

A Year Round Camp for New York City Boys

BEFORE THE DIE IS CAST

A Report

made possible by a grant from the  
Charles Hayden Foundation

November, 1955

To

Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund  
230 West 41 Street  
New York 36, New York

From

The Outdoor Education Association  
369 Lexington Avenue  
New York 17, New York

L. B. Sharp

Benton P. Cummings

# OUTDOOR EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, INC.

NATIONAL CAMP  
AND  
POLE BRIDGE CAMP  
Matamoras, Pa.

369 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

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Executive Director

## Letter of Transmittal

November 22, 1955

Mr. Whitelaw Reid  
President, Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund  
230 West 41 Street  
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Reid:

Submitted herewith to the Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund is our report, "Before the Die is Cast", of a year--round camp for New York City boys. As you know, the cost of preparing the report covering a six months period of research and study has been underwritten by the Charles Hayden Foundation.

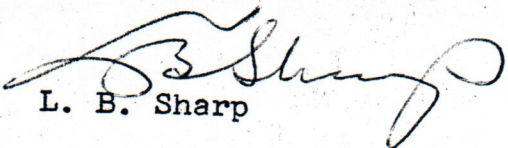
The Fresh Air Fund is to be highly commended for its vision and determination to initiate this most worthwhile project.

This new camp will be a constructive contribution to one of the most important problems concerning New York City youth. The successful operation of this new camp will be a means of providing a new world and a new life for hundreds of New York City boys who are in serious trouble. It is hoped that this undertaking can be started as soon as possible.

We have received the fullest cooperation from Mr. Lewis and other members of the Fresh Air Fund staff. Also, many civic leaders and key people from schools and agencies have assisted greatly during this study. Mr. Benton Cummings joins me in extending our sincere thanks to all of the people who have been so helpful and cooperative.

We are pleased to have been given an opportunity to share in this worthy project. It is hoped that the plans and materials included in the report will be useful in the construction and operation of the new camp.

Very sincerely yours,

  
L. B. Sharp

LBS:j  
c.c.: Mr. Frederick H. Lewis



HERALD TRIBUNE FRESH AIR FUND  
Year-Round Camp for New York City Boys

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## BEFORE THE DIE IS CAST

The year-round camp for New York City boys projected for the Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund is one of the most significant and constructive projects that has yet been put forward to help the thousands of youngsters who are in serious trouble.

About one and a half percent of our nation's youth is in the juvenile delinquency class. This figure is somewhat higher for New York City, reaching nearly three percent, and increasing rapidly. There is, however, an estimated eight to ten percent of American youth, who, by force of circumstances, is actually pushing at the doorway to full-fledged delinquency.

The trouble comes chiefly as a result of the circumstances in which these youngsters find themselves. A young person who commits an act of delinquency, or is so judged, is immediately stigmatized in the public mind, regardless of the conditions and influences which helped to precipitate the act. The child's home and the community-at-large must share much of the responsibility for the high percentage of juvenile delinquency.

The public, homes, schools, churches, and many other organizations are anxious to do more about the critical problem. All are trying and, in many instances, have made progress in some areas of the problem. No basic solution, however, has yet been evolved.

Perhaps the many individuals and groups who are concerned with the problem have not looked at it sufficiently from the youngster's side of the fence. Everyone is opposed to juvenile delinquency, even the delinquents themselves. The expression



"Juvenile Delinquency", is so commonly used that it may distort the thinking and approach of those who want to make constructive contributions toward a solution. It is actually not so much a problem of juvenile delinquency as it is a matter of "juvenile insistency". What is our American youth insistent about? What is it that they want and increasingly need in order to adjust to modern life and to grow into happy, useful, and worthy citizens?

This juvenile insistency point of view was presented in the following seven areas: (1)

"American youth need and want, though they may say it differently:

1. Want to be loved - real, genuine, true and sustained love,
2. Want to know that they are really wanted and are not an unwanted generation,
3. Need for recognition - not a lot, but some, and not all at once. Too often the recognition comes from only anti-social acts,
4. Need and want a vigorous life of adventure, daring, and healthy opposition - want to be tested,
5. Need and want religious and spiritual influence and guidance,
6. Want to grow up, mature, and amount to something,
7. Ultimately, they naturally want and need to establish a home. This involves love and all the other points of insistency, but in a different role - the home, the most important institution in our society."

