

# A SUMMER OF FIRSTS



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**2019  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**

the *Fresh Air* fund  
*because a summer can last a lifetime™*

# A SUMMER OF FIRSTS

Fresh Air children experience the joy and exhilaration of a summer of firsts when visiting volunteer host families or setting out on new camp adventures. Children grow through exploration and discovery and will always remember their first time swimming in a lake, running barefoot in a backyard, learning to ride a bike or making s'mores around a campfire on a starry night. With the guidance of volunteer hosts, counselors and mentors, children gain new perspectives and opportunities. A summer experience can be a turning point in a child's life...because a summer can last a lifetime.

“ It is peaceful and quieter than the Bronx. And there are more trees.

Destiny, 12

“ Camp is magical and full of laughter.

Kemi, 13

75%+ AWAY FOR FIRST TIME

Over 75% of first-time participants were away from NYC overnight for the first time without family.

“ When I visited my host family, we slept in the backyard, set up a tent, made a campfire and had sparklers too!

- Uzzekiah, 12



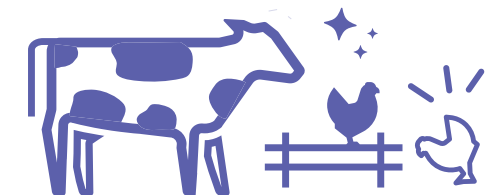
432 bags of marshmallows, 900 bars of chocolate and 60 boxes of graham crackers. That's a lot of s'mores!



Food scraps from over 90,000 camper meals were composted, enriching the soil at our Model Farm's garden.



The Fund's maple trees produced over 25 gallons of maple syrup for thousands of campers to enjoy on their pancakes and waffles.



12 chickens, one mama pig, 12 piglets, two goats, and our calf, Angel, are just some of the animals at the Camp Model Farm.

82% MORE CONFIDENT

82% of parents/guardians reported that their child's experience made them more confident.

“ We learn a lot about leadership when we work together to achieve a common goal.

- Fuma, 14



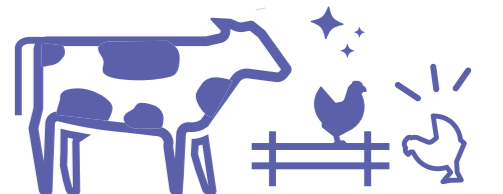
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## The Fresh Air Fund

Since 1877, The Fresh Air Fund has provided over 1.8 million children from New York City's low-income communities with free life-changing experiences. Each summer, thousands of children enjoy outdoor adventures through visits with volunteer host families along the East Coast and Southern Canada and at The Fund's six overnight camps in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley. Fresh Air children also participate in year-round leadership and educational programs.

The magic of a Fresh Air summer, full of first-time experiences and new friends, is simple yet transformative.



Fatima Shama, Executive Director, with Camp ABC campers.



William Lauder, Chairman, with Teen Leaders at The Fund's annual Camp Day celebration.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As we celebrate our children and their first-time experiences – like jumping in a lake, seeing endless acres of grass and trees, or trying a s'more – we are reminded how important those experiences are and why we should never take them for granted. Though they might sound simple, they are the transformative experiences that provide a child with a new perspective and create a willingness to try new things and to build new goals, experiences that all children need and that many from underserved communities might not otherwise have.

The relationships that are forged through our programs, whether with a host family in another state or a cabin full of new friends, are life-changing, providing new support and exposure to what could be in their future. Children feel brave and proud that they have tried something new and this newfound confidence and motivation are of incalculable benefit to a child as they learn to dream bigger.

As you read through this report, I hope you will take time to linger over the incredible stories of our youth, who are a constant reminder of how transformative a Fresh Air Fund summer experience can be. None of this work would be possible without the generosity of our amazing volunteers and supporters. Thank you for being a part of The Fresh Air Fund family and for all that you do for our children.

Sincerely,

Fatima Shama  
Executive Director

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Our Annual Report theme, A Summer of Firsts, reflects on Fresh Air experiences through the eyes of our New York City children. Whether visiting volunteer host families or at one of our six camps, a child's summer adventures broaden their horizons while they gain new skills and self-confidence.

