



Preliminary Report



Little Heroes Camp

for the children affected with the loss of a parent
or sibling in the tragedy on 9/11

An Arts-based approach to healing and fun -
using cultural exchange and traditional camping
environments to promote rehabilitation

Presented to Mr. Robert Klein
September 6, 2002



Major Sponsor:
Lions Clubs International

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation
110 Mamaroneck Avenue White Plains, NY 10601

914-328-8589 • www.faf.org

The Camp • June 29 - August 22, 2002

The camp supported 108 children, 25 children per week on average, for one month. All were certified by the camp's registration process and the Catholic Youth organization to be children whose families suffered the loss of a loved one on September 11, 2001 due to the terrorist attacks on New York, Washington, or Pennsylvania.

The Lion's Club International Little Heroes Camp was facilitated by Friendship Ambassadors Foundation at the J. V. Mara CYO Camp in Putnam Valley, New York. The foundation sought out a day camp that could house resident campers. In this way the sponsored children could have an integrated, 'normal' camp session during the day, with special programming aimed specifically at this constituency in the late afternoons and evenings (when the day campers were sent home).

During the day, campers enjoyed all the services that the day camp had to offer: swimming, hiking, adventure programming, a farm and even livestock environment.

From 3PM, past dinner, and some evenings until 9PM, special programming was offered in music, dance, theatre, mask making, and the visual arts for the affected children. A totem pole was created and a large mural was painted by the children.



The arts-based programming was culled together by Friendship Ambassadors Foundation (FAF) based on its experiences in Eastern Europe during and after the Balkan War. Many of the counselors were from around the world; some who had worked on similar projects with FAF in the past. Its artistic partners, who provided the actual services to the children, were the well-respected and renowned arts groups:

- Bond Street Theatre of New York
- The Vanaver Caravan
- The New York University Creative Arts Team (CAT TEAM)

The closing days featured an international fair and an inspection of the site by local Lions Club members.

The campers, counselors, staff, and artists all felt the summer time together was well spent and created a fun and positive healing environment for the young attendees.

The Lions Clubs International should feel proud of their contribution and service to this underserved community. The support for the Little Heroes was direct; the children deeply appreciated this aid provided through Lions Clubs worldwide directly to the youngest, most vulnerable victims of our worst national tragedy.

The Schedule - J. V. Mara CYO Camp

The little heroes were together with the resident campers during the day (9a.m.-3p.m)
They were integrated with children from the day camp according their ages.



A normal day at the day camp included:

9 - 9.45 POW WOW (talking about the day's activities birthdays, lost and found, jokes etc.)

Activities Periods included the following:

archery, swimming, nature, sports, farm, games, adventure, nature hiking, arts and crafts

9.45 - 10.30 - Period 1

10.45-11.30 - Period 2

11.30-12.30 lunch

12.30-1.15 Period Three

1.30-2.15 Period Four

2.30-3.15 Period Five

3.15 day campers return home. Resident campers (including the little heroes) involved in special programming



SPECIAL PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE:

3.30p.m. - 5 p.m.

5.30 - 6.00 dinner

6.00 - 7.00 free time

7.00 - 9.00 night activities

9.30 Preparation for bed

10.00 p.m Lights Out

SPECIAL PROGRAMS INCLUDED:

AFRICAN DRUMMERS AND AFRICAN DANCE

MAKING JOURNALS

HERMAN SEBEK: EXPRESSION WORKSHOP

MAKING MASKS: Robin and (trauma specialist) Dr. Steve Larsen

PARTICIPATORY DRAMA WORKSHOPS

INTERACTIVE DRAMA, CAT (Creative Arts Team, NYU)

BOND STREET THEATRE COALITION - FULL SHOW

VANAVER CARAVAN - concert and full theatre/dance show



Thursday, August 22, 2002 • Dinner with
Lions Club International members



Following are highlights of a typical day at camp. It is followed by the personal story of one international counselor, from Macedonia.

