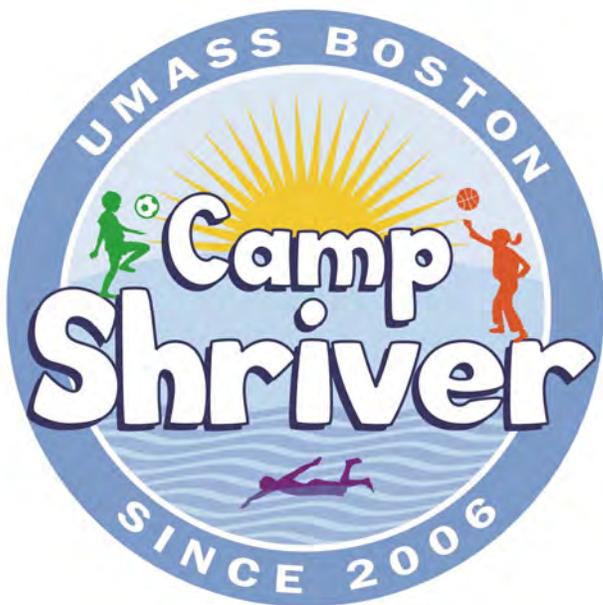


# CAMP SHRIVER AT UMASS BOSTON



2018  
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 school-year program, Saturday Camp, which meets twice each month from October to May.

For the past 14 years, Camp Shriver at the University of Massachusetts Boston has welcomed over 1,500 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.

While recreational programs offered by schools and community agencies may accept some children with disabilities, few—if any—are designed to enroll an equal number of children with and without disabilities. That is what makes Camp Shriver at UMass Boston unique. Camp Shriver serves an equal number of children with and without disabilities so that all children can play and learn together.

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. The research-based best practices and strategies for inclusion developed for Camp Shriver are disseminated widely so that all organizations can better include children with disabilities.

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 among campers.



## THE NEED FOR INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS

The social skills learned and practiced in inclusive environments make a significant difference in a child's life—a recent longitudinal study showed that a child's early social competence is predictive of major outcomes in adolescence and adulthood across the domains of education, employment and mental health (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015).

These benefits are—most importantly—shared by children with and children without disabilities. Many studies have demonstrated that inclusive camps improve the social participation, social skills, independence, resourcefulness and even self-esteem of children with disabilities (Marsh, 1999; Brannan, Arick, Fullerton, & Harris, 2000; Siperstein, Glick, Harada, Bardon, & Parker, 2007; Siperstein, Glick, & Parker, 2009).

For campers without disabilities, inclusive camps provide the opportunity to develop a more realistic understanding and appreciation of what it means to have a disability and increase their acceptance of their peers with disabilities (Brannan et al., 2000). This is more important than ever before: a study of Boston-area children (Siperstein, Leffert, & Glick, 2007) found that children with disabilities were three times more likely to be rejected by their classmates than their peers without disabilities and a comprehensive national survey showed that non-disabled youth do not socially interact with their disabled peers outside of school (Siperstein, Parker, Norins, & Widaman, 2007). This rejection may lead to social isolation, so that outside of school, children with disabilities spend a great deal of their time alone. Inclusive programs like Camp Shriver reverse this isolation and provide opportunities for children with and without disabilities to play together.



# 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:

**1) 50/50 Population:** 50% of campers have an intellectual or developmental disability to reflect our commitment to serving children with and without disabilities in a truly inclusive environment where every child has equal opportunities for full participation in all activities;

**2) Need-Blind Staff in a Low 4:1 Camper-to-Staff Ratio:** Staff (outside of the Camp Director and Inclusion Specialist) are not informed which campers have a disability. Experienced staff are trained in inclusive recreation best practices and adapt activities to focus on all children's individual skills and abilities, not on a particular label;

**3) Inclusive Activities:** Campers rotate in teams through four activity periods, transitioning deliberately from high to low impact activities. To facilitate inclusion, accommodations are made to all activities (swimming, soccer, basketball, crafts and more) following principles of universal design to promote full participation. When needed, individual accommodations are made to allow all participants to engage in the same activity, such as choices between different variations of activities (which line to shoot free throws from) and choices between different equipment (whether to use a basketball, a light playground ball or a balloon).

**4) Social Development:** Staff promote a culture of social responsibility by modelling and encouraging positive social behaviors among campers during structured and unstructured time. Social skills such as encouraging your teammates, inviting others to play with you and joining in groups that are already playing are the building blocks of friendships and positive peer relationships.

