



2019 IMPACT REPORT



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A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

As I head into my second year as Chairman of the Board of this incredible organization, I can't help but be grateful for my experience over the last few years since I was asked first to join its Board, then honored with the request to lead it.

It has been a distinct pleasure to work alongside so many committed staff members and volunteers who share my passion for helping grieving children, and I am often moved beyond words when hearing from campers of their personal stories of how Experience Camps has helped them to cope and to heal.

I know firsthand from having lost a sibling and a parent very early in life what it means to have a community of people with which to share this experience, and I can only wish that my younger self had had this opportunity. As Experience Camps continues to grow and expand, I am heartened to know that many more deserving campers will get the chance to be a part of this wonderful experience.

With gratitude and excitement to see the progress that this new decade will bring,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

William Anderson

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

In 2009, on the last night of our inaugural week of camp, I took my place on a split log bench at the closing campfire, looked out on a crowd of 57 teary-eyed campers and volunteers, and felt a shift. It was one of many moments that would come to define the next 11 years of growth, connection, and unimaginable impact on everyone that stepped through the doors of our camp universe. It was the start of a family, a mission, and a journey that has touched the lives of thousands of people since that first week of camp.

Today, we find ourselves at another inflection point. Another shift. This time it is defined by an aggressive 5-year growth plan. It will continue to be defined by the quality and integrity of the program we have created and the passion and expertise of the people that make it all happen. As we prepare to launch into this next phase of our journey, we do so with wide-open eyes and hearts full of gratitude for everyone that has given us the confidence and support to come so far. Our donors, our supporters, our volunteers, and our many friends and ambassadors have made this all possible. This is our love letter to you.



With thanks, hope and optimism,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sara Deren".

Sara Deren

FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXPERIENCE OFFICER

MISSION AND VISION

Experience Camps transforms the lives of grieving children through free, one-week overnight camps built on camaraderie, compassion, and connection.

WHAT WE DO

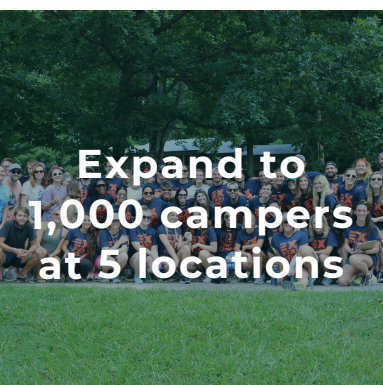
We help kids feel **less alone**. We make them feel **understood**. We convince them that there is **hope**. We help them **laugh** and breathe **fresh air**. We take away their cell phones, break down boundaries, and get them to **talk to each other**.

We combine the best elements of summer camp with a clinically-informed peer support model that normalizes their grief and allows kids to connect with other kids who "get it", creating a sense of community that lasts long after the last bus departs.

THE NEED

Despite significant growth over the last 11 years, our wait list is growing at an exceedingly faster rate. **We must grow faster to serve the kids that need us.** Nobody wants to tell a grieving child that he or she can not come to camp.

2020 GOALS



Expand to
1,000 campers
at 5 locations



Engage 450
volunteer
counselors



Add
leadership
staff capacity
to launch
regional
model



Provide
increased year-
round
touchpoints
and support for
campers and
caregivers



Continually
develop best
practices and
program
quality



Increase
depth and
volume of
funding
relationships



Expand
focus on
diversity and
inclusion
initiatives



Identify
partnership
opportunities
with camps,
corporations
and agencies

2019 IN REVIEW



AND THEN THERE WERE FIVE

A new year at Experience Camps means new kids, new camps, and new memories to be made. In 2019, we added our fifth location at Lake of the Woods in Michigan, and continued to expand our numbers at each of the existing regions, achieving a 32% camper growth rate.

739

CAMPERS IN 2019

80%

CAMPER
RETENTION RATE

352

VOLUNTEER
COUNSELORS

CAMPERS CAME FROM 35 STATES AND 4 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING IRELAND, CANADA AND JAPAN!

"These boys are like vessels trying to stay afloat after the loss of a loved one. On calm, sunny days, you can reach them; then out of nowhere, dark clouds start to roll in and it storms. Lost, they float further away from the safe harbor you try to provide for them. Similar to a lighthouse, **Experience Camps is a beacon of light guiding them back to safer waters.** Where there was once despair, there is now hope. Yes, they lost their loved one but they have gained a family; a band of brothers."

-Lori Lane (mom of Trevor, age 13)

"Kaeli got a once in a lifetime experience and has met people that will most likely be friends for life. A grief camp where she felt like a vet in this horrible thing she has had to ride through in life. Other kids that get her because they, too, have felt a close loss. My girl is coming home after only 6 days a new child and I can't say enough."