I experienced so many "firsts" during my first summer at camp that I will never forget. I learned to build a fire without matches, to paddle and steer a canoe and each stroke in swimming. For the first time, I lived with a group of peers who became my friends, and, above all, I learned to push myself to try new things. These experiences created memories of summer that have lasted a lifetime.

In 2019, we opened The Fund's newest camp, Camp Junior in Harriman State Park, that honors the memory of Lesandro "Junior" Guzman-Feliz. I had the privilege of visiting this camp and our campers from the Bronx and would like to express our gratitude to our extraordinary partners in this new collaboration.

I also visited The Fund's five camps on Sharpe Reservation and enjoyed speaking with young people in the Career Awareness Program about their hopes, dreams and goals. They – and all our Fresh Air children – inspire me.

Thank you for your support. It is through your generosity of spirit and kindness that our Fresh Air children can have A Summer of Firsts and have so many life-changing experiences.

Sincerely,

William P. Lauder  
Chairman



I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER...

# THE TASTE OF MY FIRST S'MORE!



“

I love playing outside, riding bikes, camping and swimming. I got to hold a chicken and I caught a fish!

”

- **Jaden, 8**, with host siblings Annaliesa, Isabel and Eric during his second summer visiting them in Hinesburg, VT



## FRIENDLY TOWNS

Fresh Air children spend their bright summer days and moonlit nights enjoying a summer of first-time experiences and opening up a world of self-discovery. The Friendly Towns Program brings people with different backgrounds together, and while celebrating their differences, they discover the many things they have in common.

In 2019, thousands of volunteer host families opened their hearts and homes to Fresh Air children from New York City's low-income communities. For one to two weeks in the summer, boys and girls, ages seven to 18, visit 265 Friendly Towns in rural and suburban communities along the East Coast and Southern Canada. Many children return for extended visits with the same host families, year after year.

Dedicated volunteers recruit new host families, conduct home interviews and screen references. The Fund conducts background checks and works to match each child with the host family that will be the best fit. During the summer, Fresh Air staff and volunteers are available for support 24 hours a day.

# 92%

of Friendly Towns youth report getting more comfortable meeting new people and making new friends.



“

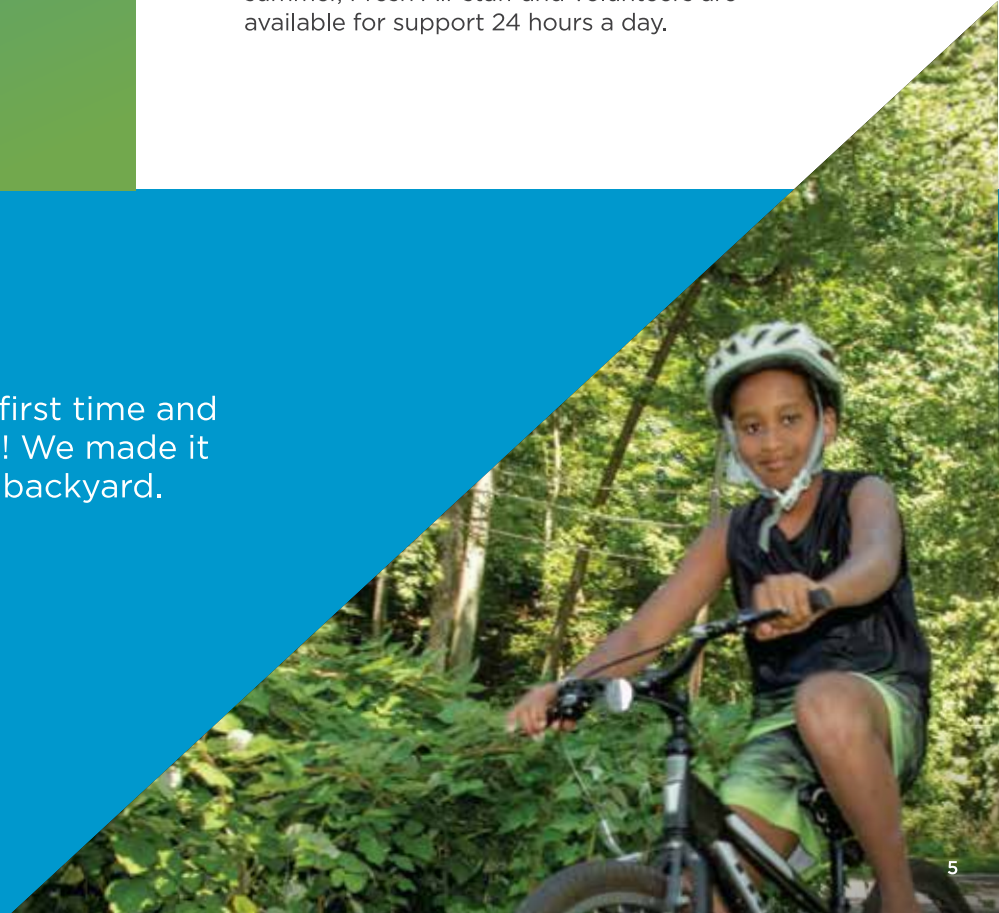
I went swimming for the first time and I also had my first s'more! We made it around a campfire in the backyard. It was really fun.

