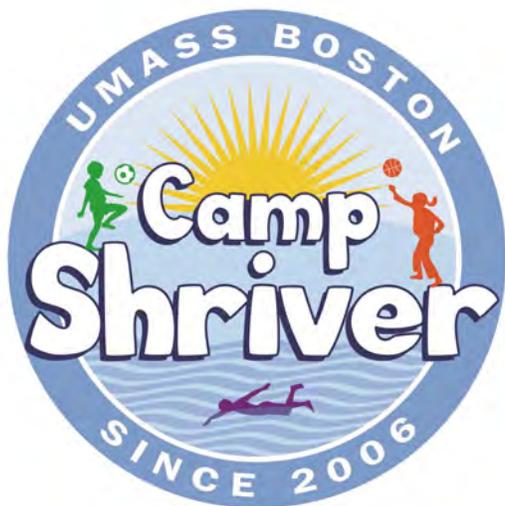


# CAMP SHRIVER AT UMASS BOSTON



2022  
IMPACT  
REPORT



# CAMP SHRIVER

... SO ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN AND PLAY –AS EQUALS



## Saturday Camp

Camp Shriver partners with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester to hold our extended camp programming during the school year. Currently on hiatus due to the pandemic, Saturday Camp will return soon.

A national model for inclusive recreational programming, Camp Shriver's mission is to improve the social, emotional, and physical well-being of children of all abilities, by providing an inclusive community of friendship and fun. At Camp Shriver, children with and without disabilities build social skills and positive social relationships by learning and playing together.

Camp Shriver at the University of Massachusetts Boston is unique, designed to serve an equal number of children with and without disabilities. Since 2006, Camp Shriver has welcomed over 1,600 children, half with and half without intellectual and developmental disabilities, ages 8-12, from low income families in the Boston area to a free inclusive recreational camp. Since 2021, Camp Shriver partnered with UMass Amherst to host our camp at the UMass Amherst Mt. Ida campus.

Camp Shriver's model of inclusion is based on over 40 years of research at the Center for Social Development and Education at UMass Boston and the research-based best practices and strategies for inclusion developed for Camp Shriver are disseminated widely. Camp Shriver strives to make sure that all organizations can better include children with disabilities.



# CAMP SHRIVER IS A WINNER OF THE 2022 ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON SPORTS AWARD!

Camp Shriver is privileged to stand with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in highlighting the importance of inclusion of children and youth of all abilities in sports and recreational activities.

Since 2015, the Robert Wood Johnson Sports Award has recognized professional sports teams, athletes, coaches and community-based organizations that use sports to catalyze and sustain changes to make communities healthier places to live, learn, work, and play. RWJF lifts up organizations that bring a deep understanding of community needs and acknowledge the power of sports to connect us and make us healthier, no matter our race, gender, abilities or economic background.

“We celebrate and honor all of the organizations that have been winners and finalists over the history of our award program recognizing the power of sports to improve health equity,” said Dr. Richard Besser, president and CEO of RWJF. “We take pride in the tremendous growth, accomplishments, and contributions to health made through sports.”

With this award, Camp Shriver will continue to demonstrate the importance of inclusion, both through expanding our camp and disseminating inclusive practices nationally.



# THE CSDE MODEL OF INCLUSION

Founded in 1976, the Center for Social Development and Education (CSDE) at the University of Massachusetts Boston is a multidisciplinary research institute whose mission is to promote the social development and overall quality of life for children with disabilities. The principles of the CSDE model of inclusion—based on 40 years of CSDE research and evaluation—are found in Camp Shriver programming:

**Commitment to Inclusion:** To demonstrate a commitment to serving children with and without disabilities in an inclusive environment, 50% of campers have an intellectual or developmental disability.

**Commitment to Full Participation:** To promote participation, all activities are planned in advance to support the camper with the highest needs and developed following the principles of universal design to promote equity. By planning for the child most in need, campers of all abilities can engage in same activities together. Differentiated instruction is incorporated so that choices are offered between variations of activities (e.g., which line to shoot free throws from) and between different equipment (e.g., whether to pass a basketball, a playground ball or balloon) that benefit all campers, whether that camper has a disability or is simply trying an activity for the first time.

