

Southampton Fresh Air Home Case Statement

Mission Statement

Southampton Fresh Air Home is a not-for-profit residential camp offering summer sessions and year-round programs and opportunities for physically challenged youth. 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 families with a well-deserved respite.

We are dedicated to improving and expanding programs and facilities as new opportunities, technology and financial support become available.

History

In 1901, a group of women who wanted to share the benefits of sun and ocean air with physically challenged children established a special camp. From the first summer of 10 children, the camp has grown exponentially to accommodate 150 plus youngsters each summer. Campers enjoy SFAH's unique, adapted sports programs such as swimming, tennis, sailing, basketball, golf and field sports such as softball and hockey. In addition, campers participate in arts, crafts, computers, music, dance, drama, games and cooking.

In 2008 with the addition of four climate controlled dormitories, SFAH began offering several off-season weekends during the school year for smaller groups of children to revisit the friendships made during the summer and enjoy seasonal activities. These weekend programs were offered free of charge and transportation was provided. Also offered was a holiday party in December where as many as 150 campers, siblings and parents gather at the Home, have lunch, play games and enjoy being together.

In 2013, a modernization of our campus was deemed necessary to better serve our campers. Projects completed include an administrative building that serves as the formal entrance to the camp and increases security on campus. We upgraded our transportation fleet with three new wheelchair vans that allow us to expand our off-site field trips and offer safer, more comfortable transportation for campers to and from New York City. We also upgraded our pools, pool house and pool filtration systems. Pool safety and hygiene are critical for our campers. The sports court was rebuilt with a fully adapted custom design that allows the children to participate in relays, track & field, tennis, football, baseball, soccer, basketball, hockey, dodge ball, targets and more. A shade awning was added to protect the children from the direct heat of the sun. A solar energy system was installed in 2018 so that the Home can benefit from sustainable energy sources. A full renovation of the Main Building was completed in the spring of 2018. This project includes the dining hall, camp kitchen and staff residences.

In 2016, with the addition of a year-round Assistant Camp/Program Director, we have expanded our off-season programming, allowing us to move from a "summer+" model to a year-round resource for youth with physical disabilities. SFAH equips physically disabled youth with the skills they need to be successful in their communities. Our off-season programs further these goals through an innovative model serving both current campers, ages 8-18 and young adult "alumni" who have aged out of the summer camp program, but still need support as they transition into adulthood. The model includes components such

as Life Skill Lab workshops, respite weekends, day trips, identification of colleges and universities equipped to meet the needs of disabled students and social media groups to assess needs.

In 2014 SFAH established a Camper Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC consists of a diverse group of former and current campers and parents, members of the Board of Directors, and management. It was formed to give campers and parents a stronger voice in future camp planning. This Board initiative has become an invaluable planning tool. In 2017, SFAH's Board voted unanimously to formalize the CAC by creating a permanent Advisory Board. Members of the Advisory Board endeavor to provide the Home with new perspectives based on their personal experiences and connections and will assist with improving programming and fundraising.

Statement of Need

Young people with physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, spina bifida and muscular dystrophy face great difficulty in accessing recreational and social opportunities. Youth who require assistance with activities of daily living encounter a gauntlet of logistics when seeking such opportunities. Those with the option of paid caregivers are usually restricted by stringent Medicaid regulations dictating when and where care can be provided. In the absence of a paid caregiver, youth in need of personal care support depend on parents and family members to help them in social and recreational settings. As a result, the lives of parents and children with physical disabilities are intertwined and both parties experience stress and lack of independence. A significant portion of recreational programs are not physically accessible to people with disabilities or lack the adapted equipment necessary to enable them to fully participate. Programs specifically designed for people with disabilities often focus on those with cognitive and behavioral issues and do not have the resources to accommodate participants whose needs are primarily physical. A lack of contact with peers who share the same experience of disability can cause youth to internalize ableist stereotypes. Youth whose needs are primarily physical and medical represent an underserved population with few outlets for recreation, and many experience extreme social isolation. Loneliness and a sense of exclusion are common.

Camps specific to people with disabilities are valuable in the development of positive self-identity and disability pride. Connecting with other youth with similar disabilities allows them to find community and strength in their shared experiences.

