Original Project: Camp Dreamcatcher will offer the Therapeutic and Educational Camp Session for 130-140 HIV/AIDS impacted youth August 23-29, 2020. We will provide 112 therapeutic, 50 educational and 160 recreational programs throughout the session. Over 270 counselors, medical personnel, professionals and community members will volunteer during the session. 100% of the youth served are from low-income households, and only 13% have access to free or affordable therapeutic programs in their communities. Campers come from PA, DE, MD, NJ, and NY.

Updated Project Description: As you know, Camp Dreamcatcher was founded over twenty-four years ago with the mission of providing a safe therapeutic “home” for children impacted by HIV/AIDS. We have faced many challenges over the years, including the loss of campers and camp volunteers, the swine flu epidemic, and the flood that destroyed our camp supplies the night before the camp session started in 2018.

We are now dealing with the challenge of COVID-19, and the restrictions and health concerns related to the pandemic. We have taken the time to consider, thoughtfully and thoroughly, all of the current guidelines from the CDC and the American Camping Association. Over the past two weeks, we have discussed the pros and cons of providing a traditional camp session with Camp Dreamcatcher Village Chiefs, staff members, medical personnel and board members. After considering all of this information, we are left with the only decision that will ensure the physical and emotional safety of the campers and volunteers. Although we all want to be together for a traditional “in person” camp session in August, we have made the incredibly difficult decision to transform the camp session to three virtual camp sessions in August.

This decision was difficult, and heartbreaking. To move forward, we must embrace the words of Anatole France, that “to accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.” I believe in our ability to shift to a virtual platform for programming this summer. I know that we can accomplish this because of our donors and volunteers. The volunteers will offer their creativity, passion, dedication, enthusiasm and love to the children. The campers will be devastated when they hear this news. They look forward to the camp session each year. What will get them through this process is knowing that they will see the faces, and hear the voices, of the counselors village chiefs, health center and program volunteers they love and look forward to seeing each year. We will offer a variety of therapeutic, educational and FUN programming during each week of camp. Programs will include art/crafts, therapeutic and educational groups, yoga, mindfulness meditation, story time, dance, movies, writing or poetry, theatre and much more. We will continue our traditional opening ceremony, wish log and talent show! Camp Week Packages will be delivered or sent to the families prior to the camp sessions, and will include camp shirts, BOMBAS SOCKS, art/craft supplies, snacks and special gifts. We already have 64 campers and 40 volunteers registered for the camp session. I expect the number of campers to increase as we distribute the new Virtual Camper Applications, and we may reach close to 100 campers. The number of volunteers will also increase, and transitioning to a virtual programming format will give us the opportunity to invite new program volunteers to the camp sessions. We hope to find new volunteers on June 13th, when we will hold the Catching Dreams for Kids Event on a virtual format. The success of this programming depends on your support, and it has never been more important to the children we serve, than now. Camp is their touchstone and we need to continue to provide programming during this difficult time.

We have created a Google Volunteer Registration Sheet https://forms.gle/227Qtd5pgUm4ouYK8 which makes it very easy for people to register as volunteers for the sessions. The camp week programming will
take place during the first three weeks of August. The children will be separated into cabins with counselors, and we will try to keep the children in the same cabins, and with the same counselors, as last summer. This is the breakdown of registered campers by age, as of May 27th, 2020:

- 5-7 year-olds: 11
- 8-9 year-olds: 11
- 10-11 year-olds: 12
- 12 & 13 year-olds: 12
- 14 & 15 year-olds: 14
- 16 & 17 year-olds: 4

We will hold the programming on different platforms, such as Zoom, Kahoots, Jack Box and others. The camp program staff and volunteers are participating in webinars on a daily basis to learn more about the transition to virtual programming. We will hold weekly camp program planning meetings and counselor trainings. We have moved our Teen Leadership Retreat to a virtual format, and it will take place on June 6th & 7th. There are twenty teens, ages 15-17, registered for the retreat. It will be facilitated by our therapeutic team, program director and executive director, and will include therapeutic and educational sessions and fun activities. Although we were hesitant about moving to this format, we have found that the teens are excited, and that we can provide safe and therapeutic programming through a virtual format.

**Updated Timeline:** We are sending out emails today to our volunteers with the new google application link, and we will let the children and families know about the changes tomorrow. Our camper applications will be moved to a virtual format, and we will be letting our donors know about the updated programs this week. I will send camp week schedules to you as we get closer to August. We will be offering new counselor training modules on Trauma Informed Programming, Positive Discipline, and virtual program sessions.

**Updated Budget:** An updated budget with anticipated and committed funding for the project is attached. As the decision to move to a virtual format was just made on Sunday, May 24th, the attached budget is our best draft for the three weeks of virtual camp programming. I will keep you updated on any changes to the budget. We will be letting committed and anticipated donors know about the program changes this week, and our hope is that our donors will continue to support virtual programming.

I also wanted to let you know that the Director of Camp Saginaw, Mike Petkov, told us on May 28th that they have decided to close for the summer. The COVID-19 restrictions and risks are too high for the campers and the camp staff to move ahead with opening their camp this summer.

The children depend on the consistency and support of the counselors and Camp Dreamcatcher staff. Although our expenses are much less than last year, we are also facing a decrease in funding. Five foundations have already alerted us to their decision to shift their funding focus to support food cupboards and/or first responders/healthcare worker during the pandemic. This has resulted in a loss of over $10,000 in funding - and these decisions were made before we moved to a virtual format. It is also important to note that some of the anticipated or committed funding sources may change in the near future.

Please let me know if you have any questions about these program changes. I can be reached anytime at 610-716-0476. We all realize that this shift in programming is temporary, and we will be together again in the future. Nothing will break the bonds of our Circle of Love.