

I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Date 9/8/26

Contact Information

Organization Name: Camp Dreamcatcher, Inc.

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Board Chair Names: Raynetta Adams/Letitia Cheatham

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

Board Chair Approval (check here): X

Year Incorporated: 1999

Primary Contact Name: Patty Hillkirk

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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☐	Arts, Culture, Heritage	☐	Education, Library	☐	Environment, Animals
☐	Health	☐	Human Services X	☐	Social Justice, Civic Engagement
☐	Religion	If other, please describe:			

Mission: To provide free therapeutic programs 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 New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. (Include Chester County # &/or % served.)

Youth served are HIV/AIDS infected themselves, have an HIV/AIDS infected family member, or have lost a family member to AIDS. In addition, 100% have experienced trauma, 50% have lost one or both parents, and 30% have been diagnosed with a mental health challenge. Camp Dreamcatcher serves 120 youth throughout the year and 30 are from Chester County.

Annual Budget \$ 474,610 _____ **1** _____ of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

88 _____ % of budget for program expenses **7** _____ of Board Volunteers

9 _____ % of budget for administrative expenses **200** _____ of Active Non-Board Volunteers

3 _____ % of budget for fundraising expenses **12,000** _____ of Volunteer Hours

100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Philadelphia Foundation, The Oak Tree Family Fund, Jack and Jill of America, Inc.

This grant proposal is for: X Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or _____ Capacity Building

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

☐	Contingency Planning	☐	Partnerships, Collaborations	☐	Merger, Closure
☐	Mission, Vision, Strategy	☐	Board Engagement & Leadership	☐	Marketing, Communication
☐	Resource Development	☐	Operations	☐	Technology
☐	If other, please describe:				

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

Proposal Summary: To support Camp Dreamcatcher's free therapeutic programs for underserved youth.

Camp Dreamcatcher 2026-2027 Application

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

Camp Dreamcatcher has been providing free services to HIV/AIDS impacted youth for thirty 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, 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 and thirty of the families are from Chester County.

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 THIRTY YEARS:

- **Total Number of unduplicated HIV/AIDS Impacted Youth served: 6,400 children**
- Provided 31 camp sessions and 31 retreats to children and families coping with HIV/AIDS.
- Provided 36 Reunion Events for HIV/AIDS impacted children and their families.
- 1,700 children received gifts through our holiday Adopt-a-Family Program.
- 1,600 Counselors, organizations, and community members attended Camp Dreamcatcher Trainings.
- Provided Restorative Practice Trainings for 200 community members.
- **THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS SINCE INCEPTION IS 327,000**

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 16-22 at Camp NorthBay. A total of 110 youth attended the camp session and sixteen of the children attending the session were New Campers this year. Over 160 counselors, medical personnel, professionals and community members volunteered during the camp session, and provided 950 hours of service!

The following Program Goals were achieved during the camp session:

- We provided **120 therapeutic programs** (psychotherapy, mindfulness, wilderness-based therapy, yoga, massage, art therapy) during the camp session.
- We provided **50 educational programs** and these included sessions on puberty education, karate, woodworking, dance, drumming, team building & leadership programming. The 15-17-year-olds completed Teen Mental Health First Aid training/certified. Restorative Practice training and went on a pontoon boat ride to celebrate their last year as campers. Bluejay, the Chief and Keeper of Culture and Storytelling of the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania, facilitated educational sessions with campers throughout the week.
- We had FUN!!! We provided **150 recreational programs** during the camp session. Programs included climbing walls, ziplines, a GIANT SWING, kayaking, basketball, volleyball, high & low ropes adventure course, swimming, arts/crafts, dance, kickball, gaga ball, ping pong & pool games, s'mores & bonfires on the beach, and our annual dance and talent show.
- 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. 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 will serve a record number of 200 people in 2025. Donors are including grocery gift cards with the gifts this year to offset the recent cuts to SNAP and other benefits.
- **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 four \$1,000 scholarships per year to college/technical school bound campers.
- **HIV/AIDS Education & Community Outreach:** Camp Dreamcatcher provides training and education throughout the year to schools, community groups, and organizations.
- **Restorative Practice Trainings:** In May of 2024, Camp Dreamcatcher provided its first restorative practice training to AHHAH – a non-profit organization serving at-risk youth in Chester County. We facilitated a 4-week Peacekeeper Restorative Justice Practices Training for court adjudicated youth and staff at Chester County Youth Center. Youth were engaged in peer-to-peer learning while strengthening youth-adult relationships and learning Restorative Practice techniques to build community, restore relationships and repair harm. In 2025, Camp Dreamcatcher provided Restorative Practice Training to Arts Holding Hands & Hearts (AHHAH), Thistle Hills, Camphill Village Kimberton Hills, and the Juvenile Justice Services Center of Philadelphia. Over 200 people have completed Restorative Practice Training in 2025. In 2026, Restorative Practice Trainings will be provided to Family Promise of Southern Chester County and Kennett Area Community Services.
- **Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA):** Two members of the Camp Dreamcatcher leadership team are now certified tMHFA Trainers and offer trainings to youth served by our programs and to other organizations in Chester County.

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.

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- 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.**
- **Four Mentees received \$1,000 scholarships through Camp Dreamcatcher's scholarship program this year.**

Camper Evaluation Quotes:

What makes Camp Dreamcatcher Special to you:

"Being with people who love you for you."

"Camp lets me speak for myself."

"Because you can feel accepted."

"It's safe and fun."

"It's fun and I make new friends."

"If I need help, they always help me."

"They make sure I am always safe."

"It's very important because people love it!"

"Because it is free and it's fun."

"They always let me talk about what I need to talk about. I came out of my shell."

"This year we are working together so Camp Dreamcatcher can stay up so we can all have a fun childhood. Because that is what camp is for. I have been here for three years, and this has been the best end of the summer for me for the past three years." - 9-year-old camper.

"My time at camp has been such a great time for the past 11 years. I've come to camp so excited to see my friends, camp has made me close with so many people. At this point every August I've come to camp and I've seen the same people for the last decade. A week full of joy, long days, and unexpected memories. Also, so many good role models at camp." - 16-year-old camper.

"Camp to me is COMMUNITY! From the resources we bring in, the campers and their families we support, to the way we lift each other up as counselors. It is a beautiful thing. Camp has forever left handprints on our hearts and we are forever changed for the better because of it." - Counselor

"Restorative Practices and cabin circles have been a hallmark of my experience at camp. Because most of the girls in the Leaders in Training (LIT) cabin have been accustomed to the practice, some of the girls began to use some of the skills on their own in having respectful conversations with each other and without needing a facilitator. It was very cool to see the LIT girls show respect and take initiative in that way." - Senior Counselor

A summary of Camp Dreamcatcher's Strategic Plan is included with this application.