

CAMP SHRIVER AT UMASS BOSTON



2016
IMPACT
REPORT

CAMP SHRIVER

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



For the past decade, Camp Shriver at the University of Massachusetts Boston has welcomed over 1,000 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.

Attending a day camp in the summer is a typical life experience for most children, but many barriers can impede the participation of children disadvantaged by socio-economic or disability status. For example, many camps in the Boston area are expensive or are unprepared to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Mission

Camp Shriver's mission is to bring children with and without disabilities together to provide opportunities for social and motor development, while promoting positive peer relationships.

Camp Shriver is unique in that it fully addresses both these potential barriers. While other summer programs may accept some children with disabilities or offer scholarships to lessen the cost to families, Camp Shriver provides the summer camp experience to an equal number of children with and without disabilities and does so at no cost to their families, who come from low-income neighborhoods or are otherwise disadvantaged.

New in 2016, Camp Shriver launched Saturday Camp in partnership with the Edgerley Family South Boston Boys & Girls Club, which meets twice each month from October to May, continuing to serve children from Camp Shriver as well as new campers from the local community.



THE NEED FOR CAMP SHRIVER



We are lucky to live in a society that is becoming ever more inclusive. Schools, in particular, have embraced inclusion in the classroom, and recreational programs in the community are following suit. Camp Shriver holds a unique place among these programs in that Camp Shriver was designed to be an inclusive recreational program and every decision is made with achieving inclusion as the primary focus. As a result, Camp Shriver is pushing the idea of what “being inclusive” means. At Camp Shriver, inclusion does not just mean being physically present, it means being socially accepted.

This social development of children with and without disabilities in an inclusive environment is critical. Through participation in integrated activities, children with disabilities can enhance their social skills, self-confidence, personal growth, independence, and resourcefulness (Marsh, 1999; Brannan, Arick, Fullerton, & Harris, 2000). Children without disabilities learn to be more accepting and tolerant toward those who are different. In a recent longitudinal study, researchers showed that a child’s early social competence is predictive of major outcomes in adolescence and adulthood across the domains of education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015).

Social development is just one aspect of a child’s broader development; motor development is equally important for children—physical activity is linked to positive outcomes in overall health, brain development, and social and emotional development (Brown et al., 2009b; Provost et al., 2007 a, b; Burdette & Whitaker, 2005). Inclusive opportunities to play are especially important for children with disabilities—while their typically developing peers may naturally develop motor skills and specific sport skills in whatever opportunities are available, children with developmental disabilities do not.

Campers leave Camp Shriver having developed their social and motor skills, ready to participate in inclusive communities in their neighborhoods and schools.



PROMOTING INCLUSION

... FOR CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES

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. Camp Shriver is based on 40 years of CSDE research and evaluation. To accomplish the mission of Camp Shriver, the CSDE model of inclusion has a few unique features:

- 50% of participants have a disability.
- Trained staff—in a low 4:1 camper-to-staff ratio—are “need-blind.” In other words, only the Camp Director and Inclusion Specialist know each child’s disability status. Staff are trained in inclusive recreation methods and adapt activities and behavior management strategies that focus on each child’s skills and abilities—not on a particular label.
- All activities are inclusive and social skill development is promoted by modelling and encouraging appropriate pro-social behavior among campers. One important reason why Camp Shriver focuses on development of social skills is because they are the building blocks to making and keeping friends.

With this model, Camp Shriver is creating inclusive communities by promoting motor and social development for children with and without disabilities.



PROMOTING INCLUSION

... ALL YEAR LONG

For the past decade, the Center for Social Development and Education (CSDE) at UMass Boston has successfully implemented its model of inclusion with the summer program, Camp Shriver. Building on the best practices of Camp Shriver, the CSDE launched Saturday Camp.

Saturday Camp has two goals. The first is to maintain and enhance the motor and social development of children continuing from the summer by providing support and instruction throughout the year. Additionally, it welcomes new campers from the local community, with and without disabilities, to experience the CSDE model of inclusion for the first time.

Secondly, Saturday Camp partners with a local non-profit to share its model of inclusion with the community. By working together with staff from its partner organization, the Edgerley Family South Boston Boys & Girls Club, the CSDE shares the strategies of its model of inclusion, which Club staff can then implement in all Club programming. The CSDE and the Edgerley Family South Boston Club are demonstrating how a university/ community partnership can make inclusion possible for all children.

