

# CAMPS

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Ambassadors Camp is very uplifting and an inspiration for a lot of people," said Elliot Johnson, 18, now in his fourth year with the program. "When I came here for the first time, I didn't really know what to expect, but after coming here for four years I've really learned a lot about myself and understood that being gifted comes with a lot of opportunities. ...

"It really helped develop who I am as a person today," he said.

Fifth-year camper Ryder Wilson, 17, echoed these statements.

"My first year I was super-quiet," he said. "I didn't have (any) friends, I had no one, and now I am outgoing, I talk to everyone. I was elected the South Dakota State Student Council president, and I give everything to this camp for giving me the confidence to run for that position."

Molly Sterlich, 13, said she felt a bit overwhelmed by her first summer at camp last year, "but everyone is really welcoming so you don't feel scared to be away from home."

These are the kinds of experiences Nelson said she wants students to gain from their experience.

"I want the campers to walk out of here more confident that they can be who they are, that they can pursue the things that they are good at, that they will take a risk and try new things, that they will realize that they are not alone and that they will realize that they have some responsibility to help bring up other people around them," she said.

"Bringing up other people" is part of what the Ambassadors of Excellence is about.

Participants arrived Monday, July 16 and will stay through today (Friday). During their first week, the 10th- through 12th-graders took part in a variety of classes and team-building activities, and served as counselors, activity coordinators and mentors for the Governor's Camp, which started Sunday.

They also spent time practicing for the 24th Annual South Dakota Ambassadors Excellence Performance, which took place Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Wayne S. Knudson Theatre.

Weber said the show "is typically centered around a theme, so there is singing and dancing and choreographed songs. There is some theatre,

drama, skits and improvisation."

Governor's Camp participants also take part in a variety of activities, including classes, tours, field trips and projects.

Some of the class topics include videography, computer programming, musical theatre, acting, dance, cake decorating, engineering, physics, forensic science, history, political science, singing, essay writing and environmental science.

"We have a real range. You name it, we pretty much do it," Nelson said. "They get a full range of theatre, art, science, literature, writing and technology. We have people from the university, from professional fields, we have graduate and undergraduate students who teach those classes."

Aside from their wide variety of academic specialties, the classes also give the students an opportunity to push themselves.

"You get outside your comfort zone, you try something new, you follow your passions, you do these kinds of things," Nelson said. "The things that make you unique are the things that you should be pursuing, not just saying, 'I can get an A without trying.'"

Weber said one reason the camps have lasted so long is

varies a lot from school to school. A lot of schools don't have it, and every year we lose more. We lost Aberdeen this year. They had a gifted program for 20-some years, and it's gone now. That just kills us."

But as long as the volunteers are willing to donate their time, some of that void will be filled.

"I'll come back until they tell me not to," Wendt said.

The current campers said they want to return, as well.

"To put it into perspective, it's a place you can call home," Wilson said. "It's a carefree place where you can do anything you want. No one's going to judge you for who you are. If you mess up, people are going to build you right back up. These people are like my family."

For more information, visit <http://www.usd.edu/education/gifted-camp/index.cfm>.

# BOMB

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were evacuated from Coyote Village as a safety precaution.

The next day it was announced that Elan Haba, a 19-year-old sophomore from the Rutgers-Newark campus in Newark, NJ, was arrested later that night after he was connected with the USD student by officials.

Haba was arrested on charges that include theft, and possession of fireworks and a prohibited weapon. He was released on a summons by Feb. 8.

The name of the USD student has not been released to the public.

Gertsema said prosecution still "depends on what happens from here."

"If we decide we've got enough evidence to charge it, and of course the grand jury would have to hear it," she said. "There are just a lot of steps before it ever gets to court."

The wait is due in part of the difficulty of coordinating the schedules of Gertsema and the DCI, but it isn't unheard of.

"Some cases we charge up to the second the come in, and others we don't," Gertsema said. "It's still hanging."

The statute of limitations does not run out yet "for several years," she added.

The main investigation is being conducted by the DCI.

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