- Traci Fariello (mom of Kaeli and Isabella, ages 13 and 11)



"Experience Camps truly helped Sarah choose light instead of darkness. Her time at Experience Camps changed her view on life and gave her a new family - a family that 'gets' her. It's hard to imagine Sarah's path if she had not had Experience Camps."

LISA PALMIERI (SARAH'S MOM)



2020 CAMP DATES

GEORGIA: AUGUST 3-8

CALIFORNIA (C): AUGUST 3-8

CALIFORNIA (B): AUGUST 10-15

PENNSYLVANIA: AUGUST 17-22

MAINE: AUGUST 24-29

MICHIGAN: AUGUST 25-30



GRIEF AND PLAY

A CORNERSTONE OF OUR MODEL

The first thing you will notice when you step foot into any Experience Camp is that it looks just like any other camp. There are cabins with bunkbeds and swinging screen doors. There are basketball hoops and campfire pits. And there are children running, playing, screaming, laughing, singing, and jumping. What you might not notice right away is that each element of camp has a purpose. Those cabins create a communal living environment that require **cooperation, problem-solving, and respect** for each other. The athletic facilities provide a backdrop for **play: the common language of childhood**. They allow kids to connect without words and build trust and familiarity before opening up. The campfire pits become **a place of nature, reflection and quietude** at the end of a full day. Through these essential elements of childhood, campers are learning coping and communication skills in developmentally appropriate ways. We are allowing them to be kids after a loss has altered that critical time in their lives.

CLINICALLY INFORMED FUN

Each of our camps are overseen by a Clinical Director, a licensed, masters-level clinician that directs a team of clinical staff assigned to campers by cabin. **The clinical team supports the emotional well-being of campers and volunteers, facilitates peer-support opportunities and oversees clinical activities designed to offer coping skills, sharing opportunities, and expression of grief.**

Our clinical model is developed and communicated by our Chief Clinical Officer, Cara Allen. Cara holds degrees in Master of Social Work and Master of Management, is a licensed clinical social worker, and has worked extensively in the bereavement field over 15 years.



SHARING CIRCLE

sharing circle | *noun* | an opportunity for campers and volunteers to tell their stories to an understanding and supportive group of peers and mentors.

ZANDER (CAMPER)

"My dad passed away and I didn't know what to do because I had never had something this tough happen to me before. Because of Experience Camps I now know I'm not alone now and that people will actually understand me."



HANNAH (VOLUNTEER)

"I love watching year after year how much the girls have grown. I love at camp watching them step outside their comfort zone and become more confident campers. And I also love experiencing being part of their grief journey, and seeing how it changes every year."



STELLA (CAMPER)

"I find this camp to not be about sadness, I find it to be about happiness and having fun, and being a normal kid. I really love being surrounded by people who have experienced the same grief I have because we all can relate and we all can understand each other in at least one way. It's really helpful."



ALI (VOLUNTEER)

"My campers have shown me what it truly means to be resilient and become the best version of myself. Together we laughed, cried, sat in our sadness, roasted s'mores, participated in epic relay races and minute to win it challenges, and celebrated the life of the person or people that have died."



sharing circle | *noun* | a way to give and receive a portion of their grief that collectively distributes the weight, allowing space for healing, opening, and remembering.

TANNER (CAMPER)

"When you lose someone, you feel alone and that nobody understands you. At school I felt completely outcasted. I didn't fit into any group and I didn't know how to. But then I came to camp and realized all these people had gone through something similar to what I had gone through. The relationship I have with my bunk is like a brotherhood. This is camp. There's no other way of describing it."



KENIA (CAMPER)

"Before camp it was pretty tough for me because I was nervous and didn't know how to react. I was still going through a lot of pain. Then, everything changed when I got to camp. I found a family. A family that understands me and is there for me every step of the way. I count every day leading up to camp. I'm always patiently waiting for the next year!"



JESSE (STAFF)

"In 2012, my brother died by suicide. It was the hardest thing I've ever dealt with, and for a while I was lost trying to figure out how I would make sure he was with me every day, though he wasn't physically with me anymore. Then Experience Camps came along and changed my life. Camp has helped me grow not only as a human, but as a griever and a person living without her brother."



JORDAN (VOLUNTEER)

"I wear the purple wristband on my wrist all year as a reminder of the lessons camp has taught me. It's normal to laugh, to cry, to jump around, to scream, to be quiet. It's important to remember that no matter what you are going through in life you can always get through it."