As one of the few camps in the nation focused on the unique needs of youth with physical disabilities, SFAH plays a vital role in enriching the lives of these young people and their families. Free to play and learn alongside other children in similar circumstances, SFAH offers these often-isolated children an opportunity to dramatically increase their sense of independence and self-esteem while learning important new skills. SFAH offers:

- A barrier free community
- A home of their own with people facing similar challenges
- An understanding of their physical potential
- A comfort level in a social environment where disability is the norm, not the exception
- An environment to explore who they are and what they want to be

We focus on areas where we have the greatest impact:

- Building healthy relationships by socializing and interacting with youngsters with similar needs
- Gaining strength and flexibility and self-confidence by participating in team sports and friendly competition
- Learning to adjust to disabilities while simultaneously achieving normal developmental tasks
- Learning skills needed to manage their own care and experience new challenges and chances for success
- By participating in educational, social and recreational activities, campers gain physical competence
- Sharing their hopes and dreams with each other, campers begin to develop goals for their lives after camp such as the possibility of college, independent living and productive employment

Goals

SFAH strives to serve as many physically challenged and economically disadvantaged children and young adults as possible. Continued funding allows us to provide a residential camp experience for severely disabled children and to create an environment in which these youngsters overcome their fears, believe in themselves, and explore new possibilities.

Campers who attend SFAH's programs come primarily from low and middle-income families. Over 75% are from New York City, Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The children live with a range of physical disabilities such as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, osteogenesis imperfecta, and spinal cord and head injuries. We also serve children who have been injured in automobile and sports related accidents, or through gun and gang violence. They range in age from 8 to 18, roughly half boys and half girls. Nearly 50% are African American, 30% are Caucasian with the remaining 20% Hispanic and Asian. Campers use electric 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.

SFAH subsidizes all campers from grants, fundraising events and donations from our many loyal and committed donors. We focus on areas where we have the greatest impact:

- Youth with physical disabilities should have access to meaningful recreational and social opportunities
- Youth with physical disabilities should have the opportunity to connect with others who share in the disability experience in order to develop a positive sense of identity
- Both current campers and alumni with physical disabilities should have access to opportunities that better equip them for independent living, college, and employment opportunities
- Youth with physical disabilities should be given the skills to manage and have a voice about their own care
- Youth with disabilities build healthy relationships by socializing and interacting with youngsters with similar needs
- Youth with disabilities gain strength and flexibility and self-confidence by participating in team sports and friendly competition
- Youth with disabilities learn to adjust to their disabilities while simultaneously achieving age appropriate developmental tasks

- Youth with disabilities learn skills needed to manage their own care and experience new challenges and chances for success
- Campers gain physical competence by participating in educational, social and recreational activities
- Campers begin to develop goals for their lives after camp such as the possibility of college, independent living and productive employment by sharing their hopes and dreams with each other

Programs

Summer Program

Each summer there are 2 three-week sessions as well as a one-week program for younger children who have never been away from home as well as children who require a higher level of nursing care. Each summer session has an optimal enrollment of 50 children. To fully meet the needs of every child, SFAH maintains a camper-to-counselor ratio of 2:1 to instruct, guide, administer, help and nurture campers throughout their stay. Campers live in spacious climate controlled, fully equipped dorms suitable for wheelchairs with 24-hour staff. Registered nurses provide 24-hour medical coverage, and a doctor is on call at all times.

Sports Program

Campers enjoy the Home's unique sports programs which include swimming, sailing, relays, golf, tennis, basketball, baseball, dodgeball, football, cycling and hockey. These activities promote motor and athletic skills, build strong muscles, develop agility, coordination, muscle tone and flexibility. Campers use modified bikes such as tricycles which provide stability and are modified with special seats and handlebars. Adaptive golf is performed standing or sitting. Tennis, basketball and other team sport are adapted and played from the wheelchair. Most activities which take place on our sports court and are tailored to fit the needs of each child's ability. Counselors work one-on-one to create an environment in which campers are fully involved and engaged in every activity.

Swimming Program

Pool time is by far a favorite activity for all our campers and an emphasis is put on getting each child into the pool each day for at least one hour. Swimming, or hydrotherapy, offers an exhilarating sense of freedom which many disabled individuals would otherwise not experience. Once in the water, campers are subject to a form of buoyancy which immediately alleviates pressure on their joints and muscles and allows them to float, splash, and undulate their way to improved physical mobility, circulation, balance, coordination, posture, endurance and more. It is highly beneficial for those with physical disabilities to have the opportunity to get out of their wheelchairs and experience the weightlessness of floating in water.

