

**American Camp Association**

**American Camp Association  
National Research Forum**

**Abstracts  
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**2014**

## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>Conference Program</b>	4
 <b>Abstracts in Book (Alphabetical Order by Author Name):</b>	
<b>Immersing Youth in a Summer Wellness 4-H Camp: Gardening, Culinary, Nutrition and Physical Activity</b> William Beckley and Ruth Litchfield, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach	7
<b>Lessons Learned in Utilizing ACA’s Youth Outcome Battery for Program Improvement</b> Marianne Bird, John Borba, Keith Nathaniel, Matthew Portillo, Rita Boyes, and Shannon Dogan, University of California Cooperative Extension	10
<b>OMK Camps Help Youth Develop Self-Efficacy to Deal with the Challenges of Military Deployments</b> Christy Clary and Theresa Ferrari, The Ohio State University Extension	13
<b>Bringing “Camp War Buddies” to the Home Front</b> Shay Dawson and Douglas Knapp, Indiana University	17
<b>Disability Specific Camp Experience: Results of a National Study</b> Mary Ann Devine, Kent State University and Shay Dawson, Bradford Woods	20
<b>Parent Perception of Changes in Children after Returning Home from Camp</b> Troy D. Glover, Steven Mock, and Roger C. Mannell, University of Waterloo, and Stephen Fine, Hollows Camp	23
<b>Evaluation of Safety, Camaraderie, and Satisfaction at the Hero’s Journey Program</b> Ann Gillard and Mathew Cook, The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp	26
<b>The Social Impact of a Summer Camp for Youth with Tourette Syndrome</b> Michael Griswold, University of New Hampshire	29
<b>Children’s Perceptions of Summer Day Camp Program Staff</b> Alice Hall and Alexius Coleman, Georgia Southern University	32
<b>Building “Survival Skills” among Children Living with HIV in Ethiopia: Results of the Camp Addis Outcomes Evaluation</b> Sarah P. Hiller, San Diego State University; Betelihem Belay, Worldwide Orphans Foundation; Kelly Collins, Reem Daffa, Kathleene Ulanday, Marc Emerson, San Diego State University; Steven Nagler, SeriousFun Children’s Network; and Thomas Novotny, San Diego State University	35
<b>Nurturing Theory of Change: An Exploratory Follow-up of the 2005 Program Improvement Process</b> Monya Jameson and Laurie Browne, California State University, Chico	38

	<b>Page</b>
<b>There was More Out There than our Street: Exploring a Structured Camp</b>	
<b>Curriculum as an Avenue for Fostering Civic Engagement and Social Capital</b> Tracy Mainieri, Illinois State University	41
<b>How a Summer at Camp Encourages Positive Personal and Professional Development among Camp Staff</b> Alicia McClain, Clemson University	45
<b>Teen Teamwork at Work</b> Cole Perry, University of Illinois	47
<b>Effect of Art and Sport Programs on Teamwork Skills and Perceived Competence among Day Campers</b> Mark F. Roark, Utah State University and Ann Gillard, Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, Julie Patterson and Kirsti Christensen, Utah State University	50
<b>Crunching Numbers and a Story in Pictures: Ways of Knowing and “Program Success”</b> Mary Rogers, Sherwood Forest Camp and Lauren Arend, Saint Louis University	53
<b>Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) Counselor and Parent Perception Versions</b> Jim Sibthorp, Troy Bennett, University of Utah, and M. Deborah Bialeschki, American Camp Association	56
<b>Life Inoculation: Examining the Relationship between Adventure Education Components and Resilience in Summer Camp Experiences</b> Sharon Tessneer and Debra J. Jordan, East Carolina University	59
<b>The Impact of Camp on Psychosocial Functioning of Children with Serious Illness</b> Shauna Tominey, Yale University	62

## **ACA 2014 Research Forum Schedule**

**Thursday, February 6, 2014:**

**9:00 am-10:15am (Educ #2) Camper Outcomes and Program Improvement**

**Moderator:** Karla Henderson

- **Lessons Learned in Utilizing ACA's Youth Outcome Battery for Program Improvement**  
Marianne Bird, John Borba, Keith Nathaniel, Matthew Portillo, Rita Boyes, and Shannon Dogan University of California Cooperative Extension
- **Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) Counselor and Parent Perception Versions**  
Jim Sibthorp, Troy Bennett, University of Utah, and M. Deborah Bialeschki, American Camp Association
- **Nurturing Theory of Change: An Exploratory Follow-up of the 2005 Program Improvement Process**  
Monya Jameson and Laurie Browne, California State University, Chico

**10:30-11:45am (Educ#3) Camp Outcomes and People with Disabilities**

**Moderator:** Ann Gillard

- **Disability Specific Camp Experience: Results of a National Study**  
Mary Ann Devine, Kent State University and Shay Dawson, Bradford Woods
- **The Impact of Camp on Psychosocial Functioning of Children with Serious Illness**  
Shauna Tominey, Yale University
- **The Social Impact of a Summer Camp for Youth with Tourette Syndrome**  
Michael Griswold, University of New Hampshire

**1:30 – 2:45pm (Educ #4) Camp Programs for Targeted Outcomes**

**Moderator:** Laurie Brown

- **Immersing Youth in a Summer Wellness 4-H Camp: Gardening, Culinary, Nutrition and Physical Activity**  
William Beckley and Ruth Litchfield, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
- **There was More Out There than our Street: Exploring a Structured Camp Curriculum as an Avenue to Fostering Civic Engagement and Social Capital**  
Tracy Mainieri, Illinois State University
- **14-21 OMK Camps Help Youth Develop Self-Efficacy to Deal with the Challenges of Military Deployments**  
Christy Clary and Theresa Ferrari, The Ohio State University Extension

**3:00- 4:15pm (Educ #5) Using Mixed Methods to Document Camp Value**

**Moderator:** Karen Carlson

- **Crunching Numbers and a Story in Pictures: Ways of Knowing and “Program Success”**  
Mary Rogers, Sherwood Forest Camp and Lauren Arend, Saint Louis University
- **Building “Survival Skills” among Children Living with HIV in Ethiopia: Results of the Camp Addis Outcomes Evaluation**  
Sarah P. Hiller, San Diego State University; Betelihem Belay, Worldwide Orphans Foundation; Kelly Collins, Reem Daffa, Kathleene Ulanday, Marc Emerson, San Diego State University; Steven Nagler, SeriousFun Children’s Network; and Thomas Novotny, San Diego State University
- **Evaluation of Safety, Camaraderie, and Satisfaction at the Hero’s Journey Program**  
Ann Gillard and Mathew Cook, The Hole In The Wall Gang Camp

**Poster Session, Friday, February 7, 9:30-10:30 am**

1. **How a Summer at Camp Encourages Positive Personal and Professional Development Among Camp Staff**  
Alicia McClain, Clemson University
2. **Lessons Learned in Utilizing ACA’s Youth Outcome Battery for Program Improvement**  
Marianne Bird, John Borba, Keith Nathaniel, Matthew Portillo, Rita Boyes, and Shannon Dogan University of California Cooperative Extension
3. **Exploring a Structured Camp Curriculum as an Avenue to Fostering Civic Engagement and Social Capital**  
Tracy Mainieri, Illinois State University
4. **Evaluation of Safety, Camaraderie, and Satisfaction at the Hero’s Journey Program**  
Ann Gillard and Mathew Cook, The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp
5. **The Social Impact of a Summer Camp for Youth with Tourette Syndrome**  
Michael Griswold, University of New Hampshire
6. **The Impact of Camp on Psychosocial Functioning of Children with Serious Illness**  
Shauna Tominey, Yale University
7. **Effect of Art and Sport Programs on Teamwork Skills and Perceived Competence among Day Campers**  
Mark F. Roark, Utah State University and Ann Gillard, Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, Julie Patterson and Kirsti Christensen, Utah State University
8. **Parent Perception of Changes in Children after Returning Home from Camp**  
Troy D. Glover, Steven Mock, and Roger C. Mannell, University of Waterloo, and Stephen Fine, Hollows Camp
9. **Psychosocial Outcomes Evaluation of a Residential Camp and Youth Club for Children Living with HIV**  
Sarah P. Hiller, San Diego State University; Betelihem Belay, Worldwide Orphans Foundation; Kelly Collins, Reem Daffa, Kathleene Ulanday, Marc Emerson, San Diego State University; Steven Nagler, SeriousFun Children’s Network; and Thomas Novotny, San Diego State University

- 10. Immersing Youth in a Summer Wellness 4-H Camp: Gardening, Culinary, Nutrition and Physical Activity**  
William Beckley and Ruth Litchfield, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
- 11. Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) Counselor and Parent Perception Versions**  
Jim Sibthorp, Troy Bennett, University of Utah and Deb Bialeschki, American Camp Association
- 12. Crunching Numbers and a Story in Pictures: Ways of Knowing and “Program Success”**  
Mary Rogers, Sherwood Forest Camp and Lauren Arend, Saint Louis University
- 13. Disability Specific Camp Experience: Results of a National Study**  
Mary Ann Devine, Kent State University and Shay Dawson, Bradford Woods
- 14. OMK Camps Help Youth Develop Self-Efficacy to Deal with the Challenges of Military Deployments**  
Christy Clary and Theresa Ferrari, The Ohio State University Extension
- 15. Teen Teamwork at Work**  
Cole Perry, University of Illinois
- 16. Life Inoculation: Examining the Relationship between Adventure Education Components and Resilience in Summer Camp Experiences**  
Sharon Tessneer and Debra J. Jordan, East Carolina University
- 17. Nurturing Theory of Change: An Exploratory Follow-up of the 2005 Program Improvement Process**  
Monya Jameson and Laurie Browne, California State University, Chico
- 18. Bringing “Camp War Buddies” to the Home Front**  
Shay Dawson and Douglas Knapp, Indiana University
- 19. Children’s Perceptions of Summer Day Camp Program Staff**  
Alice Hall and Alexius Coleman, Georgia Southern University

## **IMMERSING YOUTH IN A SUMMER WELLNESS 4-H CAMP: GARDENING, CULINARY, NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

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Progressively more youth are overweight or obese, mounting concern for the future health of Americans (Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2012). Overweight adolescents are more likely to be overweight or obese in adulthood and are at greater risk for chronic diseases (Magarey, Daniels, Boulton, & Cockington, 2003). Complications of overweight and obesity, such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, hypertension, and diabetes may be lessened by consumption of a healthier diet, specifically greater fruit and vegetable consumption (Bazzano, 2006).

Inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption occurs among all age groups, ethnicities, and gender (Yeh et al., 2008). Less than 10% of the US population meets fruit and vegetable recommendations, with the lowest levels of consumption among adolescents (Kimmons, Gillespie, Seymour, Serdula, & Blanck, 2009). As fruit and vegetable consumption decreases, a rise in solid fats, added sugars, and portion sizes tends to occur (Nielsen, 2003). Failure to meet nutrient needs provided by fruits and vegetables is of particular concern for youth's growth and development (Koletzko, de la Guéronnière, Toschke, & von Kries, 2004). The project goal was to immerse campers in a five day intervention focusing on nutrition, culinary, physical activity and gardening topics to improve health behaviors and construct a healthy lifestyle.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Multidimensional interventions are necessary to significantly influence consumption behaviors (Patrick & Nicklas, 2005). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has adopted the socio-ecological model for community-based interventions focused on chronic disease prevention and management. This model considers the complex interaction between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. Currently, we live in an environment promoting unhealthy lifestyles, requiring improvement on all levels of the model- individual, relationship and community (Brownell, Schwartz, Puhl, Henderson, & Harris, 2009). Education alone will not improve lifestyles (Krebs-Smith, Reedy, & Bosire, 2010), but a healthier, supportive environment may lead to behavior change (Story, Ark-Sztainer, & French, 2002). Therefore, interventions are needed to make healthier foods more available and accessible (Hood, Martinez-Donate, & Meinen, 2012). The socio-ecological model served as the framework for this project where a week-long camp incorporated experiential learning aimed at the individual, relationship and community environment.

### **Methods**

The Immersion in Wellness project was conducted at a Midwest State 4-H Center during the summer of 2012 and 2013. Youth attending camp the week of the intervention received experiential learning opportunities in gardening, culinary, nutrition, and physical activity (individual level). The experiential learning opportunities, physical activity, group meals and team building opportunities fulfilled the relationship level of socio-ecological model. Campers also received a take-home kit that included nutrition education publications, color-coded cutting boards, paring knife, vegetable brush, cook book, meat/refrigerator thermometers, and pedometer

to influence the family home environment (community level) after leaving camp.

Campers were recruited from two specific week-long camps at the 4-H Center, which included 9-18 year olds. Intervention weeks were randomly assigned among six weeks during summer of 2012 and two weeks during the summer of 2013. Data were collected from enrolled campers through multiple survey tools assessing nutrition knowledge, fruit and vegetable preferences, fruit and vegetable self-efficacy (belief in own ability to consume fruits and vegetables daily), dietary intake, and the home food and physical activity environment. Data on fifty-four intervention campers were examined for change in nutrition knowledge, fruit and vegetable preferences and fruit and vegetable self-efficacy using independent samples T-test, paired samples T-test, and Pearson's correlation coefficients. The level of significance  $p < 0.05$  was set for all results, while a trend was  $p \leq 0.10$ .

### **Results**

Campers ranged from 9-17 years with a fairly even distribution between male and female (43% and 57%, respectively). Baseline vegetable intake was positively correlated with baseline self-efficacy ( $r=0.38$ ,  $p=0.01$ ) and preferences ( $r=0.34$ ,  $p=0.01$ ); while a slight correlation at baseline was observed between self-efficacy and preferences ( $r=0.25$ ,  $p=0.07$ ). Knowledge was not correlated with self-efficacy, preferences or intake. Following camp, correlation between self-efficacy and preferences increased ( $r=0.28$ ,  $p=0.04$ ), while a slight correlation was also noted between self-efficacy and garden vegetable preferences ( $r=0.26$ ,  $p=0.06$ ).

Self-efficacy ( $p=0.00$ ) and knowledge ( $p=0.00$ ) scores improved significantly from baseline to post camp, although preferences did not. Males significantly improved their knowledge ( $p=0.04$ ) from baseline to post camp while a trend was observed in their self-efficacy ( $p=0.07$ ). Females significantly improved their knowledge ( $p=0.01$ ), self-efficacy ( $p=0.00$ ) and a trend was noted in females preferences ( $p=0.09$ ) from baseline to post camp. Following camp, females had significantly greater preferences ( $p=0.04$ ) compared to male campers. A trend was noted from baseline to post camp in 9-10 year olds garden vegetable preferences ( $p=0.09$ ), while 11-17 year olds significantly improved their self-efficacy ( $p=0.00$ ) and knowledge ( $p=0.00$ ) from baseline to post camp.

### **Discussion**

Campers with higher fruit and vegetable self-efficacy and preferences were more likely to consume vegetables at baseline; however, knowledge did not influence fruit and vegetable consumption. The Immersion in Wellness experience strengthened the connection between fruit and vegetable self-efficacy and preferences while significantly improving fruit and vegetable self-efficacy and knowledge. Although not significant, there were positive trends noted, males and females both increased nutrition knowledge and fruit and vegetable self-efficacy, while females also increased their fruit and vegetable preferences. The Immersion experience positively influenced the younger campers' vegetables preferences for the specific vegetables they were exposed to in the gardening, culinary, and nutrition lessons.

### **Camp Applications**

The camp experience provides an innovative approach and opportunity to provide experiential learning practices relative to health and wellness. Any camp offering youth programming could provide and benefit from this type of educational programming. These types of interventions can increase awareness, educate, and foster skills to promote fruit and vegetable

consumption among all individuals, especially youth. Utilizing camp staff in collaboration with community expertise in gardening, culinary and nutrition/health fosters a supportive learning environment without creating excessive strain on existing camp staff. Wellness programming can be integrated into pre-existing summer camp schedules.

