

Project Transformation Summary of Results 2011 Summer Program

Summer Day Camp Program

987 children and youth participated in Project Transformation's eight-week long summer day camp program. Programming was provided Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM at nine site locations in Oak Cliff, West Dallas, Pleasant Grove, Bachman Lake, East Dallas, Northwest Dallas, Mesquite and Denison, TX. Highlights of the daily program for **children** (grades 1-5) included:

- Reading one-on-one with a volunteer for 40 minutes daily to improve fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension as well as children's confidence and attitude towards reading. Each child on their first day completed a reading assessment, and throughout the summer, was adjusted to a new reading level as they improved. A reading coordinator was hired and trained for each site location, and ensured the success of the children throughout the program. This summer, **97% of children maintained or improved in their reading levels and 77% reported an increased confidence in reading.**
- Arts and crafts enrichment activities
- Vigorous daily physical activity
- A nutritious lunch was served daily to each child attending the program. This summer, over **41,000** meals were served in partnership with the North Texas Food Bank, as well as take-home snack bags on weekends.
- Afternoon enrichment activities such as sports, music, games and special speakers from the community, which provide opportunities for fun, fellowship and friendships to form and be nurtured.

Project Transformation's program for **youth** (grades 6-9) was designed specifically for their unique needs and included the following successful components.

- Training in team-building, leadership development, and conflict resolution
- "Focus time" concentrating on teen culture issues and struggles in their lives
- Opportunities for direct leadership experience by assisting interns with reading, games, and arts and crafts activities for the younger children
- Book clubs and literary discussion groups
- Career exploration through presentations by a variety of professionals in the community
- Awareness of community need and empowerment to address needs through service projects. Each youth program performs two service projects during the summer, and with help from the youth interns, they are responsible for the planning and implementation of the program. Some of the service projects performed this summer included creating greeting cards for hospice care patients, planning a recycling program for their site, holding a car wash to raise funds for cancer research and making brownies for their local fire department.
- Weekly mountain biking trips providing the opportunity to spend a day enjoying nature while engaged in vigorous physical activity. This summer, the youth mountain biking program logged over 1,000 miles on trails in Dallas County.

Our participants shared what they felt was most meaningful to them about their summer at Project Transformation.

“I can relate to more people and their life.” Oak Cliff 7th grade participant

“It has helped me read better, and I have had fun. I have made new friends, I have learned to write; it has made me happy.” Wesley-Rankin 3rd grade participant

“The most important thing I have learned in PT is how to be involved in something big.” Walnut Hill 7th grade participant

This summer, a pilot program was launched, in response to the needs of our oldest participants: senior high youth. Our current LITE program (which stands for Leaders in Training Experience) places 10th-12th grade students who are former participants of the program, in volunteer positions during day camp, helping with site set-up, reading hours, cleanup from lunch, and other activities. But as a test program, each Wednesday afternoon during summer camp, curriculum was offered to these senior high school-age students. The program consisted of speakers, service projects and leadership trainings, in which the students participated in group conversations and discussions. The final week of this program took students to the campus of SMU for a college day, in which they met with the admissions department, toured classrooms and learned what college could mean for their future. The tour included a stop at community living for the interns, to see what it would be like to return to serve as a Project Transformation intern. Six of our own participants have returned as interns through this summer, and the LITE program is a way to make this goal a continued reality. **Thirty** students participated in this program and we have goals of building on this number and the program in the future. A post-program survey completed by our participants rated this first year program a 9 on a scale of 1-10. Some youth shared what they thought of this program:

“The LITE program was an amazing experience for me because I met the most amazing people that will always stay in my heart. Thanks to PT, I know who I am and what I want to be when I grow up!” Naomi, LITE participant

“Going to the nursing home (service project) was the best part for me. This program allowed me to help out, and I like to volunteer.” Daniela, LITE participant

“This program is an awesome experience because I am more into colleges and careers now.” Alexander, LITE participant

Urban Camp at Camp Bridgeport

Following the day camp experience, Urban Camp is a week for youth aged participants (grades 6-9) to experience and participate in a sleep-away camp style experience. Youth are assigned to a cabin with the interns that have been serving with them during the summer. Many of these youth boast it is the best week of their life, and the only time they are able to leave their homes overnight. Urban Camp had high attendance this summer, with **164** registering for camp. Youth are able to select four different activities they would like to participate in, selecting from over twenty choices. Opportunities include archery, horseback riding, zip line and ropes courses, fishing, swimming, cooking classes, newspaper and other sport-centered activities. Each day the youth participate in activities, meals and daily events. Girls and boys are separated from each other for the entire week of camp, to give these youth a chance to open up with their group and with their interns, to share the challenges they may be facing at home, school or in their communities.

