



# Camp Noah Evaluation Report

## *Overview of Camp Implementation and Impact*

A P R I L 2 0 1 6

Prepared by:  
Sophak Mom, Amanda Hane, and Cheryl Holm-Hansen

451 Lexington Parkway North | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-280-2700 | [www.wilderresearch.org](http://www.wilderresearch.org)

**Wilder  
Research**

Information. Insight. Impact.

# Contents

Introduction.....	1
Evaluation overview .....	2
Overview of report.....	3
Section 1: Camper and family experience .....	5
Family background .....	5
Camp attendance.....	8
Reasons parents had their children attend camp .....	9
Camper recruitment .....	10
Parent satisfaction .....	12
Benefits to campers.....	13
Lasting benefits to campers .....	24
Section 2: Staff and volunteer experience .....	31
Training and preparation.....	31
Logistics .....	40
Camp schedule and activities.....	43
Staff/volunteer roles and expectations .....	47
Team dynamics and relationships.....	50
Satisfaction of staff and volunteers.....	51
Other thoughts from staff and volunteers .....	54
Section 3: Community experience .....	56
Benefits to the community .....	56
Recommendations.....	60
Camper recruitment .....	60
Staff and volunteer recruitment .....	60
Training and support.....	61
Camp curriculum and activities .....	62
Staff and volunteer roles .....	62
Appendix.....	63

# Figures

1.	Registration Materials: Household race/ethnicity (2014 and 2015) .....	6
2.	Registration Materials: Total household income (2014 and 2015).....	7
3.	Registration Materials: How families were impacted by the disaster: (2014 and 2015) .....	8
4.	Parent survey: How parents heard about Camp Noah (2014 and 2015).....	11
5.	Parent survey: Ratings of Camp Noah's impact (2014 and 2015) .....	22
6.	Parent three-month follow-up survey: Ratings of Camp Noah (2014 and 2015)....	25
7.	Local volunteer, Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators surveys: I felt properly prepared to fulfill my role at Camp (2015).....	31
8.	Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators surveys: Training (2015) .....	33
9.	Certified Camp Staff surveys: I felt prepared to manage campers' emotional or behavioral issues (2015) .....	33
10.	Certified Camp Staff surveys: The team sought support from the Mental Health Professional to address campers' emotional or behavioral issues when needed (2015).....	34
11.	Certified Camp Staff surveys: The team sought support from the Mental Health Professional to address their own emotional reactions to campers' stories or situations (2015).....	35
12.	Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: The expectations and duties for my camp role were reasonable (2015) .....	47
13.	Local volunteers and Site Coordinators survey: We had enough local volunteers to meet the camp's needs (2015) .....	47
14.	Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: I understood the respective roles of the local volunteers and the Certified Camp Staff (2015) .....	48
15.	Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: Ratings of own experience with Camp Noah (2015).....	52
16.	Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: I would recommend Camp Noah to others as a positive service experience (2015) .....	54
17.	Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: On a scale from 1-5, how do you feel Camp Noah went in the community? (2015) .....	56

# Acknowledgments

Wilder Research contributors to this report include Jennifer Bohlke, Rachel Fields, and Thao Vang. Appreciation is also extended to the Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota staff who worked in close partnership with the research team to identify key evaluation questions, collect surveys, and support other evaluation activities.

# Introduction

Camp Noah, a program offered by Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSSMN), is a locally hosted event for elementary-age children whose communities have been impacted by disaster. Most camps take place in communities impacted by natural disasters, such as floods or tornadoes. Camp Noah has been hosted in disaster-impacted communities across the country with the mission to bring hope and healing to communities that have been impacted by disaster. Camp Noah provides a structured and safe environment in which elementary-age children are encouraged to face their fears, grieve their losses, identify and share their unique gifts and talents, and plan for their future.

Camp Noah can be offered in a variety of formats (such as after school or on weekends), but is most often done as a week-long summer day camp. The camp follows an established curriculum designed to help children process their disaster and/or trauma experience through creative activities and play. Camp Noah provides 30 hours of program activities, including small groups, large group time (including music, skits, and puppet shows), crafts, and recreation. Meals and snacks are provided. In addition, all campers receive a paintable ark, a Camp Noah t-shirt, a fully-equipped Camp Noah Preparedness Backpack, a handmade fleece blanket, multiple craft items, and all the supplies necessary to complete the creative activities during camp.

Camp Noah is implemented through the active participation of volunteers and communities. Each camp has a local Site Coordinator, who manages local logistics such as finding a facility, arranging for food, and recruiting local volunteers. This team of local volunteers serves meals and snacks, provides transportation, and supports the camp in a variety of ways. The camp curriculum activities are led by a team of Certified Camp Staff. Headed by a Team Leader, each member of this team participates in training to administer the camp activities. The team of Certified Camp Staff could be from the local community where camp is being held, but most often come from other locations across the country. Many teams serve with Camp Noah multiple times, over a period of several years. Each camp is also supported by a Mental Health Professional, who provides additional social-emotional support for campers and linkages for ongoing support when needed.

In 2014, LSSMN contracted with Wilder Research to provide evaluation consultation and support. In this role, Wilder Research is working with LSSMN staff to collect information to help understand the full impact of camp on campers, families, staff and volunteers, and local communities. The evaluation is also exploring the way camp is implemented, and considering opportunities to strengthen the camp curriculum or approach. The evaluation is taking place over a three-year period.

## Evaluation overview

This report summarizes the evaluation of 22 camps conducted in 2015. Most were held in summer 2015, though four camps took place between October 2014 and May 2015.

These camps were held in a variety of locations, including:

- Cloquet, MN
- Crisfield, MD
- Crutcho, OK
- Detroit, MI
- Duluth, MN
- El Reno, OK
- Evans, CO
- Moore, OK (4)
- McGregor, MN
- Metropolis, IL
- Norman, OK (2)
- Oklahoma City, OK
- Pine County, MN
- Princess Anne, MD
- Roseville, MN
- St. Paul, MN
- Washington, IL
- Wayne, NE

The evaluation draws information from a number of different sources. First, campers and parents provided information about their experience with camp, and their perceptions of the camp's impact. Data sources for demographic data changed from 2014 to 2015 (household income, race and ethnicity, number of children in the household, as well as how families were impacted by disasters). In the 2014 evaluation, demographic data was collected through the parent survey. In the present evaluation, demographic data was gathered through registration materials, which is done primarily online. Completing demographic items was voluntary. Additionally, three data collection activities were used:

- **Camper surveys (N=686)** – Campers completed brief paper and pencil surveys at the conclusion of camp. These surveys asked campers to rate a variety of program activities and potential impacts. These surveys were developed collaboratively by LSSMN and Wilder Research staff, and collected by the staff and volunteers from each camp.
- **Parent survey (N=180)** – After camp was completed, parents were asked to complete a brief online survey. The survey included questions about the impact of camp on campers and their satisfaction with camp activities. These surveys were developed collaboratively by LSSMN and Wilder Research staff, and administered by LSSMN. It should be noted that only 20 of the 22 camps are reflected in the completed parent surveys. Parents from the camp in Roseville, Minnesota and one of the four camps in Moore, Oklahoma did not receive the survey.
- **Follow-up parent survey (N= 59)** – Three months after camp, parents were asked to complete another brief online survey. The survey was designed collaboratively by LSSMN and Wilder Research staff, and administered by Wilder Research. It was

designed to explore the longer-term impact of camp on campers. Eighteen of the 22 camps were included in this survey. Parents from the Saint Paul, Minnesota camp and Evans, Colorado camp were able to complete the initial survey on paper with an interpreter. These parents were not invited by email to complete a follow-up online survey because parent email addresses were not available. Additionally, parents from two camps did not respond to the follow-up survey invite.

Second, staff and volunteers were asked to complete online surveys shortly following camp. These surveys were all designed and administered by LSSMN staff, and provided staff and volunteers an opportunity to rate and describe their experience with Camp Noah and to provide recommendations for future camps. Three different surveys were used:

- **Site Coordinator surveys (N=13)** – Site Coordinators from 13 camps completed online surveys at the conclusion of camp. One Site Coordinator from Pine County completed an older version of the survey that does not include some of the items we are reporting. Items that remained the same between the older and newer versions of the survey are included in this report.
- **Local volunteer survey (N=34)** – Online surveys were also conducted with local volunteers, who most often provided support with tasks such as food service, registration, or transportation. Nineteen of the 22 camps are represented among the respondents.
- **Certified Camp Staff surveys (N=101)** – An online survey was sent to other staff and volunteers, including Team Leaders, Mental Health Professionals, and other members of the Certified Camp Staff team (such as Small Group Leaders and staff who led or supported recreation and art activities). Eighteen camps were represented among the respondents to this survey. Five respondents completed an older version of the survey. As with the Site Coordinator survey, items that remained the same between the two versions are included in this report.

## Overview of report

This report is broadly divided into three sections.

- **Camper and family experience** – While some information in this section comes from other perspectives (i.e., staff and volunteers), the first section of the report focuses on the experience of campers and their families. This section describes the background of the families that participated, the reasons why parents decided to send their children to Camp Noah, and the strategies that were used to recruit campers. This

section also describes the immediate and longer-term benefits of Camp Noah for campers and parents' satisfaction with their children's camp experiences.

- **Staff and volunteer experience** – The second section of this report focuses on the staff and volunteers who help to arrange and implement Camp Noah. This section covers a wide array of topics, such as effective strategies for recruiting volunteers, the reasons why people choose to volunteer, the training and preparation staff and volunteers received before camp, and strategies used to coordinate the camp logistics. Staff and volunteer experiences implementing camp are also included here, including feedback related to the camp curriculum and the ways in which the team roles and relationships were managed. The benefits of camp for staff and volunteers, and their overall satisfaction with their experience, are also included in this section.
- **Community experience** – The third section presents the community perspective regarding Camp Noah. This section is relatively brief, highlighting some feedback regarding the participation of community stakeholders and the benefits of camp for the broader community.

The report concludes with some overall recommendations for Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota staff to further refine and enhance the Camp Noah approach.

Additional details on survey data are included in the Appendix.



# Section 1: Camper and family experience

## Family background

### *What were the demographics of families who sent their children to Camp Noah?*

#### **Most families had one or two children from their household attend camp.**

Similar to 2014, about half of the families (56%) in 2015 had one child attend Camp Noah, and another third (34%) sent two children to camp. About one in ten families (11%) had three or more children at camp.

#### **Most families had between one and three children in their household.**

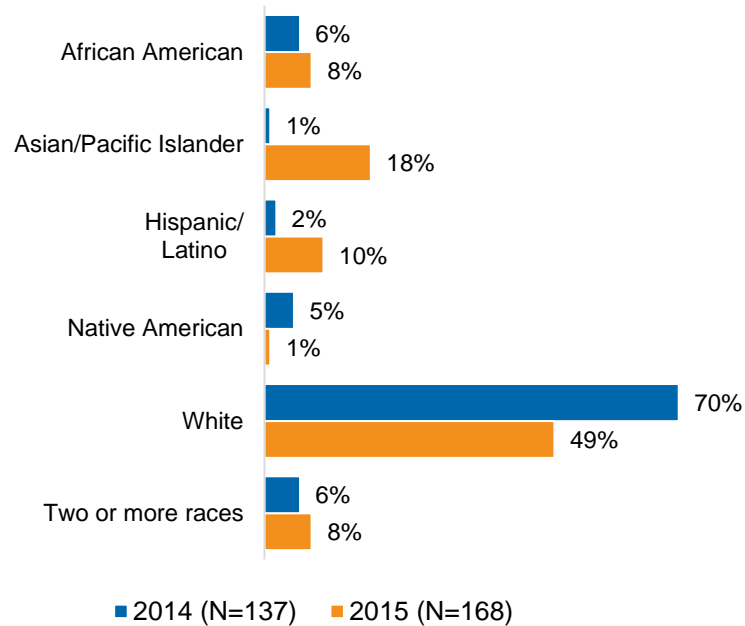
In 2015, 36 percent of families had two children in their household, and 28 percent had three children. Sixteen percent of families had only one child, and one out of five families (20%) had four or more children.

#### **Most families identified as white or Asian/Pacific Islander.**

The percentage of participating families who identified as white decreased from 70 percent in 2014 to 49 percent in 2015. There were increases in the percentages of families that identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (1% to 18%) and Hispanic/Latino (from 2% to 10%). This increase can be explained by two camps that primarily drew members of the Hispanic/Latino community (Evans, Colorado) and Asian/Pacific Islanders of the Karen refugee community (Saint Paul, Minnesota). The camp in Saint Paul, Minnesota were held specifically for members of the Karen refugee community. However, the Hispanic/latino community were not specifically targeted for the camp in Evans, Colorado. Campers in Evans, Colorado were identified through disaster camp managers as having been significantly impacted by flooding. Thirteen percent noted that they had two or more races in their household. Other families identified as African American (8%) or Native American (1%) (Figure 1).

