

Paul Smith's College VIC

Program Proposal

Summer Day Camp at the VIC

Requestors: Lenore Marcuson and Lauren Brieant, REC 440
Our Vision: Healthy Children Living in Healthy Mountains
Our Mission: To connect children with nature and each other, fostering learning, environmental stewardship and friendship.

Statement of Purpose: The mission of Paul Smith's College VIC is "to connect outdoor recreation, experiential education, and the arts, naturally." The proposed program is designed to extend experiential education to upcoming generations through a fun and educational day-camp experience at the VIC. This program will provide outdoor activities for young children who otherwise might be occupied with video games and other indoor pastimes. It will instruct the children in basic outdoor skills, promote an understanding of the Adirondack environment leading to a life-long love of the outdoors and lasting respect and stewardship for the natural environment.

Statement of Need: Affordable summer outdoor activities for children of the Tri-lakes area and Malone is a need that must be fulfilled. The average income in this region is \$42,436 (Census 2010 - refer to Appendix B) and many of the organized recreational options are not financially affordable for many families. A day-camp would reduce child care expenses and provide healthy experiences and learning. Additionally, lower-income families can claim day camp (**not** sleepover camp) expenses on tax forms, making them eligible for subsidies (New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, n.d.).

Another general need that this day camp would fulfill is to get children outside, socializing with others, and away from TV, video games, etc. According to Powell, an expert in child development, the most important education we can give children is not information, but experience, especially in nature (Powell, 2006). It is theorized that the increase in behavioural issues in children today is linked to spending less time in the outdoors (Bilek & Ehrenreich-May, 2011). Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) is related to the technologically charged generation that is being raised today - there is an increase in Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); many researchers believe that this is linked to the increased amount of time children are spending indoors (Louv, 2016). Summer camp, especially a nature-based summer

camp, will introduce children to the outdoors and help reduce dependence on electronic devices.

The five major character benefits that parents see as most important are increased self-esteem, respect for others, fun/enjoyment, positive role models and increased independence (Powell, 2006). Through this day camp, we will provide a program that encompasses these five character benefits and fulfills our mission.

In addition to improving these character benefits, the program will contribute to physical health. Today, there is a rise in obesity amongst children. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rates of childhood obesity in the US have more than tripled since the 1970s (CDC, 2017). Getting children outside and active is a great way to combat obesity and forge healthy behaviours that will last children throughout their life and help prevent other health issues related to a sedentary lifestyle.

Project Deliverables and Beneficiaries

Deliverables

- A week-long summer camp (parents may sign their children up for more than one week) will be conducted with approximately 15-20 campers.
- A written report summarizing the performance of the project including budget, educational aspects of project, impact on the VIC, evaluation of overall success/failure, and how the missions of the VIC and the program were met
- Plans for future summer camps building on this experience

Beneficiaries and Benefits

Campers/Parents

Campers will participate in various experiential activities as outlined in the Feasibility Study. They will gain leadership skills, learn about the environment, engage in fitness activities, improve social skills, gain health benefits and have fun. Additionally, children will also be exposed to higher education and campus life which could open their eyes to future possibilities, and cause them to aim higher in life.

Parents are given a break with the peace of mind knowing that their children are in a supportive, safe and loving environment where their children will have fun and learn at the same time.

Staff/Counsellors

Staff and counsellors will participate in community outreach, gain first-hand experience working with children, and enhance leadership skills and customer service. They will also create friendships with each other that will last a lifetime.

The VIC

The VIC will gain community exposure through this program, helping to solidify its presence and importance in the community. It will increase traffic to the VIC, helping to increase member numbers and donations, and getting more people onto the trails.

Paul Smith's College (PSC)

PSC will demonstrate its commitment to experiential education, and highlight its efforts to start this form of education at a young age. This will also provide additional summer work for students and could be turned into a Recreation Adventure Education and Leisure Management (RAELM) practicum, where students must see the program through from start to finish, giving the students excellent hands-on experience.

Strategic Context

There are three main areas in which this program fulfills the mission of the College and the VIC.

- Expands PSC's experiential education philosophy to a broader range of people
- Expands the role of the VIC in the community and helps strengthen the ties between the College campus and the VIC
- It promotes sustainability and environmental stewardship in the Adirondacks and beyond

Time and Schedule

The first summer that this day camp program would be implemented would be 2019. There are many reasons for this - permission and approval from Paul Smith's College is an essential first step. Without this, the program could not be conducted. Outlined in Appendix D is a schedule that has been created. A recommendation would be to run a pilot week of camp in 2018 either over Winter Break or Spring Break, to help gain a better picture concerning the likelihood of success (gauge interest) of the endeavor, which marketing strategies would likely be most successful, what parents and children enjoyed the most, feedback on what to change and better ascertain what the daily program would look like. Additional recommendations are located in the Feasibility study.