With this model, Camp Shriver is creating inclusive communities where all children have equal opportunities to fully participate.



# INCLUSION IN RECREATIONAL CAMPS

## ...DURING STRUCTURED AND UNSTRUCTURED TIME

Camp Shriver intentionally designs every structured activity to be inclusive...but our coaches and counselors know it is just as important to promote inclusion during free play and other unstructured times, too.

At Camp Shriver, as at any camp, there are many moments of unstructured time: designated free play periods after breakfast and lunch, free play at the end of a structured activity in the gym or pool, or during transitions between activities.

These moments present a great chance to promote inclusion. For example, during free play at the end of a basketball lesson, simple rules can create opportunities for inclusion. A coach may say, “During this free time, play a new game you haven’t played before or play with a camper you don’t already know.” At the end of free play, the coach can call the group back together and ask for campers to raise their hands if they were able to do so.

Likewise, a counselor may notice a camper walking alone during a transition or eating snack by him/herself. The counselor can say, “Hey, Josh! Come join us!” This simple phrase models appropriate pro-social behavior for campers, encouraging campers to invite their peers to walk or play with them.

In our inclusive environment, not only do coaches and counselors ensure that there are opportunities for full participation during activities...they make sure every moment of every day reflects our commitment to inclusion—free play included!

Examples from: Siperstein, G. N., et al. *Best practices in inclusive camping: A roundtable discussion on programming*. Forthcoming in American Camp Association Magazine in 2019.



# SERVING CHILDREN

## ... OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.

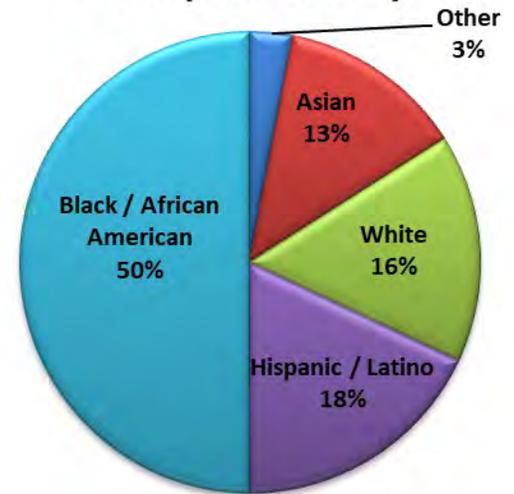
At Camp Shriver, we remain committed to welcoming children, ages 8-12, boys and girls, with and without disabilities, from low-income urban neighborhoods and ensuring diversity among its campers. In 2018, over 200 applications to Camp Shriver were received. 132 campers with and without disabilities were accepted by lottery 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: 81% of campers are from minority groups.** We are committed to maintaining this level of diversity in our camp population: 50% of campers self-reported as Black/African American, 18% as Hispanic/Latino, 16% as White, 13% as Asian, and 3% as 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 who have other developmental delays. In 2018, 46% were children with a disability and 54% were children without 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 2018, 61% of Camp Shriver families were low-to-moderate income as defined by the Federal Financial Institution Examination Council.

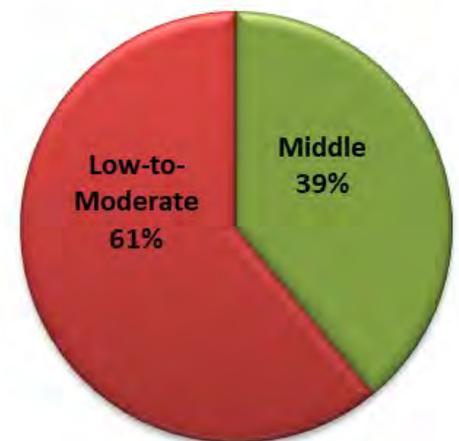
### Camper Ethnicity



### Camper Disability Status



### Family Income Levels



## YOU HOPE FOR THE BEST...

“You hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.” In every camp director’s mind, there exists the worst-case scenario—the missing kid, the major injury—that looms over every staff training.

For Camp Shriver, this summer was the year the worst-case scenario happened.

It was a normal day in the pool for Coach Katie; the lessons had concluded and she was overseeing camper free swim. She noticed that one camper wasn’t where he was supposed to be. She flagged her fellow coach and pointed at the boy. Coach Jason swam over and assessed: Nathan was incoherent, not aware of where he was and unable to communicate—Nathan was having a seizure.

