

Cadette Troop 1381 went to an overnight lock-in (9pm-6am) at **Peak Experiences** (<http://peakexperiences.com/>) in Midlothian (just outside of Richmond) on February 15, 2014. This event was sponsored by ODAT (OutDoor Adventure Team) and advertised in the GO! Magazine. It was originally advertised for cadette through ambassadors, but they must have opened it to Juniors as there were some younger girls (ages 9-11) there.

Pros: Girls LOVE to rock climb (so do adults). Girls will develop confidence through this event as they learn how to not only climb, but be the person responsible for the climber (belaying). The indoor climate controlled gym is very nice with plenty of rocking climbing opportunities at various levels which means plenty of time to rock climb (if you can stay up long enough). There was plenty of food for the girls to have throughout the night, and at breakfast; there were good healthy choices with fresh fruit. ODAT volunteers made sure the Girl Scouts cleaned up and left things tidy before leaving the facility.

Cons: The advertisement indicated there would be an optional belay class for girls 13 and up, but in our case it was required due to the low number of adult volunteers from ODAT to help belay. I expected more staff members on hand to help belay the girls that wanted to climb, but there were only 2 paid staff members and 4 volunteers from ODAT. The belay class took up the first 2 hours of the lock-in which means the girls didn't get a chance to even start climbing until after 11pm. The two staff members ran the class while the younger girls got started on climbing with the ODAT volunteers; there were probably 35 people learning how to belay from just 2 staff members which is the reason it took so long.

Pro/Con: During the belay instruction, girls form groups of 3 (one climber, one belaying, and one back up belaying). If you don't have a multiple of three then girls will be put with someone they don't know. This can be both good or bad depending on the personality of your girls. The facility was open to the public until 10:30; this was good because we got to see some awesome rock climbing, but bad because I didn't like the idea of outside people being present.

Helpful Hint: I would highly recommend bring an extra adult in each car and paying for them to stay at a nearby hotel for the night. You will NOT get to sleep during this event due to the fact sleeping arrangements are in a loft area open to the rock climbing area and very loud; they do warn you of this in advance. The extra adults could be the people that drive you home in the morning when you're completely sleep deprived.

samandwes@cox.net