

# Six to Watch in 2006

Meet six Hometown Heroes who are making a difference in our community and throughout the world.

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*by* JENNY COHRS

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## STEVE WAMPLER

*Summer Camps for Disabled Kids*

**S**teve Wampler has cerebral palsy. He also has a loving wife, two super kids and a passion to let all

kids know that a physical disability does not need to hold them back from pursuing their dreams. He figured that



out years ago, when, as a teenager, he attended an Easter Seals wilderness camp north of Lake Tahoe. Even though he was confined to a wheelchair and had a full-time camp aide at his side, Wampler learned that he could indeed do all the things fully able-bodied children do at camp — learn survival activities, make art crafts, go swimming, perform skits and dances, and join other campers in sing-a-longs. It was a life-changing experience.

Easter Seals closed the facility in 1992, but Wampler still found ways to visit the campground over the years. And gradually a dream and vision emerged: he would establish an organization and re-open the facility.

Camp Wamp has been operating for two summers, with Wampler serving as its executive director and chief fund-

raiser. His grant requests have pulled in major funding from the Christopher Reeves Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of San Diego, Stickle Christian Foundation and Century Club of Los Angeles.

And his vision has grown beyond the Northern California campground. Now Camp Wamp funds camperships to other sites hosting disabled kids, teens and young adults throughout the state, including Camp Able on the Silver Strand in Coronado.

Wampler is now striving to establish an endowment of \$20 million that will see the camp live in perpetuity. “That’s my 10-year goal,” he says. “And I’d like to see us host 500 campers by 2010.

Maybe if I can get on Oprah’s show, it can happen sooner...”

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