

CAMP SHRIVER AT UMASS BOSTON



2021
IMPACT
REPORT

CAMP SHRIVER

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



Saturday Camp

Camp Shriver partners with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester to hold our extended camp programming during the school year. Currently on hiatus due to the pandemic, Saturday Camp will return soon.

While recreational programs offered by schools and community agencies may accept some children with disabilities, few—if any—enroll an equal number of children with and without disabilities at no cost to their families.

That is what makes Camp Shriver at the University of Massachusetts Boston unique. Camp Shriver is designed to serve an equal number of children with and without disabilities so that all children can play and learn together. Since 2006, Camp Shriver has welcomed hundreds of children, half with and half without intellectual and developmental disabilities, ages 8-12, from low income families in the Boston area to a free inclusive recreational camp. New in 2021, Camp Shriver partnered with UMass Amherst to host our camp at the UMass Amherst Mt. Ida campus.

Camp Shriver's model of inclusion is based on over 40 years of research at the Center for Social Development and Education at UMass Boston. The research-based best practices and strategies for inclusion developed for Camp Shriver are disseminated widely so that all organizations can better include children with disabilities. Camp Shriver is nationally recognized as a leader in recreational inclusion.

Camp Shriver's mission is to bring children with and without disabilities together to provide opportunities for social and motor development, while promoting positive peer relationships and friendships among campers.



NEW LOCATION, SAME PROGRAM!

Camp Shriver at UMass Boston is thrilled to partner with UMass Amherst and host our camp at the UMass Amherst Mt. Ida Campus in Newton, MA. When Camp Shriver was in need of more space, UMass Boston and UMass Amherst came together to make sure that our campers had a home. We couldn't be more happy with our welcome and the collegiality of the two campuses working together to make inclusion a reality.

The Mt. Ida campus, located only 8 miles from downtown Boston, is an ideal spot for our camp. The campus has outdoor tennis and basketball courts, a stadium with a turf field for soccer, football, and lacrosse, a climate controlled indoor basketball facility, theater hall, and classroom space for creative activities. The expansive outdoor and indoor gathering spaces allowed Camp Shriver to comply with current COVID-19 guidelines and accommodate our campers and staff safely. While our location changed, Camp Shriver remains the same:

- Our Mission. We continue to bring together children with and without disabilities to develop social skills and create positive peer relationships.
- Our No-Cost Services. Camp Shriver remains free, after a \$25 registration fee, and provides free breakfast and lunch.
- Our Transportation. Free transportation continues to be provided at school pick-up and drop-off locations around the city, with shorter trips for campers near Hyde Park/West Roxbury and longer trips for campers near Dorchester/South Boston.
- Our Programming. Teams continue to travel together to a variety of activities in the arts-and-crafts room, court, field and gymnasium of the Mt. Ida campus.

This promising new partnership offers many new opportunities for our campers... we look forward to exploring what the future of Camp Shriver on the UMass Amherst Mt. Ida campus brings!



THE CSDE MODEL OF INCLUSION

Founded in 1976, the Center for Social Development and Education (CSDE) at the University of Massachusetts Boston is a multidisciplinary research institute whose mission is to promote the social development and overall quality of life for children with disabilities. The principles of the CSDE model of inclusion—based on 40 years of CSDE research and evaluation—are found in Camp Shriver programming:

Commitment to Inclusion: To demonstrate a commitment to serving children with and without disabilities in an inclusive environment, 50% of campers have an intellectual or developmental disability.

Commitment to Full Participation: To promote participation, all activities are planned in advance and developed following the principles of universal design. When needed, individual accommodations are made to allow all campers to engage in the same activities. Choices are offered between variations of activities (e.g., which line to shoot free throws from) and between different equipment (e.g., whether to pass a basketball, a playground ball or balloon). Coaches take a multi-sensory approach to game directions, verbally reviewing and visually demonstrating.

Commitment to Social-Emotional Development: To foster social connections and meaningful social interactions between campers, staff promote a culture of social responsibility by modeling and encouraging positive social behaviors among campers during structured and unstructured time. Social skills such as cheering for your teammates, inviting others to play with you and joining in groups that are already playing are the building blocks of positive peer relationships and friendships. Every week, campers work toward goals that foster positive social-emotional growth and social responsibility, such as relationship-building, responsible decision-making, social awareness and self-management.

Commitment to Staff Support: To ensure that staff provide positive behavior supports that foster social skills for all campers with and without disabilities, staff attend two full days of training provided by experts from the CSDE and Boston Public Schools. Camp Shriver prides itself on understanding and teaching fundamental best practices for successful inclusion. In a low 4:1 camper-to-staff ratio, staff have defined roles: an inclusion coordinator supports all camper and staff needs; coaches organize and lead specific areas (e.g., gym, field, swim, arts-and-crafts), working with the camp director to create daily activity plans for their respective areas; and counselors are assigned to a team of campers to support campers through the day, modeling participation and positive social skills by engaging enthusiastically in every activity. Coaches and counselors focus on each child's individual skills and abilities (not a specific disability label).

