

## The Story of The Princess and the Starfish

I am Hawkeye, Navigator of the Sierra Expedition. Waynoon!

Tonight, we celebrate the start of another great year of Adventure Guides.

- how many are here with us for the first time? welcome - we look forward to having you join us this year

- how many are here with us for the last time at Jones Gulch tonight? - we look forward to a fun filled year of adventures before you graduate next Spring

For me, this is the start of my 11th and final year in the Adventure Guides program - I've had 3 daughters with me over the years - the youngest of which, Laughing Bear, starts her 6th and final year in the program tonight.

As I thought about a story to tell tonight, I recalled the stories told by our past navigators - which are depicted on our story sticks

- Last Year - Firefox and Butterfly Fox encouraged us all to "just do it" have courage and give it your all
- The year before that - Dancing Buffalo talked to us about the value of being a friend, especially in times when others need our help

I also reflected back on my own experiences over the last 10 years.

- I thought about my very first campout which was ten years ago tonight, in a tent in Connecticut with my oldest daughter, Singing Bird.

- I remembered when my middle daughter, Dancing Pony, made her first successful climb to the top of the climbing wall here at JG - I can still see her smile as she rang the cowbell for the first time

- And, I also remembered last Spring, at the pride I felt as a few of our princesses had the courage to lead the whole expedition in song at the Manresa campout

I realized that what I remembered most was the little moments - the nights around the campfire, the sight of a bowling ball bouncing off the guardrails and then knocking down all the pins, a first bullseye at the archery range.

So, with little moments, helping others and giving it your all on my mind, I remembered the story of "The Princess and the Starfish"

It goes like this....

Last summer, a Princess was walking down Manresa beach at sunset.

As she walked along, she saw a man in the distance.

As he grew nearer, he noticed that the man kept leaning down, picking something up off of the beach, and throwing it out into the ocean. Time and again he kept hurling things out into the water.

As the princess approached even closer, she noticed that the man was picking up starfish that had been washed up on the beach and, one at a time, he was throwing them back into the ocean.

The princess was puzzled.

She approached the man and said, "Good evening, sir. I was wondering what you are doing."

"Why, I'm throwing these starfish back into the ocean." the man said.

"You see, it's low tide right now and all of these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don't throw them back into the ocean, they'll die up here from lack of oxygen."

The princess replied, "Oh, I see.....but,.....there must be thousands of starfish on this beach. You can't possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many. And, don't you realize this is probably happening on hundreds of beaches all up and down this coast. Can't you see that you can't possibly make a difference?"

The man smiled, bent down and picked up yet another starfish, and as he threw it back into the ocean, he smiled at the princess and replied, "I hope I made a difference to that one!"

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We are all here tonight - Dads, Princesses - because of the value that we all know comes from Dads and Daughters sharing some adventures together.

As we start off our year tonight, I want to encourage you all - Dads and Princesses - to "Embrace the Adventure" this year

When you do, you could just make a big difference - not only in what you get out of the program, but in what everyone else gets out of the program as well

What does "embracing the adventure" mean?

Well, I'll leave it up to you to decide....

But, I do have some ideas....and maybe you do to....

For all of you Princesses here tonight, it could be reaching out to invite new princesses to join in the fun, or helping to pick up after a meal or just trying to get to the top of the wall one more time

For Dads - it could mean hosting a circle meeting, offering to recruit new families or helping out at campouts,

- anyone else have some other ideas about the little things that you could do to make a difference?

In closing, I suggest these things to you tonight not just to make the Expedition stronger, but because I know from personal experience that there is great value in "Embracing the Adventure" - for me, for Singing Bird, Dancing Pony and Laughing Bear, it has made all the difference.

At this point I'd like to invite some folks down to help us light the fire - a pair of new dads who each have three daughters who are joining the expedition tonight

- From Chinook, Marcus and Sidney Bannon
- And the Moniz's from El Dorado— Jose Maria, Maria and Benedita

Laughing Bear and I light a candle and then light each of their candles – then, we all move over to a central lighting mechanism for the bonfire.

Waynoon!



Fall 2001 - Singing Bird – canoeing up the Saugatuck River in Westport, CT



Spring 2003 - Singing Bird, new Onondaga Chief Hawkeye, and Dancing Pony at Frost Valley – Claryville, NY



Spring 2005 – Hawkeye and Dancing Pony at the Memorial Day Parade, New Canaan, CT



Dec 2006 – Dancing Pony, Hawkeye and Laughing Bear at the Holiday parade, Los Gatos, CA



October 2010 – Hawkeye and Laughing Bear at Camp Jones Gulch, La Honda, CA