



CAMP FOR ALL 2U:

FROM 2017 – 2018 COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANT
RECIPIENT TO 2019 – 2020 COMMUNITY PROJECT

by Sarah Davidson

EACH YEAR, THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF HOUSTON, INC. PROVIDES COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS TO ORGANIZATIONS IN THE GREATER HOUSTON AREA THAT DO NOT CURRENTLY RECEIVE VOLUNTEER SUPPORT FROM THE LEAGUE, ALLOWING THE LEAGUE TO EXPAND ITS REACH INTO THE COMMUNITY. LESS COMMONLY KNOWN, COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS OFFER AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LEAGUE FOR AGENCIES THAT ASPIRE TO BECOME ONE OF THE LEAGUE'S COMMUNITY PROJECTS. ONE SUCH ORGANIZATION, CAMP FOR ALL, RECEIVED A 2017 – 2018 COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANT FOR ITS CAMP FOR ALL 2U PROGRAM AND WILL DEBUT AS A LEAGUE COMMUNITY PROJECT IN THE UPCOMING 2019 – 2020 LEAGUE YEAR.



THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

The Community Assistance Committee evaluates grant applications and makes funding recommendations for consideration to the League's Community Council and Board of Directors. Specifically, the Community Assistance Committee looks for requests that address a critical or basic need, fund a pilot program and/or expand a significant service to the community. The five focus areas for the 2018 - 2019 Community Assistance Grants are: the abuse/neglect of children, basic needs, children's education, children's health care and women's health care. These five focus areas tie to the priorities of the League membership as expressed in the League's 2015 *Membership Survey*.

Each year, the Community Assistance Committee receives applications from dozens of Houston-area nonprofit agencies. The Community Assistance Committee individually evaluates the applications to understand each agency and its mission, how they meet the criteria of the five focus areas and to review the agencies' financial statements and tax filings. From the initial group of applicants, the Community Assistance Committee then selects approximately 10 to 15 agencies for site visits. Amanda Jeffus, Community Assistance Committee Member, shared factors that she considered when attending site visits: "The committee looks for agencies that are well thought-out and resource-conscious. We enjoy touring the agencies to meet the grant requestors, agency staff and potential clients, gaining a sense of how League funds could be utilized to realize the agencies' goals." After all site visits are completed, the committee recommends a final list of recipient agencies to the Community Council and the Board of Directors to receive Community Assistance funding.

CAMP FOR ALL APPLIES FOR A COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANT

One of the Community Assistance Grant applicants for the 2017 - 2018 League year was Camp For All. Camp For All 2U is a program of Camp For All, a barrier-free camp in central and south Texas serving children, youth and adults with serious illnesses and special needs. The Camp For All 2U program emulates the camp experience by modifying activities to deliver them in a hospital setting to critically ill or special needs children and their siblings.

Pat Sorrells, President and CEO of Camp For All and League sustainer, explained how the Camp For All 2U program prepared its application for Community Assistance Grant funding: "We first looked at the League's guidelines and determined that Camp For All 2U was a good match with the children's health care focus area. Next, we selected Texas Children's Hospital as a site visit venue where the Community Assistance Committee would have the opportunity to see Camp For All 2U in action with real patients." Pat also shared the most important message that Camp For All 2U hoped to communicate to the Community Assistance Committee on the site visit: "Camp For All 2U is a worthwhile investment of League funds because we help children realize what they can do rather than what they cannot do."

CAMP FOR ALL IS AWARDED A COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANT

Camp For All's application for Community Assistance funds was successful, and the organization was awarded \$15,000 by the League for the Camp For All 2U program. Lindsay Gallmore, Camp For All 2U Program Supervisor, credits the Community Assistance funds for helping Camp For All 2U to grow and expand its volunteer pool: "The League's Community Assistance funds helped to facilitate a greater understanding and awareness of Camp For All 2U in the greater Houston community. As a result, we saw an increase in campers and volunteers," she said.

CAMP FOR ALL APPLIES AS A LEAGUE COMMUNITY PROJECT

Pat Sorrells recognized Camp For All 2U's growth as an opportunity for the agency. She submitted a 2018 - 2019 Community Project Application for the Camp For All 2U program to the Community Initiatives Committee, which annually researches new volunteer opportunities from outside agencies. Pat shared why Camp For All 2U would benefit from becoming a League project: "As the Greater Houston Area continues to grow, the special needs population continues to grow, Camp For All 2U needs to be in the forefront in people understanding the value and importance of what we do and participating as a League Community Project could help us do that," she said.

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Pat pointed to the League's reputation for supplying outstanding volunteers: "The League develops really good volunteers: they arrive on time, they understand their jobs and they interact energetically and positively with our patients. League volunteers make sure that, at the end of the day, they have made a difference," she said.

CAMP FOR ALL IS SELECTED AS A LEAGUE COMMUNITY PROJECT

To research Camp For All as a potential League community project and Camp For All 2U as the placement, the Community Initiatives Committee visited the agency onsite at Memorial Hermann – Texas Medical Center. Throughout the site visit, the Community Initiatives Committee had the opportunity to see directly how Camp For All 2U works. Amanda Gyeszly, Community Initiatives Chairman, shared one of the reasons that she considered Camp For All 2U well-suited to be a League community placement: "Camp For All 2U offers League volunteers direct contact working in an area that is important to the League: children's health care," she noted.

Amanda also notes Camp For All 2U's historical involvement with the League as a helpful factor for its application as a community project: "When you look at what works for agencies to become a successful League community project and placement, often past involvement with the League is beneficial. The agency learns how the League operates and vice versa," she said. "Camp For All hosted League Done In A Day volunteers two years ago when Camp For All 2U was held at Bo's Place. The feedback we received in surveys from the League volunteers was fantastic. This showed the

Community Initiatives Committee that Camp For All 2U had the potential to be an impactful, successful League community placement," she said. As a result of the site visit, the Community Initiatives Committee recommended Camp For All to the League's Community Council and Board of Directors as a 2019 – 2020 community project.

LEAGUE MEMBERS: SELECT CAMP FOR ALL 2U AS YOUR PLACEMENT

Camp For All 2U would like to encourage active League members to consider their agency when selecting their future placement. In this placement, League volunteers will assist Camp For All 2U staff members delivering on-site, modified camping activities at various Houston-area hospitals to critically ill or special needs children and their siblings. One unique attribute of the Camp For All 2U placement is its summer concentrated sessions where League volunteers choose from five full weeks of volunteer opportunities to work eight full days or 16 morning shifts.

Lindsay Gallmore offered a summary of the adventurous activities that League volunteers can expect from the Camp For All 2U placement: "League volunteers can push canoes on rollers down the halls of Houston hospitals' children's wards, lead the kids in tea parties, and help the kids throw pies in the faces of their favorite nurses and doctors," she said.

Pat further encourages potential League volunteers who may lack a background in health care: "League volunteers do not attend to the patients' health challenges," she shared. "The League volunteers' role is simply to facilitate an amazing camp experience for these deserving kids." **JL**