Commitment to Evaluation: To continuously improve inclusive programming so that its positive benefits can be maximized each year, Camp Shriver conducts a rigorous, annual evaluation, involving parent surveys, counselor observations of campers and one-on-one interviews with campers.

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



A CAMPER STORY – NEW LEADERS

“Get to the flag!” Grady*—a 12-year-old boy without a disability—yelled, running down the field, dodging counselors right and left. Grady was in his element, an athlete who thrived on competition, in the middle of a hotly contested game of Capture the Flag on the turf field in the stadium at Mt. Ida.

He rocketed down the field, approaching the flag, when he saw a camper in the corner of his eye. One burst of speed would take him to the flag! But Grady slowed down... because while Grady might love winning, he has been at Camp Shriver since he was 8 years-old and has learned a lot since that first summer.

* * *

Grady is part of a group of campers that have been coming to Camp Shriver for years. These campers live in the same neighborhood, attend the same school, and take the bus together every day. When they get to camp in the summer, they want to run and play and play and play... and really don't pay attention to any campers other than themselves.

Director Mark Spolidoro knew that this was a great group of campers, but after a year that many campers spent in isolation, he needed more than great campers. Mark needed great leaders.

On the first day of camp, he asked Grady and his friends to hang out after his morning welcome while the rest of the teams went to their first activity. Mark told the group how they were now the oldest kids at camp and all the 8- and 9-year-olds were completely new to Camp Shriver. He stressed how the group knew Mark's expectations and what it meant to be successful at Camp Shriver. He asked the campers how they felt about that and what might they do to help the new campers.

For the first time, Grady and friends saw their role at camp very differently. Instead of travelling everywhere as a pack, Mark watched the group split itself up while transitioning between activities so that every camper on their team had a friend to walk with. They were last in the lunch line every day, so that other campers could go first. They shared equipment, explained directions and stepped back so that others could succeed.

* * *

“Got you!” Lin said, a 10 year-old camper with a disability and limited mobility, beaming as she waved Grady's flag in the air.

“You sure did, Lin!” Grady smiled, as her team erupted into cheers, “Great grab!”

After years at Camp Shriver, Grady and his friends are more than great campers, they are true leaders of inclusion and Mark cannot wait to welcome them back one day—as the counselors.



EVALUATION OF CAMP SHRIVER

... THE IMPACT OF CAMP SHRIVER ON CAMPERS

The evaluation is conducted each year by research staff from the Center for Social Development and Education to demonstrate that Camp Shriver continues to improve and to accomplish our mission: to bring children with and without disabilities together to provide opportunities to promote social and motor development, while fostering positive peer relationships. Assessment instruments and methods are drawn from the scientific literature and adapted to measure camper social skills and social relationships through individual camper interviews and staff observations. Parents are also surveyed before camp about their goals for their child. New in 2021, our inclusion coordinator also completed an observation of camper skills. From the 2021 evaluation, we learned:

Camp Shriver's model creates a community where campers feel they belong.

To successfully help campers develop social and motor skills, Camp Shriver's model creates an environment where campers feel included and supported. To accomplish this, we welcome a population of campers where 50% of campers have an intellectual or developmental disability and use a low 4:1 camper-to-staff ratio, where all staff are trained to focus on each child's skills and abilities—not on a particular label. Campers believed that their fellow campers “helped out a lot” and “were nice to me.” They saw their peers as being “supportive,” “kind, considerate and generous” and felt that “everyone being inclusive” was part of what makes Camp Shriver fun.

In this supportive environment, over 76% of campers reported that the campers on their team were friendly, 86% campers believed they learned about things they were good at and 78% believed that they got better at making friends with other campers.

Camp Shriver improves the social-emotional skills of campers.

In this supportive environment, Camp Shriver staff promote social-emotional learning by modelling and encouraging positive social behaviors among campers during structured and unstructured time. Parents, especially parents of children with disabilities, report wanting to see their children improve these social-emotional skills as a goal of Camp Shriver:

Being self-confident: 96% of parents of a child w/ a disability & 48% of parents of child w/o a disability
Being independent: 74% of parents of a child w/ a disability & 24% of parents of child w/o a disability
Making friends: 74% of parents of a child w/ a disability & 40% of parents of child w/o a disability



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

Joining a group of children already playing:

78% of parents of a child w/ a disability & 44% of parents of child w/o disability

Asking children to play:

70% of parents of a child w/ a disability & 40% of parents of child w/o a disability

Our inclusion coordinator observed significant improvement in campers with and without disabilities for these skills: of the campers who needed improvement, 96% improved at being self-confident and making friends, 90% at being independent, 100% at joining in a group already playing and 83% at asking other children to play.

