

**Kronkosky Charitable Foundation
Roundtable Discussion**

Topic: Camps for Children with Disabilities/ Illness

Date: December 20, 2000

Prepared by: Angel Castaneda

Participants

Celia Buckner-Jones	Executive Director	Texas Burn Survivor Society, Inc. <i>Candy Lady Camp for Burn Children</i>
Karen Menger	Executive Director	The ARC of San Antonio
Jerry Permenter	Executive Director	Alamo Area Resource Center <i>Jennifer's Camp</i>
Sindi J. Rosales	Executive Director	Epilepsy Foundation of Central & South Texas <i>Camp Spike & Wave</i> <i>Camp Kaleidoscope</i>
Michele Wiley/Assistant Executive Director		Children's Association for
Sandi Gonzales Director of Development		Maximum Potential (C.A.M.P.)
Palmer Moe	Executive Director	
Megan Kromer, Ph.D	Associate Director	
Mark Carmona	Grant Manager	
Fred Cardenas	Grant Manager	
Angel Castaneda	Intern	

Note: Bernadette Hassan Solorzano, Executive Director of the Transplant Association of Texas was unable to attend due to an emergency at her agency.

Overview of Programs

Candy Lady Camp, Texas Burn Survivor Society, Inc.

Capacity: 125, but is planning to serve 70-90 children in 2001. Served 43 children in 2000.

Population Served: Burn survivors age 6-14 years old, mostly from the San Antonio Area. The camp is not only open to the children individually, but is also open to their siblings and the children of burn survivors. However, child survivors are given first priority.

Time: First week of June

Location: Flaming Arrow Camp

Cost: \$450/child, but is paid by Texas Burn Survivors

Staff: Volunteers are required to commit to a week stay and must undergo a full background check and training. Medical staff, psychiatrists, social workers, firefighters, and paramedics who work alongside other volunteers. The camp is also staffed by YMCA counselors, two per six children.

Special Features:

- Self Esteem seminars for girls have been held in the past in which young women can discuss issues specific to their needs as well as be able to communicate with other young women who share in their experiences. TBS hopes to incorporate a self-esteem class for young men this year as well. Participants go through typical camping activities as well as challenge courses.

- On the Saturday before the camp is over, professional volunteers dress in their work attire in an effort to inspire the children to keep the hope of a positive future alive and encourage them to establish positive future goals.
- Feature a one-day retreat for adult burn survivors in which they are able to interact with the children.

Needs:

- A young burn survivor must meet certain physical challenges, but there are emotional burdens as well which must be addressed. These children may experience abuse and neglect in their homes (22%) and/or remember the traumatic incident that left them physically impaired. They need programs such as this to bolster their self-esteem and show them that they are not alone.
- Burn survivors need services long after their elementary years and as such need programs that will take them through adolescence and adulthood. TBS, in conjunction with the Shriner's Program, is in the process of developing a 3-day retreat for ages 16-21 for men and women to address this population's needs as well.

A Caring Choice, The ARC of San Antonio

Capacity: 54 children

Population Served: Special Education children with severe disabilities, both physically and psychologically, who are unable to attend any other program due to their disabilities. Ages range from 5-21 for after school care and 12-21 for the summer/holiday program. Most children return every year for either/ both programs.

Time: After School 2:30-6:30pm and Summer/Holiday 7am-6:30pm

Location: At the ARC central location or the University United Methodist Church. The children are evenly split between the two locations year round.

Cost: Sliding scale fee schedule. After School Care \$9/day, Holiday Care \$18/day, and Summer Care \$20/day.

Staff: Staff at a ratio of 1 to 4 because of the specialized care and constant attention needed by the children. Staff is trained in special feeding techniques, etc.

Needs:

- Transportation has proven to limit the amount of children able to attend the program. The amount of children able to attend the after school program are limited to the Northeast and Northside who are bused in by the UUMC. Judson and Alamo Heights children are also bused in during the school year. During the summer and holiday time VIA and Warm Springs helps to bus in all children that want to attend.
- The ARC operates an adult day care habilitation program that serves 130 clients on a daily basis.

Jennifer's Camp, Alamo Area Resource Center

Capacity: Approximately 100 kids

Population Served: children with HIV, ages 6-17, along with one primary caregiver. The program is serving currently 5 states, but 2/3 of the children in attendance are from San Antonio. 95% of client base is below the poverty level.