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## **LESSONS LEARNED IN UTILIZING ACA'S YOUTH OUTCOME BATTERY FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**

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In 2007 the California 4-H Camping Advisory Committee published its first research report, *Beyond Evaluation: Findings from the California 4-H Camp Study* (Bird, et al., 2008). The two-year study used the framework and protocol developed by Youth Development Strategies, Inc. (Connell & Gambone, 2002) and adopted by American Camp Association (ACA) in their benchmark and program improvement study (ACA, 2006). It examined how youth experienced the camp environment and if camps were places where youth developed positive relationships with peers and adults, felt physically and emotionally safe, made decisions, and learned new skills. Like the ACA study, 4-H camps were provided benchmark data from year one and asked to create an improvement plan to implement the following summer when youth were surveyed again. *Beyond Evaluation* allowed 4-H to assess our strengths and weaknesses in how youth experience the camp environment, and it still informs the Advisory Committee's work in strengthening our camp programs.

In our second statewide study, the Advisory Committee was interested in assessing program impact on campers. We were curious about 4-H baseline measures and how youth outcomes could be improved through sharing data with camp administrators as was done in our first study. What components in the camp setting led to better outcomes, and how can we best work with camps to encourage program improvement? We also wanted to build on our understanding of how the 4-H camp experience varied for youth based on their age.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Through several projects, ACA has led the way in collecting and utilizing data to understand and improve the camp experience. Their initial outcomes study, *Directions* (ACA 2005), assessed campers' positive identity, social skills, physical & thinking skills, and positive values & spirituality. Today ACA supports camps with the American Camp Association Youth Outcomes Battery (ACA-YOB), a tool kit that enables camps to assess their impact on campers in 11 domains. Showing that camp creates positive youth outcomes—and helping camps provide an optimal experience—is clearly important to the field.

Youth Development Strategies, Inc. (YDSI) developed a Community Action Framework for Youth Development that provides organizations with a roadmap to improve their programs (Connell & Gambone, 2000). YDSI theory to improve youth experiences requires that a) you must change organizational practice, b) that such change requires structured and review by youth and staff, and c) reassessment of plans must occur after initial implementation. Both ACA and the California 4-H Camping Program have utilized YDSI's assessment tool and program improvement process in the past.

### **Methods**

The research team used the American Camp Association Youth Outcomes Battery (ACA-YOB) and determined which ACA-YOB components would be best to measure based on 4-H's

focus and philosophy. The team selected four: Teamwork, Interest in Exploration, Responsibility and Affinity for Nature. Teamwork and Responsibility were selected because teenagers, with guidance from adult partners, plan and deliver the program in California 4-H camps. Teens meet for several months prior to camp for planning, then serve in authentic leadership roles as camp staff. Interest in Exploration and Affinity for Nature were selected because of 4-H's emphasis on science, engineering and technology. Once identified, we created a survey derived from the ACA-YOB to measure these constructs, included demographic information (age, gender, camper or teen staff), and administered the survey in summer of 2012.

Seven California 4-H resident camps participated in the two-year study. Camps were 5-7 days long, included youth from both rural and urban communities, and each served about 100 youth (year one N=758; year two N=778). Research team members administered surveys on the last full day of camp. Data for each year was compiled into an Excel worksheet then analyzed in SPSS. Effect size was calculated using Cohen's d. The team analyzed data within and between camps programs, creating summaries for each camp, and generating a statewide overview of how 4-H camps fared in the four assessed outcomes.

In October 2012, three camps participating in the study sent teams to a weekend retreat to see first year data results for their camps and the state as a whole. Attendees included 4-H staff, volunteers, and teenagers responsible for leading their county camp programs. After exploring the data with the research team, the camps created action plans to promote positive change in one or more of the constructs. Four camps not sending teams also were given their 2012 data. Each camp team's choice and responsibility was to design and implement their plan for summer 2013.

In summer 2013, the research team again visited the seven camps, following the same protocol as in year one. The team explored year two data with participating camps and will conduct interviews with 4-H staff, adult volunteers and teen leaders, to learn if improvement plans were implemented and to help discern practices that led to program improvement, if any.

### **Results**

Year one data from the survey showed that youth generally enjoyed camp (mean 8.34 on a 10 pt. scale). The population was 57% female and 43% male, mostly between the ages of 10 and 14 (mode = age 12 at 20%), and 62% of participants were members of a 4-H club during the school year. Thirty-four percent were first-time attendees. Almost 23% of youth surveyed filled staff roles at camp.

Using the norming tables to compare data with other camps that have utilized the ACA-YOB, all seven camps combined scored in the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile for Teamwork and Responsibility constructs; the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for Interest in Exploration and Affinity for Nature. Teamwork and Responsibility constructs were consistently highest across all 4-H camps. Camps scored fairly consistently across constructs (e.g. camps that scored higher did so across all four constructs; likewise for camps that scored lower).

Teenagers who plan and deliver 4-H camping programs scored higher than younger youth on three of the four constructs, all but Affinity for Nature. Youth staff scored in the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile for both Teamwork and Responsibility, compared with campers who scored in the 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> percentile, respectively. These results parallel findings of the initial 4-H camp study documented in *Beyond Evaluation*--teen staff scored significantly higher than campers in almost

every construct. No differences were found between first-time attendees and other youth for any of the constructs.

Year two data did not show many significant differences from year one data, which indicated little change in youth outcomes across the four constructs. Hopefully some difference would be found. The research team questioned whether improvement plans were written and actually implemented. In a cursory survey, we found that two of the three camps that attended the weekend data sharing retreat did have a plan in place. For camps that did not send teams to the retreat, either the data did not reach appropriate leadership (due to volunteer or staff turnover), or, as one staff member observed, the data was met with skepticism when presented to the camp volunteers and teen staff. We plan to conduct interviews to explore further what, exactly, the challenges were in creating and delivering improvement plans, and to investigate the strategies of the camps that did implement a plan.

We did find a difference of moderate effect size between year one and year two data in three areas: age, role, and years at camp. These three items relate in that one must be a teenager to serve in a staff role, and older youth are more likely to have a longer tenure at camp. This finding supported our past study that the experience of serving as a teenager on camp staff was decidedly different—and in many ways, a richer youth development experience—than participating as a camper at 4-H camp.

### **Implications**

Since the goal of 4-H Camping Advisory Committee is not simply to add to the body of camp research, but also to help local 4-H camps improve their programs, the team was disappointed to find little change had occurred. Several reasons may account for the lack of investment from camps to make change: continuity or lack of leadership, reluctance to believe the data, time and energy to put into making a plan and seeing it through to completion. These reasons may be especially true in California 4-H camps and other camp settings where volunteers direct teens serve as staff. Our findings do support the theory of change Connell and Gambone prescribe. For change to happen, the organization—camp or otherwise—must review and be intentionally engaged in the data and improvement planning.

Our data supports findings from our first study. In California 4-H camps, age makes a difference in the outcomes for youth, and that of all who attend camp, teenage staff members benefit the most. Camps may want to look at ways to intentionally older youth in authentic leadership positions to optimize the outcomes for this population.

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## **OMK CAMPS HELP YOUTH DEVELOP SELF-EFFICACY TO DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES OF MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS**

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Military youth have unique challenges that set them apart from their peers. When a parent is deployed, they may experience more responsibilities at home, changes to everyday activities, and disruption of family routines (Knobloch, Pusateri, Ebata, & McGlaughlin, 2012); more stress (Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009; Gorman, Eide, & Hisle-Gorman, 2010); greater anxiety and emotional difficulties (Knobloch et al., 2012; Lester et al., 2010); increased behavior problems (Barker & Berry, 2009); and problems at school (Pfefferbaum, Houston, Sherman, & Melson, 2011; Richardson et al., 2011).

Attending a summer camp has been linked to multiple positive outcomes including growth in self-esteem, social skills, positive behaviors and attitudes, physical abilities, and creative thinking (Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2011; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). These positive youth development outcomes align with the suggestions made by Huebner and Mancini (2005, 2010) to help military youth cope with the negative outcomes of deployment. Thus, camps have become quite popular as a setting to conduct programming to address the unique needs of military youth. Operation: Military Kids (OMK), the U.S. Army's collaborative effort with 4-H to support youth who are impacted by deployment, has conducted camps in some states for as long as nine years. However, there has been limited research published on the specific outcomes related to participation.

In 2012 OMK camps intentionally targeted skills in four areas: self-efficacy, communication, coping, and social skills. Camp directors used multiple opportunities to embed these skills into the design of the camp environment and the activities. For example, as a way to enhance teamwork (i.e., social skills), various icebreakers and teambuilding activities were part of the opening day of camp. These fun activities were designed to create a welcoming environment that facilitates immediate belonging to the camp community. Other activities were specific to the military audience, such as devoting a portion of the program where military service personnel from different branches of the service have a structured time to interact with the campers. This aspect of the program was designed to communicate about military values and instill pride in being a military kid. Other aspects of military culture were more subtle such as service members teaching about flag reveille and retreat and staffing an operations tent.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study is based on self-efficacy theory. Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their capability to complete tasks (Bandura, 2006). A higher level of self-efficacy can improve an individual's ability to handle and adapt to challenging situations. Bandura (1997) identified four sources that influence the development of efficacious beliefs: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal or social persuasion, and one's emotional and physiological state.

Research about self-efficacy and youth self-efficacy is extensive, but limited studies have

looked at self-efficacy in a camp setting, and no known studies have looked at military youth's self-efficacy. The belief is that by increasing youth's self-efficacy toward the deployment-related communication, coping, and social skills, military youth will be more resilient in dealing with everyday issues and also with those stressors unique to having a parent serving in the military.

### **Methods and Analysis Procedures**

The purpose of this study was to explore to what extent participation in OMK camps affected military youth's self-efficacy for communication, coping, and social skills. A researcher-developed instrument was created because no existing instruments were available to measure the concepts of interest. In addition to demographic questions, the instrument contained items regarding communication (11 items), coping (17 items), and social skills (11 items) as they related to deployment. Two parallel forms were created, one for youth and the other for parents. Items for the military self-efficacy scale were developed based upon Bandura's (2006) *Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales*. Bandura (2006) recommended a 100-point response scale, but the instrument for this youth population used an 11-point scale as recommended by Muris (2001). The scale for all items was 0 – Not Confident, 5 – Moderately Confident, 10 – Highly Confident. Reliability coefficients ranged from .87 to .97. Additional open-ended questions were asked to gain further insight into perceptions of camp participation and its influence on the aforementioned skills.

The process for data collection used a modified version of Dillman's Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000). Data were collected using the Qualtrics web-based survey software. A retrospective post-pretest methodology was used to evaluate participants approximately three months after camp. The participants were military youth ( $n = 35$ ) who attended 2012 OMK camps in two states and their parents or guardians ( $n = 48$ ), for a 20% and 27% response rate, respectively. Paired  $t$ -tests for the post/pretest were conducted and the differences in responses were analyzed for both respondent groups.

### **Results**

Positive gains were seen across all three skill sets from both the youth and adult perspectives. Youth reported the largest increase in their self-efficacy for their communication skills (Grand  $M = 1.64$ ), followed by social skills (Grand  $M = 1.57$ ) and then coping skills (Grand  $M = 1.25$ ). The paired  $t$ -tests showed a significant difference across all but seven items, two each in communication and social, and three in coping. Adult respondents reported a similar pattern; they thought that youth showed the most improvement in their communication skills (Grand  $M = 1.65$ ), followed by social skills (Grand  $M = 1.57$ ), and then coping skills (Grand  $M = 1.41$ ). These paired  $t$ -tests showed that all items were statistically significant. Both youth and adults rated youth at or above the moderately confident level across every question on the military self-efficacy questionnaire.

Youth and adults both perceived the highest increase for youths' self-efficacy for communication skills. Youth reported the largest increase in their ability to tell others why they are proud to be from a military family. Adults reported the largest increases in their campers' ability to make and keep friends who are from a military family. Open-ended responses overwhelmingly supported that making new friends and seeing friends from previous years was one of the greatest benefits of attending a camp.

## Conclusions and Camp Applications

Overall, military youth and their parents felt that camp made a positive impact on campers' self-efficacy for communication, coping, and social skills as they related to deployment. The low response rate limits the generalizability of these findings, but the results are consistent with the literature on military youth, for example, regarding the presence of a caring adult (Lemmon & Chartrand, 2009) and the positive impact of the social connectedness youth feel with other military youth (Chandra, Lara-Cinisomo, Jaycox, Tanielian, Han, Burns, & Ruder, 2011; Huebner & Mancini, 2005; Mmari et al., 2010).

As previously noted, these camps were intentionally designed to foster the specific skills that were targeted in this study. We recommend that those who conduct camps for military youth should likewise strive to create an environment conducive for enhancing self-efficacy by providing opportunities for being with peers experiencing the same situations, designing embedded opportunities for skill building, and training for counselors and adult staff so they can foster a sense of pride, belonging, and camaraderie. These finding may also be useful to those working with other special populations in the camp setting.

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## **BRINGING “CAMP WAR BUDDIES” TO THE HOME FRONT**

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A qualitative assessment was conducted on two camps at Bradford Woods Outdoor Center to learn more about the psycho-social impact during and after residential camp experiences for youth with cancer and physical disability respectively. A growing body of evidence supports the notion that residential camp experiences provide psycho-social benefits for youth (Dawson, Knapp, & Farmer, 2012; Devine & Dawson, 2010; Meltzer and Rourke, 2005). However, less is known about the carry over impact of camp and some have suggested therapeutic gains diminish upon return to home environments (Moons, Budts, & Geest, 2006; Kiernan, Gormley, & MacLachlan, 2004). Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the psycho-social impact of the camp environment on youth with serious medical conditions as well as the potential carry-over impact in home communities post camp experience.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

The desire for social comparison opportunities is found in Festinger’s (1954) seminal theory of social comparison. Others have built upon Festinger’s work to apply this concept to explain the strong desire for individuals experiencing serious medical conditions to be in the company of peers with the same illness or disability (Gibbons and Bunk, 1999; Leventhal, Hudson, & Robitaille, 1997; Suls, Martin, & Leventhal, 1997). Feelings of comfort appear to result from these comparison cohorts of “similar others in illness”. The shared leisure experience for youth at medical specialty camps may provide a rare opportunity for youth to experience this valuable comparison opportunity.

### **Methods**

A phenomenological approach was utilized in both camps. Phenomenology seeks clarification and understanding of people’s perceptions and experiences, especially the meanings they give to events, concepts, and issues (Mabry, 2000). Three months post camp experience, campers from Camp Little Red Door (youth with cancer) and Camp Riley (youth with physical disabilities) were selected through convenience sampling. The interview process was initiated with general open-ended questions that did not cue the participant or influence their responses. The responses were transcribed verbatim for each subject and a phenomenological analysis was conducted (Creswell, 2007). This was accomplished through three steps. First, raw interview data were analyzed through identifying and coding categories of data. Second, emergent topic areas were identified from the clustering of similar coded memories through a constant comparison approach. Finally, these topic areas were reviewed by the author and a research assistant by analyzing the identified categories and checking against the original interview transcripts to confirm interpretations.

### **Results**

*Camp Little Red Door* is a one week residential camp designed for youth 8 -18 years old with cancer and their siblings. Eight campers participated in three month phone follow-up interviews resulting in four major themes: 1.) having a positive recollection of their camp experience, 2.) memories of specific activities, 3.) a sense of normalcy, and 4.) a strong response

to camp being a supportive community.

The positive affect toward the camp and the activities the campers experienced were couched in the most prolific recollections of the participants – social support. A strong community presence was communicated through the ability to relate to others while being surrounded by an empathetic environment. This recollection offers the depth of social support through one camper’s reference to peers as “camp war buddies”,

*“I know it’s weird to think but cancer changes everything...unless you have experienced it closely you cannot really get it...being around others who talk about it openly and hearing stories you can relate to...it creates a bond. My mom and dad always call camp friends our war buddies. I guess in a weird way it’s true.”*

Camp Riley is a one week residential camp designed for youth 8-18 years of age with physical disabilities. Twelve youth participated in post camp interviews yielding three themes: 1.) a vivid recollection of the activities related to the camp, 2.) a positive social experience, and 3.) disappointment over a lack of similar shared leisure experiences at home following the camp experience. The following quote acknowledges the salient point indicating a lack of opportunity for shared leisure experiences outside of the camp setting,

*“...just recently met somebody else who has a physical disability and is in a wheelchair, like me. Outside of camp, he’s the only one who I’ve met around this area that has a physical disability...”*

### **Implications**

The qualitative findings related to the theme of a supportive community found by both studies are consistent with other findings on the psycho-social benefits of medically specific camps (Dawson, Knapp, & Farmer, 2012; Devine & Dawson, 2010; Meltzer & Rourke, 2005). Findings from Camp Little Red Door provide evidence of social support found at camp through the phrase, “Camp War Buddies”.

