

10/7/2021

### *Summer Connections at Richard Hall CMHC 2021*

Since 2015, Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center has worked with the Children's Hope Initiative to provide trauma-informed wellness and therapeutic services. Over the past six years, we have provided therapeutic services to over 220 youth struggling with symptoms related to trauma, abuse, and/or neglect. In the first 3 years of the program, we offered outpatient groups and a comprehensive Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) for youth. In 2017, we decided the best way to assist the children and their families would be by offering a summer camp which would continue to focus on offering alternative therapies to promote wellness, coping skills and healthy relationships. Our Summer Connections program offers the opportunity to overcome some of life's obstacles and to form new relationships that support health and healing. Our program is a safe space designed to teach emotion regulation, communication and explore new areas of learning to increase confidence and self-worth.

In 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to provide a camp opportunity to our youth. This year, however, during July and August, we offered two summer camp sessions of three weeks each for 12-14-year-olds who have a history of trauma, abuse and/or neglect. We prioritized referrals from our staff, NJ Department of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), TriCounty Care Management Organization (TCCMO), schools and other community organizations within Somerset County. We followed all CDC guidelines and recommendations to keep both the children and staff safe, while experiencing the much-needed peer interactions and receiving evidence-based alternative therapies targeting their therapeutic goals all while having some well-deserved fun. A Master's-level clinical staff provided on-site interventions with campers, assisted by two bachelor's-level interns, experienced in working with children. The camp was supervised by an LCSW who was also on-site. The experience for the campers was structured with planned activities that teach mindfulness, self-reliance, and teamwork.

There were two sessions of camp, three-weeks each. Session 1 ran from July 12, 2021 to July 30, 2021 with 8 participants and Session II from August 2, 2021 to August 20, 2021 with 12 participants. Camp began at 9:00am and ended at 4:00pm, Monday through Friday. The times that we offered were in direct response to the feedback we received in previous years from parents who requested flexibility in drop-off and pick-up times. Campers were provided with breakfast, lunch, and snacks, to provide a healthy and balanced diet. The groups were limited in size to ensure compliance with the CDC guidelines for minimizing COVID-19 transmission. Each camper and staff was required to wear face masks (indoors), maintain social distancing recommendations, and screened daily at the door prior to the start of camp. We found that this size allowed for social distancing, greater team building and a 1-5 or 1-3 staff to camper ratio. Campers benefited from the opportunity to build trusting relationships with staff and peers in an emotionally and physically safe environment.

Along with the structured group experience, campers were provided with a schedule of clinical activities each day. This provided youth with tools addressing both the mind and body, as research suggests there is strong evidence supporting the connection of our physical health and our mental health related to positive outcomes. Alternate therapies included: Equine Assisted Therapy, Music Therapy (Drum Circle and Ukulele Lessons), Yoga, Cooking Classes, Wellness Workshops, Penelope the Powerful Parrot, Bricks4Kidz, Art Therapy, Life Skills, Day Trips (Turtleback Zoo, Duke Farms, Safe Harbor) and Family

10/7/2021

Involvement. In addition, staff members utilized puzzles, outdoor time, worksheets, arts and crafts, videos, and music to allow the campers to learn more about embracing gratitude, respect, being a good friend, and asking for help. Kids were able to interact with others their age in-person, something that many children were deprived of during virtual learning. Many friendships were formed between the campers and several campers hope to attend the camp again the following year. Numerous therapeutic techniques were used to assist with the campers' overall well-being, especially after having to face quarantine, virtual learning, and the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our camp is designed to use measurable, behavioral, and realistic goals to ensure campers are benefitting from our services and provide evidence to our funders of the impact their dollars have made in the lives of the youth in our camp. The structure of the program included pre- and post-camp surveys, completed by both the youth and their parents/caregivers, that measure outcomes related to healthy relationships and self-esteem.

Upon review and analysis of the pre-and post-test measures, we recognize that we have some room for growth in our data collection and the methods we use. With that said, preliminary conclusions can still be drawn from initial look at the survey responses. Looking at the individual questions, participants reported difficulty with self-regulation in the pre-test measures, with an average score of 3.6 for the item, "I can manage my feelings when I get frustrated so I can continue with the task at hand." In the post test, participants endorsed this item on average at a level of 4.07. Another item that may have indicated an area where participants feel especially challenged was, "I can let people know what I want and need." In the pretest, participants endorsed this on average at 3.95, and in the post test on average at 3.46. As indicated by the similar results, minimal conclusions of statistical significance can be drawn from these preliminary findings. However, we can begin to use these data to direct our future efforts as we identify areas of need in our client population and identify whether clients are leaving the program feeling generally satisfied and mentally well.