Time: Week long camp, twice a summer

Location: Camp Deer Creek in Medina Texas

Cost: The Center believes that every child who wants to attend should be able to. Therefore the children's family does not incur any fees.

Staff: "Drafts" medical personnel and employs volunteers. Also have 5 case managers who assist families with the application process.

Special Features:

- This nationally recognized program has gained funding from the Elton John AIDS Foundation and the David Robinson Foundation.
- Jennifer's Camp is not just a recreational camp, it also institutes workshops concerning the stigma and school issues surrounding HIV/AIDS sufferers, as well as creating an environment where children feel safe to talk about their illness.

- Conducts a survey before each camp in order to develop curriculum and establish need.
- Offers programs and workshops in which the child and their caregiver may relate to each other in a stress-free environment as well as activities that they can participate in apart from each other. The later activities allow the caregiver and child to relate to other caregivers and children with similar experiences.

Needs:

- Currently employs 5 Case Managers, each with a caseload of approximately 100 children. Case Managers fight a day to day battle with massive caseloads and paperwork in order to accommodate the needs of their applicants. This problem would be better addressed with more funding for more case managers. This would lighten the caseload and allow for an increased amount of children allowed into the program.
- The need for camps for children with HIV is growing rapidly with 9 new cases of HIV occurring every day in San Antonio. Due to this, the waiting list is growing as well.
- There is a complete turnover rate with children who attend the camp.

Camp Spike & Wave and Camp Kaleidoscope, Epilepsy Foundation of Central & South Texas

Capacity: Approximately 40-50 children

Population Served: Children with epilepsy, who are currently taking anti-convulsants, age 8 to 18 from central and South Texas.

Time: Week long camp conducted during the first two weeks of July

Location: Camp Spike & Wave takes place in Burton, Texas while Camp Kaleidoscope occurs in Livingston, Texas.

Cost: \$485 /child, however, the families incur no cost as long as they meet financial guidelines.

Staff: Houses a full medical staff as well as camp counselors.

Special Features:

- Houses a full medical facility in order to continue to meet the needs of the campers

Needs:

- Partnered with Houston affiliate. Houston does most of the fundraising with only 25-30% of fundraising occurring in the San Antonio area. Need to increase fundraising locally because the program has to wait for notification from Houston about how many children they can accept for the summer.
- At present, they have a waiting list of 10-12 children due to not enough staff or beds available.
- Parents of children are often unorganized or not concerned with getting their child into the program.

C.A.M.P.

Capacity: Over 300

Population Served: C.A.M.P. offers camping, family support, etc. for children with severe physical and mental disabilities through age 21.

Time: Weeklong camps June through August with 6-week sessions.

Location: Centerpoint, Texas, outside of Kerrville.

Cost: 3 categories of payment: 1.) \$375/week; 2.) sliding fee scale; or 3.) campership/waiver

Staff: Counselors and volunteers commit to 3 weeks at the facility and adults with a background in special education are also employed. The counselor-child ratio is one to one to meet the children's needs. Sixty medical personnel from throughout the U.S. come to take part in learning about the latest in care from the faculty at the medical facility. Forty faculty members also come from all over to teach at the facility.

Special Features:

- The infirmary is run much like a hospital with state of the art pediatric care. Medical staff is also paired off with a tribe in order to bond with children outside of the hospital setting.
- Offers a parent conference before the camp begins in order to orientate the parents to the facility and what they can offer the family.
- Features specialized camps such as “Seizures Week” to meet the special needs of different populations.
- Advantaged in that they own their own facility and are able to lease it to other camp programs.

Needs:

- Needs to accommodate the needs of those who lease the facility. C.A.M.P. is now working on air conditioning its facilities to meet these needs.
- Will institute an adult camp this year to meet the needs of those who have outgrown the program for children.