**Commitment to Social-Emotional Development:** To foster social connections and meaningful social interactions between campers, staff promote a culture of social responsibility by modeling and encouraging positive social behaviors among campers during structured and unstructured time. Social skills such as cheering for your teammates, inviting others to play with you and joining in groups that are already playing are the building blocks of positive peer relationships and friendships. Every week, campers work toward team goals that encourage campers to practice relationship-building, responsible decision-making, social awareness and self-management.

**Commitment to Staff Support:** To ensure that staff provide positive behavior supports that foster social skills for all campers with and without disabilities, staff attend two full days of training provided by experts from the CSDE and Boston Public Schools on understanding and teaching fundamental best practices for successful inclusion. In a low 4:1 camper-to-staff ratio, staff have defined roles: an inclusion coordinator supports all camper and staff needs; coaches organize and lead specific areas (e.g., gym, field, arts-and-crafts); and counselors are assigned to a team of campers to support campers through the day, modeling participation and positive social skills by engaging enthusiastically in every activity. Coaches and counselors focus on each child's individual skills and abilities (not a specific disability label).

**Commitment to Evaluation:** To continuously improve inclusive programming so that its positive benefits can be maximized each year, Camp Shriver conducts a rigorous, annual evaluation, involving parent surveys, counselor observations of campers and one-on-one interviews with campers.

With commitment to inclusion, full participation, social-emotional development, staff support and evaluation, Camp Shriver is creating inclusive communities where all children have equal opportunities to learn and play.



## A CAMPER STORY – NEW LEADERS

As camp began, two campers sat at opposite ends of their team table. Yoseph was a 12-year-old boy with a disability, a returning Camp Shriver camper, who enjoyed being at camp with his counselors, but had trouble making friends and was never one for engaging in physical activities if he could avoid it. After several summers with Camp Shriver, Yoseph knew how to follow the rules, but never stepped outside his comfort zone to help another camper or lead his group.

At the other end of the table was Nevin, a 12-year-old boy with a disability who was new to Camp Shriver, and felt a little lost and shy. The first few days were rough for Nevin; he wasn't sure where he should go and what he should do. Like many children with a disability, Nevin was easily upset by what is different and was having a hard time at camp.

Yoseph saw how Nevin sat alone and reached out. Yoseph started sitting next to Nevin and introduced Nevin to Camp Shriver's Director. He took Nevin through the breakfast and lunch line and played with him during free time. After so many summers enjoying himself at Camp Shriver, Yoseph was discovering the true mission of Camp Shriver – he had developed the social skills necessary to be a good teammate, to help other campers and to make a friend. This was Yoseph's last summer at Camp Shriver and he made sure it was a special one.

Thanks to his new friend Yoseph, Nevin became a completely different camper. When navigating around camp and understanding where he should be was no longer an issue, Nevin began to enjoy the physical activities of camp—outside field games of bocce, bean bag toss and football were his favorites. More than just joining his peers in games, Nevin repaid Yoseph's kindness by asking his new friend Yoseph to play with him.

And Yoseph surprised everyone, joined his friend Nevin and played outside! Yoseph was more physically active than he had ever been at camp before, taking positive risks, playing outside and trying new games—all because his new friend, Nevin, invited him.

At Camp Shriver, Yoseph learned the social skills that he needed to make a friend and Nevin responded in kind by inviting Yoseph to physical activities he would normally pass on. **Yoseph and Nevin both grew from their friendship and changed each other. Together, these two new friends had the best summer!**



# EVALUATION OF CAMP SHRIVER

## ... THE IMPACT OF CAMP SHRIVER ON CAMPERS

The evaluation is conducted each year by research staff from the Center for Social Development and Education to demonstrate that Camp Shriver continues to improve and to accomplish our mission: to improve the social, emotional, and physical well-being of children of all abilities, by providing an inclusive community of friendship and fun. Assessment instruments and methods are drawn from the scientific literature and adapted to measure camper social-emotional skills, social relationships, and belongingness through individual camper surveys, interviews and staff ratings. Parents are also surveyed before camp about their goals for their child. In addition, group and individual observations of campers are conducted during free play time to capture social engagement during camp activities. From the 2022 evaluation, we learn:

### **Camp Shriver's model creates a community where campers feel they belong.**

To create an environment where campers feel included and supported, Camp Shriver's model welcomes a population of campers where 50% of campers have an intellectual or developmental disability in low 4:1 camper-to-staff ratio, and where staff are trained to focus on each child's skills and abilities—not on a particular label. As expected, given the demands of school and that half of our campers have disabilities that can make school especially challenging, camp is a place where campers have fun and feel a great sense of belonging. Almost all (81%) of campers want to go to camp most or all of the time (compared to 48% of campers wanting to go to school most or all of the time) and 93% of campers find camp fun. Only half of campers find school fun.