THE CHALLENGE WE FACE

Mortality rates for adults in their 40s and 50s in the past two decades have risen dramatically, making it more likely that younger children will experience the death of a parent.

1 IN 5

children will experience the death of someone close to them by age 18

1.5 MILLION

children are living in a single-parent household because of the death of one parent

WHAT DOES A GRIEVING CHILD EXPERIENCE?

- Difficulty concentrating
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Poor school performance
- Emotional isolation
- Increased responsibility at home
- Secondary losses as a result of new school, new town, new primary caregiver



THE IMPACT OF CAMP

Experience Camps has transformed the lives of thousands of campers through one-week camps that are built on a model of compassion, camaraderie and connection.

80%

Per cent of campers that return each year

4

Average number of years that each camper attends

90%

Campers who feel less alone after one week of camp

HOW DOES EXPERIENCE CAMPS HELP?

- A safe space to express thoughts and feelings
- A blend of traditional camp and therapeutic support that allows kids to process grief in a safe and developmentally appropriate way
- A community of peers who understand and normalize the complex emotions of grief
- Licensed clinicians in every bunk who offer emotional support and guidance
- Year-round touchpoints, resources and support that reinforce coping strategies learned at camp

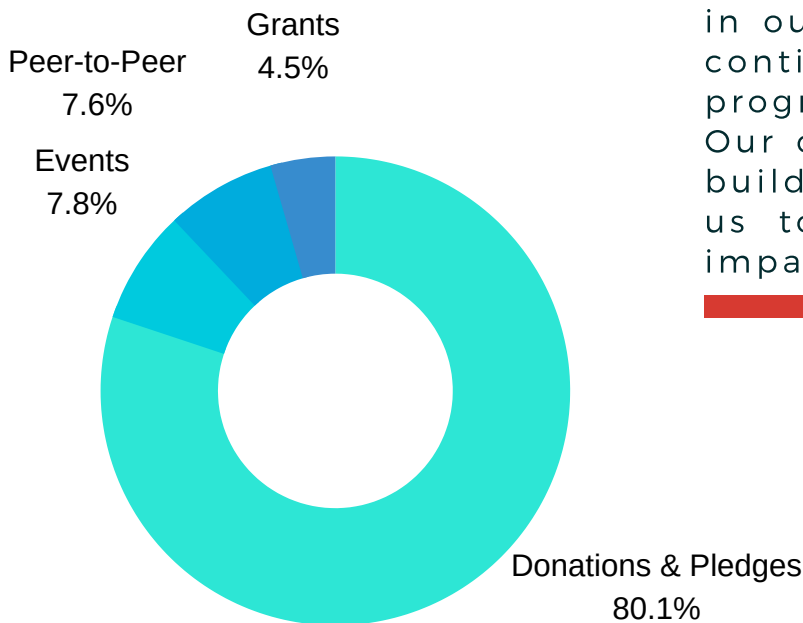


FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

2019 REVENUE AND EXPENSES

REVENUE

\$3,998,593*

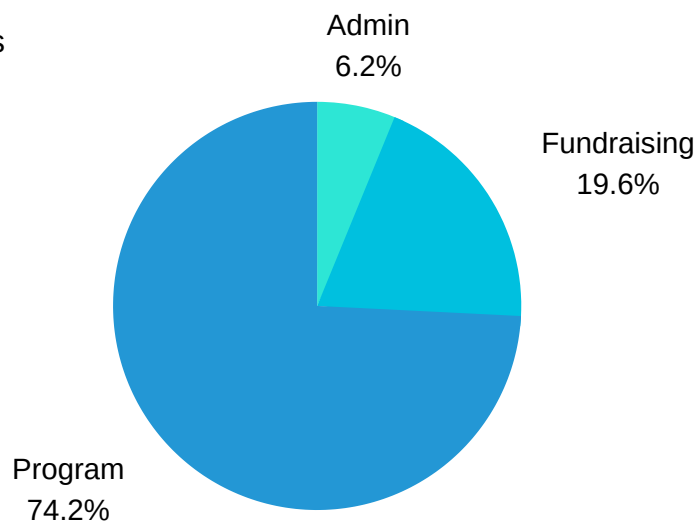


*Does not include \$296,000 in Legacy Fund donations that go directly to investment account. 5% of funds will be transferred to operating account at the end of 2020.

Our financial position remains strong as we lay the foundation for long-term sustainability and accelerated program growth. As our focus on strategic growth takes shape, we continue to make smart investments in our team and operations that will continue to ensure high-quality program growth for years to come. Our cash position reflects a focus on building up reserves that will allow us to invest in scaling up without impacting quality of programming.

