



# the *Fresh Air* fund

*because a summer can last a lifetime™*

The Fresh Air Fund, a nonprofit organization in New York City, has served more than 1.8 million children since 1877. Each summer, children from New York City’s low-income communities visit volunteer host families along the East Coast and Southern Canada or attend The Fund’s six overnight camps in New York’s Mid-Hudson Valley. Through immersive outdoor adventures, children gain self-confidence, make new friends and take on new challenges. Recreational activities are layered with experiential learning.

Founded in 1877 at the height of the tuberculosis epidemic in NYC, The Fresh Air Fund was part of the response and will be a part of the response to COVID-19. The Fund understands the power of fresh air and is designing an engaging virtual programming season which will be focused on bringing the outdoors inside with enriching and interactive online experiences. The Fund is also exploring ways to engage children in outdoor experiences while keeping them healthy and safe during this challenging time.

# 75%

Over 75% of first-time participants were away from NYC overnight for the first time without family.



"On the overnight hike, we took photos of nature, and we had s'mores. I couldn't believe that I could walk for that long! Learning at camp is different, because the classes are exciting and really interesting."

- Paula, 11, Explorers Program at Camp ABC

# 82%

of parents/guardians reported that their child's experience made them more confident.

"As a Counselor-in-Training, I have more responsibility. It has been eye-opening and a little harder than I thought it would be. I've learned more about myself and what I'm capable of."

- Joshua, 16, CIT, Camp Hayden-Marks



# 76%

of parents/guardians report their child's Fresh Air experience has given them new ideas for the future.



"I went swimming for the first time and I also had my first s'more! We made it around a campfire in the backyard. It was really fun."

- Olivia, 11, has visited the McMurry family in Ithaca, NY for four summers

## CAMPING

82

Sharpe Reservation, in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley, is the home to five Fresh Air camps for boys and girls, ages 8 to 15, including Camp Anita Bliss Coler; Camp Hayden-Marks Memorial; Camp Tommy; Camp Hidden Valley and Camp Mariah. Camp Junior is The Fund's sixth camp in Harriman State Park. Sharpe Reservation is located on more than 2,000 acres of forests, lakes and trails, and has a model farm, environmental center, planetarium and adventure and ropes courses.

of the over 465 camp staff in 2019 were Fresh Air alumni.

In 2019, close to 3,000 boys and girls engaged in fun-filled recreational activities layered with experiential learning during two-week sessions. With counselors as mentors and role models, campers enjoyed swimming lessons, art and music, boating, hiking and team sports. Through immersive outdoor summer experiences, campers gain self-confidence, take on new challenges, develop life skills, make new friends and expand their perspectives. 2019 was the third year of Explorers, an innovative four-week summer learning program which offers a hands-on, project-based learning approach that provides an academic boost for sixth-grade students.

86%

of campers reported that they felt proud of developing skills, from swimming to public speaking.

In 2019, The Fund opened its sixth camp in Harriman State Park with a new perspective on the critical role camping can play in children's lives. Camp Junior, named in memory of Lesandro "Junior" Guzman-Feliz, a victim of gang violence, helps Bronx children develop skills in communication, empathy and conflict resolution. Camp Junior is a partnership with New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie; Palisades Interstate Park Commission and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

The Fund's Teen Leadership programs provide a safe, supportive environment for campers to focus on personal growth, leadership and community service. Girls, ages 13 to 17, participate in Leaders-in-Training and Counselors-in-Training (CIT) programs. In 2019, close to 200 campers were served through The Fund's Precious Center for Teen Leadership at Camp ABC. In addition to camp activities, the teens participate in leadership development, team-building and girls empowerment workshops.

In 2019, The Fund continued to focus on teen leadership for boys in its expanded CIT program. The program guides teens on the journey from camper to counselor. Centered on professional growth and self-exploration, young men develop leadership, team-building and communication skills.

92%

of Friendly Towns youth reported getting more comfortable meeting new people and making new friends.

85%

of parents/guardians report that their child has a strong support network because of the Friendly Towns Program.

## FRIENDLY TOWNS

In 2019, thousands of volunteer host families opened their hearts and homes to Fresh Air children from New York City's low-income communities. For one to two weeks in the summer, boys and girls, ages seven to 18, visit 265 Friendly Towns in rural and suburban communities along the East Coast and Southern Canada.

Many children return for extended visits with the same host families, year after year. The Friendly Towns Program brings people with different backgrounds together, and while celebrating their differences, they discover the many things they have in common.




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