Importantly, campers also feel connected to their peers at camp: 77% of campers report that they get along well with their teammates and 83% of campers report they are good friends with their teammates. These results are confirmed when our researchers observed children socially interacting in their teams at the end of camp and found that 89% of campers were engaging in positive interactive play.

### **Camp Shriver improves the social-emotional skills of campers.**

In this supportive environment where campers feel they belong, Camp Shriver staff promotes social-emotional learning by modelling and encouraging positive social behaviors among campers during structured and unstructured time. In this manner, Camp Shriver helps campers to improve the relationship, social awareness and self-awareness skills that campers report are difficult at the beginning of camp .



## ... THE IMPACT OF CAMP SHRIVER ON CAMPERS (CONTINUED)

For example, of the campers who say it is hard making friends with other campers at the beginning of camp, 75% say it is easy making friends by the end of camp. Of the campers who struggle at the beginning of camp to ask other campers to play with them or to join a group of campers already playing, 46% of campers improve to find these skills easy by the end. These relationship skills are important to build a foundation for inclusion.

Similarly, 54% of campers who have trouble with social awareness and self-awareness skills at the beginning of camp improve to understand how other campers are feeling, learn ways to calm themselves down, and to keep trying, even when they feel upset.

### **Camp Shriver fosters positive peer relationships and friendships.**

Most fundamental to Camp Shriver's mission is that Camp Shriver brings together children with and without disabilities to promote positive peer relationships and friendships. For children with disabilities, especially, the fostering and development of peer relationships is important, as children with disabilities often lack opportunities to develop positive peer relationships. Camp Shriver clearly achieves this aspect of our mission: 92% of campers name at least one other camper as a friend and 91% of campers are named as a friend by another camper. 77% of campers have a mutual relationship (when a pair of campers nominate each other). Additionally, as reflects the diversity of our camp population, 73% of friendships are between campers of different races.

Importantly, most campers without a disability (78%) name a peer with a disability as a friend. This is particularly notable, given that even in inclusive extracurricular programming (such as Special Olympics Unified Champion School programs), only 41% of middle school students report becoming friends with a student with a disability through participating in the program (Jacobs, et al., 2018).

### **Camp Shriver promotes motor skill development.**

Camp Shriver provides opportunities for motor skill development by increasing camper participation in all activities; this is accomplished by planning for the child most in need and making inclusive accommodations



## ... THE IMPACT OF CAMP SHRIVER ON CAMPERS (CONTINUED)

to all activities to promote equal participation. This is important as 47% of parents report that their children never or rarely play on sports teams like soccer or hockey and 40% that their children never or rarely take lessons like swimming or skating lessons.

Overall, campers participate in over 78 hours of motor skill development on the field, in the tennis courts, in the gym and in the arts and crafts room, playing a variety of activities such as archery, golf, tennis, tag games, kickball, basketball, soccer and more. Campers say that are “always so active,” and “learn to do a lot of stuff, like frisbee and kickball, and get better every day.” Campers like “having options” and “how there are different activities every week.” Campers see that there is “always a fun game and everyone plays together” and summarize Camp Shriver well: “all we do is fun games and exercises... basically what every kid wants!”

**In Conclusion, when asked what makes Camp Shriver fun, one of our campers said, “the inclusiveness—not a lot of camps these days put groups together like this with kids with autism and special needs.”** In fact, over 50% of parents report that as a result of Camp Shriver, their children are more likely to play sports, be involved in school activities, have more patience and have developed leadership skills. Over two-thirds of parents report that their children are more self-confident as a result of Camp Shriver.