Reflections

There is a Latin proverb that states: *Omniom gradum difficilimus est primus*, which means: from all the steps the first one is the hardest. A proverb that literally has come true in my case.

Thanks to “Balkan Youth Reconciliation Seminar Series” and thanks to Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, I came to the USA at the beginning of this summer with a dream, a goal and wish to work and help children ... and especially the children of victims of September 11th.

I was a counselor for two months at the CYO JV Mara Camp, Putnam Valley and my group was called “The Raccoons 2”. Even though in Macedonia I have worked with kids, teaching them the basic principles of the society, the camp was a totally new experience for me.

The first few days I was so scared and insecure but after a while everything was different. “MY KIDS” were wonderful, they gave me the support that I was looking for, by asking so many questions, always laughing, playing games. And now I am so sad because the camp is over.

In the month of August “The Little Heroes Program” started. This was the most challenging period for all of us and especially for me.

In my group I had a girl that was in a camp for the first time in her life. Her mother came and we introduced each other. After the mother left the first words that the girl said to me were: “I don’t have father any more” then she said that her uncle is not going to their house any more and that their fish died too. Then she said “Now I have my mother and my sisters only”. I had tears in my eyes but coming from a place where so many people died these last couple of years, and losing my best friend and cousin in the terrorist attacks last summer, dealing with her sadness, fear and unhappiness was not hard for me. We became very good friends. Every time the girls needed to go to the bathroom, she would come with us and while they were in the bathroom we sat on the steps and talked.

During the day camp my group was in the pool for one period and while another counselor and I were standing by the pool fence. One boy was there alone. He took his towel and started crying, telling that he was going to his cabin. We went with him into the cabin where he took his pillow and started hysterically crying. We started talking and he said “My father and uncle died in the twin towers and I can’t stop thinking about it”. I had tears in my eyes again, and whenever I think about that I cry again. My heart choked and for a second I asked myself thousands of questions. So we started talking about the camp and the kids and the friends that he made and for a moment he was laughing but then he started crying again. So I retold him my life-story and he said “I have two stories for you”. He told me that his father and uncle died in the twin towers and that he found that out at 2 a.m. when he heard his mother crying in her bedroom. She was pregnant. He felt guilty and he missed his father so much. We talked a lot and explained a lot of things, we ate chocolates and we played games. He was busy all the time. The last day we played basketball while we were waiting for his mother to come and pick him up and we talked and he was happy and smiling.

FAF and BYRSS helped me and now I am so happy and proud of myself for helping the most innocent human beings. The mission of FAF is to promote mutual understanding, global cooperation and good will among the peoples of the world by creating meaningful cultural interchange projects; it has come true again.

A lot of things have happened to me this summer that I can’t explain with words. I just know that my heart is sad and happy at the same time. I believe that the kids will remember this summer and I am glad that I was a part of it.

Watching their smiles and happy faces at the end was a present for all of us and especially for me. I simple love them.

Ms. Dajana Ognjanoska - Macedonia, Peer Counselor

Financial Statement

Unaudited Preliminary Report

Notes: 1) The largest portion of these funds were allocated to the camp for lodging and meals. 2) \$17,000 is committed but yet to be allocated. According to the spending totals, it is requested that the final allocation be made at this time. 3) Ongoing efforts are being made to reach the media as part of their 9/11 coverage and funds are now being disbursed to bring media clippings and videotape together for their review. 4) Other support was also received and supported individual children, who were paid for at the camp separately; their camp fees are not included in this report as they were supported by other organizations and foundations.