When receiving verbal feedback from parents and campers they provided fantastic suggestions for activities that they think would be beneficial for future campers. Some examples include: sign language lessons, indoor rock climbing, an increase in field trips (suggestions include: YMCA, Grounds for Sculpture, Great Adventure), increase in gratitude activities and psychoeducation regarding relevant age appropriate topics.

As many of our referrals came from partnering agencies, we prioritized collaboration with private therapists, case managers and family members as deemed appropriate. Releases of Information were obtained for all campers that had outside treatment providers to assist in facilitating collaboration and to ensure they are in support of the agreed upon therapeutic goals and provide updates during the camp cycle. Our licensed clinician was essential in ensuring when clinical intervention was needed, each camper was provided with an appropriate level of service and any incidents of concern was communicated to the treatment team in a timely manner. While already thinking about how we can enhance our camp next year, it would be helpful to speak with the treating provider before camp begins, possibly during the interview for admission process.

10/7/2021

As we highlight the positives of camp, we would be remiss in not speaking of the challenges. Although being able to offer this camp free of charge to all the families that are in attendance it has presented as a struggle in maintaining retention and attendance of the campers. We had two cancellations in our first cycle the week before camp started, at which point in time all the families that we contacted to take their places had already made other arrangements for summer programming.

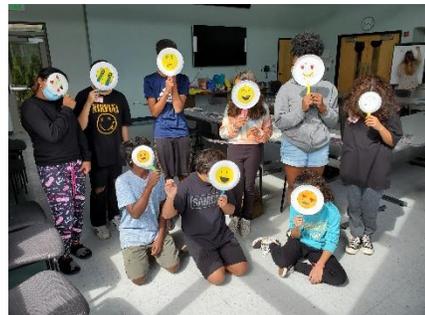
In years past we have always offered two cycles for different age groups. This year offering two separate cycles for one age group seemed to make it easier accommodate the interests and needs of the campers to fully comprehend issues pertaining to their mental health. However, with the ranges of maturity from someone as young as 12 years old to 14 years old is different. As some children are in middle school and others are in high school, the social environment changes the dynamics of the interactions between one another. We did receive interest for participation from families with younger children, ages 10-12, which we may consider when planning for next year.

When reviewing staffing needs, having a thorough orientation that not only reviews the policies and procedures of Richard Hall but also the expectations of our staff when visiting our partnering agencies will be made a priority. During the second cycle of our camp, we found it crucial to incorporate daily morning and afternoon meetings/check ins with our staff to discuss any incidents of concern as well as procedural issues. Campers' ability to speak to this year's staff in a group setting as well as individually about issues of concerns speaks highly to the environment they fostered.

For example, we had one 12-year-old male who attended our second camp cycle. He overheard conversation amongst other campers that identified possible medical risks of concern. Uncertain on how the information should be handled he confided in one of our staff so they could appropriately manage the information and ensure all campers safety. It showed significant growth for this individual, who has a history of being bullied by his peers and identified need to enhance his communication skills as a goal. After disclosing the information, he also verbalized uncertainly about returning to the camp out of fear of retaliation. His mother reported that trust in staff and the way in which the situation was handled solidified his decision to come back. He returned to enjoy a trip to Turtleback Zoo as well as graduation.

Below you will find some client pictures from Summer Connections 2021:

10/7/2021



10/7/2021

The budget as well as balance for Summer Connections 2021 is below:

| Service/Activity                      | Cost per unit                                | Number of units         | Total estimated cost | Actuals                           | Balance       |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Equine Therapy                        | \$1000/ 4hour class                          | 6 (4-hour sessions)     | \$ 6,000.00          | \$ 8,310.00                       | \$ (2,310.00) |
| Equine Therapy (reunions)             | \$590/ 90 min class                          |                         | \$ 2,360.00          | \$ -                              | \$ 2,360.00   |
| Art Therapy                           | \$40/hour                                    | 6 (90 minutes sessions) | \$ 600.00            |                                   | \$ 600.00     |
| Music Therapy Ukulele lessons –       | \$290/1hour class                            | 6 (1 session/week)      | \$ 1,740.00          | \$ 1,620.00                       | \$ 120.00     |
| Ukuleles for campers                  | \$30 / instrument                            | 20 campers              | \$ 600.00            | \$ 500.00                         | \$ 100.00     |
| Drum Circle staff                     | \$510 / 2 hour class                         | 2 (1 class/session)     | \$ 1,020.00          | \$ 1,120.00                       | \$ (100.00)   |
| Pet Therapy                           | \$25/visit                                   | 6 (1 visit/week)        | \$ 150.00            | Vendor unable to provide services | \$ 150.00     |
| Life Skills (Middle Earth)            | 0  | 6 (1 session / week)    | \$ 900.00            | \$ 900.00                         | \$ -          |
| Cooking                               | \$125 /hour, 2 hr sessions                   | 12 (2 sessions/week)    | \$ 3,000.00          | \$ 3,073.23                       | \$ (73.23)    |
| Bricks4Kidz                           | \$500/3 sessions                             | 6 (1 session/week)      | \$ 1,000.00          | \$ 1,000.00                       | \$ -          |
| Yoga                                  | \$150/hr                                     | 12 (2 sessions/week)    | \$ 1,800.00          | \$ 1,200.00                       | \$ 600.00     |
| Wellness/Penelope the Powerful Parrot | \$0/hr                                       | 6 (1 session/week)      | \$ -                 | \$ -                              | \$ -          |
| Trips:                                | \$20 /camper - set of books and art supplies |                         | \$ 400.00            |                                   | \$ 400.00     |