Camp Shriver fosters positive peer relationships and friendships.

Most fundamental to Camp Shriver's mission is that Camp Shriver brings together children with and without disabilities to create positive peer relationships and friendships. For children with disabilities, especially, fostering and developing peer relationships is important, as children with disabilities often lack opportunities to develop positive peer relationships; indeed, our inclusion coordinator reported that all campers with a disability needed at least some improvement at making friends. Camp Shriver clearly achieves this aspect of our mission: in 2021, 98% of campers named at least one other camper as a friend and 79% of campers were named as a friend by another camper. Importantly, most campers without a disability (81%) named a peer with a disability as a friend. This is particularly notable, given that even in inclusive extracurricular programming (such as Special Olympics Unified Champion School programs), only 41% of middle school students reported becoming friends with a student with a disability through participating in the program (Jacobs, et al., 2018).

Camp Shriver promotes motor skill development.

Camp Shriver provides opportunities for motor skill development by increasing camper participation in all



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

activities; this is accomplished by making inclusive accommodations to all activities following Principles of Universal Design to promote participation. Overall, campers participate in over 64 hours of motor skill development on the field and courts, in the gym and in the arts and crafts room, and report that they “learn something new every week.” Campers say that they “can do all these activities that I don't normally do at home” and experience “a lot of stuff I haven't done before but now I know they're really fun.” Campers report that “learning new things” is what makes Camp Shriver fun.

The new range of activities offered at the Mt. Ida campus, including golf, tennis and kickball homerun tournaments, means that “every two days you do another thing so you can get better at it.” Campers report, “I like that we have a chance to explore the sports we like. And I like to practice so if I'm not good on the 1st day I can still do it on the 2nd day.” Overall campers report that they “like being more healthy and active and running around.”

In Conclusion, when asked what makes Camp Shriver fun, one of our campers said, “people encouraging you and knowing that people with different disabilities can still have fun.” Camp Shriver has had demonstrated success in meeting its objectives since its inception in 2006 and the evaluation results are used to continuously revise and improve programming to maximize its positive effects. The yearly evaluation results and documented successes have been published in books (the forthcoming *Best Practices for Inclusive Camps* from Human Kinetics), encyclopedias (Encyclopedia of Intellectual and Developmental Disorders, 2018), scientific journals (Social Inclusion of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in a Recreational Setting, *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 47(2), 97-107), psychology magazines (Monitor on Psychology, July 2008), camping magazines (American Camping Association, 2007) and in national media outlets such as It's Only a Game on NPR.



SERVING CHILDREN OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

At Camp Shriver, we remain committed to welcoming children, ages 8-12, boys and girls, with and without disabilities, from low-income urban neighborhoods and ensuring diversity among our campers. In 2021, 100 campers with and without disabilities were served from Boston (80%) and Quincy (20%). The majority of campers lived in the neighborhoods surrounding UMass Boston, including Dorchester, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Roslindale, South Boston and Roxbury.

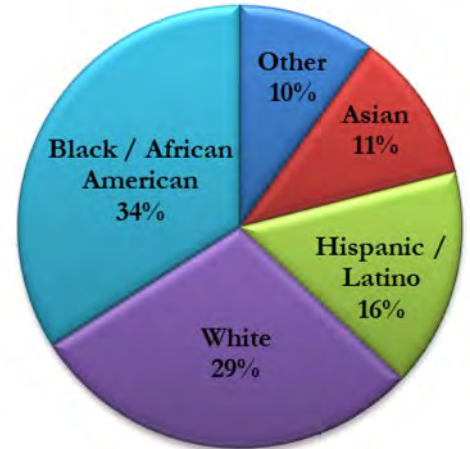
The ethnicity of our campers is representative of the communities in which they live: 71% of campers are from minority groups. We are committed to maintaining this level of diversity in our camp population: 34% of campers self-reported as Black/African American, 29% as White, 16% as Hispanic/Latino, 11% as Asian, and 10% as mixed race or other.

At the heart of Camp Shriver's unique inclusive experience, an equal number of children with and without disabilities are brought together to engage in the same recreational activities alongside one another. Our campers with disabilities are children with intellectual disabilities, on the autism spectrum, and who have other developmental delays. In 2021, 47% were children with a disability and 53% were children without a disability.