---

## 1. Registration Materials: Household race/ethnicity (2014 and 2015)



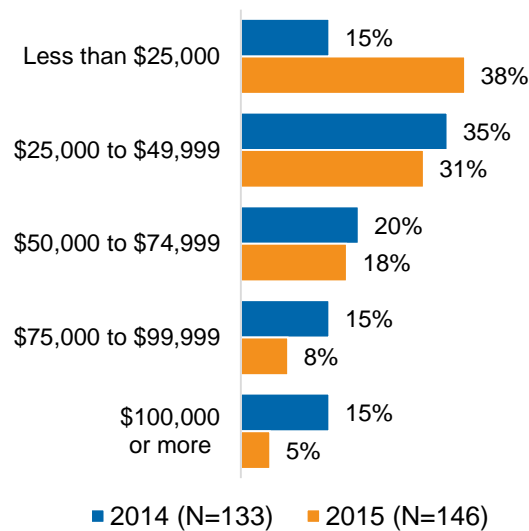
Note: Data from 2014 was collected through the parent survey.

### **Most families had household incomes of less than \$50,000, with the greatest percentage of families reporting total household income of under \$25,000.**

In 2015, more families had household incomes in the lower brackets compared to 2014. More than one-third of the families (38%) reported their income as less than \$25,000, compared to just 15 percent in 2014. Another 31 percent indicated their incomes to be between \$25,000 and \$49,999. Less than a third (31%) reported household incomes of \$50,000 or more (Figure 2).

---

## 2. Registration Materials: Total household income (2014 and 2015)



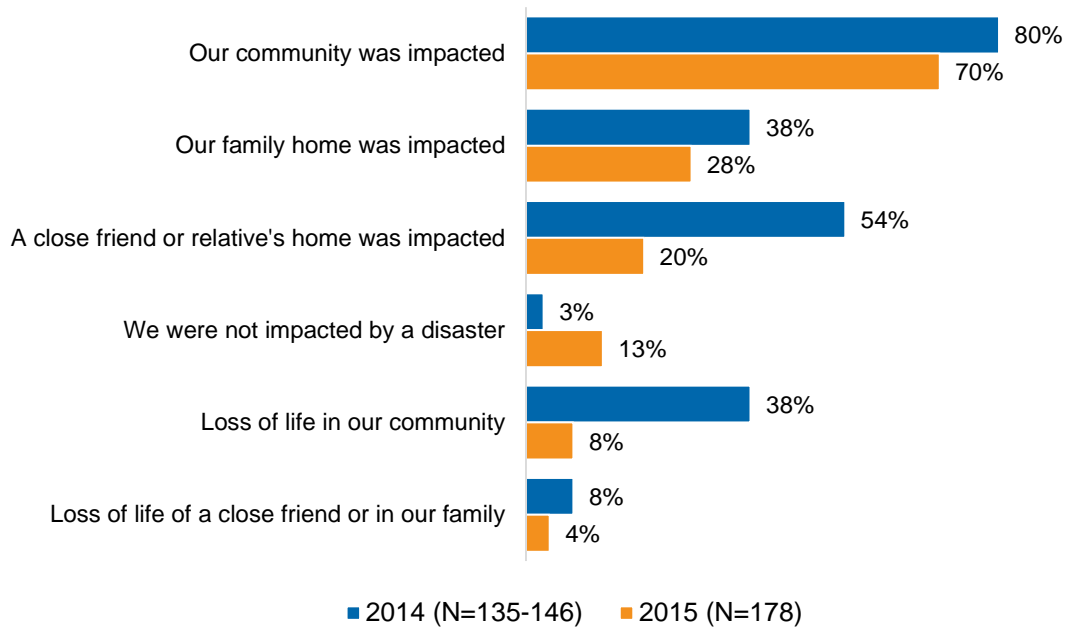
Note: Data from 2014 was collected through the parent survey.

### *How were families of the children attending camp impacted by disasters?*

#### **Participating families were impacted by disasters in a variety of ways.**

The majority of parents (87%) said that their family had been impacted by a disaster, which was slightly less than last year (97%). Most parents (70%) said that their community had been impacted by a disaster. About a third (28%) said that their family home was impacted; one in five said that a close friend or relative's home was impacted (20%). Eight percent said that there had been a loss of life in their community; four percent had experienced loss of life within their family or of a close friend (Figure 3). In the registration materials, some parents who reported that they were not impacted by a disaster, indicated other significant changes experienced by their child, including a new sibling or household member (N=4), a move (N=4), a new school (N=3), divorce or remarriage (N=2), and a parent job loss (N=1).

### 3. Registration Materials: How families were impacted by the disaster (2014 and 2015)



Note: Data from 2014 was collected through the parent survey.

## Camp attendance

### *Did children attend the camp all or most of the days it was offered? If not, why not?*

#### **Almost all children attended camp all or most of the days it was offered.**

Almost all parents (97%) said that their children attended Camp Noah all or most of the days. A few parents said that their children did not attend every day due to schedule conflicts or illness. One parent said that her 12-year-old thought it was geared toward much younger children and stopped attending after the first day. Another parent said that his or her child missed one day because the child was feeling “overwhelmed” due to sensory and attachment disorders. Almost all parents agreed that their children wanted to go to camp each day (81% strongly agreed, 17% agreed) and felt comfortable participating in the activities (72% strongly agreed, 24% agreed). These figures represented a slight decline from 2014.

## Recommendations

- Review recruitment strategies to ensure that Camp Noah is reaching communities and families that have been most affected by disasters.

## Reasons parents had their children attend camp

### *Why did parents choose to have their children attend Camp Noah?*

**Families were most likely to send their children to camp to help them deal with stresses and fears related to storms, disasters, or other adversities.**

When parents were asked an open-ended question about why they chose to send their children to Camp Noah, parents were likely to say that they wanted to help their children deal with stresses and fears related to storms, disasters, or other traumatic experiences (N=60).

*Although we were not directly affected, our community was and my child has had a fear of storms since the tornado.*

*My daughter has lived through the recent tornado and we also experienced the tragic loss of her stillborn sister. For those reasons and because it was local and associated with the church, we decided to attend!*

*Our home was completely destroyed by the May 31, 2013 tornado, and my children are still very fearful of storms. I chose Camp Noah based upon their goal of teaching resiliency skills.*

*She had a hard time dealing with storms since the tornado. She gets very scared and cries most of the time. Also her father and I are going through a very nasty custody battle. He took her from me and got an order of protection then has tried to keep us away.*

*The camp seemed to emphasize teaching resiliency and knowing what to do in adversity. Although my son has not been through a recent trauma, he is disabled and I thought it would be good for him to learn coping skills to be more independent.*

*He has been through a lot and tends to withdraw in social settings. I was hoping this would help him gain some confidence.*

*Continued concern about them having to deal with the loss of their father. How to deal with my grief and theirs.*

**Other parents highlighted their interest in providing their children with a good learning opportunity in general.**

Parents also had other reasons for sending their children to Camp Noah. Some parents said that camp sounded like a good learning opportunity in general (N=53). Others felt that it sounded like fun and provided an opportunity for their children to have an enjoyable summer activity (N=44) or an opportunity for their children to spend time with friends (N=20). Several (N=17) specifically highlighted the connection to church and the Bible.

*More understanding and education. If they stay home they are not learning anything.*

*If they stay home they do not do anything and it will help them ready for their school work.*

*I thought my son could learn lots of important things and have fun at the same time.*

*[We had] no other plans and I wanted them to have the opportunity to learn new things and make new friends.*

*My boys had never been to camp and when I read the information about the camp I thought it would be an exciting experience for both of my boys!*

*My daughter has never attended a camp such as this and I am always looking for positive environments for her to spend time during the summer.*

*He really enjoys Day Camps in the summer and I feel that Christian-based activities are important.*

*I thought it would be valuable experience for him during his spring break. I think he does best when kept busy and I liked that it seemed to be Christian based. I like him to learn about God and to be around other Christians.*

## Recommendations

- Consider ways to leverage parents' reasons for sending their children to camp in marketing and recruitment materials.
  - Review the current curriculum to consider how it can better support children who have experienced other traumas beyond disasters.
- 

## Camper recruitment

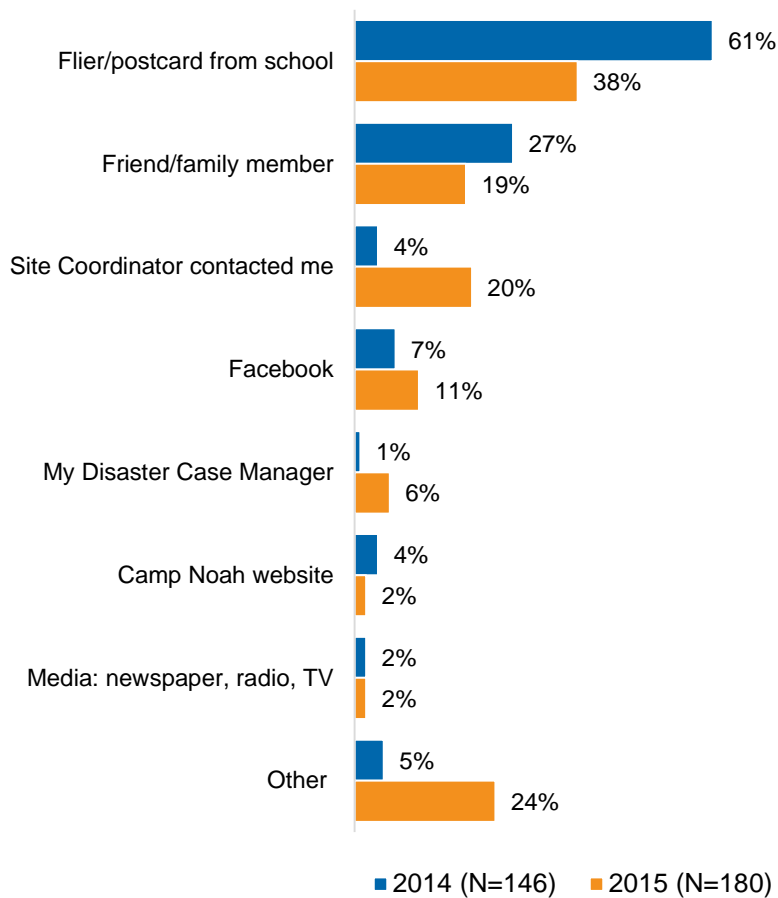
### *How did families hear about Camp Noah?*

#### **Families heard about camp in a number of different ways, but school fliers and Site Coordinators reached the most people.**

More than one third of parents (38%) learned about Camp Noah through fliers or postcards from school, although this recruitment method was reported less often than in 2014 (61%). Meanwhile, parents who learned about Camp Noah through the Site Coordinator increased from 4 percent in 2014 to 20 percent in 2015. All parents from the camp for Karen refugees (Saint Paul) reported learning about the camp through their Site Coordinator. Another common way for people to have heard about camp was from friends or family members (19%). Social media, local partners, and local media also reached some parents (Figure 4).

---

#### 4. Parent survey: How parents heard about Camp Noah (2014 and 2015)



Note: 2014: Other responses included learning about Camp Noah through the community center/hosting organization (N=2), from LSSMN, from colleagues who worked at camp, and from the church (N=2). Two parents also wrote in that they had received a flier from school, which was also one of the choices above.

2015: Other responses included Church (N=8), "My other children attended Camp Noah" (N=2), "I was co-coordinator" (N=1), "Someone from Camp Noah" (N=1), "I was the Site Coordinator, so I heard about Camp Noah from Maryn" (N=1)

### Recommendations

- Provide resources to Site Coordinators to support camper recruitment, including templates for school fliers.
  - Consider ways to support Site Coordinators in reaching out to families more directly during recruitment.
-

## Parent satisfaction

### *Were parents satisfied with their children's experience at Camp Noah?*

**Almost all parents (99%) would recommend Camp Noah to other parents.**

Only one percent of parents said that they would not recommend Camp Noah. One parent explained that he or she had concerns about the way camp was managed but did not provide specific examples. Almost all parents felt safe sending their children to camp (81% strongly agreed, 17% agreed). Overall, many parents were enthusiastic about recommending Camp Noah in their open-ended responses.

