



Teen campers at DCH Camp consider ways to improve the community

Contributed to *The Dedham Times*

This summer, Livable Dedham is partnering with the Dedham Community House Teen Camp and the Tufts Health Plan Foundation to add a programming component to Camp's community service and civic engagement on age friendly initiatives – making our community a great place to grow up and grow old. Over the course of the month of July, campers will learn about our community (and the world's) aging population and explore solutions to challenges such as transportation, communication, volunteer opportunities and programs/activities for older adults, and our aim is to provide a mutually rewarding intergenerational experience for all involved!

Dedham TV will be documenting the intergenerational programming and the campers will help to finalize a documentary during the last week. Additionally, campers will be sharing their experience in weekly submissions to *The Dedham Times*.

Week One – Walk Audit

"This week at Teen Camp was a blast!" said Ella Modzelewski. "It may have been only a week, but we got so much done."

"We started our week with a visitor, Irene Weider, who taught us about ageism and prepared us for our assignment later in the week: a walk audit of Dedham Square."

"On Wednesday, we split up into groups and evaluated the sidewalks based on their walkability for all ages (including senior citizens, children, parents with strollers, people on crutches or wheelchairs, and even the legally blind). We used canes, wheelchairs and strollers to help understand different challenges people face. Turns out, many sidewalks in Dedham are unsafe for many of these groups of people. The cracks, lack of shading, overgrown plants, and litter that gets stuck in the Charles River and eventually ends up in the ocean."

"It really made us think about how something as simple as walking in town and help be challenging for many people and ways we can help. We came up with great ideas like showing town officials the results of our audit and organizing volunteers to help clean them up. After all our hard work, we celebrated by going to Ron's Ice Cream."

"We spent some of our time this week visiting Canobie Lake Park and Patriots Place. On Friday, we will even hold a Disney-themed carnival for the main camp with many games and crafts. All in all, this week at Teen Camp was spectacular and I can't wait to come back later this summer."

Thanks to Irene Weider of Livable Dedham, Planning Board member Jessica Porter, and Library Trustee Mary Ann Sliwa for leading the walk audits, and to Dedham TV for coming along!



(Photos): Dedham Planning Board member Jessica Porter led a walk audit for Dedham Community House teen campers this week.

Photos contributed to *The Dedham Times*