These needs and wants may serve as aids and guides in dealing with youth in camp.

The greatest service the new camp can render to certain New York City boys and to the community is to take to camp as many boys as can adequately be cared for in the new camp, from the nearly three percent who are judged juvenile delinquents, but have not been committed, and also a number of the nearly ten percent who are fast on the road to delinquency, but have not been so judged. Most of them are potentially fine lads and can be redirected and rehabilitated. There is still time and something must be done "before the die is cast".

The plan is to transfer these youngsters to a totally new environment, and to offer them a new outlook with the guidance of exceptionally fine leaders and friends, and to involve them in a vigorous exploring, adventuring and doing type of experience.

Along with the emphasis on vigorous and real camping experiences, the basic small group, decentralized procedure will be followed. It will be a stepped-up camping program modeled after the Fresh Air Fund's summer camping program, but geared to a greater and more difficult task. With proper leadership, great success can be achieved, because outdoor living and learning is a "natural" for the American youngster.

The first question the average person will ask is, "How long will it take to bring about the correction and rehabilitation of these boys?" Patientce must be exercised by the public and by the camp personnel in this regard. These boys are in serious



trouble -- trouble that has not developed suddenly but has been caused by a long chain of circumstances over a considerable length of time. Once a boy is on the road to delinquency, he is almost surely destined to continue some type of anti-social behavior. This behavior pattern becomes rigidly fixed after a while, and, as time goes on, his future becomes increasingly hopeless. An accumulation of anti-social misdeeds and the accompanying realization that he is a disappointment to home, neighborhood and community often leads to more powerful defiance and ultimately to imprisonment and often extinction.

The purpose is to redirect these youngsters so that they will be able to return to their homes and community and live healthy, useful and constructive lives.

"How long will it take?" is a basic question. The attitude toward this question should be similar to the attitude the average person takes when Polio strikes in a home and a child is suddenly incapacitated. The child is in physical jeopardy, the home is shocked, saddened, and worried, and so are friends and the general public. The child is rushed to the hospital, and medical science goes to work. Despite the new medical techniques, anxiety for the child increases. The question in everyone's mind is, "Will he recover, will he be all right, and how long will it take?"

The doctors can not predict -- they can not promise recovery but will give hope and encouragement. The doctors say, "We will do everything we possibly can and much will depend upon how he will respond to our treatment, upon how well he cooperates and



maintains his spirit to win. Also, it will depend upon the cooperation of the home and everyone concerned. Even when the day comes, if he recovers, when he can be released from hospital care and treatment, and the chief danger will have passed, full recovery will depend upon how well the patient keeps up his exercises and takes care of himself."

When juvenile delinquency strikes in a home, the situation is similar in the juvenile delinquency is an outstanding symptom of a severe emotional maladjustment. However, the attitude of the members of the family is totally different. Each member of the family and community blames one another. The delinquent himself is oftentimes the center of scorn and reproaches. However, the so-called "disease" did not come on suddenly, nor was it caused by a single event or a single relationship. It is more likely to have developed as a result of a long period of bad influences, unhealthy relationships and limited opportunities for the kinds of activities which the youngster needed and did not get.

The public and even many professional people are not ready or willing to accept juvenile delinquency as a mental and emotional disease. They are not willing to consider a person as mentally "sick"; but actually this type of delinquent is just that. The youth is not aware of it, but shows all evidences of severe frustration, anger, and temper; these are some of the symptoms of advanced emotional disturbance. His anti-social behavior has been destructive enough to convince the home, school, church and finally the courts, that the delinquent needs something which is not available in his usual environment.