*Amazing camp with great leadership. My kids enjoyed every day of Camp Noah. Thank you so much for creating a meaningful camp.*

*Camp Noah offers a safe place for kids to share feelings while learning how they can be prepared for emergency situations. Planning and preparedness empowers our children. Thank you!*

*It is wonderful for all children to realize their own unique talents and to celebrate themselves. He comes home every day excited about all that he's done and learned! I bragged about this camp and encouraged my friends with children to try to enroll if they could. My kids came home each day excited.*

*I had mentioned this to some parents I knew and I was surprised that they did not take advantage of this chance for their children to meet other kids that were affected and given a chance to prepare and learn coping skills for severe weather. I personally am not from Oklahoma but I have always tried to be prepared for this weather and now my children feel that they are better prepared.*

*As a parent, I am incredibly thankful for Camp Noah and the experience my children had there. It is a month later and they are still singing the songs they learned. Definitely would recommend to others.*

*My kids LOVED this camp, and they went to many different camps this summer and they did not want this one to end!! As a parent THAT means a lot to me!!*

*I thank you for giving him a chance to go to camp. The organizers are very friendly and very helpful. Seems very genuine about caring about kids. Very recommended for other parents. Keep up the good work.*

*I would highly recommend the camp to anyone who has been through a traumatic experience.*



## Benefits to campers

*Did campers have a positive experience at Camp Noah? If so, what parts of camp did campers like the best?*

### **Campers had fun at Camp Noah.**

Almost all campers (98%) said that they had “fun” overall. At least 86 percent of the campers rated each specific camp component as “fun”. When asked in an open-ended item to describe the most fun part of camp, the most frequent response (N=102) was simply that “everything” was fun.

*All of the fun stuff which is everything!*

*The most fun part of Camp Noah was everything.*

*I liked all of it.*

### **“Take aways” like blankets and backpacks were very popular.**

Almost all campers (97-99%) rated backpacks and blankets as “fun”. When asked in an open-ended question to identify the most fun part of camp, one of the most common responses was blankets (N=39); fewer campers (N=12) mentioned the backpacks.

### **Campers enjoyed all of the activities, though stories and songs were less popular.**

Campers rated several camp activities as “fun,” including crafts (95%), food (95%), recreation (94%), and Noah (93%). When asked in an open-ended question to identify the most fun aspect of camp, campers were especially likely to mention recreation and other specific active play (N=138) (e.g. going outside, dodgeball, rock climbing, canoeing, swimming, archery, and gym). Arts and crafts (N=52) were also frequently mentioned.

Campers were slightly less positive about songs and stories, with 87 percent rating songs as “fun” and 86 percent rating stories as “fun”.

### **Parents also indicated that their children had had a good time.**

Almost all parents either strongly agreed (81%) or agreed (18%) that their child had had fun at camp. Similar to 2014, many parents in 2015 also talked about the fun that their children had had when they were asked to describe the camp’s impact.

*It brings tears to my eyes when I think of what Camp Noah did for my daughter. She absolutely loved the camp experience...she even turned down her end of year waterpark invite, in order to attend the last day of Camp Noah. She was surrounded by such positive influences, in an environment of such tremendous care and support. We felt that genuine care and safety net as soon as we walked in the doors. Plus she gained a great deal of knowledge and comfort with storm preparedness and had fun and made friends along the way. It was a win all the way around! I think it was just what she needed on her journey, where she had experienced so much tragedy in her short life.*

*It's been a wonderful experience for my son. He has learned so much! He had fun, made friends and showed so much happiness!*

*My daughter loved camp! She talked about it all the time. She has gone to many camps in the past and this one was her absolute favorite. Thank you!!*

*LOVED camp Noah. He came home talking about it every day and could not wait for the next day.*

*They are still talking about the things they learned at Camp Noah. They pretend to be at Camp Noah when they play. I have heard them talking about how they feel.*

*They loved it! They wanted to go every day and are still singing the songs they learned.*

### **Staff, volunteers, and Site Coordinators also felt that Camp Noah had a positive impact on campers.**

All local volunteers and almost all Certified Camp Staff agreed that Camp Noah had a positive impact on campers, with 70 percent of local volunteers and 61 percent of Certified Camp Staff strongly agreeing. Many staff and volunteers commented that the campers had fun, and enjoyed the various camp activities.

*The impact of this camp on the campers is always positive. Throughout the week, I was able to see the campers' attitudes, perspectives, and mindsets change into being healthy and hopeful. They not only learn ways to cope and how to prepare for another disaster, but they also have the chance to learn from their peers and to speak about their individual story.*

*You could see that the kids had an amazing week at camp and that they really enjoyed themselves. One camper said that she hadn't wanted to do Camp Noah but by the end she was really glad she had.*

*The younger campers definitely had great experiences and were appreciative of everything they received. Through their smiles, their full tummies, and giggling you could tell they really needed the time at Camp Noah to take a break from their daily struggle.*

*The impact was nothing but positive. You could see the progress the campers made throughout the week. It was great to see some of the kids break out of their shell and learn the many talents they didn't know they had. Serving at Camp Noah was the best week of my life.*

All Site Coordinators agreed that Camp Noah had a positive impact on campers, with 92 percent strongly agreeing. Site Coordinators also provided comments about campers having a positive experience at camp.

*It was a great program for the Karen community since the kids are new to the country.*

*The campers desired to return each day eager to learn and grow.*

*All of the campers and parents I interacted with throughout the week indicated that they were excited to return each day and we're having a great time.*

*This was my second camp, but it is always amazing to me to see the transformation in the kids from Monday when they come in (shy and not sure they want to be there) to Friday (when they are singing and dancing at the closing program, so happy and full of life!) Every day I had parents tell me how their kids were up and ready early and couldn't wait to get to camp the next day! I saw them open up, create new friendships with other campers and grow!*

*I believe they had a really good time and enjoyed the play and the crafts. In watching the Campers from the 1st day through the last day of Camp, each child seemed to blossom. Some of them made new friends and perhaps will be friends in the future, especially if they should discover that they are going to the same school.*

### ***How else did campers benefit from Camp Noah?***

**Almost all campers learned that they are someone special and have hopes and dreams for the future.**

Similar to 2014, the vast majority of campers in 2015 said that they learned they are somebody special (97%) and have hopes and dreams for the future (96%). Likewise, 92 percent said that they learned what their gifts and talents are.

When asked in an open-ended item what they learned at Camp Noah, the most common response from campers was that they learned that they are special or unique (N=145).

*That I am different from everybody and there's something that makes me unique.*

*That we all have something special about our self.*

*I learned that I am someone special that is always cool!*

*That I am special and I can be me more!*

Although the 2015 parent ratings of what their children had learned were very positive, they were slightly lower than in 2014. Most parents felt that their children had hopes and dreams for the future (67% strongly agreed, 24% agreed) and had learned what their gifts and talents are (53% strongly agreed, 31% agreed). Parents also indicated that their children had learned that they were someone special (72% strongly agreed, 27% agreed),

something that was highlighted in the comments provided by some of the parents following camp (Figure 5).

*He felt so much better about himself.*

*I think that camp allowed them to learn on a different level. They each learned a lot about themselves and I truly believe that both enjoyed the experience.*

*My son had fun and even after the first day was telling me how he and everyone is special and that being different is special too. I was really happy with the lessons on coping skills and being prepared.*

*[Camp Noah] made them feel special and taught them skills for dealing with storm anxiety.*

*My daughter learned even more how important she is.*

*She loved every minute and felt that she was so very important.*

*They know someone cares about them other than mommy and daddy.*

*Very impact because this help them learning more about them self.*

Local volunteers and Certified Camp Staff also shared that Camp Noah provided an opportunity for campers to feel cared for, which may have contributed to campers' feelings that they were special.

*They enjoyed the fact that the whole camp was focused on them.*

*The children received love and attention. They learned about safe places and were armed with confidence.*

*Campers seem to feel valued.*

*They were cared for by caring volunteers.*

*I loved how the campers felt "special." I don't believe they get a lot of undivided attention (and food).*

*In my opinion, having one on one time with adults who cared about them was the most beneficial part of camp.*

*Many of the children were first time campers. Their social skills were enhanced as well as the opportunity to be involved in a learning and caring atmosphere.*

*We had some very special kiddos who had some behavioral struggles and with some extra TLC and love they really blossomed and opened up. They will always have a piece of my heart and thanks to the "invisible string" I will always feel connected to them.*

Several Certified Camp Staff also emphasized that Camp Noah helped the campers feel that they were not forgotten.

*It shows the campers that they are not alone, that people care and will be there for them.*

*The children were sweethearts and touched my heart. Some of them are desperate for love and attention. I was happy to give it to them.*

Certified camp staff also noted a new sense of hope among campers.

*Accepting the campers just as they are and encouraging them to explore their feelings with the Camp Noah activities seemed to allow them to relax, have some fun and think about the future with a more hopeful spirit.*

*For many campers "the light" came and they started believing in hope!*

*Great camp! Reassures campers that there is hope and ways to be prepared for emergencies and disasters that may come in the future and strategies to help heal from the past.*

Many staff and volunteers also emphasized the ways in which the team tried to attend to campers' individual needs and meet them where they were at, which may also have helped campers feel that they were special and cared for.

*I had a kid. First day, didn't even want to be there. "I want to go home, this is boring," he'd say. When it was time for large group, he stayed in the room and refused to leave. He disrupted the class, and he was just tough to work with. I brought him to the healing room a few times, and that seemed to help him loosen up a little. Each day, he moved a little closer to large group. First he sat at the stairs, then he sat in the back of the large group room. Wednesday, he and I lay on the floor and we talked about the forts we've had in trees and bushes, and he really started to open up. Thursday, he sat with us during large group, and Friday, when we handed out the certificates, a real surprise, this child--who at the beginning of the week didn't even come into the large group room--walked to the front of the room to shake my hand and get his certificate. It was really cool to watch.*

*I had one girl who was very reserved in her attitude while at Camp Noah and was marginally participative. I kept encouraging her to share her story with the class, as well as participating more in the interactive aspects of the program. I spoke with our mental health coordinator about her throughout the week. Gradually she came around and became more participative. She even took an active role in the class's performance at the camp closing. My primary goal was to get her to smile more often, as she had a beautiful smile. I knew I had made a positive impact on her when she ran to me after the closing was completed to have me meet to her grandmother. Grandma thanked me repeatedly for being there and for helping her granddaughter have such a great experience. The last I memory I have of the girl is her smile as she left the building with grandma!*

*One of our campers had experienced so many hardships, and in May her cousin died in a car accident. I have been working with her before and after the accident and Camp Noah allowed her to open up and share her feelings. We were all over joyed.*

*We had a camper whose birthday was happening and I surprised the group with cupcakes and the camper was really embarrassed, but happy.*

*We had a little girl with spina bifida and in a wheel chair. She did not require any 1 on 1 help and was very independent. She and another boy made fast friends and hadn't known each other before camp. When it came time for the parachute, she wanted to participate and camp staff were assisting her from her wheel chair. When they did the mushroom and everyone went under the parachute, all of a sudden she was gone! She had gotten out of her chair and down under before anyone knew it! She was loving being a part of what everyone else was doing!*

**Campers also learned about how to be prepared and stay safe during stormy weather, as well as how to relax.**

Almost all campers said that they knew their safe place and could go there when they felt afraid (93%) and that they learned ways to relax (93%). Nine out of ten campers also said they felt more prepared for stormy weather (90%) and learned how to stay safe during stormy weather (90%). When asked in an open-ended item what they learned at Camp Noah, many campers said that they learned how to feel safe or prepared (N=46). Some also talked about learning to relax (N=22) and how to find their safe place (N=18).

*[I learned] how to be prepared when a storm comes.*

*[I learned] I can use preparedness pack.*

*I learned how to be safe and how to use my backpack.*

*I learned how to relax and express myself.*

*I learned I can go to my safe place when I am scared.*

Following camp, parents also felt that their children were better prepared for stormy weather. Almost all parents strongly agreed (61%) or agreed (32%) that their children were more prepared for stormy weather. This was also a common response when parents were asked in an open-ended question how camp had impacted their children. Almost all parents also strongly agreed (63%) or agreed (29%) that their children knew their safe place and most noted that their children had learned ways to relax (47% strongly agreed, 38% agreed; Figure 5).

*Anytime there is a storm now they tell me "I'm not scared, I'm prepared."*

*He feels more prepared and in turn, this makes him more calm if there is an urgent situation, like impending weather happening.*

*My son came home saying that he knew he would be okay in a storm because God was watching out for us and he was prepared. He packed around his Camp Noah backpack for days and still has his first aid kit handy at all times.*

*The first stormy day after attending camp, she was able to calm herself down instead of screaming and crying.*

*They have learned important coping skills to practice and use daily. They are less afraid when the weather comes through.*

Staff and volunteers also shared observations that the campers learned skills to be prepared, feel safer, and relax in stressful situations.

*Meaningful, and therapeutic. My kids were able to feel safe talking about their experiences.*

*Camp Noah allows campers to work through their experience/trauma/death is a very positive way, giving them tools to journey through their situation. I would strongly suggest every child have a Camp Noah experience.*

*I think each camper was given a positive platform in which to grow and learn about disaster information and ways to become more prepared for future disasters. Each camper was given coping skills to use in the future and various ways that they could go about making positive changes in their lives.*

*Great camp! Reassures campers that there is hope and ways to be prepared for emergencies and disasters that may come in the future and strategies to help heal from the past.*

*A lot of the campers that were feeling the effects were able to grow from this experience and look to be more prepared for when/if there is another disaster that comes their way.*

*They seemed to have comprehended the effects of disasters and the ways to better handle them. Some had experienced such disasters already but now know a more positive way to handle them and what to do to feel more safe and comforted during them.*

*The campers have a better understanding of how to be prepared for emergencies.*

*It gave them information and confidence to know what they could do when weather got [bad] and [what to] do after the weather to help their community and friends.*

### **Campers built strong relationships with the adults and other children at camp.**

Similar to 2014, almost all campers in 2015 (97%) rated their camp teachers and friends as “fun”. Campers were relatively likely to talk about the teachers, volunteers, and staff (N=27) and friends (N=34) when asked to identify the most fun part of Camp Noah.

