

I. **CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET**

One page only. This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors.

Note: If Philanthropy Network's Common Grant Application is used, CCCF's **Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.**

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

Date 9/4/25

Contact Information

Organization Name: Camp Dreamcatcher, Inc.

ED/CEO Name: Patty Hillkirk

Address: 148 W. State Street, STE 104, Kennett Square PA

ED/CEO E-mail: phillkirk@campdreamcatcher.org

Phone: 610-925-2998

Board Chairs: Raynetta Adams/Letitia Cheatham

Website: <https://campdreamcatcher.org/>

Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒

Year Incorporated: 1999

Primary Contact Name: Patty Hillkirk

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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☐ Arts, Culture & Humanities ☐ Environment/Animal Welfare ☐ Education

☐ Health ☒ Human Services ☐ Religion

Mission: To provide free comprehensive therapeutic services throughout the year to youth impacted by HIV/AIDS, trauma, and mental health challenges.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

Chester County areas served include Kennett Square, Avon Grove, Oxford, Coatesville, West Chester, Spring City, Lincoln University, Chadds Ford and Exton. Four other counties in PA, and also New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, and New York.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Children attending our programs are HIV/AIDS infected themselves, have an HIV/AIDS infected family member, or have lost family members to AIDS. Camp Dreamcatcher serves 120 youth throughout the year.

Annual Budget \$ 489,267 1 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
87% % of budget for program expenses 7 # of Board Volunteers
9 % of budget for administrative expenses 220 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
4 % of budget for fundraising expenses 12,500 # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Julian A. & Lois G Brodsky Foundation, Philadelphia Foundation, PayPal Community Impact Grant, Rite Aid Healthy Futures.

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building ☐ or General Operating ☒

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

☐ Mission, Vision & Strategy ☐ Governance & Leadership ☐ Partnerships & Collaborations

☐ Fundraising, Development & Marketing ☐ Technology Other: _____

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 10,000

Proposal Summary: A grant will support Camp Dreamcatcher's FREE therapeutic and educational programs for HIV/AIDS impacted youth.

Camp Dreamcatcher 2025-2026 Application

1. Camp Dreamcatcher's history, goals, key achievements, and distinctiveness:

Camp Dreamcatcher has been providing free services to HIV/AIDS impacted youth for twenty-nine years. We offer the only therapeutic camp program for children coping with HIV/AIDS on the East Coast. All of our programs are free and children attending our programs come from Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Maryland. 85% of the children served are from Philadelphia and the surrounding counties. We are currently providing services throughout the year to 120 HIV/AIDS impacted youth and their families.

The mission of Camp Dreamcatcher:

- Camp Dreamcatcher provides free comprehensive therapeutic services throughout the year to youth impacted by HIV/AIDS, trauma, and mental health challenges. Our programs provide an equitable, inclusive safe place for youth to develop leadership skills and a sense of agency and control over their lives.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PAST TWENTY-NINE YEARS:

- **Total Number of unduplicated HIV/AIDS Impacted Youth served: 6,300 children**
- Camp Dreamcatcher has provided 30 camp sessions and 30 retreats to children and families coping with HIV/AIDS.
- We provided 36 Reunion Events for HIV/AIDS impacted children and their families.
- 1,535 children received gifts through our holiday Adopt-a-Family Program.
- 1,260 counselors have attended our HIV/AIDS & Diversity Training.
- HIV/AIDS education and outreach has been provided to over 500 schools and community groups, reaching over 20,000 people.
- **THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS SINCE INCEPTION IS 326,000**

2. Funding Request:

Camp Dreamcatcher requests a \$10,000 grant from the Chester County Community Foundation to support our free therapeutic and educational programs for HIV/AIDS impacted youth.

Specific needs to be addressed:

98% of the youth served by our programs are from low-income households, and only 13% have access to free or affordable therapeutic support in their communities. Children attending our programs are HIV/AIDS infected themselves, have HIV-infected family member, or have lost a family member to an AIDS-related complication.

