

N SOUTHAMPTON FRESH AIR HOME NEWSLETTER

August 2021



KIDS + CAMP = JOY

Dear Friends,

It is my absolute joy to share the news that camp is in session this summer! After providing virtual summer camp programs and activities in 2020, and limited in-person off-season programs which were offered from October to May, larger groups of campers returned to SFAH in June to participate in our 120th season.

This year we will provide a total of 8 one-week camp sessions each with an enrollment of 20-22 children. In total, we will serve 170 children with physical disabilities this summer. They participate in a wide range of activities including basketball, tennis, bicycling, relays, swimming, iPads, computers, gardening, arts, crafts, photography, cooking, music and dancing. Off-site trips to Cooper's Beach, Carvel and sailing are favorites.

Our campers enjoy tending to the accessible gardens, watching seeds grown into herbs, fruits and vegetables which they pick and use in their cooking club. They also enjoy learning to ride bikes -- a childhood rite of passage. This builds physical strength and fine-tunes motor skills and physical coordination. Our new adaptive bicycles are designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities. Our campers are most excited about the addition of weekly computer science workshops. Knowing the basics of computer science is a great skill for our children to learn, opening doors to accessible jobs and more.



Serving youth with physical disabilities for 120 years

36 Barkers Island Road | Southampton, NY 11968
631-283-5847 | sfah.org

We are building a sensory garden, a place for children to explore, learn and stimulate their senses in a unique environment. The garden, to be named in memory of Jack C. Alexander, will include a fire pit, wind chime arbor, living tee pee, wishing well, insect house and touch garden. The sensory garden will be an environmentally friendly ecosystem with native plantings designed to capture rain water and the perfect environment for pollinators to flourish.

Our in-person, off-season programming included Life Skill Lab workshops, day-trips, reunion weekends at SFAH, alumni activities and on-line resources. Despite challenges brought on by the pandemic, this year, provided 10 off-season events that served more than 40 youngsters.

We continue to offer virtual programs to expand our impact. Daily activities provide recreation, socialization and education for campers during the time they are not here with us in-person. During the off-season, we offered more than 65 virtual events that reached more than 350 participants.

We were thrilled to welcome our supporters back to a limited capacity, long-duration Decorators-Designers-Dealers Sale and Auction in June. While we did not have the regular American Picnic in July, we did hold our 34th Fireworks by Gucci display over Shinnecock Bay. Special thanks to the Town of Southampton, the Village of Southampton and the State of New York for their assistance making these fundraising events possible during a difficult period. The Channing Daughters virtual wine tasting, organized in conjunction with our friends at the Kiwanis Club of Southampton Town, was a true highlight of the year. This year donations from new and lapsed donors were matched dollar for dollar, up to \$7,500, by the Angela and Scott Jaggart Foundation. Thank you to all who participated.

SFAH is more than a summer camp. It is a year-round center for youth with physical disabilities. On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and all of our campers and alumni, I thank you for your generosity and support.

Sincerely,



Thomas Naro
Executive Director



Sensory Garden coming to SFAH



Our campers enjoy riding the adaptive bikes on the sports court all year round.



Counselors and campers are each others best cheerleaders during color wars.

SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS



Basketball on the sports court



Color war games



Pool time



Game night

"SFAH is my happy place where I can just be myself. I love being able to spend time with my friends here."

-Alazia Milner

"SFAH is my second home, this place is really special. I love the activities we do, like swimming and dancing."

-Sean Jacobs

STAFF NEWS

This year, SFAH welcomed back three alumni campers to our summer staff: Eddie in maintenance, Kiara in the office as medical liaison and Ellie in housekeeping.



Eddie, Kiara and Ellie

"Working at SFAH as a former camper is the best way to be a responsible adult while remembering the best times of your life."

- Kiara Esteves

SUMMER TRIPS



Campers enjoy an afternoon at the mini golf and watching the sunset after a trip for ice cream.



Sailing trips on the Peconic Bay are a favorite for our campers. For many of them, this is the first opportunity to feel the salt water making it a memorable activity.

LIFE SKILL LABS

Inform, educate and guide campers



Cooking Club



Computer Club



Personal Care

Our Life Skill Lab workshop's main focus is to assess and improve a camper's ability to function day-to-day in daily activities at home, in school, out in public, and at work. The goals are to foster independence and productivity and to encourage self-care. Life Skill Labs are the most requested programs offered during the off-season.