Sailing Program

Sailing is an ideal sport for people with physical disabilities. It is more of a mental sport with physical interactions than a purely physical sport. Adapted equipment compensates for physical disabilities to allow the children to participate. Sailing develops societal skills such as leadership, teamwork and self-reliance. The goal of the program is to offer campers the opportunity to "take the helm." SFAH takes three children at a time to enjoy an afternoon of sailing. They are accompanied by three staff members: a counselor, a lifeguard and an instructor. They arrive at a floating dock which is accessible for wheelchairs and board the Sarah C, a 1994 Freedom Independence 20' sailboat. Campers are assisted onto the boat via the aid of a direct care counselor. It is mandatory for the children to wear personal

flotation devices and sunscreen while in the boat. For children with physical disabilities, the benefits of sailing include: increased independence, improved balance and the promotion of physical fitness, communication skills and a sense of accomplishment and most important a decreased awareness of their disability. Physical improvements include improved independence, functionality and motor skills, cognitive and social benefits include: a sense of accomplishment, improved self-esteem, improved comprehension, community integration, increased participation with others and an increased quality of life. It is a venue for fun and competition.

Art, Music and Drama Program

Campers spend time in our Arts and Crafts Workshop where activities include visual arts such as painting, drawing, sculpture and photography. Campers use adapted tools in the arts studio such as handles on paint brushes, pencils and pens; easels that can be attached to a wheelchair or placed on a table; non-spill containers, and attachments designed for the head. Dance is modified to suit the camper's abilities. Counselors push campers in wheelchairs while they make their moves. The physical act of dance gives campers an opportunity to build strength and develop flexibility, creativity, and range of motion. Drama offers children with physical disabilities an exciting way to express themselves. Performing means putting oneself on display for those who come to see the show. Campers have the chance to help with set designs, costumes, and writing scripts. We create a daytime disco in which campers have fun in a place where the music is "loud and theirs". Counselors create a dance hall atmosphere and campers have fun dancing with friends, being silly and just being free in an environment that is comfortable and safe. Musical instruments such as keyboards, drum pads and guitars are offered.

Technology Program

There is a well-equipped computer center where the children learn the use of modern computers and iPads. The iPad program is very popular. We found that many of our campers are unable to use a conventional keyboard because of their disabilities. Studies have shown that for those with muscular and skeletal diseases, a touch screen is much easier to use than a conventional keyboard and lead to huge increases in usage.

Transportation Program

SFAH has upgraded our entire fleet of wheelchair vans over the past four years. With the new fleet in place, we are better able to safely transport campers to and from New York City and are able to expand our off-site field trips. Outings included trips to ocean beaches, sporting events, museums, concerts, carnivals, zoos, aquariums, farms, theater and more.

Financial Aid Program

No child is denied an opportunity to be a camper because of their inability to pay. SFAH provides over \$270,000 in financial aid rewards to approximately 100 of the neediest children every summer. Financial aid is available for all levels of need, from minimal need to 100% of camp fees. Typically, 75% of campers require some amount of financial aid to attend our program.

Alumni Program

Our goal is to mentor, inspire, encourage and provide tools and information to help our alumni prepare for life after SFAH. Throughout the year, SFAH offers alumni days and weekends where alumni get together and enjoy a baseball game or a movie or luncheon in the city. During the summer sessions, we welcome one or two alumni in each cabin to act as mentors and help the younger campers adjust to camp

life. During the off-season and several days in the summer, alumni return to the Home to re-establish friendships and share their thoughts about life after SFAH.