Issues

- Children need emotional support to handle more than the effects of their disabilities, they also need counseling to handle the community’s reactions to their impairments.
- There are many problems centered on the parents of these children. Too often they abuse or neglect their children, feel overwhelmed with the stress of caring for them, are not organized or motivated enough to submit a lengthy application to a camp program or just need a break.
- Case Managers are overwhelmed with too much paper work and an extensive caseload. Funding is needed to hire more staff and relieve this problem.
- Good volunteers are hard to come by and the accountability factor lowers with their employment. They are often too busy to return to the camp the following year, have families of their own to care for or are not capable of handling the intense emotions involved in caring for disabled/ill children.
- No facility is perfect. There is issue with the time of year the facilities are available, such as late August when weather conditions are too much for the children to handle. These facilities often do not have air conditioned buildings, something that children with special needs require. Transportation to camps, which are too far away, is also a problem.

Suggestions

- Set goals for your children and program and keep track of your progress. This is a great way to raise the self -esteem of campers as well as great for showing the progress of your program for funding purposes.
- In order to get all medical information together, agencies should band together to form a clearinghouse where all documentation is brought in for one group to handle together. In collaborating, agencies are able to join forces and lessen the paperwork and caseload of Case Managers. This would save time and enable a better outreach to parents and children.
- A collaboration was also suggested for sharing transportation in which other agencies could borrow the vans of another at no cost.

Addendum to Camping Roundtable Information

Foundation staff discovered two additional summer camping programs and is providing additional information for review.

Camp Independence

The program was founded in 1987 to provide a summer camping opportunity for children with diabetes. From 1987 through 1999, Camp Independence operated as an educational program of the American Diabetes Association. Recently, the program sought and was granted its own nonprofit designation.

The program provides summer camping activities, including arts and crafts, physical challenges in a motivational environment to learn the skills necessary for the child's continued good health. The population is primarily children with Type I diabetes, however, the program will expand in 2001 and offer a 4 week program for children with Type II diabetes.

The program offers 14 camp sessions serving children ages 4-17. Previous campers (14-17) return as counselors-in-training and the program works with numerous adult volunteers as well as a number of parents. The program is totally volunteer driven. Some of the program's specific objectives are listed below:

- 1) To provide an enjoyable camping experience for children with diabetes.
- 2) To provide a safe and healthy environment away from home.
- 3) To enable children with diabetes to meet and get to know one another.
- 4) To help children, their brothers, sisters and parents learn more about their disease, how to adjust to it, and how to manage it.
- 5) To provide a respite for parents.
- 6) To help children understand the elements of a medical program, which will approximate normal blood sugar, levels while avoiding severe hypoglycemia.
- 7) To help children achieve independence and self-discipline in their approach to life with diabetes.
- 8) To provide an opportunity for professionals to acquire more knowledge about diabetes and practice their skills.

Camp Can-Do

The purpose of the camp is to provide a fully accessible barrier free camping experience with therapeutic recreation activities for people with multiple sclerosis. Participants come together through self-determination to explore the gifts of friendship and abundant life in a natural serene environment.

Since 1986, the Lone Star Chapter of the National MS Society has hosted Camp Can-Do. The name was given to this camp due to the philosophy that whatever you want to do at camp you CAN DO it. Participants experience four days filled with recreational and educational activities in a comfortable, accessible environment. Recreational activities include horseback riding, recreational swimming, fishing, canoeing, arts and crafts, challenge course, campfire, and family night.

The camp is held May 9-12th at Camp for All located near Brenham, Texas. It is open to all National MS Society members within the 143 county service area of the Lone Star Chapter. It targets people with MS only and in need of 24-hour care. Space is limited and is secured only with a completed registration form and payment. The cost is \$100 person (includes three nights and all meals) and financial assistance is available for those that qualify. Registrations are processed in the order received.

Camp Can Do
(512) 495-9901
(877) 524-4044
email: jeff.Maddox@txh.nmss.org

The V.I.P.s: Visually Impaired Players and Very Important People
Summer Theater Camp for Students with Visual Impairments

Mary Carrillee Adkins, Vision Teacher, North East Independent School District
Deborah Thompson, Educational Specialist for the Project for Students with Visual Impairments,
Education Service Center Region 20, San Antonio, Texas

Annual summer camp for students in schools within the ESC Region 20 area, held at North East School of the Arts theater – 20 students involved in first year. Goal of having a theater production by the end of the summer. Transportation has been the biggest challenge with ViaTrans used for students outside NEISD and NEISD providing school buses. The camp includes many vocational and educational goals for students participating in the camp.

* Notes and a summary about the camp have been scanned into DOCSTAR under the *charitable purposes, blind* folder.