10/7/2021

|                                |   |             |              |              |             |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Duke Farms                     | Admission \$0   | 2 trips     | \$ -         | \$ -         | \$ -        |
| Safe Harbor                    | 2 \$75 trip   | 2 trips     | \$ 150.00    | No Fee       | \$ 150.00   |
| Turtle Back Zoo                | Admission<br>\$10 - 10<br>campers+3<br>staff=\$130/trip | 2 trips     | \$ 260.00    | \$ 300.00    | \$ (40.00)  |
| Zoo lunches                    | 10 campers+3<br>staff =<br>\$117/trip                   | 2 trips     | \$ 234.00    | \$ 323.68    | \$ (89.68)  |
| Transportation                 |   |             | \$ 6,000.00  | \$ 5,310.00  | \$ 690.00   |
| Milage                         |   |             | \$ -         | \$ 56.84     | \$ (56.84)  |
| Total for activities           |   |             | \$ 26,214.00 | \$ 23,713.75 | \$ 2,500.25 |
| Staff Costs                    |   |             | \$ -         |              |             |
| Licensed clinician             | \$40/hr   | 40hrs/week  | \$ 9,600.00  | \$9,392.00   | \$208.00    |
| BA level intern                | \$15/hr   | 40 hrs/week | \$ 3,600.00  | \$3,941.25   | \$(341.25)  |
| Volunteers/interns             | \$0/hr  | 40/hrs/week | \$ -         |              | \$-         |
| Total for staffing             |   |             | \$ 13,200.00 | \$13,333.25  | \$ (133.25) |
| Supplies                       |   |             | \$ -         | \$ 66.15     | \$ (66.15)  |
| Food                           |   |             | \$ 1,250.00  | \$ 1,198.39  | \$ 51.61    |
| Art Supplies                   |   |             | \$ 250.00    | \$ -         | \$ 250.00   |
| Reunions/art<br>supplies, food | 2   |             | \$ 250.00    | \$ -         | \$ 250.00   |
| Tee shirts                     | \$12/shirt  | 24 shirts   | \$ 288.00    | \$ -         | \$ 288.00   |

10/7/2021

|                |  |  |              |                                   |             |
|----------------|--|--|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Total Supplies |  |  | \$ 2,038.00  | \$ 1,264.54                       | \$ 773.46   |
|                |  |  |              |                                   |             |
| Total:         |  |  | \$ 41,452.00 | \$ 38,311.54                      | \$ 3,140.46 |
|                |  |  |              |                                   |             |
|                |  |  |              | Total Available funds for Reunion | \$ 3,140.46 |

With the total available funds for reunion, we feel that we will be able to replace one of the art activity evening activities with another equine therapy activity. Campers from each cycle will be offered four reunions.

1. Equine Therapy
2. Art Activity (Dinner Provided)
3. Movie Night (Dinner Provided)
4. Equine Therapy

Below is preliminary proposed budget. Changes will be based on commitment of campers to Equine Therapy activities and our food budget.

| Service/Activity            | Cost per unit       | Number of units | Total estimated cost |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Equine Therapy (reunions)   | \$590/ 90 min class | \$ -            | \$ 2,360.00          |
| Reunions/art supplies, food |                     | \$ -            | \$ 500.00            |
|                             |                     |                 | \$ 2,860.00          |

We continue to be committed to providing youth and their families with a well-rounded program that can offer a variety of different therapeutic modalities to ensure that each youth is getting an individualized program to meet their needs. We are an evolving program and dedicated to bringing new and innovative evidenced based services to the program as opportunities arise. The collaboration between CHI and RH has been a rich and meaningful one with benefits that have extended throughout our community over the past seven years. We look forward to continuing our partnership in serving the youth of Somerset County.