Although the positive social support experience data is consistent across the two camps, the Camp Riley data adds one important finding. Despite the strong community that seemed to develop during the camp, participants were not happy with the lack of similar shared leisure experiences in their home communities. This finding provides breadth and depth to other studies that have found on-site changes yet little to no changes one or more months following a similar camp experience (Moons et al., 2006; Kiernan et al., 2004).

The camping industry must look at ways to bring this social comparison and support back to the areas where these children live. The authors feel that summer camp off season events should be developed to provide shared leisure experiences with other “camp war buddies”. Perhaps follow-on programming could be implemented through social networking sites designed for the camp community or camp reunions. In the case of Camp Riley, a year-round mentoring program is being implemented to provide positive upward social comparisons (Wood, 1989) from successful adult mentors with a similar diagnosis. In conclusion, the authors urge camps to find ways to extend the important social support influences of their programs back to the home front. The resulting impact could potentially help these camp war buddies fight their daily battles related to the social pressures of living with a childhood disability or illness.

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## **DISABILITY SPECIFIC CAMP EXPERIENCE: RESULTS OF A NATIONAL STUDY**

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Residential camp experiences provide unique opportunities for campers with disabilities to learn and improve skills for which they otherwise might not have a chance. For youth with disabilities, the community building aspect helps to connect and bond with others with disabilities who understand living life with a disability (Dawson, Knapp, & Farmer, 2012). Instead of campers being concerned with the “stigma contagion” that can occur in inclusive recreation settings (Gill, p. 41), disability-specific camps can offer “a strong sense of community and social belonging” (Goodwin & Staples, 2005, p. 167). According to Goodwin and Staples, being in an environment “where disability [is] the norm and not the exception” (p. 168) can lead the youth involved to express “feelings of acceptance, understanding, and a sincere connection to the other campers” (p. 169). While the trend over the past two decades has been for camps to move toward being more inclusive there continues to be a need for camps for youth and adolescents with disabilities (Dawson, et al., 2012; Goodwin & Staples).

Benefits of disability-specific camps are to have the opportunity to come together, share common experiences, and bond with their peers with disabilities (Dawson, et al., 2012; Goodwin & Staples, 2005). Studies have found that disability specific residential camps are one context in which youth with disabilities can experience social acceptance (Devine, Piatt, & Dawson, in review), interact and form bonds with others who have similar disabilities (Gill, 1997; Knapp, et al.), and gain an increased sense of quality of life (Devine et al.). Michalski, Mishna, Worthington, and Cummings (2003) found that campers in segregated camps tend to facilitate bonding, perceived competence in skills and fewer feelings of isolation. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the impact camps may have on social acceptance, camp connectedness, friendship skills, and perceived competence among youth with various disabilities.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

This study was grounded in social capital theory (Coleman, 1990) based on the notion that social capital is created when social ties are formed between individuals who have equal power among one another and share a common interest (Glover & Hemingway, 2005). According to Coleman (1990), social capital relies on one agency (i.e. specialized camp), creating one purpose (i.e. to build acceptance, competence, friendships with peers), with the outcome generalized other contexts or experiences (i.e. friendship development outside of camp). Camp offers a network of trust and similar experiences providing social capital within social structures that could motivate individuals to invest in relationships made at camp having a carry-over impact outside of the camp setting.

### **Method**

During the 2013 summer data were collected at specialized camps across the United States. A convenience sample of campers with between the ages of 8–18 who register for disability specific residential camps, were recruited for this study. Nineteen different camps agreed to participate and recruit campers for this study. Of the 19 camps, participants (N = 75)

attended 10 of these camps; nine camps had no campers who participated in this study.

Participants attended camps located throughout the U.S. They represented a variety of disability groups and gender distribution was males ( $n = 28$ ) and females ( $n = 47$ ). Participants completed the Social Acceptance Scale (Devine, 1997) and the Friendship, Perceived Competence, and Camp Connectedness sub-scales of the Camps Youth Outcomes Battery (ACA, 2011) at one week post camp experience and 12 weeks follow-up point.

### Results

Data were analyzed to determine whether engagement in camp had an impact on social acceptance, friendships, perceived competence, and camp connectedness immediately following and 12 weeks post camp experience. Statistical analysis was conducted with a .10 alpha  $p$ -value as the level of significance. Tests of averages were run for all scales examining scores across camps and disability groups. There was no statistical significance in totality for the scales, but examination of individual questions found significance for several items. For social acceptance, statistical significance was found for *Compared to camp I feel like I am a group member here* ( $M = 4.11$  post camp,  $M = 3.82$  follow-up;  $p = .100$ ) and *Compared to camp I have made friends with others that I can spend time with outside of the program* ( $M = 3.95$  post camp,  $3.62$  follow-up;  $p = .092$ ). These findings indicate that between the time camp ended and three months following camp, participants perceived a decrease in feeling like they are part of a group and having making friends they can spend time with outside of school or an organized program. The Friendship scale items resulted in statistical significance for four items: *I'm good at talking to friends about things* ( $M = 4.75$  post camp,  $5.10$  follow-up;  $p = .100$ ); *I'm good at enjoying being with friends* ( $M = 5.47$  post camp,  $5.74$  follow-up;  $p = .097$ ); *I'm good at listening* ( $M = 5.10$  post camp,  $4.95$  follow-up;  $p = .077$ ); and *I'm good at getting to know things about friends* ( $M = 5.01$  post camp,  $4.82$  follow-up;  $p = .021$ ). The Friendship scale resulted in mixed findings in that participants perceived that since camp they were better at talking to and being with friends, but reported a decrease in listening to friends and getting to know things about friends. The Perceived Competence scale yielded three items that were statistically significant: *I am good at taking care of myself* ( $M = 4.62$  post camp,  $5.15$  follow-up;  $p = .037$ ); *I am good at doing projects* ( $M = 4.68$  post camp,  $4.92$  follow-up;  $p = .036$ ); *I am good at thinking of new things to do in my free time* ( $M = 4.51$  post camp,  $4.80$  follow-up;  $p = .026$ ). Results from this scale demonstrated that campers perceived that since camp they were better at taking care of themselves, doing projects, and thinking of things to do in their free time.

### Implications

A growing body of evidence posits that disability specific camps are beneficial for youth with disabilities (Dawson, Knapp, Farmer, 2012; Devine & Dawson, 2010; Knapp, Dawson, Devine & Piatt, in press). The current study adds depth and breadth to understanding the exploring the impact of camp on perceptions of social acceptance, friendships, and competence. One result from the Social Acceptance and Friendship scales indicated that campers felt they were good at talking with and enjoying their peers, but less of a sense of belonging, getting to know peers, and having others with whom they could spend time with. Camp personnel may want to consider working with camper's community agencies or sponsoring agencies to communicate methods used at camp that promote a sense of belonging. For instance, some camps in this study used a peer buddy and mentoring system. Using a similar system in the

camper's home community (e.g., local recreation department, afterschool programs) may promote their sense of belonging or provide an opportunity for youth with and without disabilities to get to know each other. Previous studies have found that campers learn skills at camp. Findings from this study indicated that campers perceived several areas of increased competence since camp, in particular, self-care, doing projects, and thinking of things to do in their free time. Having opportunities to practice and use learned skills is important for all youth, but historically youth with disabilities have fewer options and opportunities for skill utilization. Advocating within the camper's home community is again an option camp personnel or the ACA could take to ensure utilization and generalization of skills. Additionally, active engagement in leisure is a health promotion issue according to the World Health Organization (WHOQOL), thus advocating for inclusive and separate recreation programs could be a position taken by professional organizations such as the ACA or sponsoring agencies.

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## **PARENT PERCEPTION OF CHANGES IN CHILDREN AFTER RETURNING HOME FROM CAMP**

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While proponents of summer camp advance the notion that camp provides participants with a transformative experience, the impact of camp beyond the setting in which it takes place remains understudied and unclear. Camp professionals do, of course, speculate that camp benefits their participants long-term, but, in making such a claim, their conjectures are premised on anecdotal evidence. Collecting empirical evidence of transfer, thus, is crucial to positioning camp as a genuine catalyst for positive youth development. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine the extent to which the skills, knowledge, and values that campers develop during their summer camp experiences transfer to their home, community, and school environment based on parental observations.

### **Literature Review**

When an individual learns something new from participating in an activity, transfer represents the application of that new knowledge, skill or value position in a different setting. Transfer is not a *fait accompli*. In formal education settings, for example, students learn information, but often fail to transfer it to real world contexts. Though capable of doing so, they often choose not to do so, because they do dislike the subject and have no interest in applying their new knowledge to their daily lives. Not surprisingly, then, Pugh and Bergin (2003) found transfer is directly related to motivation. When a young person feels a greater sense of self-concept as a result of skills transferring from one activity to another, he or she is more likely to be committed and perhaps even motivated to improve that skill (Hautala, 1988). Presumably camp, because of its focus on intrinsic learning, provides a learning environment that encourages campers to retain and use the knowledge they gained from their experiences.

Summer camp experiences are short lived, however, which may affect their transferability. If positive development outcomes do result from these brief experiences, then, understanding what, if anything, transfers from camp to other settings is important to assist camps in better planning and structuring their program offerings to support optimal youth development. It is not enough for camps to simply provide opportunities for positive developmental outcomes for youth and *hope* these outcomes continue to affect their campers after camp is over. Camps need to understand what, if any, outcomes transfer and adjust or improve their programs accordingly to facilitate optimal developmental growth opportunities beyond the camp experience.

### **Method**

This study reports findings from Phase Three of the Canadian Summer Camp Research Project (see Glover, et al., 2013), a national study aimed at examining the outcomes children experience after participating in a summer camp program. For Phase Three, a survey instrument was developed to determine changes in attitudes or behaviour that parents noticed since their children returned from camp. Demographic information was collected about parents, as well as information about their child. In total, data were collected from 1,405 parents, predominately from two-parent (80%) households with an average family income of \$110,000 to \$119,000. Age

was re-coded into four incremental groups according to camper's approximate grade school levels: Pre-K to K (4-6 years), Grades 1 to 3 (7-9 years), Grades 4 to 6 (10-12), and High School (13-18). The average age group was 7-9 year olds. Nearly half (49%) of the campers were girls. Regarding returning campers, 64% attended the same camp as the year before. Regarding length of stay, 16% participated for less than a week, 46% for one week, 16% for 2 weeks, and 22% for more than 2 weeks. Over 110 different Canadian summer camps were reported by parents. The regional dispersion throughout Canada was: Western (18%), Central (23%), Ontario (41%), Quebec (12%), and Atlantic (6%). Program types included: residential (49%), day (21%), religiously-affiliated (16%), those designed for children with special needs (3%), and specialty (i.e. science, language, music, sport) (11%).

Five outcome areas were explored: (1) social integration and citizenship; (2) environmental awareness; (3) attitudes towards physical activity; (4) emotional intelligence; and (5) self-confidence and personal development. Among the five key outcome areas, parents were asked to rate statements based upon changes, if any, noticed in their child since leaving summer camp. Each item was scored so that a higher number indicated a stronger agreement (1= very strongly disagree, 6= very strongly agree). *Social Integration and Citizenship* (SOC INTG & CTZHP) was a scale comprised of 3 items regarding camper's ability to stay in touch with camp friends and/or staff and their sense of membership or belonging to the camp's broader community ( $\alpha = 0.70$ ). *Environmental Awareness* (ENV AWR) was assessed in response to camper's ability to demonstrate more environmentally friendly behaviors and interest in outdoor activities since leaving camp. The two variables were strongly correlated,  $r(1121) = .73$ ,  $p < .001$ . *Attitudes towards physical activity* (PHYS ACT) was a scale comprised of 3 items regarding camper's involvement in more physically active pursuits at home, school, and/or community contexts since returning from camp ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ). *Emotional intelligence* (EMO INTL) was a scale comprised of 4 items regarding camper's ability to better understand their own emotions and demonstrate sensitivity towards feelings of others ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ). *Self-confidence and personal development* (SLF CONF & PER DVPMT) was a scale comprised of 4 items regarding camper's independence and ability to deal with challenges after attending camp ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ).

### Results

Parents perceived positive development in all five key outcome areas. Detailed analysis further revealed that gender and age were positively associated with changes in attitudes and behaviour. At the  $p < .05$  level, a one-way ANNOVA revealed no significant association between age and ENV AWR,  $F(3,1112) = 1.02$ ,  $p > .05$ ; nor PHYS ACT,  $F(3,1060) = 3.50$ ,  $p > .05$ . However, age differed significantly among SOC INTG & CTZHP,  $F(3, 1128) = 36.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ; EMO INTL,  $F(3, 1059) = 5.13$ ,  $p < .01$ ; and SLF CONF & PERS DVPMT,  $F(3,1101) = 1.89$ ,  $p < .05$ . Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that for SOC INTG & CTZHP, the 13-18 ( $M=4.46$ ) age group experienced significantly higher change than the 10-12 ( $M= 4.01$ ) age group, which both experienced significantly higher change than the 4-6 ( $M = 3.43$ ) and 7-9 ( $M= 3.58$ ) age groups. For EMO INTL, the 10-12 ( $M= 3.88$ ) age group experienced significantly higher change than the 4-6 ( $M = 3.55$ ), 7-9 ( $M= 3.55$ ), 10-12 ( $M=3.64$ ) age groups. For CONF & PERS DVPMT, changes in age groups did not statistically differ from one another; 4-6 ( $M = 3.90$ ), 7-9 (3.91), 10-12 (3.98), and 13-18 ( $M=4.12$ ).

With respect to gender, the t-test conducted revealed statistically significant differences between boys and girls in SOC INT & CTZSHP,  $t(1074.75) = -2.73$ ,  $p < .01$ , with girl campers ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ) receiving higher scores than boy campers ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). However, there were no significant differences between boys and girls in ENV AWR,  $t(1066.99) = -.008$ ,  $p = .993$ ; PHYS ACT,  $t(1017.98) = .177$ ,  $p = .860$ ; EMO INTL,  $t(1014.35) = -.587$ ,  $p = .558$ ; and SLF CONF & PERS DVPMT,  $t(1055.39) = .774$ ,  $p = .440$ .

### Discussion

While the outcomes in the five domains of development examined were found to vary to some extent depending on differences among campers based on gender and age, it was very clear that all campers regardless of these differences experienced positive outcomes and growth. As a result, we feel confident in stating that Canadian summer camps of at least a week's duration provided, to some degree and for most children, an immersive experience that promoted development in five key outcome areas. According to parents, in other words, positive changes in attitudes and behavior continued or maintained after camp. This finding aligns with previous Canadian summer camp research which found that learning transferability to daily life contexts can be traced back to the experiences that took place at camp (Fine, 2005).

With respect to differences in age, it is conceivable that older campers showed the greatest change in development because, with greater maturity and social experience, they were able to adapt to new situations with greater ease. Nevertheless, all four age groups examined were found to experience significant positive change, thereby providing good evidence that children continue to develop with subsequent camp experience. With respect to gender, though societal gender expectations may encourage girls to demonstrate more caring behavior through greater interpersonal skills, camp directors and programming staff may wish to consider ways to foster greater social integration/citizenship at camp among boys.

All told, the findings provide camp directors and programming staff with insights useful for design innovations and developments. Given evidence that important developmental outcomes can be achieved through Canadian summer camp participation, marginalized groups and children from social/cultural backgrounds where camping is not a tradition could be identified so that outreach efforts can be accordingly made. Follow-up research could offer additional insights into the influence of the camp experience on development among children from various backgrounds that differ in terms of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, etc.

