The Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville is a summer camping facility dedicated to serving children from the state of Texas who have physical disabilities and diabetes. The programs which are available at the camp are designed to help campers learn to make social adjustments, become more self-confident, and develop a positive self-image. The Lions Camp is accredited by the American Camping Association and licensed by the Texas Department of Health.

WHO MAY ATTEND
Children who have physical disabilities, including vision and hearing impairments, and who are between the ages of seven and 16 are eligible to attend the camp. Some of the qualifying disabilities include absence or amputation of limbs, albinism, arthritis, asthma, blindness or visual impairments, birth defects, burns, cancer, cerebral palsy, progressive muscular atrophy, cystic fibrosis, deafness or hearing impairments (hearing loss of 60 db or more), dwarfism, epilepsy, Erb's Palsy, heart condition, hydrocephalus, Legg Perthes, Lupus, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, phocomelia, polio, rickets, scoliosis, sickle cell anemia, speech impairment, spina bifida, spinal cord injury causing paralysis, partial paralysis or muscle impairment.

A special, educational camp is also offered for children between the ages of eight and 15 who have type II diabetes and who are insulin dependent.

HISTORY
In response to the disabling polio epidemic that swept the country over four decades ago, the Lions of Texas conceived and constructed the Texas Lions Camp. With the approval of its charter in April 1949, the camp enjoyed a fruitful period of building and planning at its 504 acre site in Kerrville. On Sunday, June 8, 1953, the camp was formally dedicated "to the perpetual use and enjoyment of the handicapped children of Texas." That summer, 236 children were introduced to the joy of summer camp.

Over the years, the Texas Lions Camp has grown to provide camping to over 1000 children every summer. The camp offers six one week camping sessions for children with physical disabilities and a 3 day day camp. Two sessions are offered for children with diabetes. The camp supports over thirty buildings to facilitate the administration of its programs. Since opening in 1953, the Texas Lions Camp has been instrumental in the maturation and social development of over 50,000 children with physical disabilities.
GOALS
The goal of the Texas Lions Camp is to create an atmosphere wherein campers will learn the "can do" philosophy and be allowed to achieve maximum personal growth and self-esteem. At camp, children who have physical disabilities and diabetes can learn to become more independent, productive adults.

PROGRAMS
The Texas Lions Camp offers exciting camp programs in an encouraging atmosphere that is designed to accommodate campers who have special medical needs. While at camp, children challenge themselves as they participate in activities such as arts and crafts, nature studies, field sports, horseback riding, swimming, and overnight camping. All of the activities are provided in a beautiful outdoor setting spanning hundreds of acres of hills and woodlands in the Texas Hill Country.

In 1971, the Texas Lions Camp began offering a program specially for children who have diabetes. This special camping session is a medical education program that focuses on teaching campers to care for their special health needs. A medical team of physicians, nurses, and dieticians joins the camp staff to help children learn to control their diabetes by eating properly, monitoring their own blood sugar, and giving their own insulin injections. Parents are also offered a special day of instruction to update them on the latest information regarding diabetes management.

SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDING
The Texas Lions League for Crippled Children is a nonprofit organization recognized under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, and it is entirely supported by the efforts of Texas Lions and other caring individuals throughout the state. The facility in Kerrville has served as a worldwide model and is one of the largest summer recreational programs in the United States that is available to children with disabilities.

For more information, contact your local Lions Club, or call the offices of the Texas Lions Camp at (830) 896-8500. Eligible children attend the summer camp at no cost to themselves or their families.