EXPENSES

\$1,586,936



\$5,688,245

END OF YEAR NET ASSETS

All numbers as of January 15, 2020

\$.07

COST TO RAISE A
DOLLAR

\$2,500

COST PER CAMPER

88%

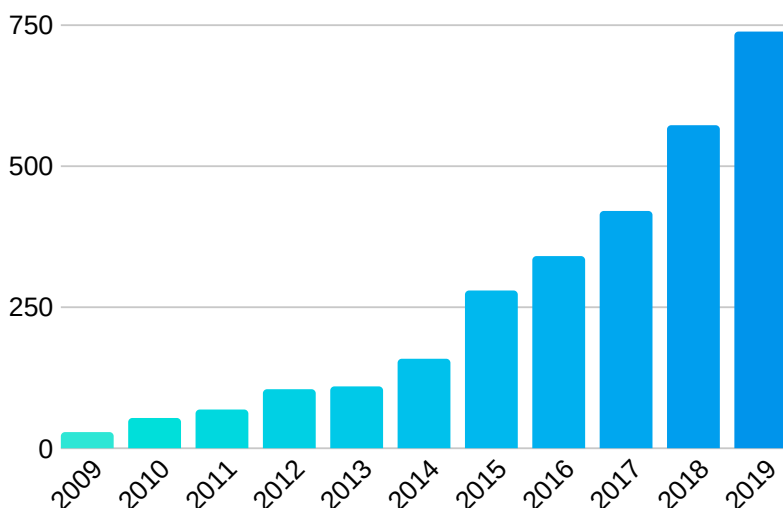
YEAR-OVER-YEAR
INCREASE IN
REVENUE

PLANS FOR GROWTH

URGENT NEED. AMBITIOUS PLANS.

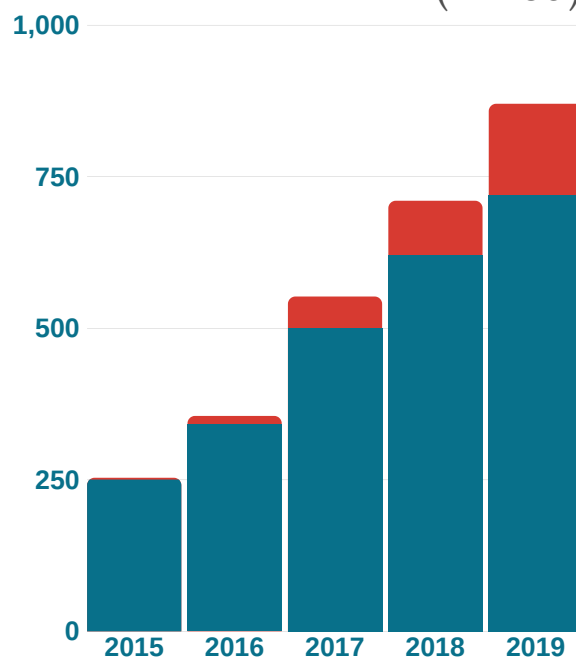
Experience Camps has served over 2,000 children since its inception, and continues to increase capacity at an aggressive rate to combat the rapidly increasing demand and wait list that we have encountered over the last 5 years.

CAMPERS SERVED



EVEN WITH A 5-YEAR CAMPER GROWTH RATE OF **188%**, THE WAIT LIST DURING THAT SAME PERIOD GREW BY **490%**.

WAIT LIST (in red)



80% OF CAMPERS RETURN EACH YEAR

In order to grow and ensure every camper can come back each year, we have to keep adding capacity and opening new locations. In 2019, we opened our fifth location. **In 2020, 1,000 campers will attend our programs at 5 locations around the country.** In 2021, we will begin our accelerated growth plans to increase the number of locations more rapidly and with a scalable format.



"My teenage son attended ManEx for the first time this summer. His mother died from breast cancer in 2017. This camp offers boys and young men an invaluable opportunity to bond and share their grief experiences while still having the best week ever!"

ANDREW POWELL, CAMPER DAD AND DONOR



2020 EVENTS

DAY OF CHAMPIONS - WESTFIELD, NJ

A NIGHT AT THE RACES - MIAMI

EXPERIENCE: NYC

DAY OF CHAMPIONS - WESTPORT, CT



LEGACY FUNDS

When a loved one dies, it is natural to seek ways for their legacy to live on through a positive impact on the world. It is with this idea that Experience Camps created Legacy Funds. Now, donors can celebrate the lives of their loved ones by sponsoring two or more campers per year, indefinitely, through the interest earned on these invested funds.

