



2019

ANNUAL REPORT

CAMPING, CONNECTIONS
AND CONFIDENCE FOR
CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Message from the Executive Director



The magic of Happy Trails goes well beyond canoeing, talent shows and pool time fun. The experiences, camaraderie and comforts of camp are not packed up at the end of the week. Rather, they are instilled within children in foster care and carried with them throughout the year. Campers leave Happy Trails with hope, because their counselors grew up in foster care and have shown them the potential their future holds. Campers leave Happy Trails with dreams, because their world has been opened to a host of new experiences and interests. Campers leave Happy Trails with a community, because they have developed lasting relationships with friends and counselors, which are continuously strengthened by our year-round programming.

A growing body of research supports the notion that extracurricular activities - like camp - have a long-term benefit for children impacted by foster care. This is also supported by the initial research we have completed: our campers and their caregivers overwhelmingly report that participating in Happy Trails has been transformative.

To that end, Happy Trails is continuing to expand and make the investment in the children we serve. We opened our doors to over 400 boys and girls this year, expanded and reimagined our year-round programming and launched two new initiatives - Happy Trails Tents and Happy Trails Art Start. Finally, in order to meet the growing needs of our older campers, and in partnership with other community organizations, we facilitated 6 leadership and skills-based workshops designed to help prepare youth for life after foster care.

We know this growth would not be possible without you – our caring community of friends, supporters and partners who have joined our campfire circle. Thank you for helping us bring thousands of children in foster care the wonders of camping, the support of connections and the power of confidence.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsay Elliott". The script is fluid and cursive.

Lindsay Elliott, JD, MSW
Executive Director Happy Trails for Kids



OUR MISSION

...

HAPPY TRAILS FOR KIDS brings camping, connections and confidence into the lives of children in foster care through winter and summer camp and year-round supportive programming designed to offer new learning adventures, cultivate an appreciation for nature and develop positive relationships with peers and role models.



OUR PROGRAMMING

Summer & Winter Camp



“DREAM BELIEVE ACHIEVE” - Overnight Summer Camp

Overnight summer camp is at the core of our programming. We expanded summer camp sessions by an additional week this year (for a total of 3 week-long sessions). Approximately 300 campers had the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities, swimming, horseback riding, dancing, campfire songs, talent shows and so much more. Our camp theme was Dream, Believe, Achieve and activities focused on inspiring campers to recognize their strengths, realize their potential and instill a sense of optimism about the future. Campers made “positivity posters” about themselves and peers and decorated them throughout the cabins.

Thank you to our summer partners who help make camp possible, including our volunteers, the Department of Children and Family Services and Camp Felix.

“My camp counselor encouraged me to pursue my dreams. I want to become a camp counselor to help change a life of a kid in need like my counselor did for me.”

– Junior Counselor



Happy Trails for Kids

Holiday Winter Camp

S’mores, snowballs and sledding greeted our campers this year for a winter camp wonderland. Thank you to the Wexler Family and Pali Adventures for hosting a magical experience filled with adventure and FUN for 120 campers. We can’t wait to return next year.



OUR PROGRAMMING

Year-Round



When asked why reunion events were an important part of Happy Trails, Junior Counselor Gemma N. shared “It’s important to make kids feel like they are thought of throughout the whole year, not just during the summer.”

We couldn’t agree more – maintaining an active and consistent presence in the lives of our campers is critical to our model.



Reunion Events provide unique learning experiences as well as social and extracurricular engagements, including sailing, ocean therapy, animal farm, Dodgers game and more.

The Trails to Success Initiative offers specialized workshops and programming for older campers and Junior Counselors, including career readiness, financial literacy and leadership skills.

New Initiatives

Happy Trails Art Start: A series of art workshops hosted and conceived by acclaimed artist and youth advocate Mimi Jung. Campers build skills through intentional learning, benefit from a lunch lecture series, and are creating a portfolio that can be used to open professional and academic doors.

Happy Trails Tents: Our overnight tent camping and wilderness retreats are facilitated by our team of experienced counselors and Happy Trails Board Members Michael Leiaghat and Jason Gilliland. This experience offers campers “leave no trace” education, self-reliance, outdoor skills and overall is an immersive experience in the great outdoors.



OUR EVENTS



Taste of Camp - May 16, 2019

Happy Trails supporters gathered for an evening of camp nostalgia, delicious food and fun! While featuring signature camp dishes from local restaurants and honoring actress, foster parent and advocate Jen Lilley, our wonderful community of friends raised \$130,000! As a result, we were able to add an additional week of summer camp - taking 100 children in foster care off our waitlist and inviting them to be a part of our Happy Trails family!

