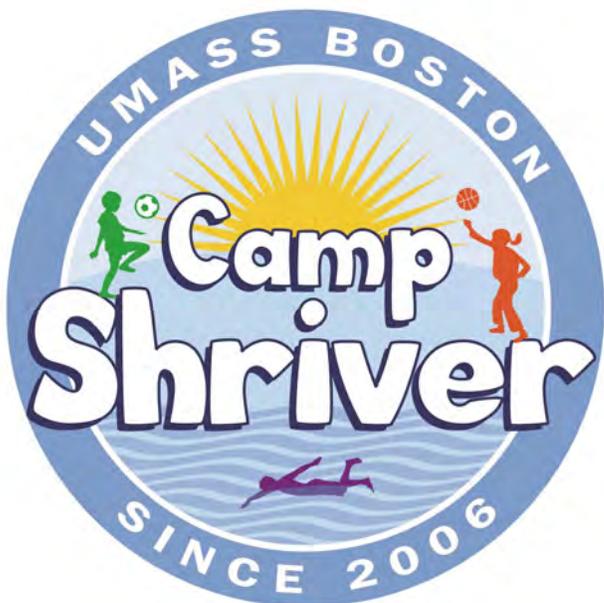


CAMP SHRIVER AT UMASS BOSTON



2019
IMPACT
REPORT

CAMP SHRIVER

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



While recreational programs offered by schools and community agencies may accept some children with disabilities, few—if any—enroll an equal number of children with and without disabilities.

That is what makes Camp Shriver at UMass Boston unique. Camp Shriver is designed to serve an equal number of children with and without disabilities so that all children can play and learn together.

Saturday Camp

Camp Shriver partners with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester to hold our extended camp programming during the school year. Saturday Camp meets twice each month from October to May.

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.

For the past 15 years, Camp Shriver at the University of Massachusetts Boston 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.

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 and friendships 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 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). While many children may develop these skills participating in school or community activities, children with disabilities often need the structure, support and mindful planning that inclusive camps provide.

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 lack of acceptance 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:

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 (swimming, soccer, basketball, kickball, crafts and more) are developed following the principles of Universal Design. When needed, individual accommodations are made to allow participants to engage in the same activities, such as a multi-sensory approach to teaching how to throw a ball: verbally explain what is expected, visually demonstrate how to throw, let campers touch the ball being used so that they understand the ball's texture and weight. Choices are offered between variations of activities (which line to shoot free throws from) and between different equipment (whether to throw a basketball, a playground ball or a balloon).

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.

Commitment to Staff Support: To ensure that staff have the requisite skills and knowledge to promote inclusion, all staff participate in two days of intensive training focusing on best practices in the field of inclusive recreation. An inclusion coordinator supports all camper and staff needs. Staff have defined roles: coaches plan and direct inclusive activities and counselors model inclusion on the camper teams they lead. In a low 4:1 camper-to-staff ratio, 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 this model, Camp Shriver is creating inclusive communities where all children have equal opportunities to fully participate.



ONE CAMPER'S STORY – FELIX

“Today’s goal? Just to get him in the building,” said Director Mark Spolidoro. Felix was outside, sitting on the stair, crying. Felix was an 8-year-old boy with autism and this was his first experience at camp.

The first day Felix cried for 45 minutes. But crying didn’t get him what he wanted. At other community programs, 45 minutes of crying would mean that his mom would be called and that he could go home. But not at Camp Shriver! Felix was a little shocked. Director Mark called his mom, but not to tell her to come pick him up. Mark told his mom that Felix was safe and that Mark had a couple of ideas. Mark wanted Felix to stay.

So Mark and his inclusion specialist got to work. First, they introduced Felix to the Team Sensory Bag, a small kit filled with egg timers and sensory toys like fidget spinners, a bag of slime and a water bottle of sparkling food color and oil. When a camper needed a break—any camper, not just a camper with a disability—he or she could choose a 3-, 5-, or 7-minute timer and sit with the sensory bag, having a chance to calm down and re-focus before going back to team activities.