OFF-SEASON PROGRAMS



Our off-season programs continue to play a vital role in the development of the campers as the children continue to strengthen skills, gain independence, engage in new activities and gather with friends. This year some of our campers gathered at the Home for respite weekends during the fall and spring. In addition, off-site trips included pottery painting, pizza in the park and an axe throwing activity.



Trip to Axe throwing



Halloween weekend art activities



Every camper received holiday gifts in lieu of the holiday party.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Southampton Fresh Air Home is a not-for-profit residential camp offering summer sessions and year-round programs and opportunities for youth with physical disabilities. Our mission is to provide an enriching, recreational camping experience. We are committed to helping our campers develop physically, emotionally, and educationally, with the goal of fostering self-esteem, maturity and independence through a broadly balanced program, while providing their families with a well-deserved respite.

The Southampton Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 100 YEARS



Campers were welcomed back in one-week sleep-away sessions.

ZOE KAV

Campers at Fresh Air Home are thrilled to be back for a 120th year

BY ZOE KAVA

Excitement was in the air as the co-ed sleep away camp for physically challenged children at the Southampton Fresh Air Home was welcoming campers back for a summer full of fun after the COVID-19 pandemic thwarted last year's camp sessions.

This year marks the 120th year that the camp on Barkers Island Road has been dedicated to providing youth with physical disabilities with a safe and welcoming environment to play, so-

ly, emotionally and psychologically. The camp teaches leadership skills, competition, independence, and confidence, while allowing campers to participate in a wide range of activities like swimming, sailing, biking, racket sports, computers, board games, and arts and crafts.

"Kids with disabilities can engage in all of these activities, too — and what we do is we give them a safe place to do that," Executive Director Thomas Naro said.

After a year of challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and primarily vir-

ly able to welcome back campers on June 27 for the first day of camp. The day was marked with hugs, happy tear and nothing but excitement for the fun summer ahead.

"The smile and joy on these campers faces when they see their friends, their counselors, and the camp atmosphere has been incredible," Mr. Naro said.

The children who attend the camp live with a range of physical disabilities: such as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, osteogenesis imperfecta, spinal cord injuries, and

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head injuries, and range in age from 8 to 18 year old. Camp counselors work one-on-one as well as in groups to create an environment in which campers are fully involved, engaged, and most importantly, having fun. This year, the camp will welcome back campers in one week sleep-away sessions instead of the usual three week sessions, and will run through August 20.

"We started with in-person programming back in October, but we weren't able to have any overnights," Mr. Naro said. "So, on our first day of camp this year, to have a large group of 20 or so children with many staff members — you could just feel the joy radiating from the property."

Though the pandemic posed challenges for bringing campers together last year, the camp staff was able to put together a full schedule of virtual programming and activities.

"Because we're a residential camp, last year we weren't

able to have kids at camp in person because of the pandemic," Mr. Naro said. "So we started running programs virtually, and though it wasn't the same as having everyone in person, we were still able to recreate the feeling of having everyone come together, a feeling which was really needed during a difficult time."

Mr. Naro explained that keeping up with virtual programming, and not canceling the camp entirely was extremely important in order to create a sense of community, and bring campers together during a time of intense physical isolation.

"Everyone faced a lot of isolation over the last year," Mr. Naro said. "But if you consider a young child who has mobility issues, or a child in a wheelchair — their isolation was likely worse for many reasons."

Though camp sessions are running in person this summer, the camp is continuing to run virtual programming in order to reach and engage more children in the camp experience.

"Post pandemic world, we sort of learned that through virtual programs, we could reach even more kids than we were already reaching," Mr. Naro said. "Because we have a limited amount of children we can bring to camp given the size of the facility, continuing to run virtual camp lets us reach more kids."

The camp has also expanded to become much more than just a summer camp, Mr. Naro explained. Programming, both virtual and in person, now runs year long, offering day trips, workshops, special events, and an 18+ program for alumni campers.

The camp kickstarted their summer with a June fundraiser event where donors were welcomed back to the campus, and camp alumni came to visit and help out.