It was an emergency that did not become a tragedy. Nathan, a 10-year-old boy with an intellectual disability, had a known seizure disorder. Camp Shriver coaches quickly enacted the safety procedures that had already been drilled by the campers and counselors—everyone came out of the pool at the whistle, counselors moved the campers away from the water while the lifeguards took care of Nathan and the coaches contacted 9-1-1, UMass Boston Public Safety and UMass Boston Health Services.

Nursing staff arrived in minutes and evaluated Nathan. Public Safety officers met the ambulance and cleared the way to camp. Within 15 minutes of the emergency occurring, Nathan was on his way to the ER with a camp staff member, who had copies of his medical records and was on the phone with his family.

In the end, Nathan was fine and suffered no ill effects from his seizure.

It was not luck that Nathan’s trouble was identified so quickly. Coach Katie knew that Nathan was out of place because he was swimming toward the deep end. Katie knew that Nathan had not passed his deep end test and quickly confirmed the same—Nathan was not wearing the wrist band given to campers who have passed the test. Coach Jason was in the pool with the campers: he leads the swimming lesson and Camp Shriver procedures require coaches and counselors to be in the water with the campers. At staff training, Health Services, which reviews the medical history of every single camper, discussed possible health-related scenarios and Public Safety gave a thorough review of emergency procedures.

Every procedure from the wrist bracelet to the ambulance escort was intentionally designed for such emergencies. And when the worst-case scenario happened, Camp Shriver was ready.



# IMPACTING CHILDREN

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

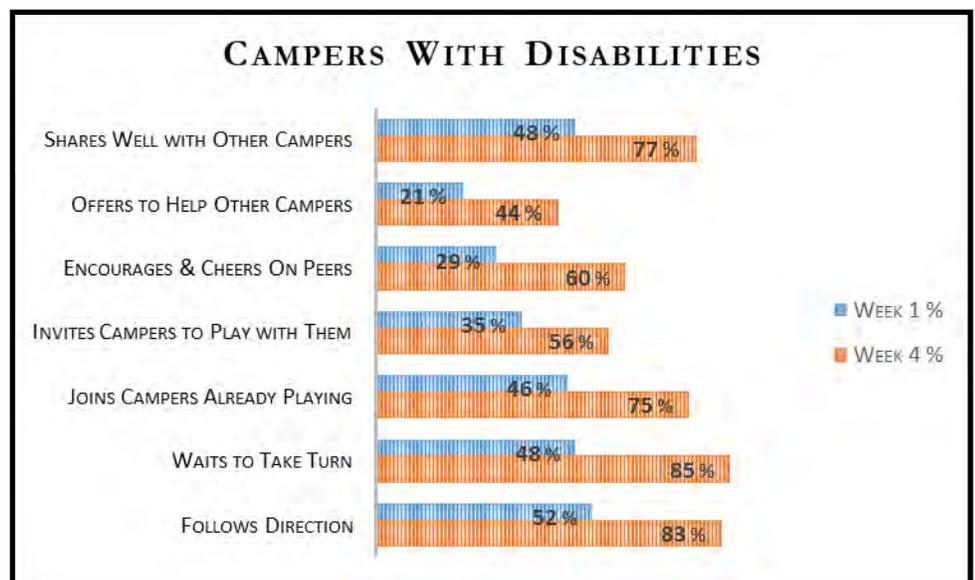
The evaluation is conducted each year by research staff from the Center for Social Development and Education to assess whether Camp Shriver is successful at our mission: to bring children with and without disabilities together and provide opportunities to promote social and motor development, while fostering positive peer relationships. Assessment instruments and methods are drawn from the scientific literature and adapted to measure campers' social relationships and social skills through individual camper interviews and staff observations. From the 2018 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. To accomplish this, we welcome a population of campers where 50% of campers have an intellectual or developmental disability and use a low 4:1 camper-to-staff ratio, where staff (outside of the Camp Director and Inclusion Specialist) are not informed which campers have a disability. Experienced staff are trained in inclusive recreation practices and adapt activities focusing on each child's skills and abilities—not on a particular label. This supportive structure creates a sense of belonging among all campers: in 2018, all campers (99%) felt proud of belonging to their team, with 86% of campers reporting that they felt proud of their team “a lot.” Even more indicative of the inclusive environment established at Camp Shriver, most or all of the time, campers felt like the campers on their team were friendly (90%) and that their teammates encouraged and cheered for them (89%). 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 a culture of social responsibility by modelling and encouraging positive social behaviors among campers during structured and unstructured time.