*Meeting new teachers and friends [was the most fun part of camp].*

*Having fun with my teacher [was the most fun part of camp].*

*That we got to meet new nice Awesome Friends!*

*Meeting my friend! She is funny and awesome.*

In addition, almost all of the parents agreed that their children made friends at Camp Noah (66% strongly agreed, 28% agreed; Figure 5). Local volunteers and Certified Camp Staff also mentioned the new friendships that children made and the relationships they had built with staff and volunteers.

*The children worked well together and actually were helpful and kind to each other. I was amazed at how much they bonded as a class.*

*The most positive outcome of the camp that I noticed was that new friendships were established between children. Also, we had one boy in our group who initially didn't seem to be connecting with the program, but by the third day, he was participating more in the activities, especially the ones that he had to share more personal stuff with us.*

*The campers were able to bond with other students who have gone through similar struggles. They were able to share their problems with their group members as well as leaders. The campers were able to build relationships and connect in a way that may be foreign in their homes. Campers were able to eat meals regularly and as much as pleased. They were able to play in an environment that was not punitive towards them. They were able to be children.*

*The campers were put out of their comfort zone and learned how to get along with the rest of the group. They also looked out for each other and shared their stories of a disaster that happened to them.*

*One of the little girls said she wanted to be just like me which was a great feeling. The last day was a bit sad since everyone was leaving.*

*The two girls in our group became friends and exchanged phone numbers. I know they made a plan to get together because one of the girls is one of my Reading Corps students.*

These relationships were not only valued by the campers, but Certified Camp Staff also discussed the strong bonds they built with the campers and other staff and volunteers and the difficulty of leaving at the end of the week. These remarks also suggest that some preparation for this transition might be warranted, potentially in the pre-camp trainings.

*I feel it took a day or two to gain the campers trust. After that, several opened up about their individual stories. We spent the week gaining their trust and building a relationship. On the last day, many campers asked if they would see me on Monday. When I replied no, the look in their eyes was crushing. I felt like I was abandoning them. Build me up, then just walk away.*

*The most difficult thing to deal with was saying good bye to the children on the final day. I dealt with this by saying I would be thinking of them as they grow up.*

*My most difficult challenge was getting attached to my campers and not being able to keep up with them after camp. I do not like the fact that I can no longer be there for them.*

*How difficult it would be on the last day. They kept telling us it would be hard, but I couldn't imagine saying good bye to these kids who had completely changed my life.*

*[I was surprised by] how attached I would get to my campers.*

*Those from Wisconsin also became close friends and they were great to work with! We still are in contact with them and we made new friendships!*

*I wish I had known how much of an impact the kids would make on my life. I think about them often and hope all is well, but unfortunately cannot have contact with them. Not only did I grow close to the children, but the team of helpers also became great friends. This entire experience greatly shaped my future and solidified the fact that I want to work with children in my future career.*

*I don't think Camp Noah organization or staff could help with this, but I wish I would have known how emotionally affected I would be from the camp. Although there were stories that ripped at my heart strings, it still overall was a very rewarding experience.*



**Most staff and volunteers felt that campers were able to open up and share their feelings, but slightly fewer campers said that they had a chance to tell their story to others.**

Most campers (78%) agreed that they had a chance to tell their story to others. This item did receive somewhat lower ratings than other items, as was also the case in 2014.

Parents were also least likely to say that their children were able to tell their stories to others, although 84 percent still reported that their children were able to do so (with 56% strongly agreeing and 28% agreeing; Figure 5). However, most of the staff and volunteers felt that telling their stories was a powerful experience for the campers, and greater willingness to open up and share was by far the most frequent response of Certified Camp Staff to how the camp had impacted the campers.

*[Campers had the] opportunity to share their flood experiences and their feelings during and after it. They realized others were going through similar (but different) experiences due to the flood. They learned ways to process the "bad" things that happen, both the flood they experienced and future things that might happen in their lives.*

*Campers had opportunities to share their stories. They felt special, talked about ways to cope and prepare, and came together as a group to support each other.*

*Camp Noah gave children that attended a way to express their feelings and experiences. It helped them not only deal with those emotions and experiences, but also to be prepared for future traumatic events.*

*Each child in my small group shared their experiences and felt safe in sharing. They came in as shy, quiet kids and left with some confidence and new found friends and resilience.*

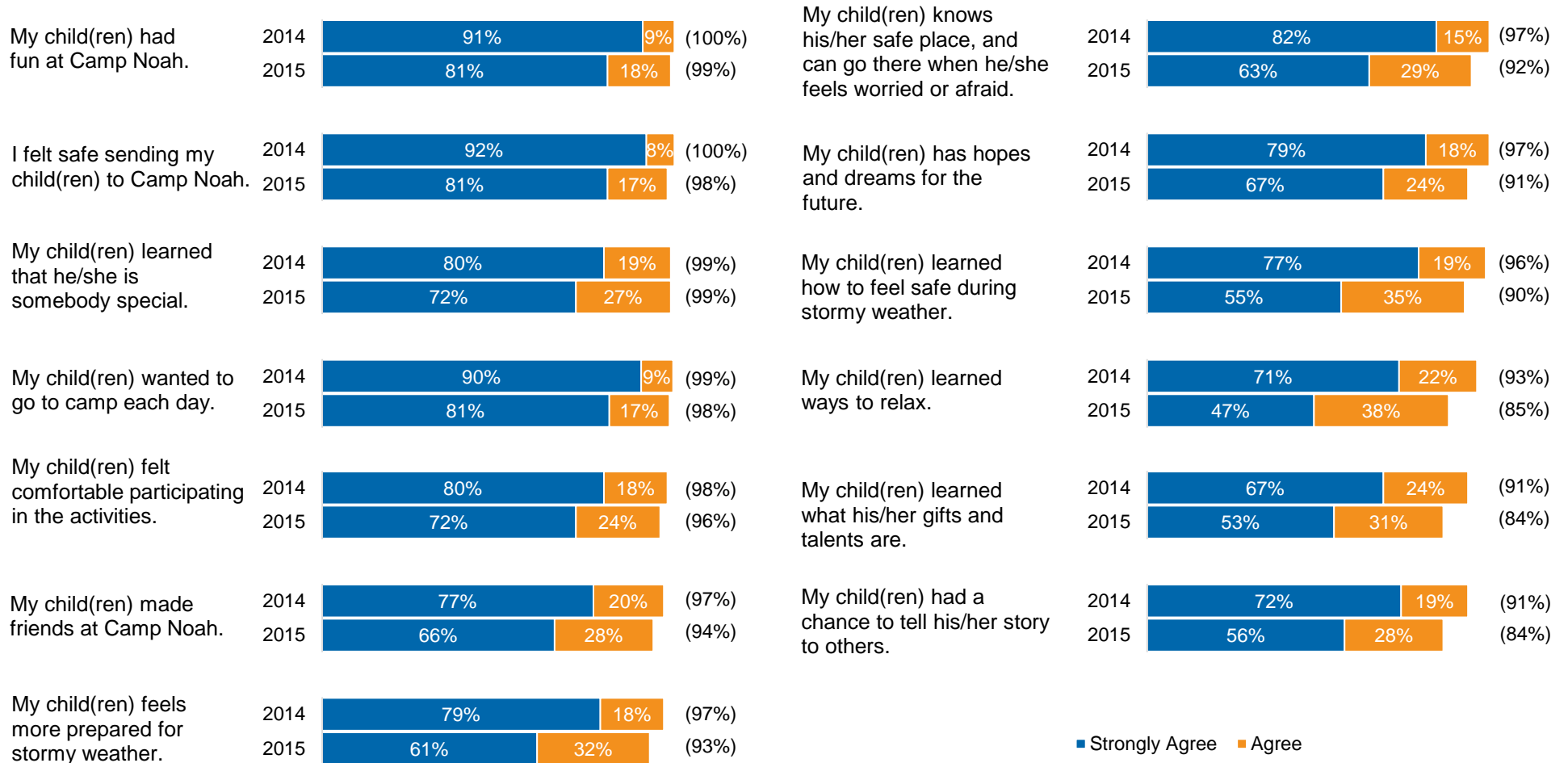
*[Camp Noah] allowed them to express feeling in different ways. It was safe to speak because of small group setting.*

*I believe the campers were able to be kids and feel comfortable talking about their stories if they wanted.*

*[Camp Noah] enabled them to open up and talk, and to put into pictures what they couldn't put into words.*

*The campers opened up and became less shy. They looked up to us, the leaders, and we noticed they became more comfortable / trusting as the week went on.*

## 5. Parent survey: Ratings of Camp Noah's impact (2014 N= 141-143 and 2015 N=178)



## Some campers may benefit from Camp Noah more than others.

Several certified camp staff pointed out that some campers may have benefited from camp more than others. Respondents suggested that these impacts may relate in part to campers' varying experiences with the disaster. A few noted how some campers may be too young to remember the disaster. Others felt that older children may have been impacted less because they were not as engaged during the camp activities.

*Camp Noah has a different impact on each group and with each individual we work with. I think that this group in Washington appreciated the chance to talk about the storm one more time and get their worries and concerns out and heard. I think that if Camp Noah National were to go back to do camps in Washington again it wouldn't be beneficial.*

*May have been excellent for some, but the kindergarteners were too young to have remembered the tornado that impacted the community.*

*This was NOT the best fit for Camp Noah. The kids only saw the camp as a continuation of their summer camps that they had participated in and had nothing to do with a traumatic experience. The campers enjoyed the week, but that's because we had to modify a lot of the curriculum for the older participants. They saw the camp as a fun time, but not as a healing process.*

*I think that Camp Noah did impact some of the kids in a positive way, but I also feel many of the kids felt no impact at all.*

*Most responded well. Some were very much impacted by the message, while the older kids seemed a little distant to the concepts (too cool for school).*

*The kids enjoyed the camp, but they would have from any camp. The camp did not necessarily fit the needs of the kids that attended.*

*The curriculum is not designed for ongoing hardship.*

*Amazing for the kids who attended, but a high number of no-shows (>50%) in the upper grade levels which reflects some of the general challenges in the community.*

*Many of the campers did not have traumatic experience, as many of them were too young or absent at the time of the natural disaster.*

*In some respects -two years out- our 5/6 year olds were mostly too young to remember a great deal. In some ways, they seemed to eventually tell us what they thought we wanted to hear.*

## Recommendation

- Consider providing training or resources to prepare staff and volunteers for the end of camp.

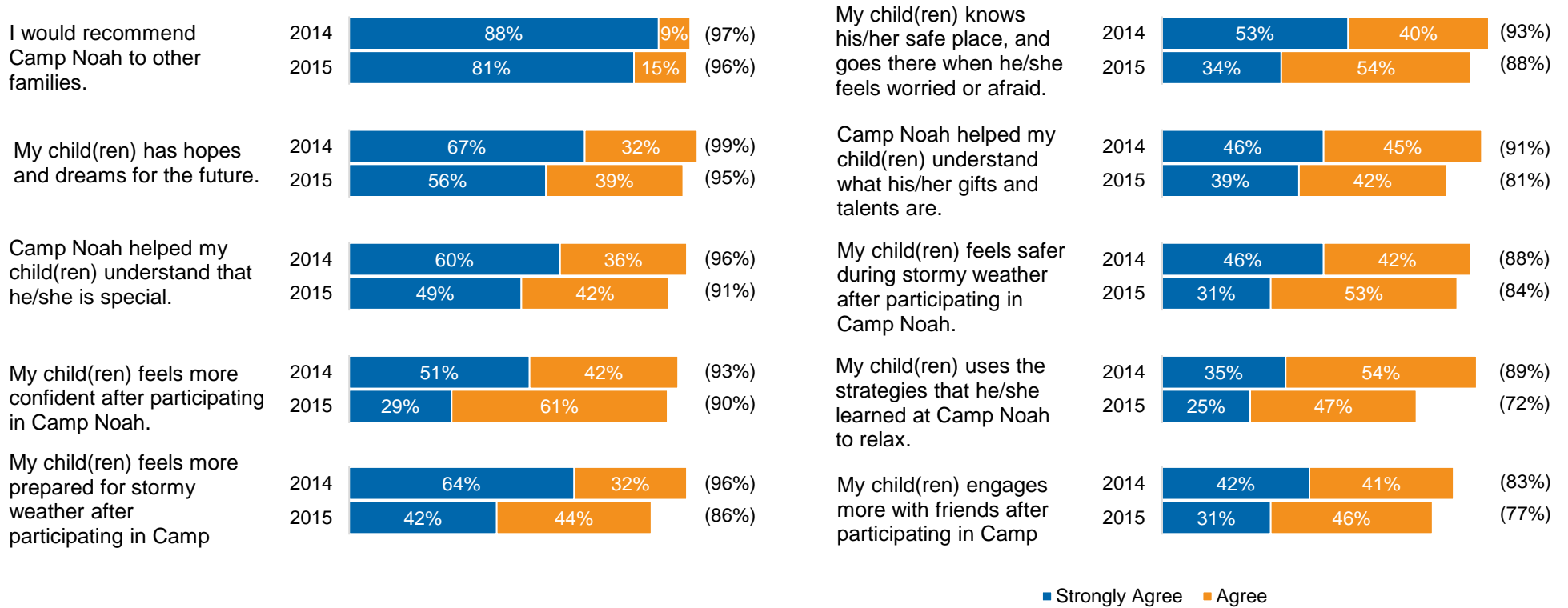
## Lasting benefits to campers

### *Did Camp Noah have lasting impacts on campers after camp was over?*

**Three months after participating in Camp Noah, parents reported that their children felt more prepared for stormy weather.**

The majority of parents strongly agreed (42%) or agreed (44%) that their children felt more prepared for stormy weather after participating in Camp Noah (Figure 6). Overall, longer-term impacts reported by parents in 2015 were positive, but slightly lower than 2014.