”

- **Olivia, 11**, has visited the McMurry family in Ithaca, NY for four summers

# 85%

of parents/guardians report their child has a stronger support network because of the Friendly Towns Program.



I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER...

# THE FIRST TIME I JUMPED IN A LAKE



“

My favorite activities are playing basketball, soccer and swimming. I want to be a counselor, because my counselors are so fun!

”

- Wilson, 11, Camp Hidden Valley

## CAMP

Sharpe Reservation, in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley, is the home to five Fresh Air camps for boys and girls, ages eight to 15, including Camp Anita Bliss Coler; Camp Hayden-Marks Memorial; Camp Tommy; Camp Hidden Valley and Camp Mariah. Camp Junior is The Fund's sixth camp in Harriman State Park. Sharpe Reservation is located on more than 2,000 acres of forests, lakes and trails, and has a model farm, environmental center, planetarium and adventure and ropes courses. Facilities at Sharpe Reservation are available for rent during the off season.

In 2019, close to 3,000 boys and girls engaged in fun-filled recreational activities layered with experiential learning during two-week sessions. With counselors as mentors and role models, campers enjoyed swimming lessons, art and music, boating, hiking and team sports. Through immersive outdoor summer experiences, campers gain self-confidence, take on new challenges, develop life skills, make new friends and expand their perspectives.

2019 was the third year of Explorers, an innovative four-week summer learning program which offers a hands-on, project-based learning approach that provides an academic boost for sixth-grade students.



“

Learning at camp is different, because the classes are exciting and really interesting. On the overnight hike, we took photos of nature, and we had s'mores. I couldn't believe that I could walk for that long!

”

- Paula, 11, Explorers Program at Camp ABC

475+

Over 475 camp staff included 176 international staff from 23 different countries across six continents.

86%

86% of campers reported they felt proud of developing skills, from swimming to public speaking.

16

There are 16 miles of trails on Sharpe Reservation. The longest is the 8-mile yellow trail that circles the entire property.

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER...

# MY FIRST SUMMER AT CAMP JUNIOR



## CAMP JUNIOR OPENS

In Harriman State Park

In 2019, The Fresh Air Fund opened a sixth camp, Camp Junior in Harriman State Park, named in memory of Lesandro "Junior" Guzman-Feliz, a victim of gang violence, in partnership with New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie; Palisades Interstate Park Commission and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

Camp Junior provides Bronx children, ages nine to 13, with an opportunity to be engaged in outdoor adventures, be exposed to new environments, broaden their horizons and gain skills and confidence to bring back with them to their community.

Staff and counselors help children develop important skills in communication, relationship building, empathy, conflict resolution and problem solving. Activities include archery, swimming, boating, sports, visual arts and the high ropes course. Camp Junior also offers year-round activities for its campers to stay connected to The Fund.



“Camp has taught me how to be more independent. I like meeting new people and having new experiences. My favorite memory is making friends.”

- Max, 12, Camp Junior



# 84%

of Camp Junior campers reported that being at camp made them feel active and healthy.



“Thanks to Camp Junior, my son will never be forgotten. His memory will be kept alive for future generations. I love visiting camp, and I feel connected to my son there.”

- Leandra Feliz, Junior's Mother

# 98%

of Camp Junior parents/guardians said they would recommend Fresh Air Fund programs to family and friends.

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER...