Off-Season Programming

While our summer camp program is a successful one, our youth have expressed a lack of recreational opportunities during the year and face social isolation in their communities outside of camp. Young people with severe physical disabilities face great difficulty in accessing recreational and social opportunities outside of camp and experience social isolation in their communities. Commonly cited consequences include loneliness, lack of independence, and stress for both the children and caregivers who rarely get time apart due to the logistics of caregiving needs. Youth with physical disabilities often feel excluded and stigmatized in mainstream recreational settings. Existing programs for people with disabilities are more often geared toward youth with cognitive and behavioral disabilities and cannot address the developmental and physical needs of young people with physical disabilities. Often, they are the only people with physical disabilities in mainstream schools, and contact with friends who share the experience of disability is limited to the camp session. The benefits of summer camp programs for addressing the recreational needs of physically challenged youth are well documented. Connecting with other youth with disabilities shatters those stereotypes and allows the youth to find community and strength in their shared experiences. Our recently expanded off-season programs directly address these needs. Off-season offerings include:

- Bi-weekly day trips and outings throughout the year
- 2-3 respite weekend sessions during the year in September, October, November, December, March, April and May
- Access to an equipment exchange that offers wheelchairs, strollers, and ramps available to interested young people when others no longer need them.
- Multi-day “Life skill lab” workshops offered throughout the year focusing on important topics such as independent living skills, managing personal care needs, job readiness, post-secondary educational options, etc.
- Seminars addressing college and university options for campers interested in higher education.

One of the most important elements of this programming is our Life Skill Lab workshops, the main focus of which is to assess and develop a physically challenged individual’s ability to function day-to-day at their highest level in normal daily activities at home, in school, out in public, and at work. The goal is to foster independence, productivity and self-care. The workshops enable participants to improve strength, dexterity, and coordination while performing tasks. The workshops include hygiene, bathing/showering, dressing, feeding, increased participation in self-care through use of adaptive equipment, financial management, health management and maintenance, home management and maintenance, first aid training, leisure exploration, social skills and so much more. Staff incorporate theme-based workshops and day trips for participants with similar identified goals. The Life Skill Lab workshops enable participants to experience a wider range of activities aimed at achieving participant-focused goals. This is achieved through dedicated staff and unique programming in small group settings in the community or in a structured environment. These programs allow participants to explore, apply, and challenge themselves. Ultimately staff become facilitators providing meaningful training or recommendations to improve the everyday lives of individuals with physical disabilities. The benefits of the Life Skill Lab Workshops enable participants to decrease their reliance on others for help with self-care, increased mobility, decreased need for assistance with everyday tasks (dressing, grooming, eating) decreased emotional dependence adapting to disabilities, interacting with others, performing tasks independently and becoming part of a community. The focus will be on breaking down essential tasks

into smaller, do-able steps, often modified, and capitalizing on the need for accomplishment, pride, enjoyment, and independence.

Measuring Effectiveness

The Southampton Fresh Air Home continually evaluates and quantifies the effectiveness of its programs for physically challenged youth via the Long Range Planning Committee. The Long Range Planning Committee formulates the Home's strategic planning goals and reports on the implementation of these goals. The committee develops future programs and analyzes their operating and capital needs. These programs include: summer, off-season, alumni, camper family, and off-campus activities. It reviews proposed new programs presented by the staff, and makes recommendations to the Board and the staff about the future and the growth of the organization. The Long Range Planning Committee guides planning and decisions regarding the buildings, facilities and the usage of the camp. The committee sets important benchmarks to determine the reach, success and sustainability of the Home's programs.

The committee evaluates the effectiveness of programming by presenting quarterly reports to the Board on the number of programs offered, the number of campers served, and the impact and accomplishments of each program offering. The committee meets annually with key stakeholders to discuss the effectiveness of the Home's programs. The information gathered during this meeting is shared with the Board in a written, formal report allowing the Board to focus on and expand the most effective programs and set new goals for future programs.

At the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in October, the camp director presents a comprehensive report to the Board containing empirical data on the reach of our programs that includes:

- number of campers served in each summer session, broken out by age
- number of campers served during the summer sessions
- number of campers attending more than one summer session
- total unique campers served during the summer sessions
- camper care needs analysis
- number of returning campers
- number of first time campers
- number of applications received
- geographic locations of campers accepted into the program
- total summer program camper days
- total number of off-season programs offered
- total number of campers served in the off-season program
- total off-season program camper days

The report also contains detailed data on program staff.

The camp director reports on the success, or lack thereof, of new initiatives as well as changes to existing programs. The camp director also reports to the Board any issues that have arisen during the year that have affected, or may affect the corporation. The camp director's report allows the Board to determine whether they have reached the benchmarks set by the Long Range Planning committee.

