

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Children who are blind enjoy summer fun, challenge limits at OWL Camp

Campers learn to rock climb from native Oklahoman and professional rock climber who is blind

Oklahoma City, OK (June 20, 2019) – Summer is one of the best times to be a kid, and NewView Oklahoma believes every child deserves a summer camp experience. That’s why NewView hosts OWL (Oklahomans Without Limits) Camp each year, a free summer camp for children who are blind and visually impaired. This year, children ages 8 to 15 will stay at the University of Central Oklahoma from June 24-28.

OWL Camp activities are intentionally designed to encourage collaboration, improve self-esteem, and challenge societal and self-imposed limits. Campers and their sighted buddies will participate in outdoor activities including rock-climbing, ice skating, indoor skydiving, visiting Frontier City and more.

“OWL Camp is one of the most special times of the year for us,” said NewView programs director Andrea Hamen. “Kids learn to push their limits and try things they may have never done before. And our campers and buddies form bonds at camp that will last a lifetime.”

Each OWL camper is paired with a sighted buddy, and the pair does everything together for the entire week. While it’s helpful to have a sighted person available to guide visually impaired campers, pairing buddies with campers also serves to increase understanding and empathy.

“By the end of OWL Camp, our buddies understand that people with vision loss can do anything a sighted person can do,” said NewView President and CEO Lauren Branch. “That’s the goal of camp—to challenge self-imposed limits for campers who are blind or visually impaired and to challenge the sighted community’s preconceptions about what a person with visual impairment can and can’t do.”

One way OWL Campers will push their limits at camp is by rock climbing at Threshold Climbing Gym. NewView is excited to partner with Threshold as well as with Justin Salas, a native Oklahoman and professional rock climber who is blind. Justin has won two gold medals at the USA Climbing Adaptive National championships and has earned a silver medal in an

International Federation of Sport Climbing Paraclimbing World Cup. Justin and the Threshold team will help OWL campers rock climb safely.

“We are extremely excited to be a part of this year’s OWL Camp with NewView,” said Sierra and John Tarkington, owners of Threshold Climbing Gym. “As a community-minded and local business, we are constantly looking for new ways to better serve Oklahoma City and work hard to make climbing accessible to everyone. We believe that anyone can climb, and that through climbing kids can gain confidence and learn camaraderie and other valuable life skills.”

To learn more about OWL Camp and other programs at NewView, visit nvoklahoma.org/community-programs, and to learn more about Threshold Climbing, Fitness + Yoga, visit thresholdclimbinggym.com.

****MEDIA ALERT: CAMPERS WHO ARE BLIND ROCK CLIMB WITH JUSTIN SALAS****

On Wednesday, June 26th, campers who are blind will rock climb at Threshold Climbing Gym at 6024 Westlake Memorial Pkwy from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. with professional rock climber Justin Salas. Media is invited to attend.

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About NewView Oklahoma:

NewView Oklahoma is a private, not-for-profit organization founded in 1949 with a mission to empower people who are blind and visually impaired to achieve their maximum level of independence through employment, low vision rehabilitation, and community outreach. NewView Oklahoma is the leading employer of the blind and visually impaired individuals in Oklahoma and offers the only comprehensive Low Vision clinics in the state. Visit online at www.newviewoklahoma.org or follow on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#).

About Threshold Climbing Fitness + Yoga:

Threshold Climbing, Fitness + Yoga is Oklahoma City’s world-class indoor climbing facility. Founded in 2017, they are dedicated to promoting community, wellness and fitness through rock climbing, one of the world’s fastest growing and most rewarding sports. Learn more about Threshold and what they offer at www.thresholdclimbinggym.com or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.