



## 2019 THERAPEUTIC AND EDUCATIONAL CAMP SESSION REPORT

The 24<sup>th</sup> Therapeutic and Educational Camp Session was held August 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The program served 122 HIV/AIDS impacted youth between the ages of 5-17, and 13 young adults, between the ages of 18-25. 92% of the campers were African American, 3% Caucasian, 1% Asian American and 4% Biracial. 98% of the campers come from low-income households and only 13% have access to therapeutic and educational programs in their own communities. The campers came from PA, DE, NJ, NY, VA and MD. 270 counselors, medical personnel, professionals and community members volunteered for the session. There were 60 male and 75 female campers.

The following Program Goals were achieved during the camp session:

- To improve the physical and emotional health of the children. **112 therapeutic sessions** (psychotherapy, music therapy, art therapy, sessions with therapeutic dogs, yoga, mindfulness therapy, wilderness-based therapy and massage) were offered during the camp week. The wilderness-based therapy program for the 15 year-olds increased from one night to two nights this summer.
- To offer educational sessions that explore issues, problems and concerns common amongst HIV/AIDS infected and/or affected youth. **50 age appropriate educational sessions** were provided on depression, HIV/AIDS, grief, eating disorders, body image, abuse, addiction, HIV medication compliance, conflict resolution, anger management, puberty education and suicide prevention. A new Life Skills Track was implemented in the Leaders in Training Program, which included sessions on applying to college, resume writing, budgeting and teambuilding. The LIT's also spent time assisting the counselors with the youngest campers.
- 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 provided **160 recreational programs**. These included arts & crafts, archery, karate, swimming, fishing, hiking, go-kart racing, movies on a giant blow up screen, the Hedgerow Theatre, miniature golf, dodge ball, basketball, horseback riding, a camp wide carnival, Dorrie's Store, dancing, cooking, a visit from the Brandywine Zoo and the annual John Flynn Concert!

### 2019 Camper Evaluation Results:

- Did you feel accepted at camp? Yes 100%
- Did you have fun at camp? Yes 100%
- Do you feel safe at camp? Yes 100%
- Did you feel supported by the staff and volunteers at camp? Yes 100%
- Did you feel there was someone to talk to at camp? Yes 99%
- Is it important to have a place like Camp Dreamcatcher? Yes 99%
- Did you feel like you could ask for help at camp? Yes 96%
- Were you able to talk openly about HIV/AIDS at camp? Yes 96%
- Did you make new friends at camp? Yes 95%

### **Why is it important to have a place like Camp Dreamcatcher?**

*"Because it is my second home."*

*"So people with HIV/AIDS can talk to other people with the disease."*

*"Because people need love."*

*"It's a good place to express feelings I usually can't."*

### **How were the staff and volunteers supportive of you?**

*"They picked up the broken pieces of me."*

*"They support us emotionally and physically when we are going through issues or anything."*

*"They listen to me and they are always by my side."*

*"They love me."*

### **What makes Camp Dreamcatcher special to you?**

*"This is where my family is. This camp is perfect."*

*"I can talk about my illness to friends without them saying 'ewww.'"*

*"We care for each other like a big family would."*

### **What other ways did you learn to deal with problems/emotions?**

*"Change my negative thoughts and help my spirit to be positive."*

*"If I am angry, cool it down."*

*"Don't use violence."*

*"Take a deep breath."*

### **Would you recommend Camp Dreamcatcher to a friend?**

*"Yes, because it will teach them about HIV/AIDS."*

*"Yes, because it is a beautiful community of open minded and accepting people."*

### **If you could share one part of Camp Dreamcatcher with the world, what would it be?**

*"That it is a safe place."*

*"The love we have here."*

*"That you can love people with HIV/AIDS."*

*"That it is a wonderful, lovely and outstanding camp."*

*"Camp Dreamcatcher is the best place to be."*