We have set the following benchmarks to ensure tangible results:

- Summer camp program will operate at capacity, serving 150 physically challenged and economically disadvantaged children every year
- Off-season programs will serve 250 physically challenged and economically disadvantaged children every year
- Summer and off-season camp programs will continue to help campers and alumni achieve their goals of higher education, employment and independent living.

Sustainability

The actual cost of a child's stay at camp is over \$3,000 per week. Published fees are \$1,000 per week. Most of our families pay less than \$300 per week after financial aid is offered. 90% of our annual operating revenue is earned via fundraising events, private foundation grants and individual donations. Only 10% of our revenue is generated from program fees.

SFAH is in a strong strategic position. The physical plant is situated on four pristine acres in Shinnecock Hills, NY. There are 11 buildings, most of which have been rebuilt over the past decade. All the buildings, as well as the outdoor landscape, have been designed with the needs of our population in mind. SFAH has an ample endowment that allows the organization to navigate downturns in the economy and fluctuations in fundraising revenue. 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. These benefits, together with private donations and grants, account for almost 80% of our annual revenue. Approximately 10% of our revenue is generated from program fees. Operating shortfalls are covered from dividends and interest earned from the endowment.

SFAH's integrative approach to life-long learning enlists the talents of a dedicated team. There are five full-time staff members (executive director, camp director, assistant camp director, administrative associate and facility manager) and 65-part-time members during the summer months (program staff, nurses and support staff) and over 100 volunteers who regularly work with the staff. The counselors receive extensive on-site training, and most study and work with special needs children throughout the year. The senior professional staff has worked with special needs children for years, and provides expert care for all children who come to the Home.

A dedicated Board of Directors governs SFAH. There are 27 voting members and 8 honorary members. All voting Board Members are fully involved with the governance, goals, and fundraising activities of the camp.

Funding for large capital projects has come from capital campaigns and bequests received through planned giving. SFAH's endowment also provides up to 20% of the funds needed for strategic capital projects.

Additional funding allows us to continue to offer and expand our summer camp and off-season programming.

Credentials of Key Personnel

Thomas Naro joined Southampton Fresh Air Home in 2008, and became Executive Director in 2011. As Executive Director, he supervises all programs, administrative and fundraising activities of the organization. He is in charge of the annual operating budget and supervises all expenditures, accounts payable, accounts receivable and bookkeeping. He oversees the financial aid for each camper, oversees all grant reporting, and oversees the yearly audit and preparation of the IRS 990. He interfaces with parents on issues regarding campers and oversees facility management personnel and office personnel as well as volunteers. Prior to joining the Southampton Fresh Air Home, Tom was Press Representative for The Joseph Papp Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival in New York City. He served on the Board of ATPAM, the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers and was Chairman of the Eastern Long Island Chapter of The Surfrider Foundation, a not-for-profit environmental group dedicated to the preservation of the beaches on the East End of Long Island. Tom received his BA from New York University in 1988.

David Billingham has been Camp Director since 2000. He began his career at the Southampton Fresh Air Home in 1993 as a Counselor. In 1996 he was appointed Head Counselor, and in 1997 he became Head of Boys Programs at the Fresh Air Home. In 1998 he was named Assistant Director and in 2000 Camp Director. David applied for and received American Camping Association accreditation. He developed a comprehensive week-long staff training program which was commended and approved by the Suffolk County Health Department. He also developed innovative programs for wheelchair campers in sailing, theater and court sports (tennis and basketball). During the Home's 2008 Capital Campaign to remodel the dorms, David served as the program design liaison with architects and builders, helping to develop a fully accessible and state-of-the-art activities building. David is a member of the Association of Special Needs Camp Professionals, the New York State Camp Directors Association and the American Camping Association. David received a BA (with honors) from the University of Hull, Humberside, Great Britain in Contemporary Studies and Leisure Management. David is married and has three young children.

Nathan Unwin has been Assistant Camp Director since 2015. Nate initially worked with the Southampton Fresh Air Home for over 8 summers; first as a counselor, then as Head Counselor, and then as Activities Director. He received a degree in Sports Management from the University of Sheffield in Great Britain. After working with the Fresh Air Home for several summers, Nate obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education at the University of Derby in Great Britain. Nate is married and living in the United States permanently. He plans to continue his education in the US and work towards receiving a Master's Degree in Special Education. Nate works in conjunction with the Camp Director overseeing our off-season programming.