Camp Shriver has had demonstrated success in meeting its objectives since its inception in 2006 and the evaluation results are used to continuously revise and improve programming to maximize its positive effects. The yearly evaluation results and documented successes have been published in books (the forthcoming *Best Practices for Inclusive Camps* from Sagamore-Venture Publishing), encyclopedias (*Encyclopedia of Intellectual and Developmental Disorders*, 2018), scientific journals (*Social Inclusion of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in a Recreational Setting. Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 47(2), 97-107), psychology magazines (*Monitor on Psychology*, July 2008), camping magazines (*American Camping Association*, 2007) and in national media outlets such as *It’s Only a Game* on NPR.



# SERVING CHILDREN OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

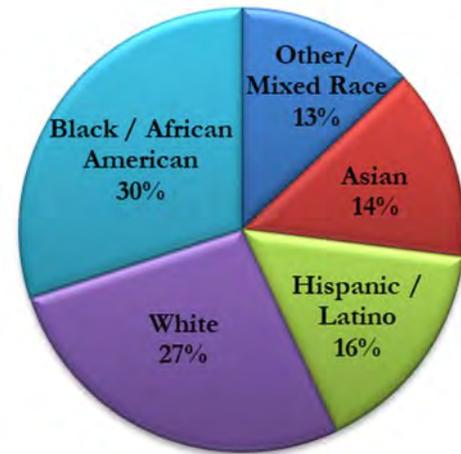
At Camp Shriver, we remain committed to welcoming children, ages 8-12, boys and girls, with and without disabilities, from low-income urban neighborhoods and ensuring diversity among our campers. In 2022, 110 campers with and without disabilities were served from Boston (80%) and Quincy (20%). The majority of campers lived in the neighborhoods surrounding UMass Boston, including Dorchester, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Roslindale, South Boston and Roxbury.

**The ethnicity of our campers is representative of the communities in which they live: 73% of campers are from minority groups.** We are committed to maintaining this level of diversity in our camp population: 30% of campers self-reported as Black/African American, 27% as White, 16% as Hispanic/Latino, 14% as Asian, and 13% as mixed race or other.

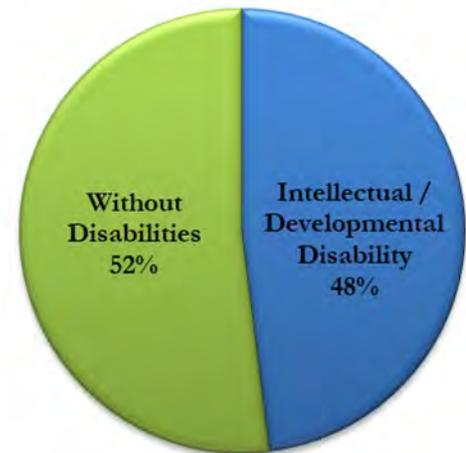
**At the heart of Camp Shriver's unique inclusive experience, an equal number of children with and without disabilities are brought together to engage in the same recreational activities alongside one another.** Our campers with disabilities are children with intellectual disabilities, on the autism spectrum, and or who have other developmental delays. In 2022, 48% were children with a disability.

**Additionally, Camp Shriver partners with schools and community groups to identify children from low-income neighborhoods** who might be interested in and benefit from a free summer sports camp. In 2022, 69% of Camp Shriver families were very low to low income, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

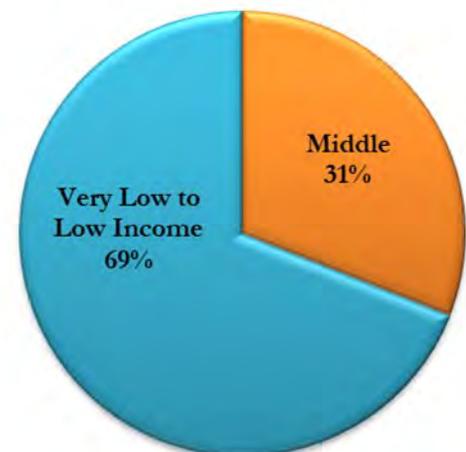
### Camper Ethnicity



### Camper Disability Status



### Family Income Levels



## CAMPER STORY—A FAMILY IN NEED

“Mom, can I come home?”

“Mom, I am not having any fun.”

“Mom, please. Come get me.”

Robin, an 11-year-old with autism and anxiety, was struggling during the first week at camp. They were texting home constantly, but mom wasn't worried. Robin's mom had met with the Camp Shriver staff months before camp began to talk about Robin's anxiety and their difficulty socializing. Robin and their brother, Theo, a 9-year-old boy without a disability, had a very difficult year—their father died suddenly, while their mother was in treatment for cancer. Both siblings were struggling emotionally.