Felix really liked the sensory bag. He liked it even more when Mark put him in charge of his Team’s Sensory Bag. That meant Felix had to come right inside every day to make sure that the bag had all the right materials.

Later, Felix’s team counselors showed Felix the Camp Shriver Sensory Wall: against a wall in a quieter part of camp were pictures and instructions for 16 different physical activities that would help ground an overstimulated camper. At each station on the wall, Felix would complete a short activity like wall push-ups, jumping jacks, hopping on one foot, a yoga position or a balancing pose. The cycle would take 5 or 6 minutes and leave Felix feeling more focused at the end. He asked his counselors for a wall break on a regular basis and afterwards was able to return to his team, calm and ready to play.

By the middle of camp, his teammates would join Felix at the Sensory Wall. These were such important interactions for Felix, who needed more support in social interactions to make friends. At first counselors would ask a teammate to join Felix, but later they would ask Felix to invite a friend. His team loved the wall, too, and everyone could see how important it was to Felix. The wall provided a way for campers to interact with Felix in a safe, supportive activity he enjoyed.

By the end of camp, Felix got off the bus with a smile every morning. He participated in activities throughout the day and proactively took sensory breaks when he needed to. At many other programs, a camper with autism who began the summer with 45-minutes of crying would be politely asked to leave.

At Camp Shriver, Felix was able to stay, play and have fun.



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 accomplish our mission: to bring children with and without disabilities together to 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 motor skills through individual camper interviews and staff observations. Parents are also surveyed before and after camp about their reasons for choosing Camp Shriver, their goals for their child this summer, and whether or not they have seen improvements in behavior as a result of Camp Shriver.

From the 2019 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 an inclusive, friendly environment for campers where, most or all of the time, campers felt the other campers on their team were friendly (82%) and that teammates cheered for each other (85%). This supportive environment paves the way for campers to feel comfortable to attempt and practice new social and motor skills.

This inclusive environment is also one of the primary reasons why parents choose to send their child to Camp Shriver. Most parents choose Camp Shriver because it is inclusive (83%) and provides an opportunity for their child to meet new children. As expected, parents of a child with a disability are more likely to believe it very important that their child attend a camp that is inclusive (92%) and can meet new children (96%).

Overall, parents believe that it is very important that their child attend a camp that has a good reputation (92%) and where their child can have new experiences (97%) in a recreational environment (93%).



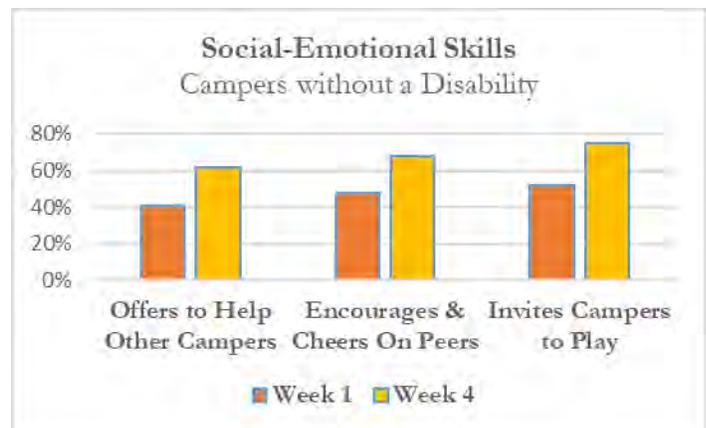
... THE IMPACT OF CAMP SHRIVER ON CAMPERS (CONTINUED)

Camp Shriver improves the social-emotional skills of campers.

In this supportive environment, Camp Shriver staff promotes social-emotional learning (SEL) by modelling and encouraging positive social behaviors among campers during structured and unstructured time. Overall, campers reported that they improved their social skills: 88% reported they improved at making friends with teammates, 84% at getting along better with teammates and 80% at joining a group of campers already playing.