Project Assumptions and Constraints

Assumptions

1. Camp will be conducted at the PSC VIC, and have access to other areas on the main PSC campus (e.g. the pool, field, gym, rock wall, challenge course, etc.). The VIC building and other equipment will be available at no cost to the camp.
2. The camp will be conducted during the summer.
3. Staff requirements will be met using either the PSC community or individuals from surrounding areas.

Constraints

1. In case of inclement weather, alternative activities must be available indoors that align with the mission of the day camp and the VIC - during the planning process, these needs will be addressed.
2. There might be other groups using the space at the VIC or other buildings on campus. In this case, alternative plans will be made so that camp does not interfere, and prior planning will be done to minimize the chance of conflicts.
3. Number of children must be limited depending upon staff numbers and ages of children - it will be the duty of the camp director to ensure that New York State Health Laws are being followed.

Project Risks and Mitigations

A detailed risk management plan (RMP) would need to be established before the camp could actually be implemented, and it would need to be updated annually, and when the program or facilities change. The feasibility study outlines some of the most common practices involved in creating a RMP. Following is a list of risks that are in regards to actually creating the program.

1. There will be insufficient enrolment by parents in the community. This will be mitigated by our marketing strategies (see Feasibility Study) and by running a pilot camp over winter break to gauge interest.
2. Camp activities will not reach the goals defined above, and therefore will not fulfill the mission of either the camp or the VIC. There will be a daily staff meeting to discuss the participation by campers and program plans will include alternative activities to be implemented as required.
3. Difficulties attracting sufficient staff and counsellors; the day camp will pay competitive wages which are consistent with similar programs in the tri-lakes region and other day camps.
4. Parents/guardians are unable to drop-off/pick-up their children at the VIC. In pre-planning/information gathering and registration, survey parents about this and

offer some alternatives. If there is enough need, a driver could be hired to shuttle children from Saranac Lake to the VIC, or carpooling could be arranged amongst parents.

5. The College will reject the proposal and/or not offer funding towards the program. To mitigate this, it is important to show a cost-benefit analysis, and be prepared to apply for grants/other funding.
6. Difficulty finding a health director to oversee the medical forms and fulfill state requirements. There is a possibility of using the PSC nurse or hiring a student who has completed and passed the EMT course that is now being offered on campus.

Special Provisions

The New York State Health Department has specific requirements for staffing and facility management. These requirements can be found in the Feasibility Study document. Child and youth protection is of utmost importance and ALL staff must submit to a criminal record check; any applicants that are found to have a record of child abuse or violence will be automatically disqualified from employment.

Staff will modify activities and accommodate children with special needs to be compliant with state laws under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. This is an inclusive camp where all children will be welcomed; one of the aspects of staff training will be about working with people who have disabilities and creating an environment that allows for equal opportunities.

Other trainings will include CPR and First Aid for every counsellor, conflict resolution, and what to do in case of an emergency. The risk management plan (RMP) must be read by all staff members at the beginning of every season and they must sign their name to indicate their understanding; the RMP will be in a place that is accessible to all staff, and they will be made aware of its location so it may be referred to at any time.

Finally, in case of incidents involving injuries or illness, the camp director and health director will be notified - the health director will make the decision if further medical treatment is required and make necessary arrangements. The counsellor/person giving care will be required to fill out an accident report form to be signed by the parent/guardian upon pick-up at the end of the day.

Project Expenses

Under the assumption that the VIC and PSC facilities will be offered to the day camp free of charge, the costs are greatly reduced. The most costly aspects will be staff salaries, especially the camp director who will work year-round on an as needed basis,

staff training, insurance and other licensing costs and additional materials for activities. The staffing salaries for counsellors will vary depending on how many children sign up for the camp - certain ratios need to be met (Department of Health, n.d.). Every staff member will also need to have a criminal record check which will cost approximately \$65 per staff member (ACA, n.d.). The two other positions that will last longer than the camp season are the registration/marketing coordinator and the finance manager - these will be part-time positions, and will work from October until the beginning of camp, paid at an hourly wage.

According to an insurance quote by Sadler Insurance, the weekly insurance rate is between \$400 and \$1100 for a science-based day camp (K&K Insurance Group, 2017). Risk would have to be assessed to determine how much coverage would be needed. For eight weeks of camp, insurance costs would be anywhere between \$3200 and \$8800.

Project Champion

Kendra Ormerod, Director Paul Smith's College VIC

References

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