Some social skills are critical for creating a positive environment for inclusion to take place: social skills such as “offering to help peers” and “encouraging on peers.” Camp Shriver sees a great need to improve these skills, especially for children with disabilities, as only 25% of campers with a disability enter camp displaying these social skills (as compared with 46% of campers without a disability). Campers with a disability who had room to grow in these social skills made remarkable gains over the course of camp, with half to three-quarters improving their social skills: 78% of these campers offer to help other campers more often, and 66% of these campers encourage and cheer on peers more often.

Two social skills where Camp Shriver sees great improvement are the two social skills critical for Camp Shriver's mission to develop positive peer relationships: inviting other campers to play with you and joining in groups that are already playing. Only 40% of campers with a disability enter camp displaying these social skills (as compared with 55% of campers without a disability). Campers who had room to improve made significant gains in these areas with 65% of campers showing improvement.



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

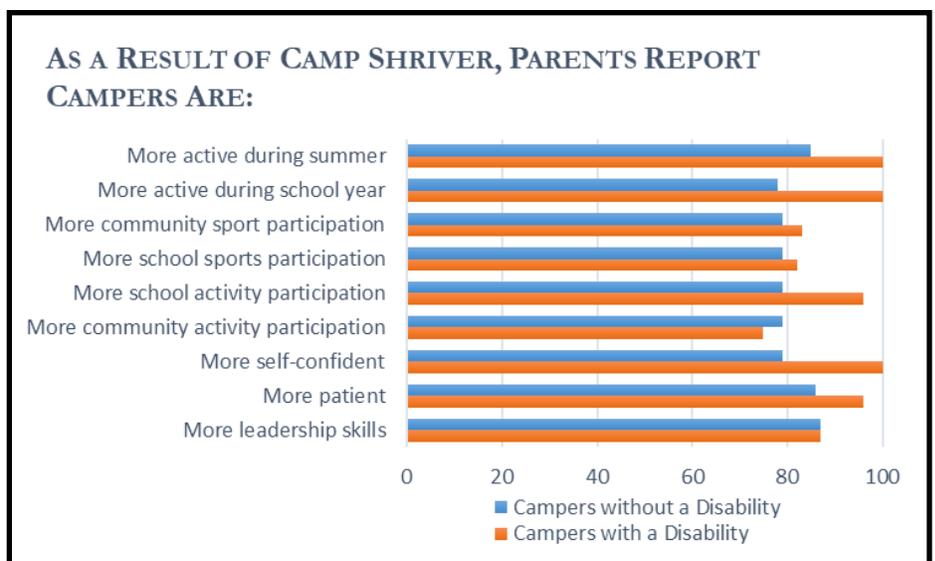
**Camp Shriver fosters friendships and positive peer relationships.** The focus on the development of social skills is important as social skills are the building blocks to making and keeping friends. For children with disabilities, especially, the fostering and development of peer relationships is important, as children with disabilities often lack opportunities to develop peer relationships. In 2018, almost all campers—95%—with and without disabilities named a fellow camper as a friend and 82% were named a friend by another camper. Most importantly, this was true of campers with disabilities: 87% named another camper as a friend and 66% were named as a friend by another camper.

However, Camp Shriver recognizes that there is still a great need for improvement in this area. While the overall averages of friendships created are strong, there exists a discrepancy between children with and without disabilities. 98% of campers without a disability were named as a friend by another camper, as compared to only 66% of campers with a disability. Qualitatively, coaches and counselors are observing more friendships than seem to be reflected in these figures—and many factors may be impacting this nomination rate. Camp Shriver will continue to closely monitor this friendship data in future years.

**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 making inclusive accommodations to all activities following principles of universal design to promote participation. Overall, campers participate in over 60 hours of instruction on the field, in the gym and in the pool. 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: 85% of campers believed they improved at swimming; 75% believed they improved in basketball, soccer and other gym/field activities.

### **Camp Shriver parents believe the positive effects of Camp Shriver last throughout the year.**

Returning parents overwhelmingly report the great influence they feel Camp Shriver has on their child throughout the year, and significantly, parents of children with disabilities are seeing greater results as compared with parents of children without disabilities. 100% of parents of children with disabilities believe their child is more confident and more active during the summer and school year as a result of Camp Shriver—80% of parents of a child without a disability believe the same. 96% of parents of children with disabilities believe their child is more patient and more active in school activities—83% of parents of a child without a disability believe the same.



