

Teenagers aim to lose weight naturally in Lake District

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A GROUP of teens, who hail from all four corners of the globe, intend to leave the area with far less than they arrived.

But far from starving into oblivion while being frogmarched up and down the Lake District fells for weeks on end, these youngsters are happily getting stuck into a host of exciting daily activities, while tucking into three great meals a day, plus snacks.

Yet, by learning how to take control of what they eat and how much exercise they take, each will lose an average of 2kg each week.

The camp is run by Wellspring, an American-based organisation geared to changing the behaviour patterns of young people.

It's this technique, Wellspring experts claim, that generates such high success rates, rather than enforcing regimented diets.

Ian Carter, UK programme director, explained: "Parents always remark on how much happier the children look at the end of the camp – rather than just on the amount of weight they have lost.

"We look at the whole issue here with nutrition classes, exercise and team sports to help build confidence and encourage them to make new friends."

Mr Carter went on: "It's also wonderful to be in such a fantastic location right next to Windermere this year where the range of activities on offer is excellent."

Over the next eight weeks, 70 young people will have attended the woodland camp set within the YMCA's 400 acre property.

Their stay will range from between four and eight weeks.



The cabin village where the teenagers stay.



(l-r) Josie Mowatt having fun on the low ropes while Ophelia Browne supports her. JOE RILEY REF: 0439928

The group sleeps in cabins just a few hundred yards from the lakeshore and take part in a range of team sports as well as rock climbing, assault courses, canoeing, sailing and swimming each day.

They will visit a cafe in Bowness to learn how to order healthier choices from menus and will spend time in Booths supermarket, in Ulverston, in a bid to better understand food labels.

And they will also learn new cooking skills, to make sure meals are no problem once they return home.

Mr Carter said: “The course is all about changing habits and that includes making sure the youngsters know how easy it is to cook something healthy themselves after the camp finishes.

“We don’t ban any food here because that leads people to crave it. The portions containing fat are controlled but soup and salad is unlimited and they have two snacks everyday.

Mr Carter added: “We still serve pizza, lasagne and burgers but they are low fat versions to show that no food is out of the question entirely, if you choose the healthier version and exercise.

“The only difference is that we use buffalo meat as it’s the leanest form of red meat you can get.”

As well as youngsters from across the UK and Ireland, the campers at Lakeside come from the United States, Russia, Romania, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Their long-distance pilgrimage to the camp is thanks, in part, to the raft of publicity that has accompanied the programme.

In the UK alone the Wellspring Camp, which took place at the University of Cumbria’s Newton Rigg campus until this year, has appeared on BBC, Blue Peter, channel Five and CNN as well as a number of newspapers and magazines.

What makes the programme unique, is that all the children on the programme receive cognitive behavioural therapy to establish the root cause of their



Max Schuette participating in the water challenge.



Bobby Demosthenis on the obstacle course.

problem.

It is hoped the food they reach for as a crutch when things don't go according to plan will be replaced with an alternative by the time they leave.

This is done through informal chats with Wellspring UK clinical director Susan Borgman.

Ms Borgman, a licensed clinical social worker, said the camp also helps the children make friends, adopt a "can do" attitude and build self-esteem by the time they leave.

"There is a wonderful sense of camaraderie here. Many have been put off sport because they are the last to be picked or feel they are not as good as other children."

She explained: "We help them to see how capable they really are. As important as the weight loss itself is learning that they are responsible for their own choices.

"And that means when they achieve something, they can take full credit for it."

Ms Borgman, who is also a director at the Wellspring Academy in North Carolina, added: "That's why we offer them so many choices here, from what they do to what they eat, to teach them that they have the power to change things for themselves with success."



Leah Jameson on the low ropes.



Katie Symes on the ladder walk.