Another current question will be - "What will happen to his school work while the boy is in camp?" The learning program at the new camp will adopt the precepts of the outdoor education. Emphasis will be placed at all times upon informal learning. Formal routine class instruction will give way to this new approach. The life at the camp will be a steady flow of vigorous activity -- being on one's own, taking care of self, sharing with others, discovering new things, exploring and adventuring, all of which will serve to stir up myriads of inquiries and interests on the part of the campers.

Counselors alerted to this new approach will seize upon every opportunity to lead the youngsters into inquiry and the solution of questions and problems raised. This newer approach to the problem puts emphasis on the fact that an individual must do the learning himself. Therefore, self-motivation is really the key to this informal learning process. The program projected covers a wide range of adventurous activity which will be the main driving force to motivate learning. A person will learn when necessity faces him or when there is a high state of readiness. The program at the new camp will build readiness to an exceedingly high degree. It must be kept in mind that a part of the difficulty of the boy who will come to the new camp has been failure to adjust to and make suitable progress in school. His failure in most instances is not due to lack of ability, but is a combination of other problems. At least, he is ready for a new approach to the matter of learning.

A natural question that many people will ask is, "Is this just a theory or will it work?" There is an abundance of ob-



jective evidence to support this procedure. Two instances are cited here to give evidence that it does work. In recent years a school camping project was conducted by the Outdoor Education Association in cooperation with New York City Board of Education to see whether or not some learning could take place more quickly and effectively in a favorable camping environment than in school. Two classroom groups, a fifth grade and a seventh grade were selected to spend nearly a month in camp during school time. A corresponding fifth and seventh grade class were selected as control groups. These two classes stayed in school and continued with their regular work. The experimental or camp group participated in the vigorous outdoor living-and-doing program, planning their own menus, figuring costs, running a bank and a post office and participating in many activities all of which were recognized by the youngsters as vital and worthwhile. They traveled, investigated, came into close contact with the woods, animals and plant life. This purposeful kind of living stimulated their interest for further inquiry. They did not have formal and class room study. There was, however, much reading and use of reference material related to their own interests and camp experiences resulting in a high learning potential.

An independent objective testing program was carried out to measure the results. Both the experimental and control groups were given batteries of standard achievement and other tests before and again at the end of the experiment to measure school progress. The experimental or camp group measured far ahead of those who remained in school.



Another instance in which the method of outdoor education is successful is at Camp Woodland Springs, Dallas, Texas. This is a year round camp for delinquent boys and is in its seventh year of operation. Concerning the educational progress and growth of their campers they state, "Educationally, the program is life-wide, encompassing the complete process of living. No formal classes are held, but all the learning tools and processes are used in solving the numerous problems that arise in day to day living. This largely surmounts the problem of motivation. Books are used freely, but mostly as a resource and reference. When boys return home, regardless of how long their stay at camp, they enter school at their regular age-grade level."(2)

The total success of the new Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund project will depend, to a large extent, upon the quality of the leadership. It will require a type of person who has the emotional stability, professional interest, devotion to this cause, and desire to see that this new program will make a substantial contribution to American youth and to society. There are many fine teachers who are eager to see more realism in education and who should be attracted to this unusual opportunity. The leaders will need to be patient and have a genuine and healthy approach to youth.

The boys who come to the camp will respond to the genuine, friendly, and interested attitude of good leadership. In camp, hundreds of new opportunities will be open to these youth. They will have a fresh and clean start in environment removed from the influences that caused their downfall; a place where there will be

**HERALD TRIBUNE FRESH AIR FUND****YEAR ROUND CAMP FOR NEW YORK CITY BOYS****VIII. Estimated Costs for Construction and Operation****A. Cost Estimates for Construction**