**6. Parent three-month follow-up survey: Ratings of Camp Noah (2014 N=74-86 and 2015 N=59)**



Feeling better prepared was also the most frequently cited impact by parents in open-ended responses. Parents noted that many of the children used their backpacks to feel prepared.

*I have heard them use the saying they learned. They both grab their blankets and backpacks when bad weather comes and have told me they know what to do and are not afraid.*

*My child feels as if he knows what to do in a tornado and is prepared if one should come. He feels empowered and confident in his knowledge. He finds great relief and encouragement from the book of Genesis, in particular the story of Noah and the ark.*

*My son was prepared for storms by making sure that he know what the plans are for different situations. He has a backpack ready to go during our tornadic season.*

*She keeps that kit under her bed. When there is a storm, she is not as scared as she used to be. She had fun at the camp and would like to attend next year if she could. Putting her in the camp was one of the best decisions I made for her.*

*They made their own emergency kits for the car as well as the ones they have in the house.*

*They talk about how to use what they received in their back packs and what to do and where to go during storms.*

*We have the preparedness bags ready to go!*

*When stormy weather occurs (or is predicted), she makes sure her emergency bag is ready to go and is nearby.*

### **Children continued to make use of their safe places after Camp Noah.**

Three months after Camp Noah, most parents reported that their children continued to use their safe places. The majority of parents strongly agreed (34%) or agreed (54%) that their children knew their safe place and went there when they felt worried or afraid (Figure 6). Some parents also observed that their children used their safe place to manage other emotions as well.

*She knows where her safe spot is and she has her bag packed that she got from Camp Noah and it is in her safe spot.*

*He learned that having a safe spot may help him relax*

### **Parents also indicated that their children are better able to manage and express their fears in stormy weather three months after Camp Noah.**

The majority of parents strongly agreed (31%) or agreed (53%) that their children feel safer in stormy weather after participating in Camp Noah. Another 72 percent of parents reported that their children use the strategies they learned at Camp Noah to relax (Figure 6). Parents shared the following observations:

*Camp Noah was a remarkable experience for [my child]. He is autistic and the relaxing skills he learned have helped him when he gets anxious. He has fewer melt downs and this is very important at his age. We take cues from him more now and his grandfather has a better relationship with him. I think Camp Noah would be a remarkable time for most autistic children whether they have been in a disaster or just need help coping with the frustration of their everyday life. We truly wish there were more camps for these children.*

*She remembers (sometimes) to take a deep breath & relax when she feels panicky.*

*They both used to be terrified of storms and now aren't nearly as frightened. There is much more discussion happening rather than complete panic.*

*He feels more in control of what he needs to do during bad weather.*

*He...seems to be able to face problems in a positive way and is calmer.*

*It provided her with tools to use to calm down when feeling stressed.*

*They help prepare the entire family during a storm and force parents to use preparedness guidelines.*

*When it storms they tell me they aren't "Scared" they are "Prepared"!*

*When it's raining hard...he gets his flashlight, makes sure we have candles, and asks where the lighter is for the candles. He also tells the 2 year old not be scared or cry.*

### **Three months after camp, parents reported that Camp Noah helped their children feel more confident.**

Nine out of ten parents agreed that their children felt more confident after participating in Camp Noah (29% strongly agreed, 61% agreed; Figure 6). In open-ended responses, parents reported improvements in their children's self-esteem and confidence in handling storms and in general.

*She has been a sweet child, now she has come out of her shell. I would like to thank you for taking the time to help my little turtle.*

*Confidence has increased. Doesn't feel so isolated.*

*My daughter, had an incredible experience at Camp Noah. She was surrounded by such love, kindness, and encouragement. I loved the confidence that she built throughout the course of the camp... It gave her a greater sense of confidence and preparedness, as well as great awareness about weather concerns. I am very grateful for the experience that Camp Noah offered and have recommended it to others.*

*He is more confident in his ability to know what to do in an emergency.*

*He really enjoyed the learning and guidance experience at the camp. He is not as afraid of storms and he is a very confident young man. He has always done well with friends, but he continues to feel good about himself after attending the camp. He had a great time.*

*Increased confidence. Now loves granola. Not afraid to try new things like the climbing wall.*

*My children are homeschooled and [my child] has never gone to a class or place without me before. Now he has the confidence to go places without me and has attended classes outside the home.*

### **Likewise, some parents observed that their children had a stronger sense of self after participating in Camp Noah.**

A total of 91 percent of parents felt that Camp Noah helped their children understand that they are special. Another 95 percent agreed that their children had hopes and dreams for the future and 81 percent indicated that Camp Noah helped their children understand what their gifts and talents were (Figure 6).

*He knows how special he is.*

*He knows that he can be anything he wants to be. Now he wants to be a youtuber. He already created a channel about making some animation, and maybe some video games. And he is only 8.*

### **Many parents also observed improvements in their children's social skills three months after Camp Noah.**

Most parents strongly agreed (31%) or agreed (46%) that their children engage more with friends after participating in Camp Noah (Figure 6). Parents also described the ways that their children have grown in their social skills and developed new friendships as a result of Camp Noah.

*She is doing a lot better in school and getting along better with her classmates.*

*My child is more joyful. He sings the songs he learned at camp and has an easier time making friends.*

*He gained new friends and it strengthened his self-esteem and confidence in himself.*

*My son has more adult friends in the community.*

*She made new friends and loved the camp leaders.*

*They seem to be making friends easier now than they did before.*

*She is doing better with her teammates and her classmates, she just wants to be liked by everyone.*

Many parents noted that their children seems to show more compassion and awareness of others' feelings after participating in Camp Noah. In particular, parents described the way their children help others stay calm by sharing what they have learned at Camp Noah.

*[My child] helps others stay calm during bad weather and knows what to do in case of an emergency.*

*[My child] loves to teach her family and younger siblings about how to be prepared.*



*[They] tell their friends it's all going to be okay.*

*They are less anxious during storms and have shared what they've learned with other kids.*

A few parents shared that it is difficult to assess the lasting impact on their children.

*I am not sure. We haven't talked about it since Camp Noah*

*They have not had much opportunity yet to talk about what they learned.*

*We haven't had any significant storms since they attended Camp Noah.*

*Somewhat. She still gets very nervous, especially with storm clouds. It seems like, in the moment, she doesn't utilize what she learned. Instead, she becomes very fearful and anxious.*

### ***Did Camp Noah have an impact on signs of stress and trauma in campers?***

Children often communicate signs of stress and trauma through behaviors such as clinginess or whining, feeling fearful or anxious, somatic concerns such as complaining of aches and pains, sleep or toileting problems, or behavior problems. Parents were asked in an open-ended question if they had observed any changes in their children related to these behaviors in the months after Camp Noah.

Worrying and difficulty calming. Parents reported that their children were easier to calm or show less worry after Camp Noah. Reduced fears and worries was the most frequently indicated response.

*Although she does become fearful with impending weather, it appears that she is calmed easier, especially when we discuss what she learned during her time at Camp Noah.*

*Before the camp, when storms were predicted, she would have extreme fear and anxiety. After the camp, she feels better prepared and has her emergency bag ready. This helps her to feel more secure in life she has a bit of control over what happens to her.*

*She is not as nervous during a storm.*

*She's still very anxious but calms easier with reassurance.*

*She is not as panicky during rain storms now.*

Whining and clinginess. Parents also remarked that their children whined less and were less clingy. In some instances, this change was associated with greater independence.

*[My child] is less clingy and [my other child] is less withdrawn.*

*Doesn't whine and cry as much.*

*Less tearful about feeling alone.*

Sleep disturbances. One parent also noted improvements in their children's sleep.

*Sleeping better.*

Behavior issues. One parent also pointed to improved behavior in the months after their children participated in Camp Noah.

*He does well with handling his stress in acceptable ways.*

---

A few parents shared that there were no change or that their children did not have signs of stress or trauma to begin with.

*My child didn't have negative behaviors before.*

*Not really. He didn't have those problems prior. Just anxious during storm seasons.*

*He doesn't have any of those [behavior problems]. Just being like regular kids. He has ups and downs.*

*Not really, but they didn't really have any signs of stress/trauma beforehand.*

*Still wants to sleep in room with an adult.*

---

# Section 2: Staff and volunteer experience

This section of the report focuses on the staff and volunteers who help to arrange and implement Camp Noah. Camp Noah requires the active participation of volunteers and staff, including Site Coordinators, local volunteers, and Certified Camp Staff, including the Team Leaders, and Mental Health Professionals.

## Training and preparation

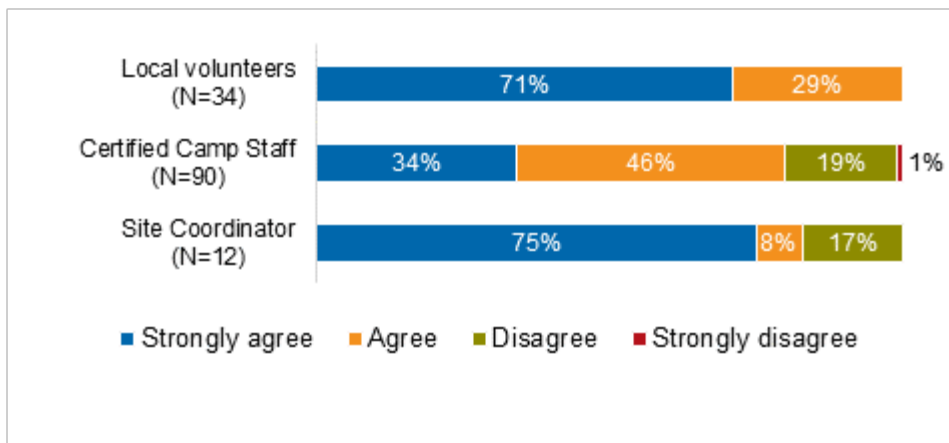
*How prepared did Certified Camp Staff, local volunteers, and Site Coordinators feel before beginning their work at camp?*

**Most staff and volunteers did feel prepared for their role at camp.**

In the surveys completed at the end of camp, all 34 local volunteers said that they felt properly prepared to fulfill their role at camp. Most Site Coordinators also said they felt prepared to fulfill their role (75% strongly agreed, 8% agreed). Eight out of ten Certified Camp Staff said that they felt prepared (34% strongly agreed, 46% agreed; Figure 7).

---

### 7. Local volunteer, Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators surveys: I felt properly prepared to fulfill my role at Camp (2015)



Most Certified Camp Staff (79%) and Site Coordinators (91%) felt that they had enough time to prepare for their role. Almost all Certified Camp Staff (99%) and local volunteers (97%) and all Site Coordinators also felt that they invested a reasonable amount of time in their camp role. One Site Coordinator shared thoughts about the work it takes to implement camp.

*I know how much work this job is. If I would have had to raise the money to bring Camp Noah here in addition to my other duties, it would have been impossible. I was lucky, because the funds were pretty much in place before I even agreed to serve as Site Coordinator. The support materials that Camp Noah LSSMN sends are amazing, and I pretty much felt like I had all the knowledge needed as Camp began.*

Several Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators who said that they felt unprepared for camp noted that they came into their roles relatively late and that they did not have time to train or prepare. In other cases, individuals did have time for training, but wanted additional information or consultation to help them get ready. In one case, their craft materials were damaged shortly before camp began.

