

# Southwoods Traditions!

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**It is that crazy time of year again when things seem to start moving so fast, and we often find ourselves coming and going. In our home, this year more than others, it seems that we are spending most of our time managing chaos. We hope you, like the Ralls family, slow things down and firmly ground the holiday season in family traditions.**

We asked our children what they love most about the holidays and they shared: decorating our home, baking cookies, making and buying gifts for friends and loved ones, watching cheesy animated holiday shows, and of course, family story time. These were the traditions they verbalized and ones we feel help slow life back down and make the season meaningful. We find that it is **our traditions that help us focus on what is really special**, and that these traditions bring perspective to all the crazy things that are going on all around us by highlighting what is truly important...family and friends!

We bet if you ask your child about traditions at Southwoods, their lists of favorites would be long, and might include: Fuzzies – that adorable creature we give out each night at line- up to campers that have given of themselves to make someone else's day better; the blue, natural and green papers that come cascading through the air to signify the beginning of tribal; and of course the burning of the year up on the hill on the last night of camp. Other traditions that your child may list are, of course, all camp campfire, our plays, tribal sing, our fantastic camp carnival extravaganza, Rainbow Warriors, the Winter Weekend, rides in the Red Ranger, the camp reunion, or THE WAY shirt that is presented to outstanding staff members for their dedication to Southwoods.

Some of our favorite traditions at Southwoods are the ones our campers have created, without any input from us: the phrase "NSW" (Not the Southwoods Way), chants and cheers we hear at line up (" I feel good...oh I feel so good"), or in the dining room ("Give it to me one time"), and let's not forget the "Shake your booty" dance. It is all of these traditions and more that help slow the summer down and allow everyone at Southwoods to have that unique, fun, special and appropriate camp experience.

All of us here at Southwoods hope you have the happiest of holiday seasons, full of love, laughter and wonderful traditions. As Rondi Hillstrom Davis recommends in - *Together: Creating Family Traditions*, we encourage you to take time and make some new family traditions - like a new activity or outing you will do each year. Or share your current traditions with someone less fortunate through a charity or senior citizens home. Invite your children to help create and implement these family traditions- we think you will find that they help **slow things down and make family time unique, fun, and special**. It is through the excitement, joy and anticipation of these traditions, that we create time to be together as a family. We change or arrange our schedules, and make sure to not miss these opportunities to be together.

Now that the winter has started to howl its cold winds round our house, we look forward to building both the first fire in the fireplace and the first snowman in the yard...and we hope for you a holiday season full of friends, family and ongoing traditions to enjoy... **"The Southwoods Way"**.