FEATURED FUNDS

The Lindsey Baron Legacy Fund

Lindsey Baron was a kind, generous, caring, loving, funny, smart, beautiful, athletic, sister, daughter, friend, and future businesswoman with big dreams. When she was a little girl she designed a snowboarding character that she named, "Bubba". When she got older she made stickers and sold them at her school and at the local snowboarding shops. Her dream was to have a snowboarding business called "Bubba Incorporated".

Tragically, Lindsey was only 16 years old when she was hit and killed by a car while on an after-dinner walk. The lives of her parents and sisters were forever changed by this sudden loss.

Through her Legacy Fund, two campers will attend Experience Camps each summer in Lindsey's honor, allowing her name to live on in connection with hope, compassion, and resilience, and maybe even inspire another little girl to follow her dreams.



Calder and Caleb Sloan's Awesome Legacy Fund

Calder was a loving, athletic, spirit-filled, big-hearted, and beautiful boy. He created his self-portrait, entitled "Mr. Awesome", just weeks before his death. They say in unfathomable times "there are no words", but there are pictures...and more importantly, good deeds. Calder's Mr. Awesome portrait went viral around the world and has inspired countless good deeds in others.

To ensure Calder would never be forgotten and guided by his memory, a non-profit foundation honoring both him and his equally amazing brother, Caleb, was created. His name would be spoken, his smiling face would be eternally present, and his loving spirit would forever contribute to the world.

Now, through Calder and Caleb's Awesome Legacy Fund, the generosity of others can provide adventure, laughter, and kindness for the grieving children that Experience Camps serves each summer.



OUR PEOPLE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William Anderson (*Chair*)

Todd Arky

Sunil Arora

Evan Bloomberg

Wiley Cerilli

Liz Eddy

Raleigh Leahy

Simone Gamble

David Garlick

Heather Garson

Justine Lelchuk

Ben Luntz

Aimee Skier

Eric Solomon

Tom Troxel

Kellie Wagner

Aron Weingard

Advisors

Darren Berger

Arthur Rosenberg

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS (with RAC Leads)

New York City: Zach Bergman

Philadelphia: Ali Boorstein

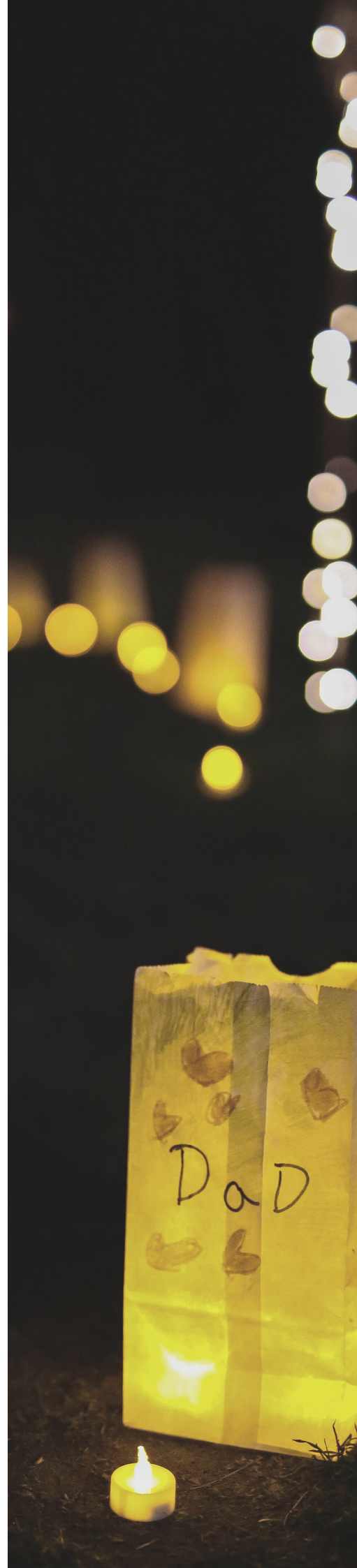
California: David Burg

Washington D.C.: Julia Ring, Haley
Rosengarten

South Florida: Jon Hooshmand, Emily
Plajer

Boston: Lucas Johnston

Midwest: Todd Shamlin



OUR TEAM



SARA DEREN

Founder & Chief Experience Officer

LEXIE RADWAN

Chief Operating Officer



KIM PUCCI

Chief Development Officer

CARA ALLEN

Chief Clinical Officer



MARTIN SKELTON

National Program Manager

JESSE MOSS

Communications Manager



THOMAS DIGUGLIELMO

Development Manager

MARGO KARP

Events Manager