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## **EVALUATION OF SAFETY, CAMARADERIE, AND SATISFACTION AT THE HERO'S JOURNEY PROGRAM**

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The purpose of this study was to understand the two outcomes of “safety” and “camaraderie,” and participants’ satisfaction with the Hero’s Journey program activities. Hero’s Journey is a program of The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp that is a free-of-charge wilderness-based summer camp program for youth aged 16-18 living with serious and life-threatening illnesses. The Hero’s Journey program engages participants through value-forming challenges, and teaches skills such as positive communication, self-reliance, and decision-making. Major activities include wilderness first aid training, mock search and rescue, teambuilding challenges, and personal reflection.

As a developmentally-appropriate and challenging extension of the traditional camp program, in 2013, Hero’s Journey served 67 adolescents aged 16-18 in groups of 11-17 over five sessions of 7 days each. One nurse, five counselors, two program administrators, and two or three volunteers supervised each session of Hero’s Journey. Participants were youth living with hemophilia, sickle cell, HIV/AIDS, cancer, and metabolic disease. As in the traditional Hole In the Wall Gang camp, the four guiding values of the Hero’s Journey program were safety, camaraderie, possibility, and appreciation. This study focuses on two of the values, safety and camaraderie, as outcomes of the Hero’s Journey experience.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Camps have been shown to be places that are physically (Erceg, Garst, Powell, & Yard, 2009) and emotionally safe (Ehrenreich-May & Bilek, 2011), which is crucial for supporting the camp experience of youth with serious illness. Camps can also provide youth with chronic illness a sense of camaraderie, belonging, and connectedness (e.g., Woods, Mayes, Bartley, Fedele, & Ryan, 2013). Using Developmental Systems Theory as a foundation for understanding the interactions between youth and their environments, in this study, camp was situated as a system that could contribute to youths’ individual potential becoming fully expressed in these outcome areas (Damon & Lerner, 2008; Lerner & Castellino, 2002). The Hero’s Journey program theory contained key elements of the Developmental Systems Theory notion of “fit”: activities and experiences that were developmental-stage appropriate, interesting, and engaging, and that provided support via interactions with caring adults and peers, and opportunities for building competence.

The purpose of the evaluation was to understand the two outcomes of “safety” and “camaraderie,” and participants’ satisfaction with the Hero’s Journey program activities. The evaluation questions were:

1. Are the outcomes and program satisfaction scales reliable?
2. Is there a difference in outcomes for youth who were more or less satisfied with the program activities?
3. Does program satisfaction predict outcomes?

4. What elements of the Hero's Journey program relate to the outcomes of safety and camaraderie?

### **Methods**

Parent or caregiver consent was obtained for 38 of the 67 Hero's Journey participants. Participants completed the questionnaires on their last evening at camp, using the iPad QuickTap Survey app. Campers who had consent to participate used one iPad, and those without consent used another. Only results from the 38 participants with consent are reported.

A collaborative approach toward scale creation included conversations and review with key program staff. Five quantitative questions comprised the outcome scale of "safety." Examples of questions included "I felt safe at Hero's Journey;" "Getting around Base Camp was easy for me;" and; "I trusted the nurses to take care of me." Six quantitative questions comprised the outcome scale of "camaraderie." Examples of questions included "I got along with other people in the group;" "I felt respected at Hero's Journey;" and; "I felt like I belonged at Hero's Journey." Seventeen questions focused on program activity satisfaction. Four open-ended questions comprised the qualitative portion of the questionnaire and focused on suggestions for program improvement, favorite moments, and engaging in unexpected experiences.

Data analysis involved three parts, using a concurrent triangulation strategy to confirm quantitative and qualitative findings of data (Creswell, 2003). First, quantitative data related to the 11 camper outcome items were analyzed to describe the data and to determine the reliability of the scales. Additionally, quantitative data related to 17 program satisfaction items were analyzed to describe the data and to determine the reliability of the scale. Differences between youth who were above and below the mean of the program satisfaction scale were compared using t-tests. Relationships between the variables were examined with regression. Second, qualitative analysis involved coding the responses to the four open-ended questions and generating themes across the open-ended responses that related to safety and camaraderie. Third, both forms of data were examined for converging patterns of relationships between outcome- and satisfaction-related data (Greene, 2007), and moderately strong convergence emerged.

### **Results**

The mean of the safety outcome scale was 4.84 ( $SD = .57$ ), and the mean of the camaraderie scale was 4.5 ( $SD = .6$ ), both out of 5. The mean of the satisfaction scale was 3.48 ( $SD = .32$ ) out of 4. The alpha reliability coefficient was acceptable for the safety scale ( $\alpha = .78$ ), the camaraderie scale ( $\alpha = .74$ ), and the activity satisfaction scale ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

There was a significant relationship between program satisfaction and the outcome of safety,  $r = .57$ ,  $p < .001$ , and between satisfaction and the outcome of camaraderie,  $r = .65$ ,  $p < .001$ . Youth who were above the mean of activity satisfaction had higher safety scores ( $M = 4.89$ ,  $SE = .05$ ), than those who were below the mean ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SE = .16$ ). This difference,  $.51$ ,  $CI [-.86, -.16]$  was significant  $t(35) = -2.97$ ,  $p < .005$ , representing a medium effect,  $d = .73$ . Youth who were above the mean of activity satisfaction had higher camaraderie scores ( $M = 4.85$ ,  $SE = .06$ ), than those who were below the mean ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SE = .15$ ). This difference,  $.69$ ,  $CI [-1, -.36]$  was significant  $t(35) = -4.16$ ,  $p < .001$ , representing a large effect,  $d = 1.03$ .

Program satisfaction significantly predicted safety,  $b = .5$ ,  $F(1, 36) = 17.3$ ,  $p < .001$ , with an overall regression model fit of  $R^2 = .32$ . Program satisfaction significantly predicted camaraderie,  $b = .65$ ,  $F(1, 36) = 26.3$ ,  $p < .001$ , with an overall regression model fit of  $R^2 = .42$ .

Across the four open-ended questions, three themes of safety (n = 65) were self-discovery, physical challenges (especially through the Tower activity), and helping others (especially through the Mock Rescue activity). Two themes of camaraderie (n = 45) were appreciation for peer connections and wanting even more peer connections. These qualitative findings support the use of Developmental Systems Theory to understand Hero's Journey as a developmental experience, and the proximity of the themes to various program activities in the qualitative responses connected campers' levels of satisfaction to developmental outcomes.

### **Camp Applications**

Hero's Journey provided strong opportunities for feelings of safety and camaraderie, especially for those who reported higher satisfaction with program activities. This is particularly important for young adults living with a serious or life-threatening illness who otherwise have limited opportunities to have these experiences in their everyday lives. This study contributes to the literature by articulating connections between camp program activities and youth outcomes.

The Mock Rescue and Tower were frequently mentioned in open-ended responses and were ranked as highly satisfactory program activities that appeared to be major drivers of youth outcomes. Additionally, the Key Ceremony provided an intensive self-reflection opportunity that further enhanced the outcomes of safety and camaraderie. Program staff should continue these activities, consider how these activities contain essential program features that drive participants' outcomes, and integrate similar features (i.e., challenge by choice, emotional and physical safety, connections with others) into other program activities.

Still, most participants would not change anything about the experience and identified many safety- and camaraderie-related outcomes as they explained the outcomes' meanings in their lives. Program staff should consider providing even more physically and emotionally safe opportunities for participants to get to know each other more deeply and to share their experiences, which could also enhance their feelings of camaraderie. Through structured relationship-building activities, Hero's Journey can continue to intentionally program for participants' transformational experiences as youth build capacity, character, and community.

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## **THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF A SUMMER CAMP FOR YOUTH WITH TOURETTE SYNDROME**

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Like many young people, youth with Tourette Syndrome (TS) experience a number of social challenges that impact their quality of life. As a genetically inherited neurological disorder, youth with TS experience common symptoms such as involuntary verbal and motor tics. Research studies examining the impact of these tics have consistently reported that these youth are commonly misjudged, bullied and teased, and are likely to experience depression and anxiety as result of their symptoms (Cutler et. al., 2009; Zinner et. al, 2012; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007). To date, there are limited resources available suggesting where youth with TS can go for help and how they can potentially work through and overcome their social challenges.

Within the past decade, a number of well-publicized research studies have reported that summer camps serve as a setting for producing positive social outcomes. These outcomes include, but are not limited to, developing friendship skills, improved positive identity, increased self-esteem, and the ability to connect with others (ACA, 2005; Henderson et. al., 2007; Garst & Bruce, 2003; Dworken, 2001). In addition to these studies, research reports focusing on segregated summer camps, which offer programs exclusively for specific populations (i.e., people with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses), yielded similar outcomes such as developing positive social identity, social acceptance, and establishing meaningful friendships (Goodwin and Staples, 2005; Conrad & Altmaier, 2009; Gillard & Watts, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the social outcomes experienced at a camp specifically designed for youth with TS. With this study being the first of its kind, the researcher's objectives were to report what the youth felt as part of their experience at camp and how their experience could present valuable implications for future research.

### **Methods**

Forty-four campers attended a TS camp this past summer. Of this total, eighteen youth ages ten to seventeen took part in this study. Seventeen of these participants shared a confirmed diagnosis of TS and one shared a diagnosis of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), a common co-existing condition of TS. A phenomenological research design was employed to discover the social outcomes for these youths attending camp. Data collection methods involved ten one on one interviews with adult staff members (seven had TS), five focus groups with campers, and participant observations. Data analysis for this study consisted of multiple rounds of open coding (Creswell, 2007) and the horizontalization of significant statements shared by the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Three methods for data collection allowed the researcher to triangulate the data and draw stronger connections between emerging themes.

### **Results**

One of the most evidential themes that emerged from this study was the youths realizing that they were **“not alone”**. The majority of the campers participating in this study commented,

“I thought I was the only one with Tourette’s”. For many campers attending camp, this was the first time that they had ever met someone else with the disorder. As *Alicia* stated, “I thought I was isolated to only having Tourette’s so I always use to think oh my goodness, I’m the only one... What am I going to do? No one will accept me. And then I came here... its really nice to know that I’m not alone.” *Chris*, one of the oldest campers, commented on the broader impact of his experience by stating, “My opinion is there is no better way to feel better about yourself than to talk to kids who have the same problems than you and it makes you feel again like you’re not alone... I feel like anybody can benefit from that kind of thing no matter what.”

A second prominent theme that emerged throughout the study was the feeling of **self-assurance** at camp. Many campers commented “I can be myself here”. As an extension to this theme, numerous campers indicated that they commonly felt that they needed to hide and suppress their tics outside of camp. *Nicole* commented on her experience by stating, “I feel free to be myself. This is like home [camp] and when I have to go back to Washington, it’s probably one of the worst feelings ever because then I know that I keep like holding in my tics and that’s one of the worst feelings. I can actually be free here”. *Benjamin* adds, “It makes me feel like I’m wanted like I won’t have to worry about my tics or people staring at me. It makes me feel like I’m just normal”.

A last major theme that emerged was the feeling of **hope** as result of the youths meeting older camp counselors with TS. Like many of the campers, *David* felt strongly that meeting older counselors with TS helped him to realize that things get easier living with the disorder. He states, “It feels like there’s a bit hope like I can get through this. I can just push myself, pull myself together and just get through this.” *Christy* added, “It’s so nice because they’re tics aren’t as bad. It gives me hope that my Tourette’s won’t be as bad when I’m older. And it gives me hope that they are so poised and so mature in their Tourette’s and they’re successful and that gives me hope definitely.”

### **Discussion and Applications to Camp**

As seen in this study, this specific TS camp allowed the campers to develop meaningful relationships with fellow campers and adults living with TS. As explained by the campers, the opportunity for this type of social interaction is very limited outside of their camp experience. As a foundational study examining TS and camp, the positive social outcomes that were discovered suggest the need for producing greater awareness and public support for how camp can be a valuable resource for individuals and families affected by TS. In building support from this study and continued research, it will help to develop more opportunities for making camp programs more accessible for this population.

Although this study maintained an intentionally atheoretical approach, the findings relate to existing youth development theories that are applicable to the camp environment. One particular theory that relates to this study is Alfred Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory. As part of this theory, it explains how people acquire new or differing attitudes through the observations of others within a particular environment. This concept was seen to apply to the youths in this study as they developed new attitudes and behaviors as result of meeting and observing others with TS at camp. This observational and relational exchange within the camp environment

helped the youths to develop greater levels of confidence and optimism for how they perceive their disorder.

A second theory that applied to this study is the Relational Culture Theory (RCT) as seen in a previous camp study by Spencer, Jordan, Sazama (2005). In conceptualizing the importance of meaningful relationships in camp, the researcher's offer that the RCT contributes to the "well-established link between strong relationships with adults and better psychological health in young people" (p. 355). This concept shares a distinct connection in demonstrating the positive social outcomes that existed between the youths with TS and their older camp counselors. This connection indicates that current and future camp professionals working with youths with TS should be mindful of the importance that older counselors have in shaping not only the camp experience, but also the youth's outlook on living with their disorder.

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## **CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF SUMMER DAY CAMP PROGRAM STAFF**

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Due to the number of working two parent and single parent families, children need care when school is not in session. Safety and support for working families are two positive outcomes for children but after school and summer programs also contribute to academic gains and a reduction in misconduct (Afterschool Alliance, 2013). Researchers are continually studying the quality of after school and summer camp programs related to child outcomes. *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success* (Peterson, 2013) provides evidence that quality summer learning and after school programs make a positive difference in youth, families, schools, and communities. In 2005, the American Camp Association published the first large scale national research project to study the youth development outcomes of the camp experience. Children between the ages of 8 and 14 years from 80 ACA accredited day and resident camps participated in the study. Results indicated that the camp experience was a positive influence on youth development in four domains (i.e., positive identity, physical and thinking skills, social skills, and positive values and spirituality). Our study adds to the literature and examines the psychosocial relationship between children and program staff at a summer day camp from the viewpoint of the children enrolled and based on program observations.

The purpose of this research was to assess if children's psychosocial perceptions of program staff changed over time, and if children's perceptions were related to program quality. A summer day camp operating in one elementary school facility by a parks and recreation program in South Georgia for nine weeks in the summer of 2013 was selected to participate as a convenience sample. All of the approximately 160 children, grades Pre-K to grade 5, who were enrolled in this summer day camp were asked to participate in the study via an email sent to parents from the summer camp director, and face-to-face requests at drop off and pick up times.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

The interest in children's perceptions comes from the body of research on quality of care as measured or observed in assessing the process variable of staff/child interactions. Process variables, such as staff/child interactions and program environment, are often difficult to measure and hard to change. Observational measures, where the researcher assesses the quality of the interactions using an observation tool, is one way of determining the quality of interactions, but children can also provide valuable information on their daily experiences while attending day camp. The early childhood literature places significant emphasis on the use of guidance to nurture children's positive potential with friendly but firm interactions. Gartrell's (2012) years of work in conjunction with the National Association with Young Children has focused on the importance of a guidance, rather than punishment, as a method of behavior management. The guidance philosophy focuses on the whole child and the importance of facilitating development in all domains and helping children develop democratic life skills. After school accreditation standards focus on developing positive human relationships including staff/child, child/child, and staff/parent relationships. The American Camp Association research also focuses on the social

domain of development. Our research study is focused on assessing children's perception of a positive, rather than negative, relationship with program staff. The results can help with staff training as staff members learn to use positive guidance as a behavior management tool in addition to evaluating the quality of staff/child relationships.

### Methods

Child survey data were collected two times during the summer of 2013 on Weeks Five and Eight, using a scale developed by the principal investigator called *My View of Program Staff*. The survey was used in a similar study of after school programs, rather than a summer day camp (Hall & Dilworth, 2005). Construct validity and reliability tests were conducted on the instrument in 2005. The Cronbach's alpha reliability co-efficient was .81 for all 13 items. In the 2005 study, it was administered to children in kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade in 11 after school programs. In our study the Cronbach's alpha reliability co-efficient was .83 for Week 5 and Week 8 data combined, and .76 for Week 5 and .78 for Week 8. The age range was similar to the 2005 study but the time period was different, after school versus summer and afternoons versus all day in the summer. Both studies indicated the scale was reliable.