*Arriving into town late on Sunday, we did not have time to go to church and see what I would be working with and who. A bit stressful Monday but the rest of week went much better.*

*Be certified earlier so I would have had more time to read all the materials.*

*I believe the most difficult challenge at the Camp was mainly due to the fact that I was recruited 2 days before the camp started. I didn't complete the online training, but I was able to talk to a staff about any important rules as a volunteer.*

*I wish that I was told about Camp Noah like a week before so that I could complete the online training sooner.*

*Last minute change to the craft program that we were unaware of until Monday night and damaged craft materials caused us to scramble to get what we needed done for Wednesday and Thursday crafts. The portfolio craft took more time to construct than it should have even though we made handles a head of time. And black cardstock is difficult to decorate. Had I known ahead of time, I would have brought stickers, but failing that, we had the kids decorate left over objects from the "safe place" materials and glued those onto the cardstock.*

*I wish I had known how fast the week would go and I wish I would have prepared a little bit more paperwork for the beginning of the week.*

*I would have liked more time, not 3 weeks to pull things together. I felt rushed in getting everything done. I needed more help, I felt like the lone ranger most of the time. Nothing to do with the Camp people, I needed someone to help with signing in and out, I was wearing many hats and not very comfortable at all.*

### ***What feedback did Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators have about the online training?***

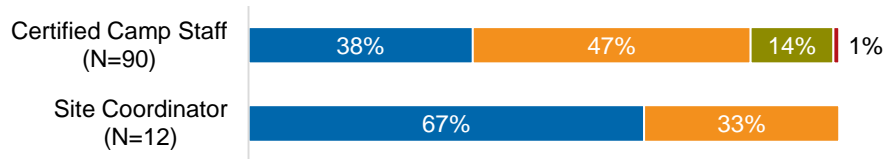
**Many people felt that the online training was helpful.**

Most Certified Camp Staff (85%) and all Site Coordinators felt that they received the right amount of training (Figure 8). Most Certified Camp Staff (88%) and all Site Coordinators also felt that they received the right kind of training (Figure 8).

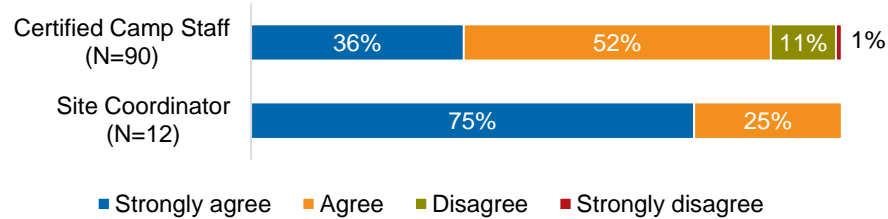
---

## 8. Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators surveys: Training (2015)

I received the right **amount** of training from Camp Noah)



I received the right **kind** of training from Camp Noah



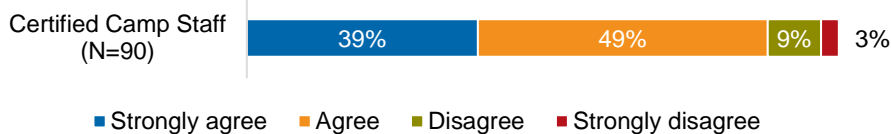
Site Coordinators and Certified Camp Staff were also asked to provide more detailed feedback about their challenges they encountered and how they handled them. Often, these individuals talked about the challenges related to behavior management and coping with the emotional impact of hearing about the campers' experiences.

**Most staff felt prepared to manage campers' emotional or behavioral issues, though this was a major challenge for some.**

In the surveys completed after camp, most Certified Camp Staff strongly agreed (39%) or agreed (49%) that they felt prepared to manage campers' emotional or behavioral issues (Figure 9). Almost all Certified Camp Staff (93%) sought support from Mental Health Professionals to address campers' emotional or behavioral issues when needed (Figure 10).

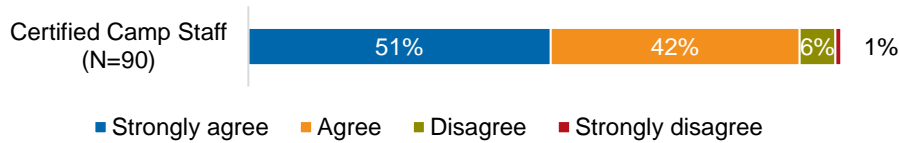
---

## 9. Certified Camp Staff surveys: I felt prepared to manage campers' emotional or behavioral issues (2015)



---

**10. Certified Camp Staff surveys: The team sought support from the Mental Health Professional to address campers' emotional or behavioral issues when needed (2015)**



However, when asked in an open-ended question to identify the most difficult challenge they faced at Camp Noah, staff described the difficulty of managing behavioral and emotional issues more frequently than any other problems. Staff also described the various strategies used to help handle behavioral issues, including providing the campers additional physical opportunities to use their energy by running it off or more time with play dough. Some staff mentioned their appreciation for the help provided by Mental Health Professionals and other staff. Others shared that they were unable to find a way to handle the issues or suggested that there should be an overall strategy set in place but did not provide specific details on what that would look like. Staff also described the challenges of working with the different trauma experiences of the children, and one staff member suggested that it would have been helpful to know more background information about the individual children and how their families had been impacted by the storm ahead of time.

*I expect a number of campers came from homes where positive family roles and behaviors were not well modeled. So, behaviors (such as making noise, doing a little bullying, etc.) were not so pleasant, especially in the early part of the week. That said, both the certified staff, the Site Coordinator, and site Mental Health Professional worked together to address the needs reasonably well.*

*The campers were all misbehaving and simply acting out and not wanting to do any of the activities. I handled it by bringing in two extra helpers apart from my original helper to calm them down and help with the activities.*

*Some of the students were emotionally challenged and needed to be by themselves. The staff and helpers helped me from time to time with a few children. One child was just very needy and seemed to almost need a one-on-one helper. It was mentally and emotionally draining from time to time. Thanks to the social worker and other staff, they did help out a lot!*

*We had all 1st grade boys, and they were energetic, not concentrating, and disruptive. We went through a "What rules would you all like to see?" exercise. For a few particularly energetic boys, I took them to the church basement area and had them run back and forth a bunch of times. You know, exercise stuff, army crawl, crab walk, etc. Or, sometimes, I sent them to the healing room.*

---

*This was more of an all-camp challenge than an individual one. Management of the children when we were in our large group activities was difficult. Children were running around or talking when they were supposed to be listening and participating. Group leaders should have managed their children better or an all-camp strategy should have been created to handle the problem because the behavior was very distracting.*

*My most difficult challenge was working with students who had difficulty controlling their impulses. I was able to manage by allowing the students become helpers or sit next to group leaders to allow some level of one on one time.*

*I struggled with setting boundaries for kids in the classroom setting. I didn't feel like I navigated the interaction with the campers well when they wouldn't be listening.*

*Keeping discipline for children who obviously had none. Laying down ground rules for behavior in our room and group.*

*As a small group leader, the most difficult challenge was keeping the children under control. It may have been the culture, but I was unprepared for that. I dealt with it by giving the children more free time to just play with playdough. Another challenge was the teens making the children more hyper by rowdy play. I didn't handle that this time, next time I will make a point to let teens know what is helpful and important for them to support the group leader.*

A few staff suggested providing a way to communicate with parents or a mental health provider as follow-up.

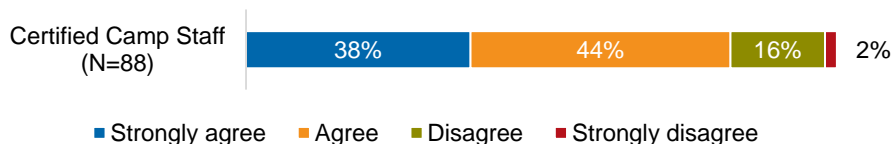
*There were some kids who presented some concerning behaviors. I was able to talk to their small group leader and the team leader since I thought follow up with parents was important. Team leader told us if parents don't request Mental Health follow up we can't reach parents. I think it will be important for all parents to know what is going on to their kids in camp.*

*Also, I'm not sure if there's a way we could communicate any discoveries or breakthroughs to the child's mental health care team--if they have one.*

### **Certified Camp Staff experienced challenges with their own emotional reactions to campers' stories or situations and most sought support from the Mental Health Professionals.**

The majority of Certified Camp Staff (82%) agreed that the team sought support from the Mental Health Professional to address their own emotional reactions to campers' stories or situations (Figure 11).

#### **11. Certified Camp Staff surveys: The team sought support from the Mental Health Professional to address their own emotional reactions to campers' stories or situations (2015)**



In the responses to the open-ended question about difficult challenges, staff also described their own emotional struggles and how they sought support from the Mental Health Professionals or other staff. One staff member re-affirmed that it would have been helpful to have more background on the children's experiences and struggles ahead of time.

*[My most difficult challenge was] the third day when children share their stories of people or things they have lost with the memory wall drawing.*

*It was emotionally challenging for me as it hit home. I have dealt with a lot of death and that was a reoccurring topic in my group. I dealt with it by talking to my other team members that I trusted and became really close with.*

*I thought I would be invincible to the emotional stress the camp brought me. The site leaders encouraged individuals to step out and others would fill in gaps if needed and I just thought I'd never need the extra help. I was proven wrong.*

*Learning of the very difficult situations so many of our campers had been forced to deal with at such young ages was my most difficult challenge. Sharing my feelings with the camp staff and listening to how others dealt with their feelings was helpful.*

*My most difficult challenge was dealing with my own emotions. Even though I was well trained, I don't think I could have ever prepared myself emotionally for the stories that came out in our small group. It was nice to be able to rely on others in the group and the Mental Health Professional.*

*There were severe personal traumas with several campers that came out during the week that had not been communicated to the staff. This caused undue stress on the small group leaders that could have been mitigated if we had some background information on the issues. We handled it through cycling leadership through the group to allow the small group leaders to leave the room and recover with help of the Mental Health Professional and other leaders.*

### ***What should be done to better prepare future staff and volunteers?***

When asked what they know now that they wished they had known at the beginning of Camp with regard to training and preparation, many staff and volunteers shared that they felt what they knew coming in was adequate. Many also drew on experiences working at past camps through Camp Noah.

*What I knew was enough.*

*I knew a lot going in, so I am not thinking there is anything I could have known differently.*

*I have worked three of them, so I had an understanding of how the camp works.*

*Nothing really, this was my seventh camp, so I was really expecting a lot and know there is always something that happens at Camp.*

*Nothing! I've participated in this program for many years and I feel very prepared and expecting the unexpected at every camp we put on.*



**Other people did share the training and preparation they wish they had before Camp as well as suggestions for how Camp Noah could better prepare staff and volunteers.**

Provide more information about trauma and strategies for working with children who have experienced disasters. A few of the staff and volunteers felt it would have been helpful to know more about the impact of trauma in general, and the impact of disasters in particular.

*I wish that I would have known more ways to help kids with traumas beyond mainly storms.*

*I don't know if it is new registration process, but not knowing about the kids prior to them being in the classroom was rough. We used to know from the parents what they struggle with and get the "real" info on what happened to their homes during the storm. This year, we had no info so I didn't know who was truly telling the truth about what they lost.*

*I think the most difficult challenge I had at Camp was the variety of traumas among the kids. There didn't seem to be one "common" trauma throughout the whole group. The best thing I could do was listen to the kids and be there for them.*

*A lot of the trauma at this particular camp (Cloquet) was not weather related and much deeper than we had expected since it primarily surrounded deaths in the community. This made some of the activities more difficult to do and less effective. There's not much you can do in that situation but it helped that most of the curriculum still worked.*

Provide more training in classroom management skills. A few staff and volunteers also felt it would be helpful to emphasize behavioral and social management skills during training.

*I had previous experience volunteering for Camp Noah, so I had a good idea of the format and content. For our particular group, I wish I would have known that some of our kids struggled more with showing respect to others and listening so that I could have established more boundaries on the first day.*

*[I wished I would have known] to do more research on classroom management skills before camp.*

*I wish that it was emphasized that kids will be kids. Some of the other volunteers were too focused on the curriculum.*

*I think the training should be geared more towards classroom management and how to deal with problem children whether it be for behavioral reasons or psychological reasons. I felt like a lot of the training was common sense and didn't really prepare me for what I would really be facing on a daily basis with the children. More scenario questions should be included on how to deal with certain situations the right way.*

Facilitate coordination between the local volunteers and the Certified Camp Staff. Several respondents noted the need for more opportunities for staff and volunteers to get to know each other before the start of camp.