# WHEN I FIRST KNEW I WAS A LEADER

## TEEN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

The Fund's Teen Leadership programs provide a safe, supportive environment for campers to focus on personal growth, leadership and community service. Girls, ages 13 to 17, participate in Leaders-in-Training and Counselors-in-Training (CIT) programs. In 2019, close to 200 campers were served through The Fund's Precious Center for Teen Leadership at Camp ABC. The Center was created with the guidance of Sarah Siegel-Magness and the generous support of The Gary Magness Family Foundation. In addition to camp activities, the teens participate in leadership development, team-building and girls empowerment workshops.

During the academic year, the youth-led Young Women's Giving Circle teaches girls about the importance of community service and the power of philanthropy. With advisors' support, students meet weekly to research social issues, plan service projects and strategize for fundraising.

In 2019, The Fund continued to focus on teen leadership for boys in its expanded CIT program. The program guides teens on the journey from camper to counselor. Centered on professional growth and self-exploration, young men develop leadership, team-building and communication skills. By facing challenges together, these young men develop self-confidence, teamwork and a strong bond of brotherhood.



“ I've learned that I can be a leader and that I can accomplish anything I put my mind to, and I've developed a strong sisterly bond with the other girls. ”

- Samyya, 15,  
Teen Leader, Camp ABC

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER...

# MY FIRST MENTOR



## ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

The Career Awareness Program begins as an intensive 24-day summer camping experience for 300 boys and girls at Camp Mariah and continues during the school year in New York City and at camp to expand educational options, academic support and career exploration. The summer curriculum highlights engaging classes such as coding, music, environmental science, international relations, photography, debate and culinary arts, with plenty of time left to enjoy traditional camp activities.

During the academic year, students attend the annual Career Fair and interactive job shadowings to learn about career paths. The weekly tutoring program follows a structured curriculum that supports literacy skills and strengthens critical thinking. After 9th grade, many students transition into the College Connections Program which provides weekly workshops and mentoring sessions that support the college preparation process. Staff and mentors help students every step of the way from applying to college, to graduation and beyond.

## NEW YORK CITY VOLUNTEERS

New York City volunteers support thousands of Fresh Air children year round by giving countless hours of their time, energy, talents and creativity. Volunteers become children's role models and mentors by offering guidance, support and inspiration. Tutors and mentors meet weekly with students in the Career Awareness and College Connections programs, while other volunteers help with outreach efforts and much more.

In New York City, corporate volunteers host job shadowings where students learn more about career options, lead workshops at the annual Career Fair, volunteer at bus departures, coordinate fundraising events and participate in marketing campaigns and drives for books and camp supplies. At The Fund's camps, volunteers help as Counselors for a Day and assist with arts and crafts and sports activities.

“ As a Counselor-in-Training, I have more responsibility. It has been eye-opening and a little harder than I thought it would be. I've learned more about myself and what I'm capable of. ”

- Joshua, 16, CIT,  
Camp Hayden-Marks



82

of the over 475 camp staff in 2019 were Fresh Air alumni.



“ Our counselors are mentors and teach us something new every day. In my careers class, I learned how to write a resume and in coding we got to program a robot. My tutor, Matt, helps me when I'm stressed about school, and he has a really cool job. ”

- Giovanni, 14,  
Career Awareness Program



# CONDENSED SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE	Current Funds at Year Ended September 30:			
	2019		2018	
Off-Season Use of Camps	\$ 1,364,190	7.2%	\$ 1,046,402	6.5%
Investment Income	5,972,744	31.7%	5,024,061	31.1%
Contributions*	11,507,798	61.1%	10,094,305	62.4%
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 18,844,732</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 16,164,768</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

OPERATING EXPENSES				
<b>PROGRAM SERVICES</b>				
Friendly Towns Activities	\$ 4,204,694	22.3%	\$ 3,899,657	24.1%
Fresh Air Camps	6,728,346	35.7%	5,138,321	31.8%
Sharpe Reservation	2,547,475	13.5%	2,412,810	14.9%
<b>SUPPORTING SERVICES</b>				
Management & General	1,241,990	6.6%	1,105,560	6.9%
Fundraising	4,122,227	21.9%	3,608,420	22.3%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 18,844,732</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 16,164,768</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### Not included in the above are:

(a) Bequests and Trusts and Other Gifts added to funds functioning as Endowment	\$3,297,378	\$2,828,183
(b) Net gain (loss) on investment transactions	(\$7,276,640)	\$2,576,497
(c) Contributions to Land, Buildings and Equipment Fund	\$376,237	
(d) Depreciation expense	(\$1,706,672)	(\$1,683,642)

\* Total contributions raised also include items (a) and (c). \* (Total contributions for 2019 - \$15,181,413.)