Cantor Fitzgerald Charity Day Sept 11, 2019

Happy Trails for Kids participated in the 2019 Cantor Fitzgerald Charity Day. Comedian and creator of Comedy Central's critically acclaimed "Broad City," Ilana Glazer, served as the Happy Trails for Kids celebrity ambassador. Charity Days was founded to honor the 658 Cantor Fitzgerald friends and colleagues who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. Cantor Fitzgerald and BGC Partners in conjunction with the Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund donates 100% of their global revenues during Charity Day to participating charities.



Hike-a-Thon & Family Fun Day Nov 3, 2019

Nearly 500 friends and family enjoyed a beautiful afternoon at Temescal Gateway Park at our 9th Annual Hike-a-Thon and Family Fun Day. With \$90,000 raised in support of our programming, we were so appreciative of the teams, sponsors and vendors who participated to make this year a success. Thank you for hiking this trail with us in support of children in foster care!



The Max "Sonny" Salter Scholarship Recipient



In recognition of the outstanding academic excellence demonstrated by our brightest stars, Happy Trails offers college bound leaders financial aid through the "Sonny Salter Fund."

This year, our 2019 scholarship was awarded to Ashley Robinson. Ashley started her journey with us when she was 7 years old during our very first year of camp in 2009! She is now a Junior Counselor and a first-generation college student at Chapman University.

"When I was younger, I went through life thinking I was worthless because of my situation of being in foster care." However, Ashley recounted, being at camp surrounded by "amazing kids" going through similar situations has not only given her a lasting community, but it has taught her "to be humble and appreciate what you do have in life." Ashley shares that one of the biggest lessons she has learned at Happy Trails is "never judge a book by its cover because you never know what someone has had to endure underneath the smiles."

Ashley describes her feelings of returning to Happy Trails as coming home to family. The feeling is mutual. Ashley is a role model for hundreds of children and a shining light for boys and girls who need it most.

INSPIRING YOUNG LEADERS!

Happy Trails for Kids High School Volunteer Clubs

Under the leadership of Santa Monica High School student Taylor Spill and Palisades Charter High School Student Noah Wexler, a new generation of volunteers and advocates are emerging. The Clubs are comprised of dedicated students interested in becoming more informed and involved in supporting children impacted by the foster care system. Founder and Club President of the Pali High School Chapter, Noah Wexler, describes why he is a committed volunteer:

"It was a fun, but also an incredibly meaningful experience to host the scavenger hunt and camp dance for the Happy Trails campers - it reminded me and our volunteers about all the things we love about camp, and why it is important for children in foster care to have these positive experiences."



»»» OUR IMPACT



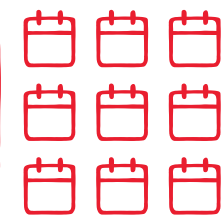
424

NUMBER OF KIDS SERVED
47% F 53% M



63%

OF COUNSELORS
IDENTIFY AS A FORMER
FOSTER YOUTH



21

REUNIONS EVENTS
OR WORKSHOPS



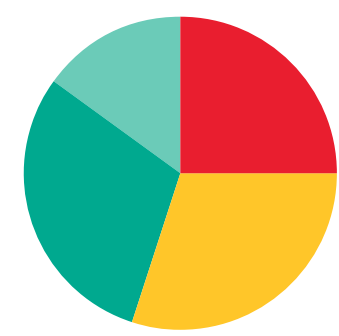
1,452

ONGOING POINTS OF
ENGAGEMENT WITH CAMPER
AND CAREGIVER COMMUNITY



ethnicity

LATINO	52%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	36%
CAUCASIAN	6%
ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER	2%
AMERICAN INDIAN	1%
OTHER	3%



types of programs

RECREATIONAL	5
EDUCATIONAL	6
TRAILS TO SUCCESS	6
FULL FAMILY	3



OUR TEAM

Our Board of Directors

CHAIRMAN

Jonathan Abrams, JD
Partner,
Abrams Brown LLP

PRESIDENT

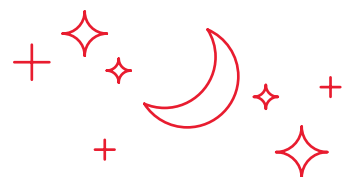
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Policy Director,
Children's Law Center

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lindsay Elliott, JD, MSW
Happy Trails for Kids

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Director of
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Loyola Marymount University