*Also getting to meet the volunteers ahead of time and talking to them about what we are doing from day to day would have been helpful.*

*I feel like there should be a day where the volunteers and the camp staff has made contact at least once to talk about the camp and how it's going to be like. We met a day before but that wasn't enough to make me confident in what I was really doing.*

*I would have liked to meet the local Site Coordinator sometime on our arrival date to simply talk with that person about the disaster, the kids coming to camp, and some logistical items.*

*It would have helpful for all of the staff to have gotten to know each other better before the beginning of camp. I think we could have been a stronger team. I know the camp was thrown together rather quickly, and there was the possibility of it not happening at all because of lack of enough staff members. Ideally, a more complete training period with all of us together would have been helpful.*

*I wish my team had gotten together for a meal or something to get to know one another on a bigger purpose than just learning the materials.*

**Provide more information about the local community and the campers.** In addition to general information about Camp Noah, some Certified Camp Staff would have liked more site-specific information. Some requested more information about the local community, and the community's experience with disaster. A few of the Certified Camp Staff felt that they would have liked more information about the specific needs and issues facing the campers. Others reflected that it might have been helpful to meet the campers ahead of time, such as in a welcoming event the night before camp started.

*It would have been nice to meet the children and families the day before just so we were not strangers to them and we could put a name with a face.*

*Have a social hour the night before camp to allow campers the opportunity to meet and greet the staff before camp begins. - Ice cream social or something simple. This may help the jitters the first day and they know what rules and expectations will be on the first day of camp.*

*My experience has been that the volunteers are better adjusted to begin camp if there is an opportunity to arrive on Saturday, [and] spend some time learning about the issues facing this community in which the camp is being held.*

*It would be helpful to have a heads up about certain camper's stories before the camp so that volunteers can be prepared and are not taken off guard by the stories being shared. This should absolutely be on a need to know basis but I think that the camper's small group leaders need to know this information so that they can correctly respond to the story if the camper chooses to share and are not fumbling around with their own shock.*

*At times I felt that the camp leaders were too secretive about the individual campers' stories. I felt that I wasn't really trusted [and] respected enough to handle the information. I realize that there are definite privacy issues that need to be respected, but having more information sooner would have allowed me to interact with some kids more effectively [and] compassionately. By the end of our camp, I learned about the traumatic situations some had been forced to deal with at such a young age. The reason for the camp I attended this year was not specifically for a flood or tornado. Not knowing a specific reason for the campers attendance made me anxious that I might say or do something that might be hurtful or not as supportive as I would want to be.*

Provide more detailed information ahead of time about the daily activities. Finally, some staff wished they had known more details on the activities, including wishing they had received a copy of the guide or daily manual prior to camp.

*I would have loved to have the daily activities manual to read prior [to] camp.*

*I feel like I was most anxious about not knowing the flow of the curriculum prior to camp. I wish that a copy of the Small Group Leader Guide was available prior to Camp, so that staff might have had a chance to prepare more thoroughly prior to the first day.*

*How to use a parachute ahead of time!*

*It worked out fine, but I wish we would have done a bit more rehearsal of the skits and puppet shows.*

*The words to the songs.*

*What to expect. Even though I went through the training and had the small group leader's book ahead of time, it would have been nice to know more of what we were going to be doing. We did have a meeting a head of time and many questions were answered.*

*What my responsibilities were and more detailed info about Camp Noah.*

## Recommendations

- Consider recruiting Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators earlier so they have adequate time to prepare for camp.
- Consider ways to provide Certified Camp Staff with more information about the campers' background and the local community.
- Increase the emphasis on addressing behavioral and emotional issues in training, including working with children who have experienced multiple types of trauma.
- Build in ways for Certified Camp Staff to better communicate with parents and the children's mental health team about the child's experience during the week, as appropriate.

- Provide additional support and guidance for Certified Camp Staff to help them manage their own emotional responses to hearing the children’s stories over the course of the week.
  - Continue to engage and build upon the experience and expertise of previous volunteers who have had multiple experiences participating with Camp Noah.
  - Facilitate connections between the Certified Camp Staff, Site Coordinators, and local volunteers before camp, and consider adding team-building activities to the meeting the night before camp begins.
  - Provide an opportunity for Certified Camp Staff to meet the campers ahead of time, such as with a meet-and-greet with families the day before camp begins.
  - Provide Certified Camp Staff with more detailed information about the daily activities earlier, such as in the training materials.
- 

## Logistics

### *What challenges did Site Coordinators face in arranging for camp logistics?*

**Site Coordinators identified a number of challenges related to camp logistics.**

In addition to recruiting 4-6+ local volunteers, Site Coordinators are responsible for arranging a number of logistics for Camp Noah, including planning for camper transportation, finding a facility, and arranging for food. During the surveys completed at the end of camp, Site Coordinators were asked to identify their greatest challenge as a Site Coordinator. Challenges that Site Coordinators identified related to logistics included fundraising and managing the budget, arranging and coordinating campers’ meals, setting up and preparing facilities, and not having enough volunteers.

Among the twelve comments, fundraising and budgetary issues were mentioned by two Site Coordinators. One also described how this was related to managing the campers’ meals.

*I think the thing hardest for me was raising the money. We tapped about every resource we could think of.*

*Other than getting enough kids for the camp, the biggest concern was money to buy food. We (the church) should have had a budget for the camp, they didn't and it was rough. It worked out and in time I'll be reimbursed.*

---

Another two Site Coordinators described their most difficult challenge as setting up the physical space.

*Having to tear-down, re-set, tear-down and re-set a bingo tables and chairs set-up for hundreds of people was difficult, but we just did it, because we had to. Re-setting for bingo at the end of Camp was challenging due to lack of volunteers to help.*

*Arriving Sunday to meet the Team Leader and her crew --- the Team Leader showed up with one other person, neither of them could climb stairs nor get around very well, physically. They were not prepared to set camp up and seemed uninformed that they were responsible for doing so. I had one local person with me, along with [one LSS staff]- we unpacked a few boxes, examined the spaces we would be using for small & large group, and decided to arrive early Monday morning and go from there.*

Another Site Coordinator mentioned the logistics of managing multiple jobs when there is an inadequate number of volunteers.

*Not having enough volunteers was a huge challenge to deal with because we had to have multiple jobs for each person. The team leader was often subbing in for small groups and it was hard to have one person be a small group leader and a large group leader, craft leader, and game leader which we had all three happen. I stepped in to help a lot, I led crafts on Friday which I didn't mind but it took me away from helping anyone else for a while. We handled all our challenges well and made it work but I do think recruiting camp staff needs to happen early and needs to happen face to face or phone calls, not emails.*

One Site Coordinator described the transportation costs as a challenge. Another Site Coordinator offered suggestions to partner with local car rental companies.

*I learn some each year. This year, I learned that there has to be a more effective way to handle transportation. Transportation ended up costing a lot more than we originally thought.*

*I think Camp Noah should work on forming partnerships with hotel chains and car rental companies. I'm sure there are organizations that would love to be a "sponsor" and provide free hotels and vans for camper transportation/volunteer transportation.*

In the surveys completed at the end of camp, almost all local volunteers (97%), Certified Camp Staff (92%) and all Site Coordinators felt that the facility was appropriate for camp activities.

### **Logistical issues also came up occasionally from other staff and volunteers.**

Other staff and volunteers occasionally referenced logistics issues in their surveys. These comments generally focused on concerns about the suitability of the facility for camp, perceptions that the food offered to campers was not healthy enough or culturally responsive, and the difficulty arranging transportation.

*It was difficult at times, for the campers to open up with all of the other surrounding "white noises". We would often have random visitors and other local volunteers pop in and out of the classroom during small group, which would cause a distraction.*

*The area where I was to hold the small group sessions was not effective -all small groups were in the same open area and the noise was overbearing. Distractions were a challenge and the eating area was in the same area so it was disruptive to the groups when in session trying to prepare for lunch etc. We ended up hollering above the noise to try to conduct the small group - it was not a calming atmosphere. A local school with classrooms would have worked much better.*

*The school was not "confined" enough, especially given the few number of adults we had. Also, 95% of the campers went to school at the school where camp was held. Thereby, they were very comfortable there, and not having the regular authority figures present, they seemed to be more disrespectful and took advantage of the fact that they were in comfortable, familiar territory.*

*Having most of our small groups in one large room was very hard on the volunteers and campers. Individual rooms would be the ideal as there were too many distractions and the noise level was not conducive to some of the activities.*

*The place we had in St Anne's Maryland was beautiful but it was in one big room so there were a lot of kids and lots of noise which upset some of the children and we would have to move tables around every day to make room for lunch and snacks and classes.*

*[It would have been helpful to have] a staff-only bathroom (unisex fine) so we don't have to worry about kid presence.*

*A lot of food got wasted most probably because the ethnic group with which we were working differed from some of the food offerings. Far too many sugary items, especially drinks.*

*My only complaint is food options. A lot of people have allergies and some foods they cannot eat so the options are limited for them to get a decent meal.*

*I realize that transportation is problematic. But finding a large van or small bus is much preferable to small cars making many trips to pick up the campers.*

## Recommendations

- Consider providing additional support to Site Coordinators in raising funds and managing a budget.
- When recruiting volunteers and Certified Camp Staff, clarify the physical requirements of the work.
- Make sure that teams have enough Certified Camp Staff to comfortably fill all roles.
- Look into additional transportation options, such as vans or small buses, or partnering with local car rental agencies and hotels to provide lodging for Certified Camp Staff.
- Provide additional guidance to Site Coordinators about securing facilities that have individual space for small groups to meet, such as local schools.
- Provide recommendations to Site Coordinators and volunteers about healthy and culturally appropriate food to prepare for campers.

## Camp schedule and activities

### ***Were staff and volunteers satisfied with the camp curriculum?***

As part of the survey completed at the end of camp, most Certified Camp Staff strongly agreed (42%) or agreed (46%) that the curriculum materials were clear and easy to use and follow. While most ratings were positive, comments provided by staff and volunteers tended to focus on concerns or suggestions for improvement.

### ***What concerns did staff and volunteers have about the camp activities?***

The most prevalent concern staff and volunteers had about camp was that camp materials were not age-appropriate. Some staff and volunteers felt that materials were not appropriate for younger campers. An approximately equal number felt that materials were less appropriate for the older campers. A few said that the younger campers struggled with some of the material, or that the older campers did not always enjoy the activities.

*There are a few days of curriculum that don't make sense. I don't like the Katja book, the younger kids don't understand and it's too long of a book for their attention span. That also goes along with the Sunshine boxes, they don't understand the concept. The addition of the ant hill book was great idea, but again the book seems to drag on a bit. There are a few crafts that the younger kids don't understand, including the worry rock.*

*The curriculum is too difficult for kindergarteners and too young for middle school age kids. I think there should be more options for age-appropriate modifications or totally different curriculum books for different age groups.*

*The curriculum was not geared well to the older kids. Large group activities of puppets and Noah skits - did not keep the attention of many in this group.*

*I would suggest having more variations of the curriculum that would fit better for each age group, more modifications for stories, time spent in classrooms, and activities that are tailored to being age appropriate. I feel some of the activities were too complex for small children, such as the Coat of Arms, and the story Boxes for Katje.*

*Materials need to be tailored to age groups. Little kids that can't write or spell shouldn't be given the same work books as the older kids.*

*The "My Camp Noah" books were difficult because most of my children could not read/spell at the level required to answer the prompts.*

*The material was not engaging or age appropriate for the older kids. I like having a large group session with all ages, but I think there needs to be different curriculum (and more older age activities) for the different age groups.*

A few staff and volunteers suggested enforcing a more clear age limit for the campers.

*I think Camp Noah needs to be very clear about the age of the students to the community leaders. In our camp circumstance, I think LSS needs to have staff that can step in firmly and review the contract and requirements of the camp.*

*Camp Noah did an amazing job. The community should respect the age limits and if the children don't want to attend keep them home.*

One Site Coordinator explained having mistakenly accepted four year olds.

*I'm not sure if the age limit is enforced. Maybe it is and I messed up in accepting 4 year-olds. Clearly that is too young for this material and they disrupt the other students when can't have their way. That clearly was my mistake.*

**Some staff and volunteers had concerns about the pace, indicating that there were too many activities to complete each day.**

A second theme that emerged was that the pace of Camp Noah was too ambitious. This issue emerged most often from the Certified Camp Staff. Some Certified Camp Staff said that they needed to move too quickly, and that there was not enough time to complete everything they had planned. Several of the craft activities in particular seemed problematic, with Certified Camp Staff feeling as though they needed to rush through the activities. When asked for suggestions for improving the camp model, Certified Camp Staff often suggested revising the schedule to be more flexible, reducing the number of activities, increasing time for crafts, or reducing the number or complexity of craft projects.