Lions Club International

Little Heroes Camp

Unaudited Report - 9/4/02

Initial Donation - Lions Club International **\$70,000.00**

Expenses

Air tickets (For International Counselors) \$8,000.00

Direct Land Expenses to Camp and for Program \$50,656.50

Promotion/Development (To find children and media support) \$6,650.00

Administrative Staff (Camp Office for registration, filing, training, ofc. admin) \$9,000.00

Final Payments for Miscellaneous since land payments (doctors fees, local transport) \$1,150.00

Subtotal \$75,456.50

FAF Admin at 15%

(Insurance, materials development, registration search, phone, postage, media contact, local and international travel for related staff and Project Director) \$11,318.48

Total Spent **\$86,774.98**

Final Donation of \$16,774.98 is requested at this time



Friendship Ambassadors Foundation: Methodology, Research, & a history of Good Practices in the Field

An Interview with the Project Director, Szilvia Agoston

WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

Finding New Hope (which was realized as the Little Heroes Program for Lions Club International recently) is a project that uses the arts and person-to-person cultural exchange to help victims of human trauma.

In this case, over the summer months of July and August of 2002, the young heroes of the 9/11 disaster were provided with a specialized camp experience through the support of Lions Clubs International. It was a relaxing aid that helped them recover from the trauma they suffered, and move forward.

Finding New Hope (aka The Little Heroes Camp, as it was known this summer) is a project that strives to help these and other war victims see the world as a friendly place once more. Those affected by the tragedy through the loss of a loved one, or simply by the shock of seeing it happen, now experience waves of fear, anxiety, grief or rage. According to NYU's Child Study Center, all of us – "adults and children alike may go through periods of shock, have physical complaints, and be angry, sad, and scared." However, these psychologists recommend, "It is important to cope with tasks of living rather than seek to place blame or express anger at groups of people."

In response to this advice, Finding New Hope and the Little Heroes Camp seek to help the healing process by having the victims enjoy the arts and cultural exchange, release themselves, and eventually express their feelings creatively, with the help of professional art therapists and counselors. Most are integrated into projects that include affected and non-trauma related participants; some are offered practical tools for coping with anger and the feeling of loss, as necessary. These may be viewed as tools for finding inner peace; and they are given the opportunity to build relationships that help return the trust lost by the devastation – to find harmony with others. They get introduced to cultural diversity in a way that engenders understanding and eliminates fear or distrust.

The goals of the Finding New Hope project is to enhance the personal healing of the traumatized population, and to prevent possible future conflicts resulting from the fear and the blame that may grow in the hearts of those affected.



WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?

Feelings engendered by the 9/11 tragedy, for example, such as grief, anger or fear, if bottled up, may be destructive to the psyche. They may lead to isolation and they may lead to violence. Therefore it is crucial for a person to bring them to the surface, face them, and eventually let them go.

But individual healing has a social significance as well: one who nurtures negative feelings – as traumatized people often do – may become suspicious and quick to point a finger at somebody else. They may become receptive to stereotypes and prejudice, which in turn will create an environment "favorable" for conflict. Long-lasting peace begins in the minds of people, and the individual's approach and behavior carries far more weight than any preventive military action.

Finding New Hope engages participants in a way that helps them come to terms with their feelings, and at the same time come to respect and appreciate diversity. It has the potential of break the cycle of hatred, even if changes on the individual level seem small, and difficult to measure.

WHY IS THIS THE WAY WE DO IT THIS WAY?

The arts and culture are tools often used to relieve stress due to trauma and to enhance healing. "Through singing, painting, drama and other arts, people can release emotions that logical discourse does not permit. It allows people to express what's bottled up inside." – observes Patrick Sciarratta, Executive Director of Friendship Ambassadors Foundation. The arts help to release negative energy in a positive way, while intercultural exposure helps eliminate stereotypes while allowing participants to see the world as a friendly place once again.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS? HOW DOES EACH WORK TOWARD THE PROJECT'S GOALS?

Each form of art, each component of the program enhances the healing process in a specific manner. The "curriculum" of Finding New hope is comprised of sessions of visual arts, performing arts, martial arts, and structured intercultural exposure.

Visual arts help to bring to the surface the negative feelings inflicted by the trauma: the grief, the frustration, the anger, the feeling of loss, the desire for revenge. Graphics, painting, sculpture, and other creative activities provide an outlet to face these feelings, understand and accept them, and then eventually to them go. These quiet, relaxing but creative activities are therefore effective tools for finding inner peace once more.

