

FACS Niagara Facts

“The Smiles Files” 2019

November 2019



Family and Children's
Services Niagara
Les Services à la famille
et à l'enfance de Niagara

Summer Smiles for 415 Children & Youth

Thanks to the generosity of you and other donors, 415 children and youth in the care of and affiliated with Family & Children's Services Niagara attended camp this past summer. On behalf of those children, we appreciate your support and generosity!

Summer Camp is ideal because it encourages growth in all developmental areas including social skills, physical health, and self-learning. Camp allows children and youth to challenge themselves in a new environment, build friendships, and improve physical, mental and social skills.

Because of the community's generosity, no matter what a family's circumstance all children that wanted to attend camp had the chance to attend this summer. The donor-supported Summer Smiles program removed barriers like the cost of registration, the need for camp supplies, and the availability of transportation, so that children and youth could attend and enjoy a fulfilling week.

Summer Camp also provided children and youth with the opportunity to learn new skills, improve existing skills and participate in new and exciting experiences in a safe and age-appropriate setting.

Each child or youth chose from a variety of camps or programs that met their interests. This created those “Summer Smiles!”

Some youth attended specific sports camps for soccer, hockey, basketball, cheerleading or gymnastics. Others enjoyed horseback riding, bicycling, learning dance, singing, drama, or making crafts. A few others participated in a camp with a



“CAMP IS AWESOME!” wrote Jacob (age 8) about his experiences this summer.*

high-ropes obstacle course.

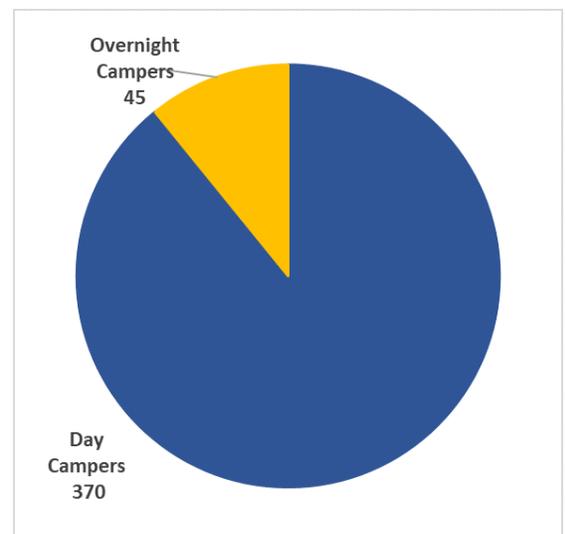
For those overnight campers, they enjoyed hiking, swimming, canoeing, fishing, rock-climbing, and nature walks. Camp also gave them the opportunity to learn some time-honoured camping songs and enjoy marshmallows around a fire.

Camp helped build resiliency since campers worked on their social skills through hands-on experiences. Residential camps allowed youth the chance to develop their independence as they were exposed to new experiences – sometimes outside their comfort zone. They also engaged in experiential learning in a structured environment.

Ultimately, sending children and youth to camp aligns with FACS Niagara's vision of providing a safe and supportive environment for children. Because of the Summer Smiles camp program, children's and youth's lives were forever changed.

Thank you!

Overnight & Day Campers, 2019



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At the beginning of the summer we estimated that we would send about 20% of FACS children or youth to enjoy a “traditional” overnight, outdoor camp – in a cabin or bunkhouse. We promised to arrange transportation to the camps outside of Niagara and to outfit each camper with their own sleeping bag, bug spray, sunscreen and hat.

Thanks to the community’s generous support we were able to fulfill the need! Donors helped send 45 children and youth to a weeklong overnight camp. Yet, as we look back on the results, that’s just slightly more than 11% of the 415 children or youth who attended camp.

This variance occurred for a couple of major reasons.