The 13 question survey took about 10 minutes to complete. The survey was completed by 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> graders independently and read individually to Pre-K, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. The survey was administered between swim and field trips by two researchers. An example of one question is; "Most program staff seem to care that I am here." The children circled a number between 1 and 5 with 1 = never and 5 = always. The 13 questions were designed to understand a child's range of feelings about program staff from feeling welcome, being strict, yelling, learning new skills, and knowing what children like to do at summer camp. In Week Five,  $N = 103$  children completed the survey, which was 64% of children enrolled. In Week Eight,  $N = 81$  children completed the survey, 56% of children enrolled. A total of 56 matched sets of Week 5 and Week 8 surveys were completed. Parents were able to enroll children from week to week therefore not all children attended the entire 9 week period.

A program observation was also completed in Weeks Five and Eight within three days of collecting child survey data. The observation was completed by the two researchers for a minimum of 2 hours. The researchers used the Indiana Afterschool Standard Program Observation Tool (2012-2013). The purpose of these standards is to assess the quality of after school programs. The tool was developed by the Indiana Afterschool Network and the Indiana Department of Education using the National Afterschool Association (NAA; 1998) as a framework. The Indiana standards are on a 5 point scale with 0 = Not applicable and 4 = Exceeds. The researchers rated 103 standards in the following sub categories: Human Relationships, Indoor and Outdoor Environments, Programming and Activities, and Safety, Health, and Nutrition. Human relationships was of greatest interest in our study.

### Results

Overall, children had a more positive than negative perception of program staff. The overall mean on the *My View* scale was 3.42 (based on the 5-point scale) on Week Five and 3.34 on Week 8 indicating a small decrease. A paired samples  $t$  test between Weeks Five and Eight ( $N=56$ ) found no significant differences on any questions. An independent samples  $t$  test found no statistically significant gender differences on the *My View* scale. The girls overall mean on the 13 questions was 3.46 and for boys was 3.26. The Pre-K and Kindergarten grades had the highest

mean (3.61) on the scale while the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades had the lowest (2.9), but was not statistically significant. The observation mean on the human relationships sub-category of 29 questions was 2.89 for Week 5 and 2.39 on Week 8. These means indicated that the summer camp still needed some work on developing human relationships to exceed the standard, although they did get better as the summer progressed.

### **Implications**

The *My View* scale has strong construct validity as well as relevance and utility in understanding staff/child relationships from the perspective of the child enrolled in a day camp. Gender does not appear to be a factor in developing positive relationships with children. There does appear to be a difference in how children rate relationships with staff based on age. The Pre-K mean was close to 5 which would indicate a very positive perception of program staff. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades mean was closer to an average (i.e., not too positive or too negative) perception of program staff. The child survey can be used as a staff training tool to help program staff understand how to build positive relationships with children in all grades Pre-K to Grade 5 using the guidance philosophy. For example, program staff may need to work hard to build positive relationships with older school-age children who have attended summer camp for 4-5 previous summers. Older children are less likely to believe they need to attend camp while their parents are working. The 13 questions fall into three general categories; children's overall perceptions of the psychosocial climate, program supervision and interaction with children, and behavior management and guidance techniques. Staff training should focus on all three categories. Specific guidance tips can be given as alternatives to yelling and being overly strict. Supervision should also focus on program staff talking to children more than to other staff. Building relationships involve skills such as children being able to talk to staff about problems and problems with friends. Staff can also consider guiding programming by helping children learn new skills and decide what they like to do while at camp. Overall, it was important to find that the children's perception of program staff was consistent from Week Five to Week Eight as well as across gender. More work may be necessary to address age differences.

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## **BUILDING “SURVIVAL SKILLS” AMONG CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV IN ETHIOPIA: RESULTS OF THE CAMP ADDIS OUTCOMES EVALUATION**

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Since 1988, *SeriousFun Children’s Network’s* (SeriousFun) has organized camps for children with serious illnesses. Researchers have found that these camps enhance resilience and emotional wellbeing (Kiernan, Gormley, & MacLachlan, 2004; Tominey, Pietrzak, Noulas, Southwick, & Mayes, 2012). In 2007, SeriousFun adapted their camp model to serve children living with HIV (CLHIV) as the *Global Partnership Program* (GPP). SeriousFun implements Camp Addis in Ethiopia in partnership with Worldwide Orphans Foundation (WVO). Counselors use child-centered, intentional programming based on concepts of therapeutic recreation to achieve the following expected outcomes, identified collaboratively with camp staff: (1) Gaining HIV life skills through improved understanding of HIV, antiretroviral therapy (ART), and stigmatization; (2) improving confidence and resilience by trying new things in a supportive environment; and (3) promoting social skills and connections with peers and caring adults who can provide HIV-related support. WVO also holds a Youth Club as follow-up for some camp attendees, combining recreational activities with tailored health education.

This research aims to assess changes in these outcomes among Camp Addis and Youth Club attendees’ from before to after attending camp in 2012, as they relate to risk and protective factors of resilience and ART adherence.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

The Model of Adolescent Resilience, adapted by Ahern from Rew & Horner’s model, provides a conceptual framework for our analysis. Ahern defines resilience as a process or personality trait that helps children successfully overcome challenges. The framework dictates that resilience is influenced by individual and sociocultural risk and protective factors, which may also influence each other. Interventions may target changing risk and protective factors to affect resilience, or directly promote resilient behaviors and attitudes (Ahern, 2006; Rew & Horner, 2003). We also used elements of the Pediatric ART Adherence Framework to identify CLHIV-specific evidence-based influences on children’s and caregivers’ medication behaviors (Haberer & Mellins, 2009). These two complementary frameworks overlap in multiple domains.

CLHIV experience extensive physical health challenges, psychological issues, and endure the effects of HIV-related stigmatization, including limited social interactions (Hazra, Siberry, & Mofenson, 2010; Steele, Nelson, & Cole, 2007). Developing resilience to cope with HIV and all its challenges, including a lifetime of taking ART, is critical to their survival. Based on the expected outcomes, attending Camp Addis and Youth Club may influence risk and protective factors of resilience and ART adherence, as identified by the selected frameworks.

### **Methods**

The evaluation utilized a mixed methods approach to assess changes in expected

outcomes. Trained local assistants administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to children and caregivers one month before and five months after camp. Data collection instruments were translated into Amharic and backtranslated to improve accuracy. Questionnaires used measures validated with HIV-affected African children, including an adapted version of the Children's Depression Inventory to measure psychological distress, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to assess behavioral issues, and the social support and perceived community stigma measures (Snider & Dawes, 2006). Additional items were developed from camp activities to measure outcomes specific to camp, such as missed doses of ART, peer relationships with other CLHIV, and child-caregiver relationship. Semi-structured interviews with caregivers elicited information regarding the questionnaire measures and changes in children since camp. San Diego State University and Addis Ababa University Faculty of Medicine provided ethical approval for this evaluation.

Quantitative analysis assessed changes from before to after camp using paired Student's T, McNemar's Chi Squared or Exact, and Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests. In addition to these straightforward comparisons, we utilized "difference-in-difference" OLS regressions to compare outcomes for new vs. returning campers, and children who only attended camp to those who also attended Youth Club. To analyze the semi-structured interviews, we developed and applied to the transcribed and translated interviews, and used descriptive content analysis to determine the range of caregiver perspectives on each outcome (e.g., taking ART consistently) (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Quantitative and qualitative methods were "mixed" by using qualitative findings on each outcome to support, contradict, or provide context to quantitative findings (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

### **Results**

Before camp, 81 child-caregiver pairs were surveyed; 11 pairs were lost to follow-up after camp. Interviews were conducted with 14 camper-caregiver pairs. Of the 65 children on ART, 29 reporting missed any doses in the last month before camp; after camp, this fell to 21 children (28% relative improvement,  $p=0.07$ ). A greater proportion of children also indicated they were responsible for taking their ART after camp, not nurses or caregivers ( $p=0.04$ ). Almost all interviews reinforced these findings, indicating improved ART behavior and attitudes. Children reported improved relationships with their caregivers with 10% fewer indicating they got along "very poorly" with their caregivers, and 10% more indicating they got along "very well" ( $p<0.05$ ). Small but significant improvements in psychological distress and behavioral issues were also observed ( $p<0.10$ ). Children's and caregivers' perceived community stigmatization fell by 67% and 48% from pre-camp to post-camp, respectively ( $p<0.05$ ). Interviews with caregivers also attributed improved social relationships, HIV knowledge, and future outlook to camp, although this was not reflected in the quantitative data.

The multivariate difference-in-difference analysis to compare new vs. veteran campers and Youth Club attending campers to non-attendee campers found that children attending Youth Club improved their peer relationships with other HIV+ children (6% increase in score relative to baseline, compared to -7% decrease for non-attendees,  $p<0.10$ ) and sustained their social support (3% increase in score relative to baseline, compared to -8% decrease for non-attendees,  $p<0.10$ ) between pre-camp and post-camp measures, controlling for age, gender, and orphanage-living status. Unexpectedly, while new campers showed a 7% decrease in psychological distress

relative to baseline, veteran campers showed a 16% increase ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, children attending Youth Club and camp experienced sustained levels of psychological distress, compared to a 12% decrease among non-attendees relative to baseline ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### Implications

Of the expected outcomes that camp staff identified, several measures improved after camp, including monthly missed doses of ART, ART responsibility, child-caregiver relationship, perceived community stigmatization, behavioral issues, and psychological distress among CLHIV with no history of persistent emotional issues. These outcomes represent risk and protective factors related to CLHIV resilience and ART adherence as described in their respective theoretical frameworks. In addition, camp follow-up programs such as Youth Club may help children develop and sustain protective friendships with other CLHIV, and feel more supported within their social networks, both protective influences of resilience. Contradictory results regarding increased or sustained psychological distress in veteran campers and Youth Club attendees are likely due to selection bias from program recruitment criteria; children who were recently disclosed or have behavioral issues are sometimes selected to repeat camp or invited to attend Youth Club.

Recommendations for future evaluation efforts include addressing limitations such as the lack of a comparison group, and including clinical data to validate self-report ART adherence measures. Although outside the scope of this analysis, the evaluation project also highlighted successes and challenges of conducting program evaluations through academic/NGO partnerships and data collection logistics in a resource-poor environment with minimal intrusion on camp activities. The potential of camp programs as effective vehicles to deliver interventions to vulnerable or at-risk children underscores the need for continued research and evaluation.

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## **NURTURING A CULTURE OF IMPROVEMENT: AN EXPLORATORY FOLLOW-UP OF THE 2005 PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS**

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Improving camps so they consistently promote youth development benefits administrators, funders, and the youth they serve. Administrators benefit through quality activities, effectively trained staff, and organizational efficiency (Smith et al., 2012). Funders, such as donors and parents, benefit from improvement efforts because these efforts create direct linkages between resources and targeted youth outcomes (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). Finally, a youth program that engages in program improvement benefits youth by fostering outcomes such as competence, confidence, character, and caring (Lerner et al., 2005). With these benefits in mind, the American Camp Association (ACA) sought to better understand how some camps promote developmental outcomes more effectively than others. This project, entitled the Program Improvement Project (PIP), was initiated in 2005 in conjunction with Youth Development Strategies, Inc. (YDSI). The 2005 PIP study engaged 23 camps in the process of gathering information from campers, sharing this information with campers and staff, linking practices to campers' experiences, developing plans to improve practices, and examining changes in campers' perceptions based on program improvements (YDSI, 2006). Our study sought to examine the longitudinal impact of the 2005 PIP among the 23 participating camps.

### **Theoretical Framework**

PIP was developed by YDSI based on Gambone and colleagues' (2002) Community Action Framework for Youth Development. Rooted in the assumption that youth naturally follow a healthy developmental trajectory, the framework outlines the ways youth programs promote development. Supports (e.g., supportive relationships) and opportunities (e.g., opportunities for skill building) characterize a youth development setting (Gambone et al., 2004). Program improvement is the process by which the program systematically collects information from campers and other stakeholders and uses that information to critically examine problematic aspects of its program (Gambone et al., 2002). The goal of a sustained program improvement effort is to identify a theory of change (YDSI, 2006). Within an organization, theory of change is a tool that allows program leaders to anticipate the developmental outcomes of specific practices, such as staff training or activity design (Connell & Kubisch, 1998). Theory of change assumes that predictable linkages between practices and outcomes emerge from repeated testing over time. The purpose of this study was to explore the longitudinal effects of PIP among the 23 participating camps. Specifically, this study sought insight into internal and external impacts on PIP implementation and the ways the plan contributed to a culture of improvement today.

### **Methods**

A mixed-method approach was used to explore the nature of PIP among the original 23 camps. First, an online survey was administered to each of the 23 camps. This survey explored the extent to which the camps engaged in program improvement today and the specific affordances and barriers associated with their current implementation. Questions on the 10-item

survey included “How would you rate the degree to which the PIP plan developed for you in 2005 continues to be used at your camp today?” and “Please describe the single biggest challenge you faced implementing your PIP plan since 2005”. Survey respondents were also asked if they would be willing to participate in an in-depth interview following the survey. The research team then identified four camps that reported a “high,” “moderate,” or “low” degree of PIP implementation who were invited to serve as case studies. Camp directors from each camp participated in a 30-minute interview that probed into the questions from the original survey. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by a research assistant. Additionally, each camp provided physical evidence, such as staff manuals and strategic planning documents to further support the case study. To identify broad themes, interview data were independently coded and collaboratively discussed by the research team. Finally, artifacts from the 2005 PIP (e.g., PIP Implementation Plan, camp demographics) and current artifacts were analyzed.

### **Results**

A total of 14 camps responded to the survey; 42% indicated they were very familiar with the 2005 PIP plan. When asked “how would you rate the degree to which your PIP plan continues to be used at your camp today”, 38% reported “more than it was in 2005,” 30% reported “less than in 2005,” 7.7% reported “same as in 2005,” and 23% reported “not at all.” Eleven camps offered to serve as a case study, four of which completed interviews. Camp A was a Midwestern resident camp that serves 450 children aged 7 to 16, 80% of whom come from families living in poverty. Camp B was a Midwestern resident camp that serves 165 campers aged 8 to 16. Camp C is a Midwestern, faith-based resident camp that serves 1300 campers 7 to 17. Camp D is a year-round program located in the Eastern U.S. that serves 1400 campers ages 6 to 14, 80% of whom come from families living in poverty. Several themes emerged from the interview data, each of which aligned with the strategies for program improvement described in the 2005 PIP report (ACA, 2005).

Case study analysis gave insight into each camp’s PIP experience. Comparing 2005 PIP documentation to data collected in this study suggested that a “high implementation” camp not only continues to implement many of the PIP strategies, but have identified a theory of change that is actively used to evaluate program processes, implement improvements, and communicate strategies with staff and stakeholders. Camp A, a “high implementation” camp, reported “A lot of it just became camp culture, and it is just kinda what we do.” Unique to Camp A was the notion of external accountability. “So we are looking at all of this data in ways that are pretty comprehensive, and ways that are helping us understand what is going on at camp. And again, as we are looking at that data and the larger data sets in the world.” Camp C, a “moderate implementation” camp, likewise described an early theory of change; however, staff turnover between 2005 and 2013 challenged program improvement efforts. For this camp, though, the culture of improvement buffered the potential effects personnel changes, allowing the camp to maintain a focus on camper outcomes over time. Interestingly, Camp D, the “low implementation” camp, also described a culture that emerged from their 2005 PIP experience. This camp described its culture as “camper-centeredness,” which focused on campers’ likes and dislikes, but did not seem to be a culture focused on developmental outcomes. Administrative turnover seemed to impact this camp more so than the other participating camps, disrupting the trajectory toward theory of change experienced by the “high implementation” case camps.

### Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore the long-term effects of the 2005 PIP among the 23 participating camps. Themes related to the affordances and challenges of building a culture of program improvement emerged from the case study data. One of the key affordances demonstrated by the “high implementation” camp culture of program improvement. For this camp, the PIP plan initiated a set of practices that are now embedded in camp practices. Of particular note was the way this camp intended to use its culture of program improvement to buffer the anticipated effects of upcoming administrative turnover. In contrast, camps in which the 2005 PIP did not initiate a sustained culture of improvement faced challenges related to administrative turnover. It is not clear whether the turnover prevented the development of a culture of improvement or whether a lack of this culture contributed to administrative turnover; however, these findings support the notion that administrative culture in general mitigates the effects of turnover (Aarons & Sawitzky, 2006).

Accountability practices also appeared to play an important role fostering a culture of improvement. Of the four case study camps, only the “high implementation” camp showed evidence of accountability measures such as comparing camper outcomes with national normative data. Little is known about the effects of accountability practices in the camp setting specifically, although the recent addition of nationally normed camper outcomes data available through the American Camp Association might allow more camps to seek external accountability. In summary, this study depicts four cases of program improvement and the affordances and challenges each camp faced following their 2005 PIP plan. From these cases camp professionals might gain insight into the reciprocal relationship between administrative turnover and a culture of improvement. Additionally, professionals should consider the ways accountability measures, such as comparing camper outcomes with the national norms now available through ACA, might contribute towards an overall culture of program improvement.

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## **THERE WAS MORE OUT THERE THAN OUR STREET: EXPLORING A STRUCTURED CAMP CURRILCULUM AS AN AVENUE TO FOSTERING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL**

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The social capital and civic engagement literature indicate a similar concern: Americans today are less connected to their communities than in the recent past. Putnam (2000) argued that the activities most adept at forging connections are decreasing while participation in individual-oriented activities are increasing. Social capital, as a collective resource, greases the processes of collective problem solving and allows individuals to feel more capable to shape public life (de Sousa Briggs, 2004). Scholars have called for research to identify places in society that support the development of social capital, civic engagement, and the skills necessary for both (Obradovic & Masten, 2007; Putnam, 1995; Putnam, 2000). Summer camps could offer an arena within which to address the aforementioned civic issues. Research on summer camp programming has demonstrated that camps can engender many of the same skills and competencies represented in the civic engagement and social capital literature (e.g. American Camp Association, 2005; Browne, Garst, & Bialeschki, 2011; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007); however, summer camp remains underrepresented in the social capital and civic engagement literature.

### **Study Purpose & Question**

The purpose of this study was to explore summer camp as a possible avenue to engendering civic engagement and social capital in campers' home communities. To address this purpose, this study addressed the following research question: What was the impact of the Teens Leading & Connecting (TLC) program on campers' civic skills, civic engagement and social capital in their home communities after camp?

### **Sample**

The unit of analysis was a week-long pilot camp program, TLC, which was structured to increase participants' civic engagement in their home communities. Table 1 shows the schedule for TLC. The program was implemented during the summer 2012 at a day camp in Northeast Georgia, serving a total of 10 campers ages 13-16.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning	Introduction	Camp Activities	Camp Activities	Community Tour Debrief	Camp Activities	Off Camp Service Project
	Group Dynamics	Leadership Skills	Problem Solving Skills	Camp Activities	Service Planning	
After	Camp Activities	Organizing Skills	Community Tour	Planning Skills	Meeting with	Lunch

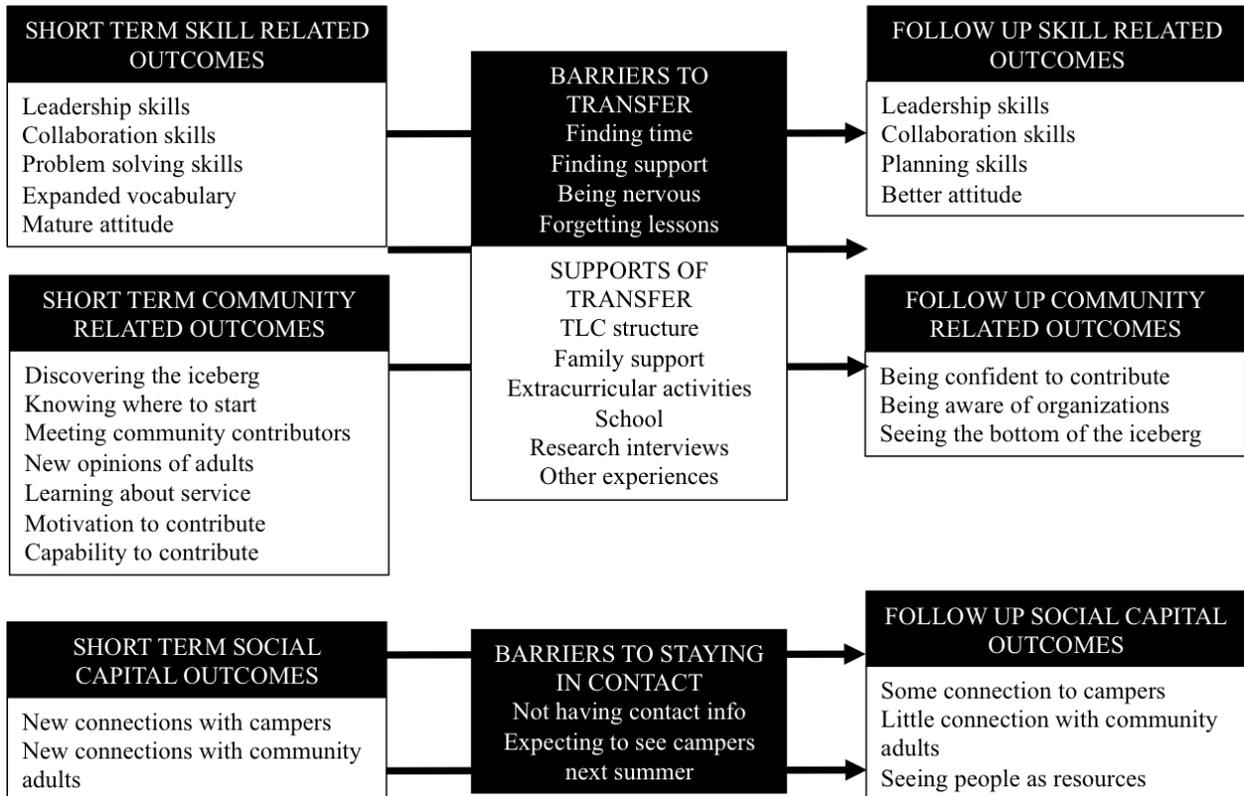
	Cooperation Skills	Identifying Problems Skills		Service Planning	Community Leaders	Week Debrief
Evening				On Camp Service Project & Camp Out		

**Methods**

Each camper participated in a series of three in-person semi-structured interviews with the researcher: one week prior to TLC (pre-camp), one week following TLC (post-camp), and three months following TLC (follow-up). Collectively, the interviews explored the civic skills and attitudes each youth gained through the camp experience and whether they retained those civic skills and attitudes. In addition to camper interviews, TLC facilitator and parent interviews were also conducted. The TLC facilitator interviews took place in the week following TLC and the parent interviews took place approximately four months after TLC via telephone. The qualitative interview data were analyzed by the researcher following Hycner’s (1985) guidelines for the analysis of interview data. Trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability of the findings was established in a variety of ways including prolonged researcher engagement in the study site, member checking, employment of a second data analyst, and reflexive journaling.

**Findings**

Figure 1 displays the summary of the short-term outcomes of TLC, the outcomes that persisted to the follow-up interview, and the barriers and supports that impacted the follow-up outcomes as reported in the qualitative interviews. Of particular note in Figure 1 regarding the



outcomes of TLC, campers indicated that they retained some, but not all, of the civic skills they gained from TLC in the months following the program. Second, in the community related outcomes, campers felt they contributed to the community about the same, and usually more, than before TLC. TLC campers thought that the program helped them to become more confident, motivated, and informed to contribute to their community. Further, campers were more likely to stay in contact with other campers than with the adults they met during TLC.

From the perspective of the social capital and civic engagement literature, the TLC camp program displayed some of the features recommended in the literature for contexts wishing to foster those outcomes. Campers discussed the opportunities they had to practice their new skills and ideas during TLC as a supporting factor of their ability to transfer learning from TLC. Additionally, TLC provided connections to non-familial adults that campers recognized at post-camp. Further, campers in TLC expressed at post-camp that they realized that they do have a voice in the community because there are adults who want to hear from youth.

Beyond the findings displayed in Figure 1, all of the campers, parents, and the facilitator felt that camp was a good place, in some cases the best place, for teenagers to learn about contributing to the community. They all believed camp was a good place to learn such things because camp is fun, outside, friendly, flexible, at the YMCA, and in the summer.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

To combat the changing nature in which Americans are connecting with society and with each other, scholars and programmers can collaborate to identify and design arenas where youth can learn their place in their communities and can learn the value of connecting with others. This study represented one attempt to leverage the power of the summer camp environment, of structured curriculum, and of program evaluation to explore summer camp as a possible arena to help youth reach these goals. Campers in the TLC camp program experienced post-camp gains in civic skills, civic values, motivation for civic engagement, and forming bonding and bridging social networks; however, not all of these gains were sustained and applied by campers after the camp experience. Consequently, this study demonstrated that summer camp has promise to achieve civic engagement and social capital outcomes beyond camp but more research and program development on these crucial societal topics is needed.

The intention of this study was not to generate sweeping generalizations appropriate for all camp environments, but to develop a rich understanding about summer camp as an avenue to civic engagement and social capital building in campers' home communities. The researcher intended the TLC program to act as a demonstration program for other camps interested in developing similar skill sets in their campers. Consequently, though the results of the proposed study cannot necessarily be generalized, the results may be useful for camp practitioners who are looking to engender similar outcomes in their campers or implement the TLC program itself.

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## **HOW A SUMMER AT CAMP ENCOURAGES POSITIVE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG CAMP STAFF**

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Camp directors often state that camp is the best place for young campers to learn to build confidence and build relationships with their peers. Many of the same outcomes that these children experience can be applied to summer camp counselors as well. The purpose of this study was to examine and measure the personal and professional development of counselors at three different residential summer camps. This study also aimed to discover how motivations of camp counselors, and previous summers spent at camp, as campers or staff, may predict youth development outcomes.

### **Theory**

In the area of personal development, a study was done to discover what counselors in a New York day camp program felt that they had learned through their experiences working at camp (Katz, 2008). These counselors described themselves as feeling more confident, organized, positive, empathetic and assertive. They reported learning skills such as how to take initiative, resolve conflicts, put needs of others before themselves, understand their ability to influence others, develop relationships with peers and friends, and mentor and communicate with children (Katz, 2008).

In the area of professional development, young people expect to gain skills and experiences at camp such as leadership, responsibility, team work, relationships with staff and campers, and appreciation of diversity (Bialeschki, Henderson & Dahowski, 1998). Working at a residential camp also allows teenagers and young adults to learn professional skills such as public speaking, evaluative writing, program planning, logistics and risk management (Nicholson & Klem, 2011). Counselors are able to learn new skills and ways of doing things. Summer camp is a safe place for staff to explore different ways of using these skills and talents, as well as trying new leadership styles. Many of these skills may be acquired during staff training, but often skills are learned through participation in the camp community, and experiences in a leadership role (Ferrari & Digby, 2007).

This study aimed to discover how motivations of camp counselors, and previous summers spent at camp, as campers or staff, may predict positive developmental outcomes. Lyons (2000) found that the motivation of counselors and volunteers may be predictors of their job performance throughout the camp season. Lyons (2000) sought to support Maehr and Braskamp's Theory of Personal Investment in their study of the motivations of summer camp counselors. It was found that ethical and external influences served as predictors for interpersonal skills, task orientation, and ability to work as a team. The skills and characteristics measured in this study were self-esteem, self-efficacy, intercultural sensitivity, leadership skills and responsibility.

### **Method**

A total of 98 staff members, from three western North Carolina residential summer camps, ranging from 18-25 years old served as the participants for this study. Each staff member was surveyed during initial staff training, at the end of the camp season, and will be surveyed again 8 weeks after the season is complete. Performance assessment feedback was given to staff

by their supervisors, and was collected at mid-season and upon completion of the summer. Directors rated staff on 9 areas of professional development from 1-5. Survey items used to measure personal development were the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, Jerusalem and Schwarzar's General Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Counselors were also given a list of motivations for choosing to work at summer camp, and asked to rank their reasons for employment from 1-10. The top three responses were then used to describe individual counselors as being primarily intrinsically or extrinsically motivated in their work. Linear regression and paired samples t-tests were used to analyze pre and post-test data.

### **Results**

A total of 73 participants were able to complete both the pre-camp and post-camp surveys (74.5% response rate). Out of those 73 counselors, 43 were given mid-season and end-of season professional feedback by their directors (43.9% of the total, and 58.9% of the survey respondents). Data analysis revealed that there is evidence to suggest that working a summer at camp has a positive effect on counselors' personal and professional development, using a significance level of 0.05. Results of paired sample t-tests showed that counselors scored significantly higher in intercultural sensitivity, self-esteem and self-efficacy at the post-test. There were also significant increases in counselors' ability to work as a team, communication, dependability, punctuality, effective teaching, risk management, customer service, and being camper and mission-focused. Linear regression analyses showed that intrinsic motivation was a significant predictor of intercultural sensitivity. However, previous years spent at camp was not significantly related to scores on any of the outcomes under investigation.

### **Implications**

Directors market the positive effects of sending kids to camp when recruiting new campers. The results from this study help camp directors better understand the developmental outcomes of camp for their staff. Directors may use findings to explain how camp is not just a summer away from home, but an experience that encourages personal and professional growth. Directors may also aim to enhance specific areas of development through more intentional staff training and leadership development programming. Further, given the ACA's focus on positive youth development, more research should be conducted to better understand more any specific effects that working at camp may have on summer staff.

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## **TEEN TEAMWORK AT WORK**

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As teenagers approach adulthood in the 2010s, they find themselves connected with the world in ways that reflect new technologies and increasing globalization. The abilities needed to collaborate successfully with others under these circumstances, though, constitute a complex set of skills. Leaders in business, government, and academia have emphasized the lifetime importance of being able to accomplish teamwork (e.g. Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011).

Documenting what young people know and learn about collaboration will facilitate better understanding of this capability among camp professionals and researchers alike. Building on the literature exploring the development of teamwork (Larson, Hansen, & Walker, 2005; Selman, 2003) this study seeks to elaborate on what teens mean when they say they learn teamwork. Specifically, I examined teamwork strategies used in different social situations at camp.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Teenagers in junior staff or counselor-in-training roles have attracted increased attention among camp researchers in recent years. Several studies have attested to the development of interpersonal and collaborative skills through teenagers' participation in such programs at camp (Digby & Ferrari, 2007; Forsythe, Matysik, & Nelson, 2004).

This work relates more directly to the program of research of Larson and colleagues, undertaken in after-school programs (e.g. Larson & Angus, 2011). Following Larson's qualitative work on learning in out-of-school settings, the current study focuses on the various processes of peer collaboration in a camp context.

### **Methods**

This research project collected data from 26 teenaged staff at an overnight summer camp near a mid-sized Midwestern city. Youth were tenth graders and stayed six days each week of a three-week session. The author conducted one semi-structured interview with each participant during their session. Supervised by college-aged leaders, the youth served meals, washed dishes, cleaned bathrooms, and helped with construction projects for the camp, which most had previously attended as campers.

At each step of the research process, I used modified grounded theory methods--including coding, memos, diagrams, and comparison--from informing the creation of the interview protocol to analyzing and describing patterns in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

### **Results**

The current study documented a variety of insights into teamwork and collaborative strategies employed by teenaged staff members through their work at camp. The narratives coalesced around certain types of interpersonal episodes that the youth reported experiencing on the job. These situations serve as analytical categories, within which the youth related a complex array of collaborative strategies to work with their peers (see Table 1).

