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Gary Siperstein

University of Massachusetts Boston, gary.siperstein@umb.edu

Barbara Gildea

University of Massachusetts Boston, barbara.gildea@umb.edu

Center for Social Development and Education, University of Massachusetts Boston

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Camp Shriver – A Free Inclusive Summer Sports Camp for Children with and without Disabilities

Gary N. Siperstein, Director, Center for Social Development and Education (CSDE)
Barbara Gildea, Assistant Director of Community Partnerships, CSDE

Summary

Camp Shriver at UMass Boston provides summer recreational programming for children in the surrounding communities of Boston, Brockton and Quincy.

Through Camp Shriver, UMass Boston reaches out to children and families who have few opportunities, particularly families of children with disabilities.

Goals and Objectives

Camp Shriver's goal is to provide a sport-oriented recreational program that:

1. Fosters positive peer relationships among campers;
2. Improves camper social skills;
3. Promotes a positive sense of self among campers; and
4. Expands camper skills in swimming and team sports.

Approaches and Methods

The unique inclusive experience of Camp Shriver brings over 120 children together each summer: an equal number of children with and without disabilities. Camp Shriver campers are 8-12 years old and 50% have a learning disability, an intellectual disability, or are on the Autism spectrum.

So that all campers can play, learn and interact in meaningful ways, Camp Shriver has implemented:

- 1) **Inclusive Sport Instruction** in basketball, swimming and soccer by coaches who have graduate degrees in education & adaptive PE
- 2) **A Team Model** that creates a supportive environment featuring a 4:1 camper to staff ratio, mixed-gender groups, and a balance of campers with and without disabilities.



Need and Impact

Camp Shriver is needed by the community:

- There is a lack of affordable summer programming that is welcoming to children in low-income urban areas.
- Children with disabilities in urban areas are more likely to be without productive summer engagement.
- Camp Shriver's recreational programming emphasizes social inclusion, which is the promotion of positive peer relationships and the development of friendships between children with and without disabilities.

Camp Shriver is making an impact:

- 92% of campers named *at least one* person they "liked to hang out with."
- Overall, Camp Shriver changes attitudes and fosters acceptance among children to help create stronger inclusive communities in schools and at home that transcend disability status.
- The documented success of Camp Shriver has been published in scientific journals, the American Camping Association Magazine, and in local media outlets such as *It's Only a Game* on NPR.