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 Camp Shriver so that its positive effects on campers can be maximized each year. The yearly evaluation results and documented successes have been published in 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 *It's Only a Game* on NPR and in the *Boston Herald*.

## ONE CAMPER'S STORY – LUIS

“Is that that true, Mark? I will never do that again.” Luis said, shaking his head and walking away. Mark watched him go, smiling to himself. An 11-year-old boy with an intellectual disability, Luis had a rocky start to the summer, but Director Mark Spolidoro had no doubt he was on a better path now.

During his first days at Camp, Luis saw that when the older boys acted out, they were sent to Mark for a conversation. Impressionable and unsure of himself—and with a limited understanding of social cues as a result of his disability—Luis began to imitate the behaviors he saw; he wanted to be special, too.

When Mark had a conversation with the older boys at Camp, he made sure Luis was included. Mark reminded the boys of what he talks about every morning—how to be a good friend and teammate. After, Mark kept Luis for a few more moments and pay attention over the next few days. Any boy wasn't being a good friend and teammate was going to end up eating lunch at table for one. Luis couldn't believe it; he loved lunch with his team and wouldn't give it up for anything.

So Luis began to see—especially when one boy did have to sit alone at lunch—that acting out was not going to get him the attention he needed. With gentle encouragement and modeling from his counselors, Luis began to put the puzzle together—it was his positive behaviors that earned praise and shout-outs.

Luis attended Camp Shriver's Saturday Camp during the year, continuing to practice and refine his social skills. By his next summer, the transformation was clear. When Luis saw a group of boys beginning to act out waiting for their turn to get lunch, he confidently walked over to them and said, “You don't have to push or shove; Mark will make sure everyone gets lunch! Waiting quietly will get us up sooner.”

Mark was thrilled. Luis was implementing the skills that his counselors worked so hard to teach: he recognized inappropriate behavior and had the ability and confidence to encourage his peers to choose a better path. Luis was becoming a leader.

This year, Luis moved from a substantially separate classroom to an inclusion setting—his experiences at Camp Shriver eased that transition and prepared Luis to excel in his new environment as a good classmate, friend and role model.



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

Camp Shriver brings kids together and makes friendships happen. I really like this camp 'cause it shows what friendship is.



The counselors are the best!

I can trust my friends at Camp Shriver—they will always be there for me.

It'll be something to look back at—having good friends and someone to stand up for you."



The best part of Camp Shriver is being able to play with different kids and make new friends.

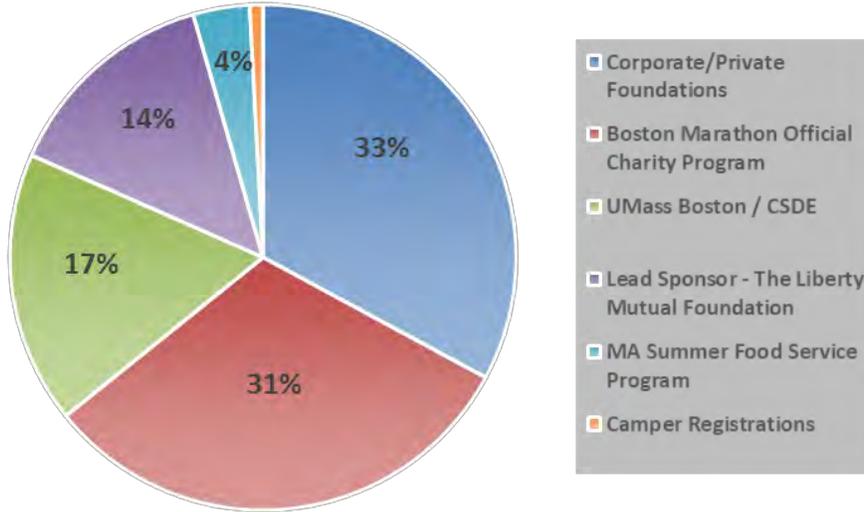
At Camp Shriver, you are always having fun no matter what!



At Camp Shriver, we can have fun in our own ways, play with other kids and get to know people we don't know.

# 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 Liberty Mutual Foundation and the 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.



# 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, the TCS NYC Marathon and all of our friends and sponsors:



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# OFFICIAL CHARITY

A special thank you to the Boston Athletic Association and all our runners, who have raised over \$550,000 since 2013 as an Official Charity of the Boston Marathon. Go, Team!

# CAMP SHRIVER

AT UMASS BOSTON



2018