

Villagers, Grandchildren Compete With R/C Cars

About 15 grandchildren attended the Camp Villages R/C race event at La Hacienda Recreation Center

The Villages Daily Sun
Monday, July 29, 2019
By Summer Jarro

Hailey Schittone's favorite part of the R/C Model Race Cars event was winning.

The 15-year-old New Jersey resident was one of about 15 grandchildren who put their competitive skills to the test at the Camp Villages event Thursday at La Hacienda Recreation Center while they raced remote-controlled cars on an indoor course. First-, second- and third-place winners were chosen at the end of the championship race.

Hailey won first place during her first race, followed by second and first place again in her next races. Camp Villages provides intergenerational fun for Villagers and their families. The program, sponsored by The Villages Recreation and Parks Department, hosts about 4,000 children, ranging in age from 3 to 16, each summer, said Lisa Parkyn, lifestyle events manager and Camp Villages coordinator for the recreation department. The 19th Camp Villages summer program runs through Aug. 9.

Thursday's event was put on by The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club.

Club members assisted the grandchildren with their cars and made the atmosphere feel like attendees were participating in a real NASCAR event. One club member acted as a sports announcer and provided commentary during the races, while another waved a checkered flag whenever someone finished a race.

The club has been hosting the Camp Villages event for the past several years.

They enjoy sharing their interest in model cars with the younger generation, said club member Bob Woodsford.

"I think (the event is) excellent for them," the Village of Springdale resident said. "It gets them in an atmosphere with other kids their own age, and it's something that the grandparents can get to do with the kids in The Villages. Camp Villages really is a good thing."

During the event, attendees were split into groups of two or three and raced two laps around the course. For some, controlling the cars came easy. For others, there was a lot of crashing or wheelies before they got to the finish line.

Kaley Foster, who attended with her grandmother, Village of Virginia Trace resident Margaret Morgan, started off slow but got better each heat.

At first, she was spinning out.

"I was going on full by mistake," the Grand Island resident said.

Once she corrected the mistake, she went from third place in her first race to first place in her last.

As the club members tallied up the scores to choose three racers for the championship race, some grandparents raced against one another.



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Camp Villages volunteer, Lou Palmer, of the Village of Summerhill, helps Emma Elsaid-Harris, steer her remote-controlled car during a Camp Villages racing event at La Hacienda Recreation Center.

Hailey volunteered her grandmother, Village of Santiago resident Gail Toscano. Toscano finished second.

“The only way I got through the race was with (Hailey) helping,” Toscano said.

In the championship race, Leland Scott, of Kentucky; Holden Yakola, of North Carolina; and Rand Grindol, of Kansas, battled it out. Ten-year-old Leland finished third; Rand, 11, finished second and Holden, 12, took first place.

Holden felt good after the race.

“It was fun,” he said. “I would come back next year.”