Some social-emotional skills are critical for creating a positive environment for inclusion to take place: social skills such as “offering to help peers,” “cheering and encouraging on peers,” and “asking other peers to play.” Camp Shriver sees a great need to improve these skills, especially for children with disabilities, as only 36% of campers with a disability enter camp displaying these social skills (as compared with 47% 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: by the end of camp, 54% of these campers got better at offering to help other campers, 51% of these campers got better at encouraging and cheering on their peers and 44% got better at asking other campers to play with them.

It is clear that Camp Shriver has a positive effect on the social-emotional skills of children regardless of disability status and that children with disabilities demonstrate a greater need to improve their social-emotional skills:



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

Camp Shriver fosters friendships and positive peer relationships.

Most fundamental to Camp Shriver's mission is that Camp Shriver brings together children with and without disabilities to create 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. In fact, Camp Shriver's model focuses on the development of social skills as social skills are the building blocks to making and keeping friends.

From interviews with campers, it is clear that Camp Shriver achieves this aspect of our mission: remarkably, 100% of campers named at least one other camper as a friend and 93% of campers were named as a friend by another camper.

Importantly, Camp Shriver fosters friendships between children with and without a disability. Most campers without a disability (80%) named a peer with a disability as a friend— notable, when compared with data (Siperstein, Parker, Norins, & Widaman, 2007) that shows only 30% of children in school will name a peer with a disability as a friend.

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. 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 influences how campers feel about their skills; by the end of camp, campers overwhelmingly believed that they improved: 88% believed they improved in basketball and other gym activities; 87% of campers believed they improved at swimming; and 80% believed they improved at soccer and other field activities.

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

Parents overwhelmingly report the great influence they feel Camp Shriver has on their child throughout the year. Often, parents of children with and without disabilities report seeing the same results: 100% of parents believe their child is more confident and more active during the summer and school year as a result of Camp Shriver.

As expected, in some categories, parents see different results. Parents of a child with a disability are more likely to report "a lot" of improvement in leadership skills (70%) as compared to parents of a child without a disability (50%). Parents of a child without a disability are more likely to report "a lot" of improvement in patience (56%) as compared to parents of a child with a disability (36%).

In Conclusion, Camp Shriver has had demonstrated success in meeting its objectives since its inception in 2006. 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 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 local media outlets such as It's Only a Game on NPR and in the Boston Herald.

SERVING CHILDREN OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

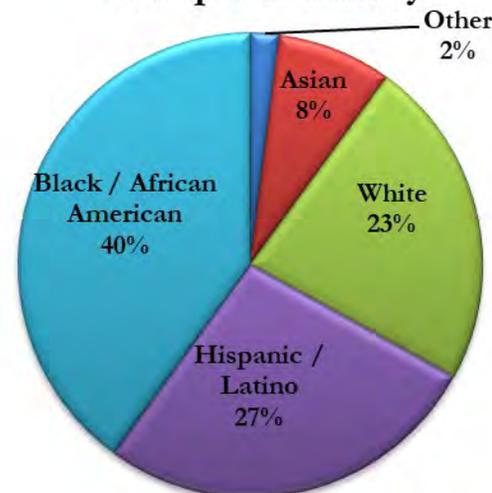
At Camp Shriver, we remain committed to welcoming children, ages 8-12, boys and girls, with and without disabilities, from low-income urban neighborhoods and ensuring diversity among its campers. In 2019, over 250 applications to Camp Shriver were received. 135 campers with and without disabilities were served 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: 77% of campers are from minority groups. We are committed to maintaining this level of diversity in our camp population: 40% of campers self-reported as Black/African American, 27% as Hispanic/Latino, 23% as White, 8% as Asian, and 2% 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 2019, 45% were children with a disability and 55% 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 2019, 55% of Camp Shriver families were low-to-moderate income as defined by the Federal Financial Institution Examination Council.