Performing arts such as drama, dance and pageantry build self-esteem, trust and resiliency skills. They can serve as useful tools for processing the emotions provoked and issues raised on September 11. Through fictional scenarios unrelated to the tragedy, participatory drama can address critical issues from a different perspective, acting as a critical lens; and the distance allows participants to see current conflicts objectively and find alternatives instead of despair. It allows children and adults alike to practice coping skills such as self-expression, critical thinking and conflict management. Communication and collaboration strengthens and builds emotional resiliency.

Expressive arts also stimulate mental, emotional and physical activity. Specific physicality such as balancing exercises, acrobatics, trust exercises, pageantry skills, etc. helps to build confidence, help overcome fears, and encourage self-trust and group trust. They also teach participants to support each other during challenges.

Dance (and music) in itself carries a strong power for healing and is widely used as a therapy for a wide range of purposes. An interplay of dance, music and song also has the potential to inspire intercultural understanding. Dance and music can get one acquainted with other cultures on an intimate level, and thus fosters an appreciation of, and openness towards “others”.

Martial arts offer positive ways to release and control negative energy. They teach focus, discipline, and respect. Learning skills such as karate and tae-kwon-do can help participants find inner peace and avoid violent situations.

Structured intercultural exposure, that is, person-to-person cultural exchange, allows the program’s participants to meet flesh-and-blood people from other parts of the world, and to look behind the mask of stereotypes and prejudice. Those involved will discover the commonalities and similarities they share, and will come to appreciate diversity. This experience opens the mind and eliminates suspicion and distrust towards the “unknown” – it educates people towards a culture of peace.

ROOTS

The arts and culture are tools often used in relieving stress due to trauma, and it has long been a core part of Friendship Ambassadors Foundation’s mission to use them as tools for healing. Finding New Hope stems from Friendship Ambassadors’ earlier work with young people emerging from tragedies around the globe. FAF’s project, once called the Balkan Youth Reconciliation Seminar Series, is now evolving into a wider-scale project “Mending Social Fabric”. It strives to assist young people from the Balkans reconcile - by using the international language of the arts as a common ground. *(For a chronicle of that project, visit www.faf.org/byrss)*

Media Strategy – Lions Club International Camp

1. Creation of the Little Heroes Camp website. This website will act as an electronic chronicler of the events that took place at the camp. It will host a variety of pictures and videos of the children, offer crucial information about the camp, registration, FAQ’s etc., and the involvement of the Lions Club International. In addition, this website will be the first website to feature the art, journals and experiences of these children. The aim is to be an inspiration for children and adults all over the world.

2. Production of a 4 to 5 minute cd-rom that will act as an electronic news release. It will feature the involvement of the Lions Club International as well as deliver a message of hope. This cd-rom can be distributed to the membership of the Lions Club International and the media.

3. News & Media that we are actively pursuing: Bloomberg News Radio Interview, CNN-news feature, Sunday Morning show on CBS television, and Nickelodeon (Nick Jr.) Cable programming targeted at children. These media were selected because of the caliber of their programs and willingness to go beyond the “if it bleeds it leads” mentality. Nickelodeon is interested in featuring the camp and its benefactors.

A press package will be prepared for the Lion’s Club within the month, chronicling all media already received.

4. Continuing with our media strategy we have contacted MusicVision, a Company that deals with music celebrities such as Britney Spears and Enrique Iglesias. The plan is to use their considerable influence with these stars to secure their visit to the camp, creating a wonderful press event. They would interact with children and promote the camp and its benefits to the world.

We will track some of the children we served; if there are any other good media stories that emanate from this tracking that correspond to the service that the Lions Club has provided we will highlight this news to the general media at any time.

FAF is also open to collaborations with the Lions (Jay Copp in Chicago and others) or willing to pursue new ideas as they arise at any time.

Submitted by Audie Serrano



The Picture Page!



Kids

and



Counselors

....



**and Lions,
too!!**

