

# 2014 Camp Dreamcatcher Camp Week Report

## The Campers:

- 35% of the youth served in 2014 by Camp Dreamcatcher are HIV/AIDS infected and the remaining children have an HIV/AIDS infected family member or have lost a family member to AIDS.
- 82% are African American, 11% Latino, 6% Caucasian and 1% Asian American.
- 96% of the children are low-income and most do not have access to free therapeutic and educational programs in their own communities.
- 68 females and 55 males participated in the camp session.
- We adapt and expand our programs to meet the changing needs of HIV/AIDS impacted youth, who face complicated challenges beyond the issue of HIV/AIDS. The psychosocial information collected in evaluations and camper applications indicates that 70% of the campers have experienced some form of abuse, 25% have been diagnosed with a mental illness and 50% have lost a family member. Our free therapeutic and educational programs offer a safe place for the campers to talk openly about their problems and receive support from licensed or certified professionals.

The 2014 camp session was a success and all of the goals and objectives were achieved. This past August 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 124 HIV/AIDS impacted youth attended the camp session.

## Program Goals:

- To improve the physical and emotional health of the children. The strategies offered to achieve this goal include a variety of therapeutic modalities provided during the week and at weekend retreats. For example, 86 therapeutic sessions (psychotherapy, music therapy, art therapy, visits with “therapeutic dogs”, yoga, acupuncture, mindfulness meditation and massage) were offered during the camp week.
- To offer educational sessions that explore issues, problems and concerns common amongst HIV/AIDS infected and/or affected youth. During the camp session, 46 age appropriate educational sessions were offered on depression, HIV/AIDS, grief, body changes, body image, sexuality, abuse, addiction, conflict resolution, anger management, puberty education, and domestic violence prevention and awareness. Participants in the “Leaders in Training” program visited Immaculata University during the camp session and learned about the college admission process. They also participated in horseback riding at Timberlake Horse Haven and really connected with the rescued race horses.
- To increase HIV medication adherence. One of the most challenging issues we face is the low rate of compliance with HIV medications, which research has indicated to be as low as 29-41%. Group sessions to explore this issue are offered during the camp session and weekend retreats.

- To increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS and to explore attitudes and values regarding this issue. The strategies offered to achieve this goal include 3 ½ days of HIV/AIDS & Diversity Training provided to our counselors. Our full-time counselors and health center volunteers must complete a yearly criminal background and sex offender search.
- To give the children and adolescents attending our programs the chance to feel free from the secret of HIV/AIDS and have fun – just like any other kids! During the camp week, we offered 130 recreational programs. These included swimming, basketball, lacrosse, arts/crafts, fishing, cooking, moon bounces, concerts, dodge ball, go-kart racing, Zumba classes, visits from a local pet store and our annual dance and talent show. New programs included a magic show and visits from the Hedgerow Theatre and Quest Therapeutic Services.

## **2014 Camp Week Statistics: 124 Campers**

- **73** campers were 5-13 years of age
- **22** campers attended our teen camp program for 14 & 15 year-olds
- We welcomed **13** participants to the “Leaders in Training” program for 16 & 17 year-olds.
- A total of **3** Junior Counselors moved into leadership roles with the younger campers during the session.
- A total of **13** young adults moved into the role of counselors at camp after moving up through the years from campers to CIT’s or LIT’s and transitioning into the role of counselors.
- **8** of the HIV/AIDS impacted youth served during the camp session were from Chester County and **10** students from Chester County High Schools compiled community service hours by volunteering during the camp session or in the office for pre-camp preparation.
- **37** of the children were “new” campers

A total of **255** counselors, medical personnel, professionals and community members volunteered during the camp week. The following is a breakdown of the volunteer activities:

- **30 health center volunteers (nurse practitioners, physicians, EMT’s, pharmacists, nurses)**
- **65 cabin counselors**
- **43 professional volunteers (massage therapists, music therapist, acupuncturist, mindfulness meditation facilitators, social workers, psychotherapists, musicians and program facilitators from non-profit organizations & schools)**
- **72 recreational volunteers (lacrosse, basketball, fishing, art/crafts, etc.)**
- **45 general volunteers (registration, organizing and moving supplies in and out of camp)**
- **THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS SINCE INCEPTION IS 170,877**