In 2016-2017, Saturday Camp is held on every other Saturday, October through May, at the Edgerley Family South Boston Boys & Girls Club; over 50 children are registered for Saturday Camp.



SERVING CHILDREN

... OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.

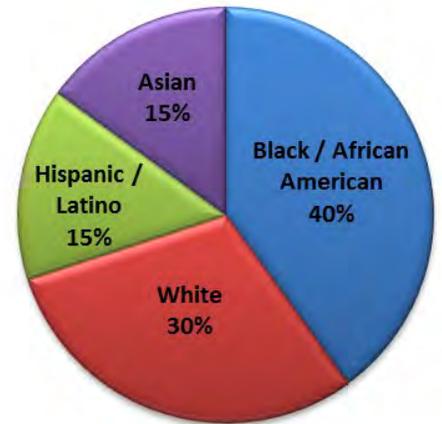
At Camp Shriver, we remain committed to welcoming children, ages 8-12, boys and girls, with and without disabilities, from low-income urban neighborhoods and ensuring diversity among its campers.

In 2016, over 350 applications to Camp Shriver were received. 133 campers with and without disabilities were accepted from Boston (75%) and Quincy (25%). 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 are representative of the communities in which they live, where 70% of campers are from minority groups. We are committed to maintaining this level of diversity in our camp population: 40% of campers were Black/African American, 30% were White, 15% were Hispanic/Latino and 15% were Asian.

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 who have other developmental delays. In 2016, 50% were children with a disability and 50% were children without a disability.

Additionally, Camp Shriver partners with schools and community groups that serve children from low-income neighborhoods to identify families that might be interested in and benefit from a free summer sports camp. In 2016, 60% of Camp Shriver families were low-to-moderate income as defined by the Federal Financial Institution Examination Council.

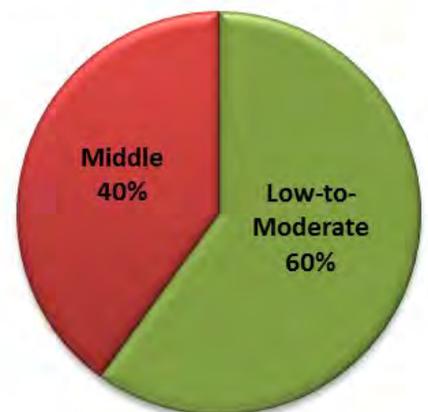
Camper Ethnicity



Camper Disability Status



Family Income Levels



ONE CAMPER'S STORY – SIENNA

When Sienna applied to Camp Shriver, Camp Shriver's Director and Inclusion Specialist immediately got to work. Sienna is a 10-year-old girl with autism, on the severe end of the spectrum with limited verbal skills (two word phrases), limited social skills and acute sensory sensitivity. She had never attended a summer camp before, as her mother never found a place where she was comfortable leaving her daughter.

Our Inclusion Specialist carefully reviewed Sienna's application and IEP and had several long conversations with her mother and her teachers. Sienna and her mother were invited to UMass Boston before camp opened to become comfortable with the space and discuss what accommodations Camp Shriver could make to be welcoming for Sienna.

Of course, at Camp Shriver, accommodating Sienna is more than just creating a way for Sienna to be physically included in our space. One of Camp Shriver's goals is promote social skills so that all campers can be socially accepted and develop friendships.

Our Inclusion Specialist identified social skills that were important for Sienna to learn so that she can participate fully in any activity. She worked closely with Sienna, helping her to learn an extremely pivotal two-word phrase: "Can play?" Armed with this one phrase, Sienna could approach and join a group peers who are already playing together: an important skill that likely comes naturally to many of her typically developing peers.

Three weeks into the summer, during free time after lunch, our Inclusion Specialist went looking for Sienna, not seeing her at her team table or with any of her counselors. She found her in the best possible place: sitting on the field with a group of girls, playing with gimp. Without prompting, Sienna had approached this group of girls sitting in the field and asked, "Can play?"

Equally as remarkable as Sienna taking this important step toward building friendships, the girls she joined were welcoming to Sienna, accepting her just the way she is.