"We're simply so excited to be back and operational," Mr. Naro said. "We're extremely appreciative of the support from the community during this past year when things were difficult, and we're looking forward to a great summer ahead."



Camper Joshua with two of his counselors.



NICKY GRANT & TOM NARO

THE SOUTHAMPTON FRESH AIR HOME

JEAN SHAFIROFF INTERVIEWS
NICKY GRANT, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND
TOM NARO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By JEAN SHAFIROFF

Tell me about the Southampton Fresh Air Home.

Nicky Grant: Southampton Fresh Air Home (SFAH) is a not-for-profit residential camp offering summer sessions and year-round programs and opportunities for youth with physical disabilities. Our mission is to provide an enriching, recreational camping experience, and to help our campers develop physically, emotionally, and educationally, with the goal of fostering self-esteem, maturity, and independence through a broadly balanced program. We also provide families of children with very high-care needs with a well-deserved respite.

Tom Naro: Campers who attend SFAH's programs come primarily from low- and middle-income families. Over seventy-five percent are from New York City and Long Island. The children live with a range of physical disabilities, such as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, osteogenesis imperfecta, spinal cord injuries, and head injuries. They range in age from 8 to 18, roughly half boys and half girls. Campers use power or manual wheelchairs, braces, or crutches. Some manage their own care with minimal assistance, while others require total care, receiving help with dressing, toileting, eating, bathing, and moving about.

What are some of the services you offer?

NG: While in residence at SFAH, participants enjoy our unique sports programs, which include swimming, sailing, relays, golf, tennis, basketball, baseball, dodgeball, football, cycling, and hockey. Campers spend time in our arts and crafts workshop where activities include visual arts such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography. There is a popular iPad program, gardening, cooking, games, and camp fires. Counselors work one-on-one to create an environment in which campers are fully involved and engaged.

TN: Between September and May, SFAH offers a regular schedule of weekend and day programs. Each weekend includes life-skill lab workshops focusing on relevant topics such as independent living skills, managing personal care needs, job readiness, post-secondary educational options, etc. As one of the few camps in the nation specifically focused on the needs of youth with physical disabilities, SFAH plays a vital role in enriching the lives of these young people and their families. SFAH offers these often-isolated children an opportunity to dramatically increase their sense of independence and self-esteem while developing crucial new skills.



Tom Naro and Nicky Grant

What are some of your recent accomplishments?

NG: There was a complete modernization of our campus in the last few years. Projects include a new administrative building, an upgrade of our transportation fleet, a new sports court, a solar energy system, and a full renovation of the main building which houses our dining hall, camp kitchen, and staff residences.

TN: In 2016, with the addition of a year-round assistant program director, we formalized our off-season programming, allowing us to move from a "summer+" model to a year-round resource for youth with physical disabilities. Most recently, we added raised, accessible vegetable gardens and started an adaptive bicycle program. This year, we are building a sensory garden that will include a wind chime arbor, fire pit, wishing well, touch garden, and rain garden. It will be a place where campers can come together and enjoy a wide variety of sensory experiences.

How can people support the Southampton Fresh Air Home?

TN: Jean, first I'd like to thank you for your continued support of us over the years. To learn more about the Southampton Fresh Air Home and how to support it, go to sfah.org.

What are the future plans for SFAH?

NG: SFAH strives to serve as many physically disabled children and young adults as possible, many of whom also face economic disadvantages. We are currently looking at ways to add more programs and serve more campers.

TN: We are working on a plan to formalize our virtual programs as they are so popular and they expand our reach. SFAH is more than a summer camp. It has become a year-round center for youth with physical disabilities. We want to do more year-round.

Why is SFAH one of the most enduring charities on the East End of Long Island?

NG: SFAH is a community organization with strong support from both local residents and businesses as well as support from regional and national foundations and corporations. SFAH hosts two signature fundraising events each summer. The events are very popular and they continue to introduce new friends and supporters to our mission.

TN: SFAH's integrative approach to life-long learning enlists the talents of a dedicated team. There are five full-time staff members and 65 part-time members during the summer months and over 100 volunteers who regularly work with the staff. And we have a dedicated board who truly care about the campers, the mission, and the organization. They are the driving force that has kept SFAH strong for the past 120 years.



Campers, Photography by Kevin Gomez