Camp Shriver's Inclusion Coordinator worked with mom to plan for what Robin's triggers might be and how to help Theo let go of the weight of all that was happening. Robin and Theo were intentionally placed with seasoned counselors, who were prepped in advance on their needs. Robin's counselors were taught what signs of stress and distress to look for and locations where Robin could take quiet breaks, as needed. Theo's counselors were to be more vigilant with him to be sure he was having fun and not worrying about Robin. Counselors made sure to stay close to Robin, proactively checking in with them and pairing Robin with other campers that had similar interests—all best practices at Camp Shriver.

When Robin was texting home, the Inclusion Coordinator was texting mom too: pictures of Robin engaged in activities and smiling! Robin's mother knew she could trust Camp Shriver to give Robin what they needed to make the day a success and had Robin stay for the rest of the day.

As the days went by, fewer and fewer texts were sent to mom. The Inclusion Coordinator continued to check in weekly with reports as Robin played tag, created art, tried archery and walked to and from activities laughing and joking with the friends they made.

Theo, meanwhile, had an amazing summer – knowing Robin had the support they needed and that his mom was receiving the care she needed, he was able to let go and just be a kid for the summer, jumping right into activities and making friends with pretty much everyone.

Camp Shriver provided Robin and Theo a safe, inclusive environment to be themselves and the support to have fun and make friends. On the last day of camp, all of the work to prep Camp Shriver for Robin and Theo paid off when the Inclusion Coordinator sent one last picture to mom... of Robin, smiling from ear to ear as they received their camper award for “Most Creative” with their friends cheering! Theo, naturally, received the “Best Friend” award.

Robin continues to pester their mother about Camp Shriver:

“Mom, I put Camp Shriver on the calendar for July.”

“Mom, I am talking with my camp friends, I will be right down.”

“Mom, don't plan anything but Camp Shriver for July!”



CAMP SHRIVER...  
*IN THE CAMPERS' OWN WORDS*

It's very including and everyone gets to do every thing!



The activities are fun!

My friends are kind to me.

We are always so active!



Camp is fun games and exercise!

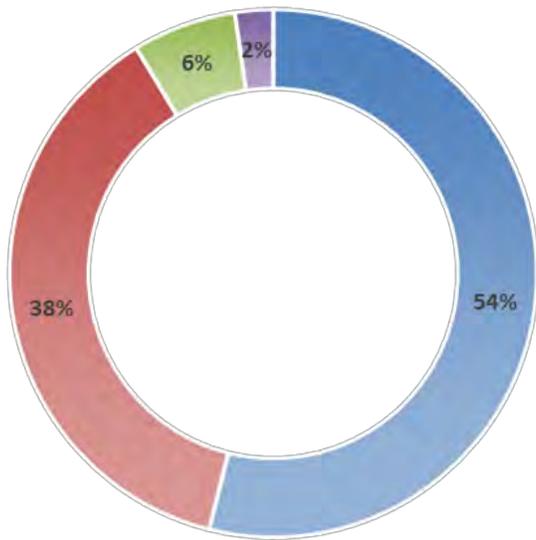
I love making new friends!



We do things together, we play together!

# SUSTAINABILITY OF CAMP SHRIVER

Camp Shriver is a financially stable program, comprising support from the Center for Social Development and Education (administration and fundraising) and the University of Massachusetts Boston (facilities and transportation). Additionally Camp Shriver has been awarded a multi-year grant from the Liberty Mutual Foundation and is a member of the Official Charity Program of the Boston Marathon. We continue to actively solicit new and varied funding opportunities each year.



- Individual Giving (including the Boston Marathon Official Charity Program)
- Corporate/Private Foundations
- University of Massachusetts Boston
- MA Summer Food Service Program



# A GRATEFUL THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Camp Shriver and the Center for Social Development and Education would like to thank UMass Boston, UMass Amherst and all of our friends and sponsors:



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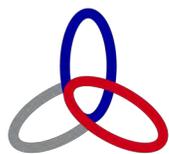
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# CAMP SHRIVER

AT UMASS BOSTON



HOSTED ON UMASS AMHERST MT. IDA CAMPUS

2022