

Summer SEALS Day Camp 2012 Annual Report January 28, 2013

With the completion of its sixth consecutive year, the 2012 Summer SEALS Day Camp continued to build upon the successes of the previous five summers, measurably *enriching lives...* of 30 youth academically, socially/emotionally and behaviorally... *one summer at a time.*

Improving campers' core reading and mathematics skills remains the program's primary focus while maintaining a high level of engagement in meaningful learning opportunities through out the summer. The curriculum was divided into three integrated units. Each of the campers received a *Magic Treehouse* book aligned with each unit's theme: **African Safari** (*Lions at Lunch Time*), **Jungle Animals** (*Good Morning Gorilla*), and **The Olympics** (*Hour of the Olympics*) while also completing related writing and mathematics activities. Campers traveled to the Washington Zoo, attended a Harrisburg Senators baseball game, and visited the Selinsgrove Pool. Additionally, the campers sponsored a clothes drive for **The Mustard Seed**, a free community car wash (as a way to thank those who made camp possible) and visited Mike & Kathi Flock's pond in Kreamer (an annual highlight for the kids, Mike and John Bickhart). At the conclusion of the program campers presented an overview of their learning activities to an audience of family and friends, and then, they received diplomas and prizes to celebrate their many achievements.

Due to changes in assessments administered by the school district, comparison of campers' pre- and post-camp reading and mathematics levels were not possible in 2012. Nevertheless, we are able to share information gathered by Mrs. Holly Morgan, School Counselor at the Intermediate School, who conducted interviews with each of the campers and their parent/guardian.

During these interviews campers were asked a series of questions (noted in bold) with representative responses provided after each question. **Tell me what camp was like for you?** "It was so fun! It was the best thing that ever happened to me. You go on field trips and go swimming and make new friends and meet new people." **How was learning different at camp than at school?** "You don't really know that you're learning cause it's in fun ways." **What were some important things you learned at camp?** Campers' responses centered on specific facts or concepts, like the Olympics, reading or math, as well as on "life lessons", like "We learned to be supportive if someone needs help", "to follow directions and always do your best", and "friendship, to be nice and not be mean, no drama." **What would you change about camp?** Most campers said they wouldn't change anything. There were two suggestions: "If you're really good, maybe you could bring in a game to play with the other kids" and "Don't use Styrofoam trays at lunch because they break too easy." There were no negative comments.

Parents/guardians were asked: **Tell me your overall thoughts about the Summer SEALS Day Camp? In what ways has your child's learning changed as a result of attending the camp? What changes have you noticed socially, behaviorally or in your child's attitude that you attribute to their participation in camp? And do you have any other comments you'd like to make?** Again, there were no negative comments. Parents were clearly pleased with the program, the teachers, and their child's response to the program. A few suggestions for the Board to consider included: ensuring that parents know what their children are reading, extending the years children can attend the program, and making the opportunity available to more students. Many are amazed and appreciative the program is provided at no cost to the families.

- "I think it was an excellent program. It taught them more math and reading skills in a fun environment. They took the themes they were learning and applied them also in the field trip experiences. It was a great confidence booster for him."
- "I was telling everybody I loved it; I thought it was a great opportunity for him. Instead of being home all summer it kept him up to speed with stuff. I thought it was awesome how it was funded, the transportation and everything. He loved it and there wasn't one day I had to fight with him to go."

- “She’s making more friends; she’s not as scared or as timid as she used to be; she’s willing to ask more questions and she’s come out of her shell.”

Mrs. Morgan also shared an email message she received in mid-November from one of the parents: “Mrs. Morgan, I had to email you, did you see (child’s name)’s report card? His grades were the best he has ever gotten. I don’t know if it had anything to do with the SEALS Summer camp, but I’m amazed. (mother’s name)

Beyond these highlights, the Summer SEALS Day Camp continues to operate in a fiscally conservative, prudent manner. Our website (www.summerseals.org) contains links to our program video, annual reports, weekly newsletters, and EITC information, all of which help to inform others of the program’s vision, mission and impact. And Summer SEALS continues to be recognized by the state as an approved **Educational Improvement Organization (EIO)** under the **Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC)** program, specifically for the 3rd grade component. Our current fundraising goal is \$50,000, which will provide operating funds for the 2013 program in addition to helping build an endowment to ensure the program’s long-term sustainability. Also, please consider noting April 21, 2013 on your calendar, the date for the 3rd Annual 5k Walk/Run at the High School stadium. This fundraiser, planned and organized by our teachers from Susquehanna University, helps fund field trips for the campers.

The charitable contributions received from 01/1/12 to 12/31/12 totaled \$63,692.44. This includes significant EITC contributions from United Concordia, Mifflinburg Bank & Trust, Northumberland National Bank, Swineford National Bank and Weis Markets, as well as proceeds from the 2nd Annual 5k. At the same time, our program director and associate director exercised fiscal discipline in holding the line on program expenditures, totaling \$36,233.81 for 2012, a figure that is comparable with each of the five previous years’ expenses. This is no small accomplishment given annual increases in fuel costs and the like.

With each passing year we remain most grateful for the unwavering support we receive from faithful individual, business/corporate and foundation donors. Our base of donors has gradually expanded each year, now with over 170 donors. The fruits of our collective efforts are indeed tangible, most especially in the meaningful growth observed among campers in their reading skills, math skills and beyond. Faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us remains a paramount priority. And know the Summer SEALS Day Camp’s many successes directly reflect the collaborative synergy of its partners and the broader community.

Report Compiled by:

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