In addition to our campers, 33 participants in our LITE program (mentioned, above) attended camp as junior counselors. These students are selected to be placed in a leadership role during the summer. They participate in a weeklong leadership course as well as help facilitate pieces of camp throughout the week. The goal of the program is to encourage these adolescents to finish school and to stay away from pressures they face in their neighborhoods, such as gangs and drugs.

Our camp participants write stories of their experience at Bridgeport, and share how being at Urban Camp has made a difference in their lives.

***“When I’m at camp it makes me feel like I’m someone really special to this world.”
Paola, age 12***

“Urban Camp has changed my attitude with others, interns have shown me how to treat other people nice and to be friendly. I feel like PT people are my family; always there for you and understands your situation.” Michelle, age 16

“Being at camp has made a difference in my life by meeting people and getting new friends who I get to hang out with for the whole week.” Diana, age 13

***“Camp has taught me to be a better leader, and this is the beginning of my leadership. Maybe someday I can work as a Project Transformation intern.”
Berenice, age 15***

“This program helped me learn what it takes to be a leader and helped me become a better person in the process. I hope that next year I will be able to come back as an intern.” Joe, age 18

“Camp helped me to be more confident and try new things.” Jorge, age 12

Interns

103 college-aged interns participated in Project Transformation’s ministry exploration and leadership development experience. This hands-on ministry opportunity embodies the “transformational” aspects of Project Transformation as these young adults served over 1,000 underserved children and youth and lived with their peers in community. We are confident that this group, like the interns who served before them, will go on to either work or volunteer in some form of ministry. In fact, our surveys show that over 52% of the interns increased their likelihood of pursuing a vocation in a ministry-related field as a result of their experience at Project Transformation. 21% also planned to change their course of study as a result of their experience at PT. Common examples of new studies include: seminary, youth ministry, psychology, nonprofit management, social work and education.

“I have experienced transformation in so many ways; watching first graders learn the alphabet while interns from across the country become best friends is a true joy!” Julia, 2011 intern

“This summer I have sharpened my ability to work with children and interact with many different kinds of people. I have enjoyed worshipping God in many different

ways and seeing God work powerfully in the lives of all those touched by this ministry.” Matt, 2011 intern

“God has taught me so much about selfless love and the meaning of true beauty, and I care very deeply for the youth I serve. My heart has even received a new call to teenage girls’ ministry, and this experience would not have been possible without this program.” Evelyn, 2011 intern

“God has truly changed my life through this internship, especially in getting to be part of the lives of these kids. I have never before felt such purpose in service or felt so loved and belonged with a group of people.” Theresa, 2011 intern

Parent Feedback

End of program parent evaluations showed that parents overwhelmingly feel that our program is essential to their children’s healthy spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social development.

Parental response to the following questions:

- Do you feel that the program impacted your child’s reading ability? **99%**
- Do you feel that the program impacted your child’s attitude about reading in a positive way? **99%**
- Do you feel that your child benefited from his/her interactions with the young adult staff? **99%**
- Are you satisfied with the summer program and activities provided? **100%**

“The program made a big difference in my kids this summer in their reading ability and other activity.” Casa Linda parent

“(This Program) kept them active and motivated. They are much more positive and upbeat than they would have been without this program.” Chapel Hill parent

“I have seen a positive change because they have taught my kids new things and reinforced what they needed to about all of their activities, like improving their ability to read, to plan, and to think about their future. And all of this is done in a very fun manner.” Pleasant Mound parent

“He has opened up socially. He has been more open and respectful. He comes home every day happy and talks about the positive things that he learned. PT has helped him appreciate and learn about character principles.” St Mark’s parent

“I know it must be a good program because my child keeps wanting to come back!” Trinity parent

Volunteers

Our summer program could not exist without the help of reading and dinner volunteers from churches and community groups. More than **1,500** volunteers dedicated their time and talents to serve through Project Transformation this summer. We are truly grateful for their loyal support. We are particularly proud that our volunteer survey results show that 99% of volunteers felt that their time with Project Transformation was a positive experience. Based on their experience, 99% said they would be interested in volunteering with PT again, and 99% said they would tell others about PT. ***This***

summer, 7,168 volunteer hours were spent reading one-on-one with a child in our program.

Volunteers shared the following comments on their surveys about their experience:

“PT is better, more efficient, and effective than any other program I’ve worked with.” Oak Cliff volunteer

“I think this program is excellent and of great encouragement for the children.” Pleasant Mound volunteer

“Well organized program; good staff who are passionate about their work.” Walnut Hill volunteer

“The children were always thanking me.” Casa Linda volunteer

Project Transformation had a wonderful summer program this year, and is in part to your support of our programs. If you are interested in more information on how to become a homework volunteer in our after-school programs this semester, or how to get involved in volunteer opportunities throughout the school year, please contact our offices. Thank you again for your continued support of this program.