At Camp Shriver, there is a place for everyone. Children with disabilities, like Sienna, have a chance to learn and practice social skills that are important to building friendships; children without disabilities learn and practice social skills to be more accepting of peers who are different from them.

At Camp Shriver, Sienna and all children have a chance to learn and play...as equals.



IMPACTING CHILDREN

... THE IMPACT OF CAMP SHRIVER ON CAMPERS

A program evaluation is conducted each year by research staff from the Center for Social Development and Education to assess whether Camp Shriver is successful at its mission: to bring children with and without disabilities together to provide opportunities to promote social and motor development, while also fostering positive peer relationships. Assessment instruments and methods are drawn from the scientific literature and adapted to measure campers' social relationships, social skills and motor skills through individual camper interviews, observations and staff assessments.

Over the past decade, Camp Shriver has consistently demonstrated positive impact on our campers and the documented successes have been published in scientific journals, psychology magazines, encyclopedias, camping magazines and on NPR's *It's Only a Game*. From the 2016 evaluation, we learned:

Camp Shriver's model creates a community in which all campers feel included and supported

To successfully help campers develop social and motor skills, Camp Shriver must first create an environment where campers feel included and supported through the CSDE model of inclusion (page 4). This supportive structure creates a sense of belonging among all campers: in 2016, almost all campers (93%) felt proud of belonging to their team and felt included in activities (83%). Even more indicative of the inclusive environment established at Camp Shriver, campers felt like part of their team (84%) and that their teammates liked them the way they are (82%)—and this percentage was similar for campers with and campers without disabilities. This supportive environment paves the way for campers to feel comfortable to attempt and practice new social and motor skills.

Camp Shriver improves the social skills of campers

Once campers feel supported on their teams, Camp Shriver staff promote the development of social skills by modeling, monitoring, and encouraging appropriate pro-social behavior among campers. For some social skills, the majority of campers are already applying these skills when they enter camp. For example, 70% of campers entered camp interacting well with other campers. The 30% of campers who were not strong in this skill at the beginning of camp showed improvement, so that by the end of camp, **all campers** (98%) interacted well with other campers.



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

Camp Shriver improves the social skills of campers (continued)

Some social skills are critical for social inclusion to take place. Social skills such as inviting peers to play and offering to help peers are the first steps toward building positive peer relationships and friendships; there is a great need to improve these skills as only 20% of campers enter camp displaying these social skills. Campers who had room to grow in these social skills made remarkable gains over the course of camp, with 70% of these campers inviting other campers to play with them more often, and 65% of these campers offering to help other campers more often. By the end of camp, campers learn the social skills to be accepting of their peers with and without disabilities: 90% of campers invited other campers to play with them and 88% of campers offered to help other campers.

Camp Shriver fosters friendships and positive peer relationships

The focus on the development of social skills is important as social skills are the building blocks to making friends. For children with disabilities, especially, the fostering and development of peer relationships is important, as children with disabilities often lack opportunities to develop peer relationships. In 2016, almost all campers (86%) were named as a friend by another camper, and 70% of campers had one or more mutual friendships, meaning that the child they named as a friend named them in return. Most importantly, the majority of campers without disabilities (75%) named a peer with a disability as a friend—notable, when compared with recent data that shows only 30% would socially interact with a peer with a disability outside of school.

Camp Shriver promotes motor skill development

Finally, Camp Shriver provides opportunities for motor skill development through the use of the Let's All Play curriculum (National Inclusion Project) and other inclusive lessons, specifically designed to meet the needs of children with disabilities to ensure that all children have an opportunity to fully participate. Overall, campers participate in over 60 hours of instruction on the field, in the gym and in the pool. In swimming, for example, of the 84 campers who had room to improve, 69 (82%) were assessed as having higher-level swimming abilities than they had at the beginning of camp. This time spent promoting motor skills additionally influences how campers feel about their motor skills; by the conclusion of camp, campers overwhelmingly believed that they improved their motor skills: 80% of campers believed they improved at swimming in the pool and in soccer and other field activities; 73% believed they improved at basketball and other games played in the gym.