First, while we based our estimate on the results from previous years, the ages of the children and youth able to attend an overnight camp were quite different this year. As the graph shows, more younger children this year participated in camps than in 2018. Since younger children and their parents / guardians prefer day camps over overnight camps, fewer children overall attended overnight camps.

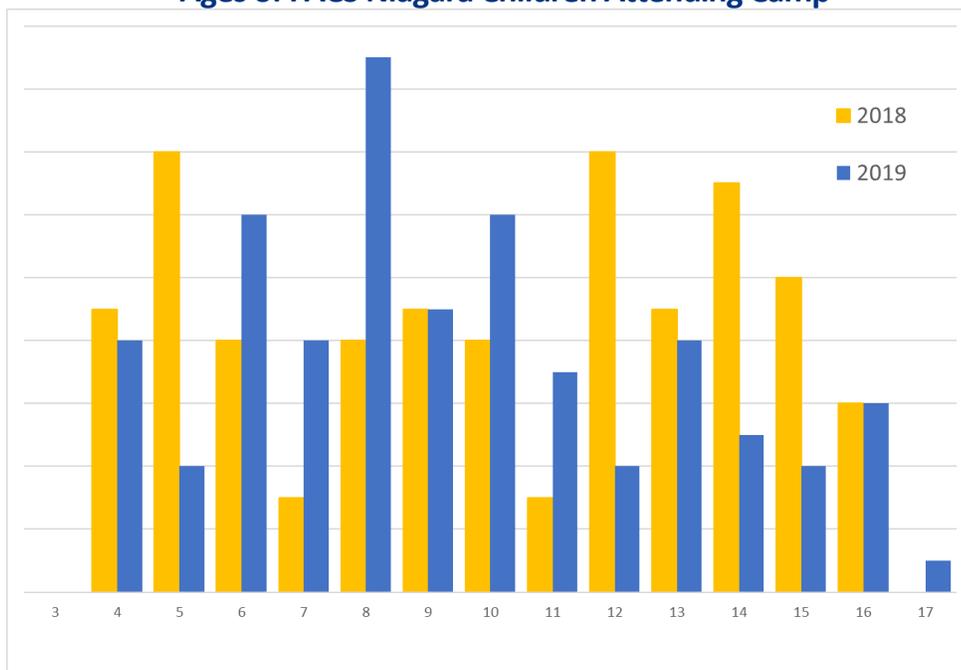
Second, two (2) overnight and seven (7) day camps worked directly with FACS Niagara staff and offered either free registration or significantly discounted registration rates. We appreciate their generosity!

These two factors – dramatically reduced camp registration costs and fewer overnight campers – helped decrease the average cost per child. Last spring, we expected the average cost to be about \$400 per camper; now that all the bills have been paid and the accounts reconciled, we found that the average cost was about \$350 per camper.

This is great news for donors because it means that your contribution made an even greater impact!

And, we are excited about this analysis as we begin planning to for more “Summer Smiles” next year.

Ages of FACS Niagara Children Attending Camp



Thanks Summer Smiles Donors!

- Employees of FACS Niagara
- CUPE Local 2328
- Anne Kemp
- Ontario Power Generation
- Rotary Club of Niagara Falls
- St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Alexander Church
- The Larocque Group
- Niagara Periodontics
- Edward Kendall
- Mike T. Connolly
- Grantham Lions Club
- Bosch Rexroth Canada
- Kemp Financial Group
- Niagara Slo-Pitch
- Hildebrand Lehn Family Fund
- Judy Dell
- Metroland Media Group
- Canadian Tire Bank
- Judith Adamson
- And many more!

Camper Feedback, 2019

- “My favourite part of camp was being in the woods.”
- “I really enjoyed learning to dance.”
- “I felt really connected to God and I feel like I found my true family.”
- “I really enjoyed playing canoe polo.”
- “I learned that seeds dropped from birds can produce trees.”



“Thank you for letting me shadow a life guard!” wrote Emma* (age 10) about attending a junior lifeguard club camp

*Name changed to protect child’s identity.