	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
1. Administration Building	20,000	25,000
2. Community Lodge-Dining-Store	46,140	56,000
3. Service Maintenance Shops	18,000	22,000
4. Health Center	18,900	22,000
5. Director's Lodge	12,000	15,000
6. Staff Recreation-Library	15,000	20,000
7. Staff Lodge-Living	22,000	25,000
8. Campers Cabins-16@-13,600	217,600	230,000
9. Camper Activities Center	40,000	50,000
10. Furnishings & Equipment	20,000	25,000
11. Caretaker Lodge	10,000	12,000
12. Fire Station	3,500	4,500
13. Roads	15,000	18,000
14. Power-Light	5,000	6,000
15. Water Supply	20,000	25,000
16. Sewage Disposal	25,000	30,000
17. Telephone	500	600
18. Incinerator	1,000	1,500
19. Lake-Shower House-Dock-Pier	22,500	34,500
20. Ice House	1,500	2,000
21. Outdoor program facilities	3,500	5,000
22. Site Development-Consultant	12,000	15,000
23. Contingency	12,000	15,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<u>561,140</u>	<u>658,600</u>

If work is done on a cost plus basis, add 10%.

If work is done by contract, add 20-25%.

Architect - plans and specifications - cost to be added.



## IX. EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

A plan should be set up to assure constant study, evaluation, and research of the total program of the camp. This would include evaluating by the camp staff, Fresh Air Fund, cooperating agencies, Camp Advisory Board, and individuals and special groups.

These studies, evaluations and researches would be concerned chiefly with questions dealing with the campers, the camp program, leadership, community relationships and follow-up.

## X. RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXISTING FRESH AIR FUND PROGRAMS

While the new camp will be an independent unit, it will have a close relationship with other programs of the Fresh Air Fund, especially with other camps located on the Reservation.

The year-round camp will add a large unit to those already located on the Reservation. A long range master plan for program and construction should be developed for the entire Reservation to assure the best and most efficient use of the property.

The central City Services is a unit to serve the new camp which will be needed for handling intake, follow-up, and information.

A permanent Advisory Committee of individuals interested in and willing to work for the development of the program should be established.

The Fresh Air Fund has a unique situation, unmatched by any other similar agency for conducting a long term constructive program for maladjusted boys.



HERALD TRIBUNE FRESH AIR FUND'S YEAR ROUND CAMP FOR NEW YORK CITY BOYS  
Operation Cost Estimates

	PHASE I		PHASE II		PHASE III		PHASE IV	
	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
Director	8,000	10,000	8,000	10,000	8,000	10,000	8,000	10,000
Assistant Directors(4)	6,000	8,000	12,000	16,000	18,000	24,000	24,000	32,000
Counselors-9 per phase	36,000	45,000	72,000	90,000	98,000	135,000	144,000	180,000
Program staff - 7 plus	28,000	35,000	56,000	70,000	84,000	105,000	112,000	140,000
Caretaker	2,500	3,500	2,500	3,500	2,500	3,500	2,500	3,500
Visiting staff - consultants	5,000	6,000	5,000	6,000	6,000	8,000	7,000	9,000
Staff training	3,500	4,500	3,000	3,500	3,000	3,500	4,000	4,500
Securing initial staff	4,000	5,000						
Central City Services	20,000	25,000	25,000	28,000	25,000	28,000	28,000	30,000
Program Supplies	1,000	1,500	2,000	2,500	3,000	3,500	4,000	5,000
Food	22,000	24,000	35,000	37,500	59,500	60,500	78,500	79,500
Transportation	1,500	2,000	2,000	2,500	2,500	3,000	3,000	3,500
Laundry	3,000	3,500	3,500	4,000	4,500	5,000	5,000	5,500
Insurance	7,500	9,500	9,500	11,500	11,500	12,000	12,000	12,500
Utilities-fuel-vehicles								
Water-light-power	4,500	5,500	5,500	6,500	6,500	7,500	7,500	8,500
Maintenance	2,500	3,000	3,000	3,500	3,500	4,000	4,000	4,500
New Equipment	3,600	4,000	1,000	2,000	2,000	4,000	2,000	3,000
Public Information	2,000	3,000	1,000	2,000	1,000	2,000	2,000	3,000
Misc. - Contingency	<del>5,000</del>	<del>6,000</del>	<del>5,500</del>	<del>6,500</del>	<del>6,000</del>	<del>7,000</del>	<del>7,000</del>	<del>7,500</del>
TOTALS	118,100	204,000	251,500	305,500	344,500	425,500	454,500	511,500