<b>Table 1. Teamwork Strategies</b>		
<u>Situational Category</u>	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Quote</u>
Encountering Diverse Ideas and Perspectives	<i>make sure own idea is heard</i>	“if you don't agree with somebody, you don't have to like give in or whatever. You can like pitch your idea and then you guys can have like a team vote” -Blair
	<i>try out others' ideas</i>	“be ready to take everyone else's advice and try and use it at least once” -Kevin
	<i>mutually compromise</i>	“Teamwork's about sort of sacrificing on each end” - Natalie
Confronting Conflict	<i>listen</i>	“If there is a problem, you have to listen to the other person.” -Stephanie
	<i>calmly find a solution</i>	“Just politely and calmly find a solution, if you have a problem.” -Britney
	<i>forgive</i>	“Forgive and forget. If you hold grudges about not helping on one job, then you can never really give them a chance to help you on the next” -Martha
Opportunities to Enhance Teamwork	<i>help one another</i>	“I would help them, so I know they'll help me if I ask.” - Lindsey
	<i>develop a system together</i>	“we kind of just developed a system of who would do what and taking turns” -Molly
	<i>understand and accommodate peers</i>	“when I work with people it seems like I get a feel for what like their work personality [is], I guess. You try to meld to it as best you can.” -Martha

Regarding their response upon encountering a diverse set of perspectives in their group, youth reported advocating for their own proposals, allowing for others' ideas, and making mutual compromises. These responses, ranging from assertive to charitable, reflect choices that reflect and promote the prosocial camp environment.

In the face of interpersonal conflict, the teenagers told how they heard their peers out, worked calmly to find a solution, and overlooked lapses in order to be able to continue to work

together. In contrast to popular images of teens engaging in destructive and violent interactions, this grounded research shows that while conflict does occur, it can be handled maturely and compassionately without adult intervention.

Even when not faced with a particular challenge or obstacle, youth had stories to tell of learning about and applying teamwork strategies. Youth recounted instances where they adjusted to their co-workers, they assisted each other in their duties, and cooperatively developed ways of accomplishing their tasks. This proactive behavior highlights an exciting possibility for teens learning teamwork.

All three situation types elicit solutions that balance both personal and interpersonal interests. The teenagers here reported learning to flexibly coordinate effort and goals at camp. In sum, the youth show creative and active tactics that help them negotiate relationships with others. This research, then, contributes to our understanding of how adolescents construct their social worlds (Eder & Nenga, 2003) and “produce their own development” (Lerner, 2002). Furthermore, we see “beyond the dark side” of peer influence, with prosocial learning happening through adolescent peer interactions (Allen & Antonishak, 2008). Teenagers are learning prosocial behavior from and with one another.

### **Camp Applications**

Going beyond the work that documents *that* teenagers learn at camp, these findings contribute a rich description of the variety of collaborative skills learned and applied, as youth describe them. Knowing the sorts of strategies that teenagers implement, camp professionals can adjust their mentoring accordingly. This research suggests that teens have a broad assortment of positive ways to handle interpersonal situations. Positive reinforcement, thoughtful feedback, deliberate role modeling, and a supportive, prosocial staff culture may enhance the likelihood that youth learn to collaborate well. By structuring opportunities intentionally, directors can facilitate the development of perennially useful teamwork skills.

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## **EFFECT OF ART OR SPORT PROGRAMS ON TEAMWORK SKILLS AND PERCEIVED COMPETENCE AMONG DAY CAMPERS**

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Every year, parents and children make decisions about participating in different camps, and in different programs within those camps. In addition to the daily camp activities such as singing, swimming, or games, many camps offer specific skill-based programs such as arts or sports, which are designed to elicit outcomes such as teamwork or perceived competence (PC).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Previous research has indicated that camp programming elicits gains in participants' developmental outcomes such as competence, friendship skills and teamwork (e.g., Roark, 2012; Roark, Gillard, Evans, Wells, & Blauer, 2012; Roark, Gillard, & Mikami, 2013). As documenting youth outcomes based on the overall program experience increases (Roark & Evans, 2010), there is a growing emphasis on what type of specific program focus within an experience might increase particular outcomes. For example, extracurricular youth organization participation has a strong negative correlation with youth delinquency, while sports participation exhibits no correlation (Larson, 1994). Compared to other organized youth activities, art and sport programs were found to provide more experiences related to development of initiative, although sports participation also related to high stress (Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006).

Learning sport and art skills at camp would seemingly increase teamwork skills because they occur in the context of "working with others." However, when skill development occurs in the context of "individual improvement," teamwork might not increase. Campers' perceptions of how good they are in an art or sport program might vary as well. Through teamwork, youth learn social skills such as how to work with a variety of people, compromise, give and receive feedback, and acquire social norms. Teamwork was defined as "beliefs that one can be an effective and productive group member" (Ellis & Sibthorp, 2006). Through PC, youth form self-perceptions (Harter, 1988) about how good they are cognitively, physically, socially, and in general (Sibthorp, Bialeschki, Morgan, & Browne, 2013). PC was defined as "beliefs about their ability to be successful that are integrated with their self" (Ellis & Sibthorp, 2006).

The art and sport programs in this study were designed and implemented at a day camp lasting five days in the southeastern United States. While each program had its specific program focus (i.e., sport or art), all campers participated in the same week of programming and had minor involvement in the other program area. Knowing that the camp environment has many components that could affect outcome results, participant age, number of years or days a camper attended, and level of fun were considered (e.g., Roark, Ellis, Wells, & Gillard, 2010). This study examined the difference between art and sport programs on teamwork and PC outcomes.

### **Methods**

At the time of registration, participants 8 to 13 years old chose the sport ( $n = 44$ ) or art ( $n = 54$ ) program. Teamwork and PC were measured using the reliable (.94 & .89, respectively) 8-item self-report measures (Ellis & Sibthorp, 2006). The measure began with the stem, "How

much, if any, has your participation in [Camp Name] changed you in each of the following ways?" The outcome response format used a change scale allowing questionnaire administration to occur once on the last day. The response format measured whether the outcome decreased (score of 1), did not increase or decrease (2), increased a little (3), some (4) or a lot (5).

First, to make sure we can make an equivalent comparison between this camp's art and sport programs, we tested to make sure that art program focused on art and that sport focused on sport. This was tested with a single item measure favoring the art program. Then, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) procedures were performed to test the following null hypotheses regarding the effect of art and sport programs on teamwork,  $H_0: \mu_{\text{arts}} = \mu_{\text{sports}}$  and on PC,  $H_0: \mu_{\text{arts}} = \mu_{\text{sports}}$ . The covariates included number of years attending camp, number of days attended in the week, age, and a single item measure of fun (1 no fun to 5 lots of fun). Adjusted means, standard deviations, and strength of relationship statistics were calculated. Slope homogeneity and error variance assumptions were tested.

### Results

The test between art and sport program foci ( $N=98$ ) was significantly different ( $F_{1,97} = 19.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .17$ ). This result is important because it provided evidence that each program is content specific and allowed us to compare the programs more confidently.

Descriptive statistics indicated the adjusted teamwork mean for the art program ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = .76$ ) was higher than the sport program ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = .81$ ). Regarding PC, art ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) was slightly higher than sport ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = .70$ ). Just because the means of one program are higher than another program, does not mean that one program is better than the other one. It is important to note that all outcomes increased for both programs.

Table 2

*ANCOVA for the Effect of Art or Sport Programs on Teamwork and Perceived Competence*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Teamwork						
Age	1.09	1	1.09	2.38	.13	.025
Years Attended	.14	1	.14	.30	.59	.003
Days Attended	.38	1	.38	.82	.37	.009
Fun	13.15	1	13.15	28.79	<.01	.238
Art or Sport	1.98	92	1.98	4.33	.04	.045
$R^2 = .306$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .268$ )						
Perceived Competence (PC)						
Age	.56	1	.56	1.69	.20	.018
Years Attended	.01	1	.01	.04	.85	<.000
Days Attended	.21	1	.21	.63	.43	.007
Fun	12.44	1	12.44	37.64	<.01	.290
Art or Sport	.48	1	.48	1.46	.23	.016

$R^2 = .326$  (Adjusted  $R^2 = .289$ ).

ANCOVA results indicated that a significant relationship existed between art and sport programs on teamwork ( $F_{1,97} = 4.33$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and no significant relationship existed between programs on PC ( $F_{1,97} = 1.46$ ,  $p = .23$ ). In other words, the participants' gains on teamwork in the art program were large enough, when compared to the sports program, to inform us that a

difference in programs occurred that allowed for these higher gains in teamwork. The homogeneity of slope test was not significant for teamwork ( $F = .45, p = .637$ ) nor PC ( $F = .50, p = .496$ ). Levene's test did not reject the hypothesis that group variances are equal for teamwork ( $F = 1.63, p = .21$ ) nor PC ( $F < .01, p = .611$ ).

### Camp Applications

This research adds to understanding how camps can transform lives through the provision of specific program types that develop character of youth. Specifically, we found that the art program led to higher gains in teamwork outcomes than the sport program, which is perhaps initially counter-intuitive. As previous research indicated, the benefits of developing initiative through sport programs can also come with the challenge of stress. Perhaps campers internalize their sport ability in comparison to fellow campers. It could also be that the sport program was focused on individual skill development while the art program included a great focus on working with one another to accomplish individual and team art projects. It is important to recognize as a program administrator that both programs elicited high gains in outcomes, providing evidence of effective programs despite the difference between teamwork outcomes. More research is needed to unpack the techniques within art and sport programs that elicit teamwork, and the potential aspects of sport participation that could affect outcome gains. Camps should consider the following suggestions: a) Investigate how different camp activities might yield differing strong outcomes, b) Consider how and why participants in sport programs might feel distanced from their fellow campers, and c) Provide a variety of activities to all campers, knowing that some promote outcomes at different strengths than others.

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## **CRUNCHING NUMBERS AND A STORY IN PICTURES: WAYS OF KNOWING AND “PROGRAM SUCCESS”**

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Sherwood Forest Camp, founded in 1937, is a St. Louis–area youth development agency that serves children, primarily from low-income families and under-resourced communities. Its programs are centered on a resident camp program with school year “continued contact” follow-up activities. Over the last four summers, the camp developed a reading program to address a critical area of concern: the issue of “summer learning loss,” especially regarding reading skills for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

Over the past four years, we collected data to document changes in campers’ recreational and academic reading attitudes, vocabulary knowledge related to novels read at camp, and how campers engage with literacy activities. Evaluations of the program documented several promising results for campers who participate in the reading program at Sherwood Forest Camp. One of the interesting results is that while the program benefits all campers, changes in behaviors and attitudes about reading were particularly significant for boys (Arend & Rogers, 2013).

### **Methods**

Debates over methodology frameworks (quantitative vs. qualitative), the use of mixed-methods, and conflicting epistemological paradigms have been raging in the research world for decades (Denzin, 2010). The “QUAN-QUAL” wars of methodology pose some particularly interesting questions for camp program evaluations. Identifying the purposes of camp, what we want to know about the success of camp programs, and determining how we will know what has been accomplished can guide not only the methodological choices made, but the weight given to the findings from different methods.

As noted in the background, the children who attend Sherwood Forest Camp primarily live in poverty. This raises additional questions of methodology. Critical theorists would argue that the “politics of evidence” (Denzin, 2010) negatively impacts poor children, children of color, and other marginalized groups. From a critical pedagogy, quantitative methodologies and a focus on “evidence based” practices may be at odds with the social justice mission of a camp like Sherwood Forest (Dillard, 2006).

As these questions are raised, our view at Sherwood Forest Camp is that we can learn and measure the reading program’s success using multiple sources of data. This year, as we analyze the data from summer 2013, and begin to plan the evaluation of 2014, we will continue to revisit the varying epistemological frameworks and ways of knowing to guide our own understanding. In the summer of 2013 components of the reading program were led by camp professionals, rather than practicing educators. With the goal of embedding the reading program within Sherwood Forest Camp, this summer’s evaluation focused on identifying how camp professionals can engage campers in reading. This year we began to question ways of knowing and measuring program success, and how to balance and understand the contexts of the quantitative and qualitative sources of data.

We analyzed quantitative data sources to determine if there were changes from pre to post intervention on the Elementary Reading Attitudes Survey and vocabulary assessments. We also collected library usage data to determine program impact. More sources of qualitative data were collected this year than in prior years. This was the result of discussions around the purposes of a camp reading program and how to measure goals related to reading *and* camp. Photo documentation and audio tapes of camper conversations were analyzed using qualitative frameworks of visual analysis (Knoblauch, Baer, Laurier, Petschke & Schnettler, 2008).

### Results

This summer's quantitative data reflects similar trends to past year's data. Campers who participated in the Sherwood Forest Camp reading program increased their recreational and academic reading attitudes, measured by the Elementary Reading Attitudes Survey developed by McKenna and Kear (1990); increased their vocabulary knowledge; and campers who participated in the reading program in the past continued to use the camp library more than campers who never participated in the program. However, girl campers' reading attitudes slightly declined (not statistically significant), which differs from previous years.

This summer there were fewer statistically significant differences found from pre to post intervention, particularly for girl campers (see Tables 1 and 2). Analyses indicated there were numerous possibilities for the differences in this year's quantitative findings including cohort characteristics, sample size, and statistical power.

Table 1. 2013 Boys' Camp Data

<i>Measure</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>PreERAS Rec</b>	13	28.69	5.8
<b>PostERAS Rec</b>	13	31.92*	5.75
<b>PreERAS Acad</b>	13	26.15	6.48
<b>PostERAS Acad</b>	13	32.46*	5.56
<b>PreVocab</b>	16	8.63	3.07
<b>PostVocab</b>	16	12.00*	3.22

\*Indicates statistically significant increase from pre to post test at .05 level.

Table 2. 2013 Girls' Camp Data

<b>Measure</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>PreERAS Rec</b>	22	29.86	7.28
<b>PostERAS Rec</b>	22	29.50	7.72
<b>PreERAS Acad</b>	20	30.10	8.57
<b>PostERASAcad</b>	20	29.05	8.76
<b>Prevocab</b>	24	11.58	4.81
<b>Postvocab</b>	24	13.46*	4.09

\*Indicates statistically significant increase from pre to post test at .05 level.

Qualitative analyses revealed emerging overlapping themes of camp, nature, friendship, literature, and individual choice. Further analysis will include "shared interpretation" (Schwartz, 1989) of the photo documents with the camp leader of the girls reading program.

### Implications

As money for funding becomes scarcer, competition for those funds becomes even greater. One reaction to this new reality may be to become entrenched in the "evidence-based"

camp of research, the preferred methodology for many donors. While much can be learned through quantitative data, this “show me the numbers” outlook may change camp environments. Camps, like schools, may become over-tested and over-analyzed.

This research study has implications for how camp professionals collect and analyze data. Additionally, through becoming educated on the rationales and processes of qualitative inquiry, camp professionals can in turn educate and advocate on their own behalf to donors, thus creating possibilities for several ways of documenting “evidence-based” practices.

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## **YOUTH OUTCOMES BATTERY: COUNSELOR AND PARENT PERCEPTION VERSIONS**

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The genesis of the Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) began when the American Camp Association (ACA) conducted a multiyear study to identify and measure summer youth program outcomes (ACA, 2005). Ten key outcomes relevant to summer camps were identified and measured. Results showed youth development in several different domains, including: independence, self-esteem, confidence, social skills, exploration, and spirituality. Despite the significance of this study, effect sizes were relatively small and the scale had several key limitations that necessitated additional work.

As the YOB was being developed, special attention was given to measuring outcomes that were included as part of the original study (ACA, 2005), that might potentially be influenced by weeklong recreational experience, and that were needed by practitioners involved in programming for positive youth development. The ACA and its research committee were consistently involved in the initial instrument development and outcome selection. After selected for inclusion in the YOB, each of the outcomes were conceptualized and defined based on the contemporary literature with attention to utility and application potential for youth recreation programs. Readers interested in the details of this process should see earlier papers related to the specific outcomes of interest (e.g., ACA, 2011; Eastep et al., 2011; Ellis & Sibthorp, 2006; Sibthorp, Bialeschki, Morgan, & Browne, 2013; Sibthorp, et al., 2010).