Organizational impact:

Camp Dreamcatcher offers the only free therapeutic and educational program serving children impacted by HIV/AIDS in Chester County. The children attending our programs are facing issues beyond HIV/AIDS. 100% have experienced trauma, 50% have lost one or both family members and 30% have been diagnosed with a mental health condition. Our programs offer a safe place to talk about the concerns and feelings associated with HIV/AIDS in a therapeutic and confidential environment. We provide factual information about HIV/AIDS, and dispel the myths and stigma associated with the disease. We provide a variety of therapeutic, educational and recreational programs throughout the year to improve the physical and emotional health of children, adolescents and young adults coping with HIV/AIDS.

We provide **Trauma Informed Programming** which ensures the following:

- A physically and emotionally safe environment.
- Predictable schedule & Camp Traditions that increase security and a feeling of BELONGING at camp.
- Clear & healthy emotional and physical boundaries.
- Caring adults & the opportunity to form positive relationships
- Opportunities that develop a sense of agency and control over their lives.

Description of Key Initiatives:

- **Therapeutic and Educational Camp Session:** Our Trauma-Informed Camp Session was held August 17-23 at Camp Saginaw. A total of 105 campers, ages 5-17, and 22 CTC's (counselors who were campers) attended the

camp session. Nine of the children attending the session were New Campers this year. Over 200 counselors, medical personnel, professionals and community members volunteered during the camp session, and provided 12,000 hours of service!

The following Program Goals were achieved during the camp session:

- We provided 150 therapeutic programs (psychotherapy, mindfulness, wilderness-based therapy, yoga, massage, and sessions with therapeutic dogs) during the camp session. New programs included expanded group sessions on the impact of substance use disorders/addictions in families and sessions on body image/eating disorders.
- We provided 75 educational programs. These included sessions with Bluejay, the Chief of Culture and Storytelling with the Lenape Nation of PA. We offered sessions on puberty education, karate and self-defense, dance, drumming, robotics, woodworking, teambuilding, and leadership programming. PayPal employees have been volunteering at camp for over ten years, and over forty of them attended the session. They helped with registration and fishing and facilitated a session on Entrepreneurship with the teens at camp. The Leaders in Training (16-17 -year-olds) completed CPR Training & Certification and Restorative Practice Training and finished off the week of camp with a tour of Lincoln University.
- We had FUN!!! We provided 150 recreational programs during the camp session. Members of the Philadelphia Avengers Superheroes Team opened the camp week with games and Superhero Training. Other programs included pottery, arts/crafts, nature hikes/plant identification, go-kart racing, volleyball, soccer, horseback riding, story-time, fishing, miniature golfing, GAGA tournaments, a Camp Carnival, basketball, movie nights, and our annual dance, talent show and John Flynn concert! One of our previous campers brought his Outdoor Party Business to camp and held FOAM PARTIES with all of the campers.
- Restorative Practice Circles: We use Restorative Practice Circles during the camp session to promote connectedness in the cabin, address conflicts, repair harm, and restore justice within the community. These practices promote inclusivity by inviting all members of the camp community involved in the conflict to have a seat within the circle, express their feelings, and to be actively involved in the decision-making process of how to repair the harm and restore justice within the community.

Other Programs:

