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

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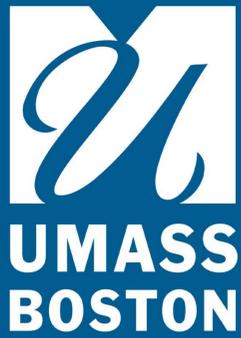
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Camp Shriver – A Free Inclusive Summer Sports Camp for Children with and without Disabilities

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Summary

Camp Shriver at UMass Boston provides a free and fully inclusive summer recreational program for children in the surrounding communities of Boston 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 promote the health and wellness of at-risk children (with and without disabilities), measured by Camp Shriver's objectives to:

1. Foster positive peer relationships among campers;
2. Improve camper social skills and social behaviors; and
3. Expand camper motor skills in swimming and team sports.

Camp Shriver's yearly evaluation and documented successes have been published in scientific journals (*Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*), psychology magazines (*Monitor on Psychology*), camping magazines (*American Camping Association*) and in such media outlets as *Only a Game* on NPR.

Approaches and Methods

The unique inclusive experience of Camp Shriver brings over 100 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.

To ensure that all children can learn and play as equals, Camp Shriver implements:

1. A supportive **Team Model** with a 4:1 camper-to-staff ratio, and an equal balance of ages, genders and disability status and
2. **Inclusive Sport Instruction** in swimming, soccer, basketball and more.

The Team Model provides a supportive environment that promotes equality and equal status among campers; Inclusive Sport Instruction promotes the development of social and motor skills through teamwork and skill-building exercises.

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 programming.
- Too few recreational programs emphasize social inclusion: the promotion of positive peer relationships and the development of friendships between children with and without disabilities.

Camp Shriver's extensive evaluation demonstrates impact:

- Camp Shriver changes attitudes and fosters tolerance and acceptance among children.
- 88% of campers named at least one friend at camp.
- 70% of campers with and without a disability named a camper with a disability as a friend.
- 50% of the friendships made at camp were across disability status.
- 26% of beginning swimmers moved up to intermediate.
- 88% of campers believed they were good, or even great, at swimming.

