

# the *Fresh Air* fund

servicing children since 1877

## Facts about The Fresh Air Fund

The Fresh Air Fund, an independent, not-for-profit agency, provides free, enriching summer experiences and academic programs for children from underserved New York City neighborhoods year-round. During the summer, students attend five Fresh Air camps in Fishkill, NY or visit volunteer host families across the Northeast and Canada, where they learn about new environments and skills that they can bring back to their communities. When school is in session, Fresh Air students participate in supported school programs at camp and in New York City. We partner with volunteers, corporate groups, and social service and community organizations. Since 1877, 1.8 million children have participated in Fresh Air experiences, where each day is an exploration of nature and journey of discovery.

### Fresh Air Children

Children are selected to participate in The Fresh Air Fund's programs based on financial need and are registered by social service and community organizations in all five boroughs of New York City. Now in its seventh year, our immigrant outreach project recruits children from New York City immigrant families through our network of community partners. This project focuses on newly arrived and second-generation immigrant families who require culturally sensitive outreach and translation services.

### The Fresh Air Fund's Summer Programs

#### Friendly Towns Program

Fresh Air boys and girls visit over 300 rural, suburban and small town communities along the East Coast and Southern Canada, called Friendly Towns, during the summer. During the one or two week visits with volunteer host families, children become immersed in the day-to-day lives of hosts. Life outside the city helps them learn about new environments and experiences they get to bring back to their communities.

- Children on first-time visits are seven to 12 years old. Reinvited youngsters may continue through age 18 and may enjoy extended trips.
- A committee of volunteer leaders supervises each Friendly Town community.
- Committee members select host families after reviewing their applications, visiting them in their homes and checking their personal references.
- There is no "typical" Fresh Air Fund host family; host families open their homes to children who might not otherwise be able to enjoy a summer away from New York City.
- There are no financial requirements for hosting a Fresh Air child.
- The Fresh Air Fund covers the cost of transportation and insurance.

#### Summer Camping Program

The Fresh Air Fund's free camping programs take place year-round on close to 2,000 acres in Fishkill, New York. In the summer, 3,000 New York City children explore outdoor adventures and benefit from educational experiences.

- Camp Hidden Valley is for boys and girls with and without special needs, eight to 12 years old.
- Camp Tommy is for 12- to 15-year-old boys and is named in honor of designer Tommy Hilfiger for his dedication and support of Fresh Air children.
- Camp Hayden-Marks Memorial is for nine- to 12-year-old boys.
- Camp Mariah is for boys and girls in 7th to 9th grades.
- Camp Anita Bliss Coler (ABC) is for girls, nine to 12 years old.
- Special features shared by all camps include: planetarium; model farm and nutrition center; wilderness trail; and ropes course.

## **Academic Enrichment and Leadership Programs**

### Career Awareness Program

The Fresh Air Fund's innovative Career Awareness Program is designed to help New York City youngsters understand the relationship between school and work and how to make choices that will determine their futures.

- Students apply in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and begin summer camp session when entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- The year-round program includes weekend camping trips and an intensive three-and-a-half week summer session at Camp Mariah, named in honor of Board member/singer Mariah Carey for her dedication, support and commitment to New York City children.
- 7th- to 9th-graders participate in job shadowings that offer close-up views of business, receive after-school tutoring with volunteer tutors, and attend a career fair.
- After 9th grade, participants continue to receive support through the College Connections Program.

### Young Women's Leadership Program

The Fresh Air Fund's Young Women's Leadership Program, launched in 2008, offers New York City girls a safe, nurturing environment to think about their futures, recognize their responsibility for educational and career planning, and overcome perceived limitations of gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

- The goal is to engage at-risk girls during their formative teenage years in constructive, year-round activities to develop their self-esteem, financial literacy, and problem-solving and communications skills.
- The Precious Center for Teen Leadership at Camp ABC provides a home for the program during the summer and off-season.
- During the academic year the Young Women's Giving Circle (YWGC) teaches the importance of community service and the power of philanthropy. The group selects one or more charities to support, and work to fundraise and create awareness on their selected issue.

### Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Program

The purpose of the Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program is to prepare young adults to take future leadership roles working with children in summer camps and in other childcare settings. Participants are provided with opportunities to develop their skills in camping, childcare, and outdoor education. In addition, participants are asked to be a role model to young campers by exhibiting positive leadership and being a good example to campers.

This is a workforce development program that encourages former Fresh Air Fund campers and Friendly Town participants to apply at the age of 16.

### College Connections Program

Launched in 2012 to continue our educational support to Fresh Air students through college, the College Connections Program provides high school students enrolled in The Fresh Air Fund's academic enrichment and leadership development programs with the resources, support and tools needed to enter and complete college. The program builds a strong network of support for students as they enter college and maintains a high level of engagement with them until they graduate. Many are the first in their family to attend college.

- Guides 10th, 11th and 12th graders through the process of selecting, enrolling, financially preparing for and transitioning into a successful college career.
- Educates parents and students about the sources of financial support available to them.
- Provide SAT and other test preparation courses, organize college visits, provide financial literacy and planning workshops, connect college students with extracurricular opportunities that will prepare them for post-college success, encourage students to complete community service hours as they transition into adulthood.
- Supports and mentors students throughout their four years of college so they can succeed in attaining their degree.

## **Volunteer Groups**

The Fresh Air Fund has an active group of New York City volunteers and corporate partners. Metropolitan area volunteers help reach out to New York City parents and children, support Summer Camping Programs, Academic Enrichment and Leadership Programs, the Volunteer Host Family Program, and fundraising opportunities. To volunteer, call (212) 897-8900 or visit [www.freshair.org](http://www.freshair.org).

## **Fresh Air Fund History**

In 1877, the Reverend Willard Parsons, minister of a small rural parish in Sherman, Pennsylvania, asked members of his congregation to provide country vacations as volunteer host families for children from New York City tenements. This was the beginning of The Fresh Air Fund tradition. By 1884, Reverend Parsons was writing about The Fund for New York's Herald Tribune, and the number of children served grew.

## **Sharpe Reservation**

The Fresh Air Fund's Sharpe Reservation has more than 2,000 acres of beautiful land with lakes, ponds, streams and hiking trails through the woods. Located in the Hudson Highlands near Fishkill, NY, Sharpe Reservation is the site of The Fresh Air Fund's five summer camps, where 3,000 children get a break from city life each summer. During the rest of the year, over 15,000 children from community and school groups as well as Girl Scout troops visit to learn about the environment. The Sharpe environmental programs help meet academic standards through outdoor learning. To learn more, visit [www.freshair.org/sharpe](http://www.freshair.org/sharpe).

## **Fresh Air Fund Contributions**

The Fresh Air Fund is a not-for-profit agency, depending primarily on support from private contributions. It costs The Fresh Air Fund \$1,172.00 for a visit with a volunteer host family and \$1,925.00 to send a child to Fresh Air camp. Over 75% of The Fund's contributions come from individual donors. Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to The Fresh Air Fund, 633 Third Avenue, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017. Families who wish to be hosts, or parents who would like to sign up their children, may call The Fresh Air Fund at (800) 367-0003 or visit [www.freshair.org](http://www.freshair.org).

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