ONE CAMPER'S STORY – WALTER

When Walter, a 10-year-old boy without a disability, returned to Camp Shriver as an alumni, he didn't have the smooth start that Camp Shriver's Director expected. In his two past summers with Camp Shriver, Walter was already showing promise as a future leader, helping his team come together to succeed on the field or basketball court.

But this year was different. With the familiarity of two summers, Walter began ignoring some of the rules; rules he knew well. He left his team in the locker room and headed out to snack alone. After getting off his bus, he went right outside to play instead of getting breakfast first. He was impatient and frustrated with the pace of his team, always pushing ahead to the next activity.

Camp Shriver's Director intervened, pulling Walter aside. The Director talked about his expectations for Walter: how Walter had so much potential to be a positive example for everyone on his team, with and without disabilities. The idea of being a leader had never occurred to Walter and it changed everything.

Gone was the selfish camper of the early days of summer. Instead, Walter was always looking out for his fellow campers. He was the last to leave every activity, making sure slower campers had someone to walk with. He helped campers carry trays through the lunch line and helped his teammates pack up in the locker room after swimming.

Walter put the interests of his team first and his teammates with a disability knew they had a friend who would always be there for them.

At Camp Shriver, we provide opportunities for all children, with and without disabilities, and we hope our campers, like Walter, will leave Camp Shriver and become leaders for inclusion in their schools and communities.



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

“My favorite thing I did at Camp was meeting new friends.”

Camp Shriver is fun because you get to meet lots of friends at camp and they'll always be nice to you no matter what.

My favorite thing I did at Camp Shriver was being a friend and helping other people and making other friends.

Camp Shriver is fun because we always support each other!



Camp Shriver is fun because everybody is included no matter what disability they have – that's what I like about it.

I love
Camp Shriver!



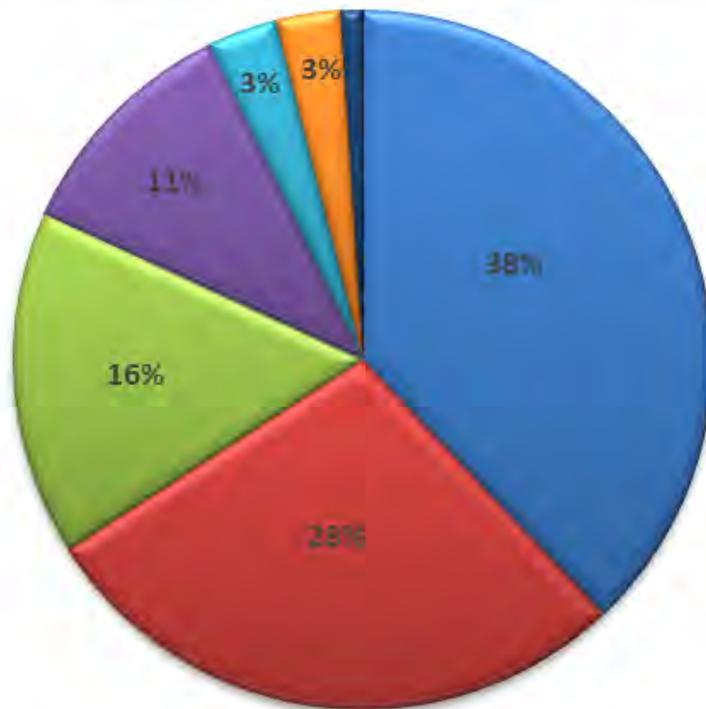
Camp Shriver is fun because you get to meet new people who have different abilities.



My friends are funny. They're nice and they include you!

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 multi-year grants from the Cummings Foundation and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern New England, as well as a long-term partnership with Boston Athletic Association as an Official Charity Partner of the Boston Marathon. We continue to actively solicit new and varied funding opportunities each year.



- Corporate and Private Foundations
- Boston Marathon Official Charity Program
- UMass Boston / Center for Social Development & Edu
- Lead Sponsor - The Liberty Mutual Foundation
- MA Summer Food Service Program
- Individual Donations and Other Contributions
- Camper Registrations



A GRATEFUL THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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



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A special thank you to the Boston Athletic Association and all our runners—we have raised over \$350,000 since 2013 as an Official Charity of the Boston Marathon. Go, Team!

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AT UMASS BOSTON



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