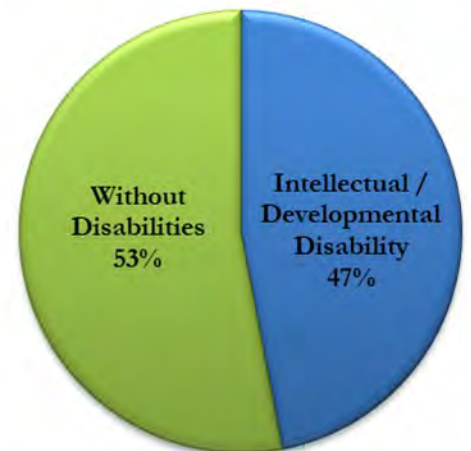
Additionally, Camp Shriver partners with schools and community groups to identify children from low-income neighborhoods who might be interested in and benefit from a free summer sports camp. In 2021, 64% of Camp Shriver families were very low to low income.



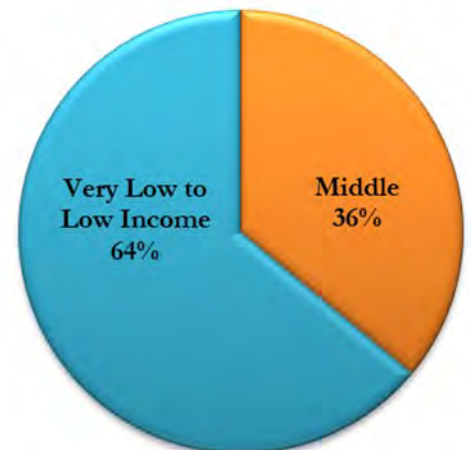
Camper Ethnicity



Camper Disability Status



Family Income Levels



A CAMPER STORY—THE WHIFFLE BALL GAME

“Hey,” Jayden* said, picking a bigger bat. “Try this one!”

“Thanks!” Sammy said, taking the bat and nodding at the pitcher, who moved a few steps closer to home plate.

This summer, one group of campers who were especially athletic decided to spend their free time organizing a whiffle ball game. During this unstructured play time, this group claimed a section of the field, set up their bases, invited other campers to play, chose their teams and played a game almost every day.

At most camps, maybe a game of whiffle ball isn’t a rousing success. But at Camp Shriver, it absolutely is—because this game of whiffle ball was inclusive and the campers took the lead and made sure it was so!

Without prompting from counselors, the lead group of campers made sure that their whiffle ball game included every camper who wanted to play, regardless of disability status or ability. They moved the plate closer, pitched slower, used a different ball or a bigger bat to make sure that everyone could get in the game.

These campers had taken Camp Shriver’s mission into their hearts and were adapting games during their free time to include every camper.

Inclusion is more fun for everyone!

**Camper names changed.*



CAMP SHRIVER...
IN THE CAMPERS' OWN WORDS

My friends are kind, considerate and generous.



My friends and I get to play!

It is fun to be outside!

At Camp Shriver, they support and encourage you.



I like being more healthy and active and running around!

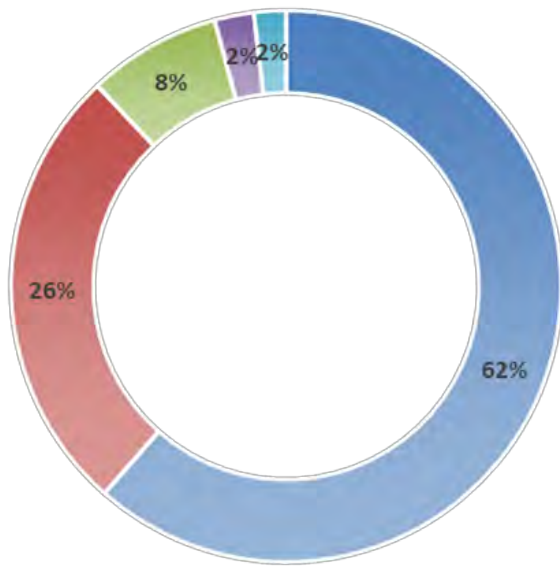
We learn something new every week!



Camp Shriver is knowing that people with different disabilities can still have fun.

SUSTAINABILITY OF CAMP SHRIVER

Camp Shriver is a financially stable program, comprising support from the Center for Social Development and Education (administration and fundraising) and the University of Massachusetts Boston (facilities and transportation). Additionally Camp Shriver has been awarded multi-year grants from the Liberty Mutual Foundation and is a member of the Official Charity Program of the Boston Marathon. We continue to actively solicit new and varied funding opportunities each year.



A GRATEFUL THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Camp Shriver and the Center for Social Development and Education would like to thank UMass Boston, UMass Amherst and all of our friends and sponsors:



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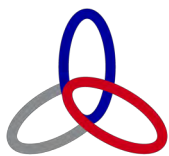
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THANK YOU ALSO TO THE AGNES M. LINDSAY TRUST, STOP & SHOP AND THE MANY GRACIOUS DONORS TO OUR THRIVE FOR SHRIVER CAMPAIGN!

CAMP SHRIVER

AT UMASS BOSTON



HOSTED ON UMASS AMHERST MT. IDA CAMPUS

2021