



## City charity set to celebrate 35 years of happy camping for needy children

BY SHIRLEY BROOKS

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A CHARITY that has provided free holidays for thousands of Derby youngsters will mark its 35th birthday with a reunion this month.

Derby Kids' Camp was formed in 1973 when a group of volunteers took 15 children on holiday for the first time - with borrowed camping equipment and a budget of just £80.

Three-and-a-half decades later, the charity, still run by volunteers, now provides 250 eight-to-11-year-olds with a fun-packed week of camping in the Peak District every summer - at a cost of up to £35,000.

On March 15, DKC will celebrate its anniversary with a party for current and former volunteers and the children who have been on camps.

Chairman Chris Edwards said that for many of the children, who are nominated by their schools, the camp is the only break they receive.

"When I first started out as a volunteer eight years ago I took part in home visits," he said. "It really brought it home to me that just around the corner there are young people who really need a holiday."

"Some children are living with parents or carers that are ill. For their parents the camp is a relief as it gives them respite and in some cases means that their child doesn't have to go into foster care."

The camping holidays are funded by sponsorship, donations, fund-raising events and charitable trusts, and the charity needs to ensure that up to 150 adult volunteers are available for the five-week camping period.

Each week-long camp of 50 children - starting on July 26 this year - needs to be supervised by about 25 adults.

Volunteer Elaine Johnson has been involved with the charity since 1984.



**PITCHING IN:** Young campers in 1978 showing that even the washing up could be fun. Inset, Derby Lions Club makes its contribution with a cheque to buy two tents for Derby Kids' Camp.

# Reunion to mark decades of happy holidays for kids

The 48-year-old, of Opal Close, Oakwood, said she gets as much out of the trips as the children.

"It's really good fun," she said. "I've made lots of really good friends through doing it."

"I love working with children and being out in the countryside so volunteering for

**"Just around the corner there are young people who really need a holiday."**

CHRIS EDWARDS

Derby Kids' Camp is something I really enjoy."

Miss Johnson, who is a teacher at Stanton Vale special school, said that seeing the difference the holidays make for the children is what draws her back each year.

She said: "At the beginning of the week they are quiet and unsure but they are all lively by the time they leave."

The charity's birthday event takes place upstairs at The Waterfall pub, in Railway Terrace, Derby on Saturday, March 15.

Old photographs from the charity's history will be on display during the night of

fun, which will include video horse racing, food and a play area for children.

Doors open at 7pm and tickets cost £8 for adults, £4 for children aged three to 12. Entry is free for children under three.

For tickets call 07792 179003 or 0115 8771095.

The group is recruiting new volunteers for this summer.

If you are interested in helping out, send an e-mail to [volunteers@derbykidscamp.co.uk](mailto:volunteers@derbykidscamp.co.uk) or download an application form from the website at [www.derbykidscamp.co.uk](http://www.derbykidscamp.co.uk).

All DKC volunteers are subject to an advanced CRB check



**THEN AND NOW:** The times may have changed but fun has been the camp keynote from 1973 until the present.

prior to them being approved. To volunteer as a fundraiser, e-mail [fundraising@derbykidscamp.co.uk](mailto:fundraising@derbykidscamp.co.uk) or telephone 07932 048 005.

Direct donations can be made via the charity website.