Erika Frank, BA
Founder,
Erika Frank Interiors

Jason Gilliland, JD
Vice President,
Endeavor Capital

Jeffrey Schwartz, BS
Founder and Managing Partner,
Corbel Structured Equity

Michael Leiaghat, MS
Vice President,
Pom Pom at Home

Our Leadership Team



September Sucher, Camp Director

Vincent Stevens, Assistant Camp Director

Nadia Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant

Jasmine Steele, Camper Care Coordinator

Carolina Wolf, Trails to Success Project Coordinator

Raquel Barbas, Activities Director



\$\$\$ OUR FINANCIALS

revenue

42%
\$ 275,536

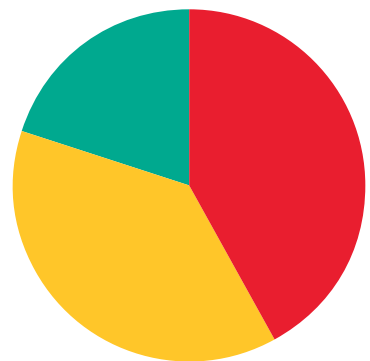
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS
AND SPECIAL EVENTS

20%
\$ 126,904

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS,
AND OTHER REVENUES

38%
\$ 246,236

FOUNDATIONS AND
CORPORATE GRANTS



\$ 648,676

expenses

64%
\$ 322,440

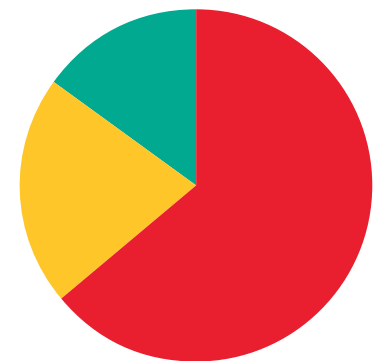
PROGRAMMING

15%
\$ 75,172

OPERATIONS

21%
\$ 107,194

DEVELOPMENT



\$ 504,806



»»» OUR SUPPORTERS



\$50,000 +

The William Gumpert Foundation
Salter Family Charitable Foundation

\$10,000 - \$25,000

Mark Taper Foundation
Jeffrey and Rachel Schwartz
Louis Lucido
Rose Hills Foundation
Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund
The RD Foundation Inc.
Dr. Patricia Friedman & Mr. Peter Serber
Corbel Capital Partners LLC
Henry L. Guenther Foundation
Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of CA
LightBay Foundation
Oarsmen Foundation

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Zolla Family Foundation
Erika and Jay Frank
Michael Richards
Harriet Zaretsky
Anonymous
Stephanie Bronfman
Carolyn and Damian Giangiacomo
Pepper Edmiston
Foster Nation
Pepper Edmiston
Hilda and Sam Leiaghat
Michael and Stephanie Richards
Kelsey Lichtenstein
FastPay
Jeffrey Serota
Capri Urban Baldwin LLC

\$5,000 - \$9,999 (cont)

Milton & Ruth Berman Family
Foundation
Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth
Vistas for Children

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Gillan Frame
David Boyle
Max and Ciria Fischer
Kate and Ross Dworman
Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club Inc.
Jonathan Abrams
Banner Bank
Barry and Wendy Meyer Foundation
Kelly McCreary
Mark Ridley Thomas
Monica Mallen
MRC Studios
Brookamplyn Studio
Morrison & Foerster Foundation
Andrew and Jennifer Wexler
Claudia Barasch
Bradley Slocum
Lisa Fuerst
Frank Gonzalez
Anonymous
Fidelity Charitable Fund
Pom Pom at Home, LLC
Charles Edmiston
Sahin Kadizade
Claudia Barasch
Allyson Pfeifer
Ashumi Kothary
Chicago Title Company

\$1,000 - \$4,999 (cont)

Christopher Henderson
David Leishman & Melissa Torme
Genevieve Harlocke
I B Speiser
Jenna Bunder
Jocab Abramson Foundation
Joni Hersch Viscusi
Law Offices of Abrams Brown, LLP
Michael and Diane Ziering
Milken Family Foundation
Richard Gruber
Richard Motzkin
Susan Zolla
The Raich Family Fund
Wayne Dempsy
Nathan Hunt
Brett Hobbs and Lindsay Elliott
Sarah Van Ness
Jewels Washington
Jason Levin
Eric Anders
Bambi Elliott
Medler Family Foundation
Robert and Cheri Orgel
Mike Slinger
Momoko Suzuki
Brennen Degner
Janet Cha
Min Cho

**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PARTNERS,
SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS.**

**Every dollar contributed makes a difference in our ability
to improve the lives of children in foster care.**

Thank you so so so much for every thing.
Happy Trails has taught me so much.

I ♥ the years I was here And there
is more to come. Happy Trails has made
me meet amazing people. Learn things-too.
Thank you so much. Love you September.

Also my cabin members and my counselor
are the best I could ever ask for.
Thank You happy trails for every thing
that you've done. And see you next
year. And ALL THE YEARS
AFTER THAT ☺



HAPPY TRAILS FOR KIDS PROVIDES OVERNIGHT CAMP,
YEAR-ROUND ALUMNI EVENTS AND OLDER YOUTH PROGRAMS THAT
HELP OUR CAMPERS PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER FOSTER CARE.

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