 10 + people on the wait list."

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The excitement of swordplay, a staple of many blockbusters, jumped from the big screen to the Lafayette Recreation Center in the form of Fencing Camp in June. From June 22 through June 26, twenty kids from eight to 14 years old learned the fundamentals of the sport. The camp was offered in conjunction with the staff from the Concord-based George Platt's Swordplay.

The sport of fencing grew out of the deadly practice of sword fighting and of the ancient art of the duel. It has evolved into an Olympic sport which requires speed, balance, fluidity, concentration and tactical thinking. Fencing has been called "Physical Chess" because it requires advanced planning and use of moves in a combination to surprise or trap an opponent.

In addition to teaching the sport's movements and tactics, emphasis was placed on developing each camper as an athlete and an intellectual. Certain fencing drills stressed speed and skill. Other games reflected specific moments in books or films which taught students in an exciting way. In