### As of September 30, 2019:

Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets	(\$) Amount
<b>Assets</b>	\$ 136,701,751
<b>Liabilities</b>	\$ 2,452,157
FYE 2019, net assets balance	\$ 134,249,594
FYE 2018, net assets balance	\$ 139,559,291

A copy of our financial reports may be obtained from The Fresh Air Fund, 633 Third Avenue, 14th floor, New York, NY 10017 (212) 897-8900, from the New York State Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 28 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10005, or from the Charities Registry on the New York State Attorney General's website, [www.charitiesnys.com](http://www.charitiesnys.com). ©2020 The Fresh Air Fund

# LEGACIES AND BEQUESTS

Visit [FreshAir.org](http://FreshAir.org) for more information on planned gifts.

## LEGACIES & BEQUESTS INCOME

October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019

Estate of Lucy Avakian	Estate of Liam J. Lacey
Ruth Bachrach CRT Unitrust	Estate of James Manges
Estate of Fred Bass	Estate of Rutherford L. Moore
Estate of Kenneth Bernard	Estate of Wayne Oxford CRT
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Estate of Mary Franco	Estate of Gilbert Hamilton Raab
Elizabeth H. Fuller Trust	Estate of Philip Roth
Estate of Jeanne Hammond	Estate of Marcia T. Thompson
Estate of Eleanor Hochman	



“ I was nervous before I came to camp but now I don't want to leave.

- Xige, 10

“ We can sit outside and see the stars at night.

- Lunelly, 12

“ Camp is a whole different world.

- Brianna, 16

“ I have learned how much friendship matters, and I like making new friends.

- Joel, 12

**76%** OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

report their child's Fresh Air experience has given them new ideas for the future.

# CHAMPIONS, BENEFACTORS, PATRONS AND SPONSORS

## CHAMPIONS \$100,000+

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# The New York Times

## A Journey Through Fresh Air

April 25, 2019  
Editorial



HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Brianna Jones at St. Thomas Aquinas College, where she is working on a master's degree.

The first time at sleep-away camp can be daunting for a city kid. It requires boarding a bus that takes you far from familiar streets and into a new setting. It also means leaving your family and friends, sometimes for weeks, with little communication.

But an escape during the summer can also be transforming.

Brianna Jones would know. She grew up in Brownsville, Brooklyn, and was 8 years old when she traveled about 65 miles north to Camp Anita Bliss Coler, one of the Fresh Air Fund's five overnight camps. "The first night was the roughest," she said. But it didn't take long for her to adjust and then embrace activities like swimming in the lake and visiting animals at a nearby farm.

Ms. Jones, now 23, has spent every summer there since. As a teenager, she felt inspired to give back to the community and trained to become a camp counselor. She was later promoted to village leader, an administrative role. In 2017, she was ready to take on even more responsibility and became the assistant director at "Camp ABC" for girls ages 9 to 15.

This year, Ms. Jones will complete her master's degree in childhood and special education at St. Thomas Aquinas College in Sparkill, N.Y., where she also coaches field hockey and bowling. But she has no intention of leaving the camping world anytime soon. "Once you come to camp, you can stop hiding," she said. "You can be yourself."

**Summer camp can introduce city children to a world of new possibilities, even sometimes pointing to future careers.**

Each year, thousands of New York City children stay with host families or attend one of the Fresh Air Fund's camps. A one-week or longer visit to a Friendly Town volunteer host family costs \$1,113, and \$2,014 sends a child to summer camp for one session, for 12 days. The Fund hopes to raise more than \$12 million by the end of September.




Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to the Fresh Air Fund, 633 Third Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017. Families who would like to be hosts, or parents who would like to sign up their children, may call the Fresh Air Fund at (800) 367-0003 or visit FreshAir.org.



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