- **Mentoring Program:** HIV/AIDS impacted, low-income, BIPOC youth face barriers to obtaining equitable physical and mental healthcare, educational, and career support. We decrease these barriers by assisting youth and families with direct assistance in completing FAFSA and scholarship applications for college or technical schools & for mental health support. Each mentee is matched with a mentor who is a long-term volunteer with Camp Dreamcatcher. The program bridges the gap between our current LIT program, which is held during the camp session, and expands it to year-round support through mentorship at the leadership retreat, the camp session, and ongoing virtual sessions.
- **Adopt-a-Family Program:** This annual program is held in November and December each year. In 2024, we distributed gifts to 170 children.
- **The Phoenix College Scholarship:** Our college scholarship was renamed in honor of Gennifer Robinson, a beloved counselor who passed away in 2022. The Phoenix Scholarship awards three \$1,000 scholarships per year to college/technical school bound campers.
- **HIV/AIDS Education, Restorative Practice Training, & Community Outreach:** Camp Dreamcatcher provides services throughout the year to schools, community groups, and organizations. In 2025, Camp Dreamcatcher provided Restorative Practice Training to AHHAH, Thistle Hills, Camphill Village Kimberton Hills, Kennett Square community members, and incarcerated youth at the Chester County Youth Center.
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Projects:** In 2022, the Board of Directors and Staff made a commitment to expand the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of our programming by identifying specific DEIB goals for 2022-2024. Our DEIB goals included an equity & culture audit of the organization, which was conducted by **S'more Melanin**, a company founded by two women of color who grew up at camps, with the mission of assisting organizations to provide a safe and inclusive camp culture that honors diversity and welcomes and embraces BIPOC in the camp world. S'more Melanin recently awarded Camp Dreamcatcher their Seal of Approval. The Seal of Approval is given to those camps that are taking concerted steps towards creating more inclusive and equitable spaces. Camp Dreamcatcher met the rigorous Standards by auditing a variety of practices and policies for evidence of equity.

Why is it important to fund this now?

Camp Dreamcatcher provides services throughout the year to children impacted by HIV/AIDS. Funding will enable us to expand and adapt our programs to meet the changing needs of the children and families served by our programs.

How impact and results will be demonstrated:

Evaluations, assessments, and surveys are conducted during, or at the completion of our programs. Youth involved as mentees in the year-round Mentoring Program identified the following challenges at the beginning of the program:

- 100% have experienced trauma.
- 70% were experiencing mental health challenges.
- 63% were experiencing mild-moderate depression.
- 50% are impacted by substance use disorder.
- 43% have attempted suicide.
- 70% are interested in ongoing mental health support.
- 97% are interested in pursuing higher education.

The assessment also indicated that 20-30% were experiencing barriers to obtaining employment, reliable public transportation, and physical healthcare. In addition, 20% were experiencing housing and food insecurity.

One year Mentoring Program Update:

- **22 Mentees and 20 Mentors completed the first year of the program.**
- **50% of the mentees secured employment.**
- **100% of the mentees were attending high school, college, or technical school.**
- **22 Mentees completed CPR training & certification during the camp session.**
- **10 of the Mentees completed Restorative Practice training during the camp session.**
- **10 of the Mentees visited Lincoln University for a tour during the camp session.**
- **Four Mentees were off to college/technical schools. These included Temple University, Delaware County Community College, Thaddeus Stevens School of Technology, and Anne Arundel Community College.**
- **Three Mentees received \$1,000 scholarships through Camp Dreamcatcher's scholarship program this year.**

2025 Camper Evaluation Results:

- 90% of the campers reported that participating in a restorative circle helped them resolve conflicts at camp.
- 93% of the campers feel that Camp Dreamcatcher has made a positive impact on their life choices.
- 93% of the campers learned new coping skills at camp.
- 94% of the campers made new friends at camp.
- 99% of the campers felt safe or very safe at camp.
- 100% of the campers felt they had someone to talk to at camp.
- 100% of the campers had fun at camp.
- 100% of the campers felt accepted at camp.
- 100% of the campers would recommend camp to a friend.
- 100% of the campers feel Camp Dreamcatcher is important.

Camper Evaluation Quotes:

How has camp impacted your life?

"It has impacted my life in a positive way."

"I had fun with my friends."

"Kindness, Peace, Love, Hope."

"It is so fun to me, and I don't want to leave."

"Camp Dreamcatcher has been helping me through lots of stuff and keeping me safe."

"My friends and counselors."

"I don't like being around other people or opening up, but this camp has made me want to."

"Helped me make better choices."

"I had depressing thoughts and camp made me happy."

"Helped me with my feelings."

"We can talk about our feelings at camp – most people can't do that."

"If I have a problem, I talk it out."

A summary of Camp Dreamcatcher's Strategic Plans from 2019-2025 is included with this application.