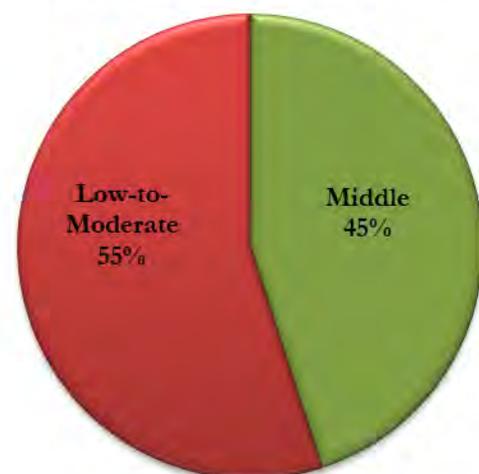
Camper Ethnicity



Camper Disability Status



Family Income Levels



A CAMPER STORY – SHAY AND CARRIE

This summer, Camp Shriver welcomed two new campers, 10-year-old girls without a disability, who came to camp for very different reasons. Carrie's family wanted her to participate in an inclusive environment while Shay's family saw a camp that would keep Shay out of trouble and was free of charge with breakfast, lunch and transportation provided.

When Carrie and Shay got off the bus, the differences were stark. Carrie immediately understood what Camp Shriver was about and set about cheering her teammates and making friends. Shay was uncomfortable at a camp that was so different from the streets of her challenging neighborhood, and reacted by teasing her teammates and isolating herself.

Carrie knew that Shay was not being a good teammate and also knew that Camp Shriver was about friendship. She took her concerns to her counselors and to the Director of Camp Shriver, Mark Spolidoro. Mark listened and took Shay aside for a conversation.

Mark and Shay talked about Camp Shriver, the mission to make friends with kids who are different from you, the emphasis on being part of a team, cheering on your teammates and what being a good friend means. Shay listened, but was resentful, too. Shay was angry at Carrie for going to Mark and started to tease and push Carrie when the two were playing games.

But Carrie wasn't put off so easily. She understood that Camp Shriver was about friendship and that friendship isn't easy. She knew that it was hard to be singled out.

Later that week, Carrie asked Shay to play with her and a group of campers who were playing Uno during team time. Shay agreed and the first tentative steps toward friendship were made.

By the end of the summer, Carrie and Shay were playing together every day during activities and free time. Shay cheered the loudest for Carrie and all of her teammates during games and made sure to ask other campers to play with her when she could.

Providing an opportunity for Carrie and Shay—two girls from very different backgrounds—to become friends is an important part of Camp Shriver. In our model that promotes socio-emotional learning, all children learn how to be welcoming, inclusive, a good teammate and a friend.



CAMP SHRIVER...
IN THE CAMPERS' OWN WORDS

My friends never leave anyone out.



My friends are positive and cheerful and excited!

At Camp Shriver, there's always someone around to help you!

The kids at Camp Shriver are friendly and want to play with you.



Everyone cheers you on and tells you to keep going!

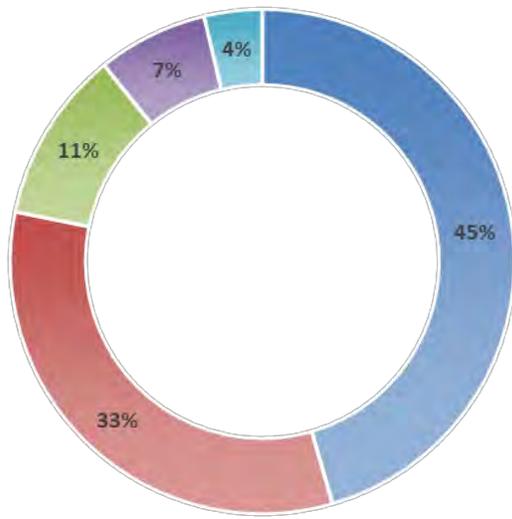
I want to be here forever!



Camp Shriver is fun because you meet a ton of different people.

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 Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism, 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/Private Foundations
- Boston Marathon Official Charity Program
- TCS NYC Marathon Official Charity Program
- University of Massachusetts Boston
- MA Summer Food Service Program



A GRATEFUL THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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CAMP SHRIVER

AT UMASS BOSTON



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