Currently in its second printing, the YOB is a battery of self-report instruments that can be easily administered to youth 10-17 years old, scored, and used by youth program professionals seeking an evidence-based outcome evaluation. The current version of the YOB has 11 subscales: Friendship Skills (FS), Family Citizenship Behavior (FCB), Responsibility (RESP), Independence (IND), Teamwork Skills (TW), Perceived Competence (COMP), Affinity for Exploration (AE), Affinity for Nature (AN), Problem Solving Confidence (PSC), Camp Connectedness (CC), and Spiritual Wellbeing (SWB; ACA, 2011).

In 2011 norms were established for not-for-profit camps on the YOB and further evidence of the measures' validity and reliability was generated (Sibthorp et al., 2013). The YOB is now one of the few assessment options with normative data and a track record of sustained use, adaptation, and translation (cf., Wilson-Ahlstrom et al., 2011). Furthermore, ACA has worked to make the tools highly useable and accessible. ACA offers online and print training materials to help establish a strong context for outcomes work, supports web-based (and downloadable) analysis templates to ease data-related issues, suggests options for bundling specific YOB measures in ways that address larger issues (e.g., 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, leadership, life skills), and provides resources that help link outcome efforts to program improvement processes.

Despite the success of the YOB, the focus on children 10 and older leaves a large segment of youth out of a comprehensive evaluation strategy. Therefore, the purpose of the current project is to develop counselor and parent report versions of the YOB that can be used with

younger campers. This project was completed over two years and two phases. During phase 1 we conducted bench testing on the rating scales, items stems, and instructions. Phase 1 involved approximately 100 counselors at three different camps. During phase 2 we collected matched pilot data on both counselor and parent versions from 222 campers attending nine camps.

### **Phase 1 Methods and Results**

In phase 1, items were converted from self-report formats to parent and counselor reports. This process involved removing the spiritual well-being subscale and the family citizenship behavior scale as counselors could not report on these constructs. Fifty items were retained for the initial item pool. With bench test data from 95 counselors, the phase 1 item pool (50 items) took an average of 6.3 minutes to complete. The lowest Cronbach's alpha for phase 1 was .93 for the COMP subscale. Distributions exhibited relatively normal distributions. Initial item analyses were run and content coverage was prioritized as the item pool was reduced to 31 items tapping 9 constructs (FS, RESP, IND, TW, COMP, AE, AN, PSC, CC) for phase 2.

### **Phase 2 Methods and Results**

In phase 2, the sample was 52% female and generally between 5 and 10 years of age ( $M = 8.6$  yrs). The phase 2 questionnaire included both rating scales, some criterion measures, and a couple of open-ended questions. All Cronbach's alphas exceeded .80 and demonstrate good to excellent internal consistency. Again, all subscales, on both parent and counselor perception version, exhibited relatively normal distributions with means generally between 3.0 and 3.5 on a 5 point scale. Correlations between subscales of each version were generally high. The parent perception version correlations ranged from a low of .45 (AN and IND) to a high of .83 (TW and PSC). The subscales of the counselor perception version correlations ranged from a low of .53 (AN and RESP) to a high of .84 (CC and FS). Several criterion validity questions were asked of both parents and counselors and generally supported that each group was able to consistently identify campers that they thought learned more or less at camp. While the patterns of correlations within parents and counselors were somewhat consistent, there was little agreement between counselors and parents as to the level of each construct that was attributable to camp. The between form correlations (parent subscales correlated to counselor subscales) were generally low and non-significant. In other words, the parents and counselors did not attribute similar gains to camp for the same campers. Exploratory Factor Analysis likewise verified that parent and counselor perceptions are fundamentally different constructs.

In examining mean differences by the version, sex of the camper, and camp type attended (day or resident), several findings were significant. The counselors reported higher growth than parents in FS. Parents reported the greatest gains at camp in AN. Both counselors and parents reported the lowest overall level of gains in TW. Counselors reported higher scores for girls in FS, CC, COMP, RESP, and TW than parents. Resident camps generally showed more positive growth than day camps regardless of version. These reporting differences by version again illustrate a challenge equating the parent and counselor versions.

Two confirmatory factor analyses were performed on these data, one for the counselor version and one for the parent version. Overall these models fit well (CFI = .946, RMSEA = .048 for the counselor version and CFI = .96, RMSEA = .052 for the parent version) and demonstrated good construct and convergent validity. Challenges with discriminant validity remain as many of the subscales are inherently correlated (cf., Sibthorp et al., 2013).

In the qualitative data, parents and counselors reported common gains because of camp in confidence, independence and social skills. Parents also commented that their children had already acquired many of these skills through previous camp experiences, or that they already possessed these skills in general, thus justifying potential lack of growth when referring to the most recent camp experience. Other ideas that emerged from the qualitative data were the need for parents to have more time to evaluate the behavior of their child before completing this type of survey as well as the need for more communication from camps regarding their child's behavior and progress made during the camp experience.

### **Discussion and Implications**

While the YOB, in its various forms, will continue to be used given its merits, ACA support, and relative parsimony, this analysis raises an important question about who is best able to assess development at camp for the youngest campers. These younger campers (ages 5-9) are generally unable to validly complete self-report measures and lack the self-awareness to complete these accurately even if they can read rudimentary items. While the overall picture of camp benefits from the qualitative data (confidence, independence, and social skills) is both positive and consistent with previous research (ACA, 2005), the quantitative parent and counselor reports show little agreement as to what these younger campers learned from camp. As a possible explanation for this disconnect, some of the qualitative data indicate that while parents were primarily assessing changes attributable to camp, counselors, who are less familiar with a camper's general level of development and disposition, may conflate their actual level of development with development at camp. Despite this limitation, overall, parents expressed very positive feelings toward the benefits of the camp experience for their children.

The counselor and parent perception versions of the YOB offer another option for assessing the outcomes of camp for younger campers. In addition, the use of these tools may prove useful in establishing objectives and language around outcomes during staff training for counselors and in communicating with parents. Specifically, based on feedback from both parents and camp directors, these versions provide a tool to better communicate with parents about what their children learned while attending camp. These tools also provide an additional resource for camps to consider when interested in documenting their intentional efforts focused on youth development outcomes for their youngest campers relevant to their mission and goals.

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## **LIFE INOCULATION: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADVENTURE EDUCATION COMPONENTS AND RESILIENCE IN SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCES**

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One of the greatest predictors of success in life is an individual's resilience (Tough, 2013). This ability, to overcome difficult life circumstances and continue at a reasonable level, is a capacity within us all. In life, resilience may be built through facing difficulties that cause disorganization and in coping with challenges allow us to reintegrate at a resilient or higher level (Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, & Kumpfer, 1990). Studies on resilience often lack clarity on how to foster this capacity intentionally. Interestingly enough, common traits or indicators of resilience hold similarities to outcomes of adventure education programs (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997). Adventure education programs may offer opportunities and processes that impact internal capacities and promote successful development when individuals are faced with adversity; further, residential camps often include programs commonly described as adventure education. While too little is known about which program attributes most effectively foster the capacity for resilience, the immersive nature of residential camp experiences and their existing focus on positive youth development may make them ideal intervention programs to foster resilience. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to measure the impact of an organized camping experience that includes adventure education components, on indicators of resilience in youth between the ages of 11-16 years.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

The Christian boys' camp in this study utilized The Hero's Journey as a framework for their programming (Stephenson, 2006). Stephenson's model for male rites of passage begins with a youth accepting a new challenge. This is similar to how other models address development, including the Resilience Model (Richardson et al., 1990), Stress Inoculation Training (Meichenbaum, 1985), and Walsh and Gollins model, representing adventure education (1976). As part of the initial step, an individual begins by reconceptualizing a challenge. The next step includes difficulty or disruption, which requires the individual to acquire new skills. Achieving a level of competence serves as the culmination of the quest, and after reintegration the new knowledge is applied to the next challenge. While each model is distinct, their similarities may demonstrate the importance of this basic process to the development of resilience in adventure education programming.

### **Methods**

The instruments used in this study included online, pre-post resilience measures in combination with a stress scale, demographic assessment, camper experience tool, counselor intentionality survey, and program assessments. E-mail invitations were sent to parents of campers between the ages of 11 and 16 requesting consent for their child to participate. Parent consent and youth assent were required prior to accessing the online survey. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003) was utilized to measure resilience. The pre-camp assessment occurred up to two weeks before the attended camp session;

the post-camp assessment occurred up to one week after camp. The Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen & Williamson, 1998) was utilized pre-camp to assess the level of stress in the study population, and results fell within expected norms. Additionally, a measure was created and administered twice over the summer to assess counselor intentionality in line with identified aspects of youth development in this context. Finally, a measure was created to assess qualities of adventure in skill-based camp programs. The skill-based programs were ranked in order of adventuresomeness.

### Data Analysis

Pre and post-camp surveys were matched and imported to SPSS for analysis. Pre- and post- resilience scores were analyzed using paired sample t-tests. An adventure assessment tool was created specifically for this study, rating the camp skill program areas by qualities associated with adventure as derived from the literature. Six seasonal directors completed the assessment and the skill areas were grouped into five levels of adventuresomeness. The adventure qualities utilized in the analysis included interaction with nature, perceived risk, natural consequences, active engagement, and recognizable challenges. Campers who participated in at least three skills or trips in the upper two groupings of adventuresomeness ( $n = 17$ ) were compared to participants who did not meet this threshold ( $n = 25$ ) using paired sample t-tests. Counselor intentionality was measured on a separate assessment using a five point Likert type scale ranging from 1 or “rarely or never” to 5 or “almost all of the time”.

### Results

To address the first research question, “to what extent do camp experiences increase ratings of resilience”, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare CD-RISC scores between pre- and post- camp responses. There was a significant difference in scores from pre- ( $\bar{x} = 75.17$ ,  $SD = 11.21$ ) and post- ( $\bar{x} = 79.05$ ,  $SD = 11.85$ ) responses,  $t(41) = -3.21$ ,  $p = 0.003$ .

The analysis for the second research question, “is a camp experience with more adventure education components associated with greater increase in resilience”, resulted in a significant difference in scores from pre- ( $\bar{x} = 73.06$ ,  $SD = 12.61$ ) to post- ( $\bar{x} = 78.65$ ,  $SD = 10.41$ ) responses;  $t(16) = -2.55$ ,  $p = 0.02$  for the high adventure group. For the low adventure group, pre- ( $\bar{x} = 76.60$ ,  $SD = 10.17$ ) and post- ( $\bar{x} = 79.32$ ,  $SD = 12.93$ ) responses were not significant;  $t(24) = -1.99$ ,  $p = 0.06$ .

Counselors reported engaging in intentional actions to positively impact camper development. Means were calculated and all 14 actions rated above 3.5. Counselors rated *built relationships with campers*, *modeled good character*, and *interacted with nature* as the most frequently occurring behaviors ( $\bar{x} \geq 4.34$ ). The actions in which they engaged the least included *introducing tasks incrementally*, *activities were organized to arouse curiosity*, and *we took time to talk about what we’ve learned* ( $\bar{x} = 3.54 - 3.87$ ).

### Summary and Implications

The camp in this study utilized intentional programming to facilitate resilience. The results indicated that the camp experiences in this camp produced a significant effect on resilience levels in the boys who participated in the study. Specifically, campers increased their capacity for resilience over the two-week camp session in which they participated. Results also demonstrate that campers who participated in a higher number of adventurous skill activities experienced greater change in resilience scores than campers in skill areas that were low in

adventure.

While generalizability is limited due to the sample size and site selection, this study suggests that resilience may be enhanced for campers at camps that choose to include activities with qualities of adventure and ensure camper involvement. The similarities of the models discussed, which have grown from different fields of study, suggest the process of successfully moving through challenges effectively contributes to developing the capacity for resilience. Camp program development may benefit from intentionally including phases such as challenge, new skills, and application to foster the resilient growth process. Resilience has been shown to increase success at all stages of life, and is particularly important for youth development. Thus, camps are encouraged to review activities and engage in assessment to determine the impact of programs on resilience at their own camp.

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## **THE IMPACT OF CAMP ON PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONING OF CHILDREN WITH SERIOUS ILLNESS**

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Developing capacities for resilience – the ability to thrive despite adversity – is critical for positive growth and development (Masten & Gewirtz, 2006). Resilience plays an especially important role in the lives of children living with serious medical illness as these children experience challenges related to illness and treatment that can lead to serious stress and psychosocial difficulties (Eilertsen, Rannestad, Indredavik, & Vik, 2011; Ishibashi, 2001; Martinez, Carter, & Legato, 2011). One of the strongest predictors of resilience is social support (Torres, Southwick, & Mayes, 2011), however, children living with serious illness may have few opportunities to develop friendships and support networks as time spent ill or receiving treatment can lead to frequent absences from school and missed opportunities to interact with peers (Ishibashi, 2001). Residential summer camps designed specifically for children living with illness can provide a unique opportunity for children to come together and build networks of social support with peers who have shared experiences, thus boosting children’s capacities for resilience. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of attending a residential summer camp on children’s friendships and social support as well as their psychosocial quality of life.

### **Methods**

Prior to the start of camp during summer 2012, families with children attending camp in a network of camps for children living with serious illness were invited to participate in a longitudinal study. Nine hundred nineteen caregivers and 764 campers completed pre-camp surveys, which included questions related to children’s characteristics (e.g., emotional reactivity), capacities for resilience (social skills), quality of life (physical and psychosocial), and friendships/social support. Follow-up surveys were sent one month and six months after camp. At one month, a total of 262 parents/caregivers and 188 campers completed post-camp surveys and 152 parents/caregivers and 104 campers completed the six-month follow-up surveys. Questions in the follow-up surveys were identical to the pre-camp surveys with additional items relating to the camp experience and friendships made at camp. Respondents were 54% male, 46% female and an average age of 12.7 years ( $SD = 2.7$ ). There were no significant differences in key variables (e.g., gender, age, physical health) between campers who completed the pre-camp surveys and those who completed follow-up surveys.

### **Results**

One month after returning from camp, nearly all campers (98%) reported that they had made new friends at camp and increased friendship satisfaction was reported ( $t(153) = -2.08, p < .05$ ). Campers reported statistically significant differences in how they felt about their friends at camp in comparison to how they felt about their friends at home, rating camp friends higher on a number of qualities including understanding and listening ( $p < .05$  for all analyses). Approximately 58% of campers were still in touch with camp friends one month after camp and

48% were in touch six months after camp. Gender, age, and emotional reactivity significantly predicted whether or not campers reported staying in touch with camp friends after returning home ( $\chi^2 = 24.69, p < .001$ , Odds ratios: age: 1.25,  $p < .01$ , gender; female = 0, male = 1: .51,  $p < .05$ , and emotional reactivity: .58,  $p < .01$ ). Specifically, female campers, older campers, and campers with low emotional reactivity were more likely to stay in touch with friends made at camp than male campers, younger campers, and campers with high reactivity.

Questions related to psychosocial quality of life for campers (Psychosocial Difficulties subscale from the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory (Varni, Seid, & Kurtin, 2001)) were included in surveys at all three time points. Both parents and campers reported a decrease in camper psychosocial problems after camp in comparison to before camp. At six months, however, psychosocial difficulty scores had returned to a level that was not significantly different from pre-camp levels. Camper social skills significantly predicted differences in problems with psychosocial functioning ( $F(3, 180) = 4.04, p < .05$ , social skills:  $t = -2.84, p < .01, \beta = -.24$ ). In other words, campers with stronger social skills showed a larger drop in psychosocial problems after camp than campers with poor social skills, indicating that campers with stronger social skills may have psychosocially benefitted more from camp than their peers.

### Conclusions and Implications

These results highlight the role that camp plays in promoting friendships and social support for campers living with serious illness. Nearly all of the campers in the study reported making new friends at camp and many continued to stay in touch even six months after camp. Importantly, children's social skills predicted how much children benefitted psychosocially from the camp experience. Promoting social support through camp participation may increase children's capacities for resilience as social support is a primary predictor of resilience. These findings have important implications for camps. Specifically, intentionally focusing on promoting social skills as part of camp programming may have the potential to maximize psychosocial gains for all campers and ultimately boost capacities for resilience.

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