

## *Ned Goes To Camp Thorpe*

**By Dawn Daggett, April Brewster and Marie de La Bruere**

Camp Thorpe is a summer camp for people with special needs ages 10 and up. It is located in Goshen, Vermont near Rutland. Dawn has attended Camp Thorpe for nine summers, April for three summers and Ned was a first timer. Who is Ned, you might be wondering? Ned is Dawn's newest friend. He is an outgoing, cuddly bear who became the mascot of Dawn's cabin, Mansfield.

There are three campers to one counselor in each cabin. Some of them had new beds this year. To get the campers up in Dawn's cabin, their counselor, Chris, sang "Oh My Darling Clementine" (a bit off key). Ned thought she was a little crazy. The counselors were also very kind, patient, understanding and helped campers solve their problems.

The campers often helped the staff in a numbers of ways. April helped the director, Sarah, with snack time and cleaning the bathrooms. She also assisted the camp Nurses, Angela and Mona, rounding up campers for their meds. Dawn was a Junior Counselor which entailed supervising two campers. She toured them around the camp and answered any questions they had.

The counselors led many fun and awesome activities. Campers enjoyed nature by going on walks to learn about trees and to collect rocks for a memorial rock garden, and picking blueberries on Blueberry Hill. Campers had many sports they could participate in such as bowling, basketball, soccer, bocce ball, floor hockey, and swimming. Hanging out at the playground on the swings and slide was a favorite past time for some. Campers found their creative side with arts and crafts; finger painting, making mobiles, and paper flowers. Learning to play musical instruments and cooking also challenged campers' creativity. April and Dawn made chocolate chip cookies for everyone. There were also special activities such as the slip and slide, pool parties, picnics, cookouts, campfires, dances, and open mic nights.

At the end of each week, the staff presented a slide show set to music of pictures taken throughout the week. Everyone enjoyed seeing themselves on the big screen. After a special dinner was served, awards were given out by staff and campers. Dawn was awarded "Best Laugh" and "Sweetheart." April was awarded for "Best Arts and Crafts." Ned hopes to get an award next summer!