*The kids seemed to need more time for many activities, causing us to fall behind schedule. For the most part, I just went with that as long as it seemed helpful to them, and skipped other activities or shortened when possible to make up.*

*It is more fast paced than I expected, but managed to find creative ways to keep things organized and moving smoothly.*

*Time is always the most difficult challenge during the week. There is no recognition of time needed to move from one program area to the next. The amount of activity work in crafts is more that the children can typically handle in the allotted time.*

*The schedule was way too tight. It was like: Now we are doing this; Now that's over and now we are doing this— to even begin to get every aspect of the program fulfilled. That tight pace was obvious in the children - many seemed to be more hyper as the week progressed. Our reunion meeting revealed that as two beginners we seemed to be the only ones that attempted to and somewhat managed to fit everything in at the tight pace noted above. Others eventually realized it was impossible and implemented much less. Maybe "optional" needs to be woven into the agenda, especially on areas that tend to be repetitious.*

*There is just too much to cover in the curriculum. Some communities you use everything in the book, and some communities you don't use everything. This camp experience it changed each day. Something to recommend is to revise the curriculum and add some optional activities that can be used to break up the classroom time and as filler when needed.*



Some staff mentioned the Ark craft as an activity that needed changing and provided some suggestions for improvement next year.

*Also, the arks are not enjoyable for anyone, not even the campers this year. It was too much for them to paint the arks and they all finished at different times which made it hard for planning. Some kids finished in 2 minutes and others took over 30 minutes. They are too big and bulky and break easily because they are just cardboard. I can't see any parents keeping them longer than a week after the program because they are just not good material. Maybe suggest to you guys small ark piggy banks. The portfolios was a good idea this year, but making them black wasn't effective and they took forever to tape and put together.*

*I felt that some of the crafts needed to be changed. For example, the Noah's ark is way too big and takes way too long to paint (it also takes forever to put together and the paint is slow to dry). The sunshine box was better this year, but the kids have a hard time getting the concept of who it should be given to. Also, if you want us to buy our own candy to put in the box, that needs to be mentioned. The portfolio was a great idea, but way too complicated for the kids to put together, so our craft staff and teachers had to do the work of messing with the duct tape for sides, top and handle, some didn't get it done during the time allotted.*

*I know the kids love painting the arks, but that is such a big production, and then parents who might still be living in cramped living spaces are stuck with this huge ark (or more if they have multiple kids in the camp.) I'm not sure I see the value of this craft.*

A few staff felt that the campers received too many take-home items during camp.

*I think the kids got too much stuff during the camp. Of course, the blankets were the highlight for them, the backpacks were nice but maybe had too much stuff in them. Some of the crafts were good, such as the rain sticks, but other stuff was just junk and was a waste of materials. The arks were excessive. I liked most of the posters because it got the kids to express their feelings and ideas. The portfolio was nice for carrying all of their papers home.*

*Our 5/6 year olds received an overwhelming amount of "stuff". It was so much it was definitely not fully appreciated. It could be scaled down dramatically.*

### **Staff and volunteers recommended more clarity regarding the program's emphasis on disaster recovery.**

Some staff and volunteers suggested that the program might want to expand its focus to be broader than just disasters. These volunteers said that they had seen positive impacts for campers affected by a wide array of situations, and that a broader group of children could benefit from a Camp Noah experience. Some felt that all children could benefit from Camp Noah to deal with whatever challenges they are facing. A few people noted that they felt the curriculum worked well for all children, while a few others wished that it could be modified to apply better to children who have experienced specific challenges.

*I would suggest only using Camp Noah in natural disaster settings.*

*Since this was the first one involving immigrant children, I understand that the curriculum wouldn't exactly fit them but now we know things that can be changed to fit them better. Maybe less about natural disasters but more about change.*

*Maybe a tweaked curriculum for kids in low socioeconomic areas that are little more street wise and find some things silly.*

*Although I didn't see real trauma from a natural disaster within the campers, the material was very applicable to mental/emotional trauma that kids often deal with. We used it to start many conversations about anti-bullying and how they can use their special gifts and talents to stop it. Having the fellow campers in on the conversation empowered each individual and gave a strong sense of spiritual community.*

*It was interesting because the campers weren't someone who went through something like a disaster like a tornado or a flood but kids who probably moved a lot or some somewhere very far away. It helped them in case something bad like a tornado, which can happen in Minnesota.*

## Recommendations

- Reinforce the age limits for the camp to ensure that the camp is reaching children who are of the appropriate age.
- Consider simplifying the camp schedule or activities, to allow Certified Camp Staff to spend more time on each activity, and to avoid feeling rushed.
- Provide additional guidance to Certified Camp Staff about how best to prioritize available activities.
- Consider modifying or eliminating some of the craft activities, such as the Ark, and reducing the number of take-home items
- Consider modifying some of the camp activities to better suit the youngest and oldest campers.

## Staff/volunteer roles and expectations

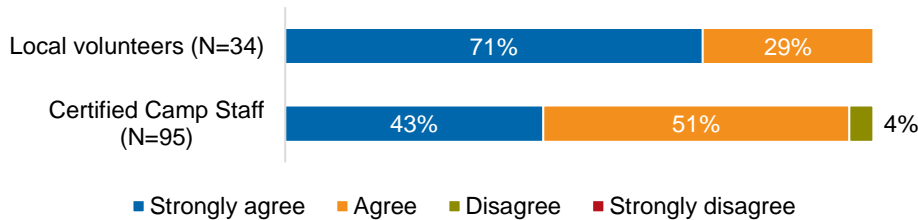
### *Did staff and volunteers feel that their roles at camp were reasonable?*

**Most Site Coordinators, local volunteers, and Certified Camp Staff felt that the expectations for their camp role were reasonable.**

In the surveys completed after camp, staff and volunteers were asked in various ways whether their camp roles were reasonable. All but one of the 12 Site Coordinators who completed surveys said that Camp Noah had reasonable expectations for them. All local volunteers, and 94 percent of the Certified Camp Staff agreed that the expectations and duties of their camp roles were reasonable (Figure 12).

---

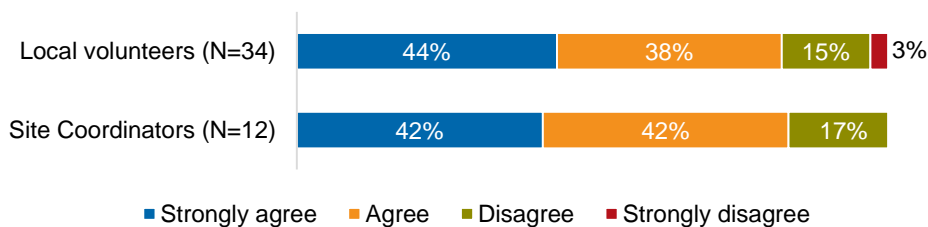
#### 12. Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: The expectations and duties for my camp role were reasonable (2015)



In the surveys completed at the end of camp, 82 to 84 percent of local volunteers and Site Coordinators felt that there were enough local volunteers to meet camp needs (Figure 13).

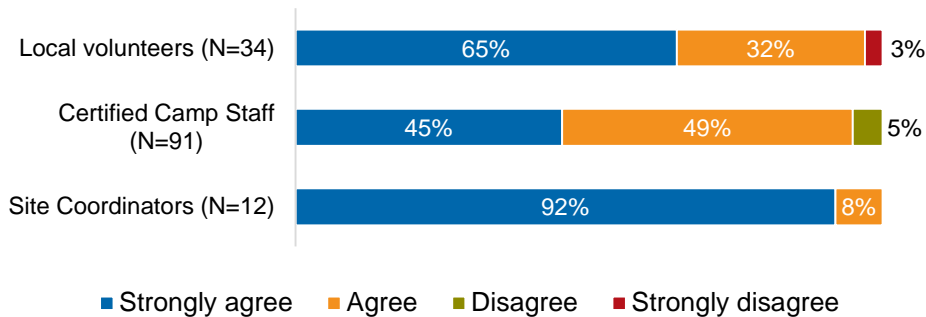
---

#### 13. Local volunteers and Site Coordinators survey: We had enough local volunteers to meet the camp's needs (2015)



Almost all local volunteers and Certified Camp Staff who completed the survey felt that they understood their respective roles, with 65 percent of local volunteers and 45 percent of Certified Camp Staff strongly agreeing (Figure 14). All 12 Site Coordinators who responded to this question reported that they understood the roles of local volunteers and Certified Camp Staff.

**14. Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: I understood the respective roles of the local volunteers and the Certified Camp Staff (2015)**



Almost all Certified Camp Staff strongly agreed (53%) or agreed (45%) that their role on the team was a good fit for their interests and skills. Fewer strongly agreed (38%) or agreed (33%) that there was enough camp staff to meet the needs of camp.

***What challenges did staff and volunteers describe related to team roles and responsibilities?***

**When asked what the most difficult challenge was, staff frequently mentioned a need for clarifying roles and expectations. Some staff and volunteers also mentioned an inadequate number of staff and volunteers.**

Role confusion. Staff and volunteers shared concerns about their limited understanding of their roles and expectations when describing challenges and suggestions for improvement.

*The first day of camp, I didn't have a clear idea on my role. I read the manual and consulted with my co-small group leader and we elaborated a plan to do the daily activities.*

*I didn't know how much the staff was expected to do for fund raising and getting donations before the camp.*

*The coordinating organization did not understand their role.*

*Expectations of leadership did not seem as clear cut as the training video portrayed, difficult to know when / how to set limits in Camp Noah setting. How strict we were expected or not expected to be. Each week different expectations from different leaders.*

*Once you have a designated role, only change if and when necessary.*

*The coordinating organization didn't understand the structure of camp and did not fulfill their duties as expected, in my opinion. The camp staff from MN and the LSS MN staff led the team and carried the camp.*

*[I wish I had known] that I was going to be Noah. I missed the Sunday meeting however so I guess it was my own fault.*

**Team size and amount of work.** Some respondents also mentioned an inadequate number of staff and volunteers as their biggest challenge. Some staff explained that they dealt with it by juggling various roles and asking for help from others, including the Mental Health Professional.

*Having three roles to fill with no breaks during the day because of the lack of volunteers. I dealt with it the best I could. (it was worth it)*

*I served multiple camps this summer and felt that each one had too few adults for each adult to play only one role. It seemed to me that with more staff involved it would be easier for the adults to potentially take some five minute breaks, or at least, fill one role at a time, rather than juggling several.*

*Many people during the weeks worked at 3+ roles. For example, a co-worker/friend was alone with a small group of middle school aged kids after just having foot surgery a week prior - she really needed a helper but there wasn't enough staff for it. I don't know what the recruitment process for volunteers is, but I think whatever it is needs to be more vigorous.*

*Our session was understaffed, so my small group did not have a helper at times. I originally utilized the Mental Health Professional or other available volunteers when needed. I discussed my concerns with the team leader and Site Coordinator, and they assisted in finding extra people to provide support.*

A few also suggested having more Mental Health Professionals to meet the needs.

*It would be beneficial for there to be additional local Mental Health Professionals available rather than just one.*

*In my experience, we needed more healing rooms and more Mental Health Professionals. One day during our Camp Noah, we did not have our healing room or Mental Health Professional. It was the day the afternoon activity was "Let's think about your loss." We really needed not just the mental health person we had, but I think it would be beneficial to bring in more.*

**Local volunteer engagement.** A few survey respondents described concerns regarding engaging volunteers in the work. Some staff felt that the local volunteers could be leveraged to step in and help out with campers, especially when there was a shortage of Certified Camp Staff. Some local volunteers also felt that they were under-utilized in their role.

*Would there be a way to "empower" the volunteers to be able to do more? It seemed those of us who had gone through the training were the only ones who could do anything...I know there is a fine line there of working with the kids, but it would be nice if there were more of a balance. There were folks just hanging around...it would have been nice if they could have plugged in more.*

*There should be a commitment made by the volunteers. If you volunteer or support a program you must step up and do your part and not rely on one person to do everything.*

*I felt like I was not very useful and that they really didn't need me to volunteer my time.*

*I felt a little bit like my volunteer time wasn't put to use. I arrived to serve lunch at the specified time and then had to wait around for a half hour to serve the children. I would have appreciated being told to arrive 5-10 minutes before my shift, not a half hour. I was expecting lunch to start at that time, so I arrived even earlier than my scheduled time. I also came to help set up, and it seemed like there wasn't anything for us to do. I'm always willing to help, as long as I'm not standing around and can actually help.*

## Recommendations

- Provide additional guidance, especially to Site Coordinators and Team Leaders, about their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Consider whether the current size of the teams, especially Certified Camp Staff, is adequate for the requirements of camp.
- Consider ways to leverage the roles of the local volunteers to help out with activities and ensure that the local volunteers have meaningful volunteer experiences.

## Team dynamics and relationships

Almost all Certified Camp Staff strongly agreed (63%) or agreed (34%) that the team worked together effectively. All 12 Site Coordinators strongly agreed (75%) or agreed (25%) that the Certified Camp Staff appeared to work together effectively.

All three staff and volunteer surveys asked respondents to rate how strongly they agreed that local volunteers and Certified Camp Staff coordinated with each other effectively. All Site Coordinators strongly agreed (58%) or agreed (42%) with this statement, and almost all local volunteers (97%) agreed. Most Certified Camp Staff strongly agreed (43%) or agreed (48%).

Almost all Certified Camp Staff (98%) strongly agreed or agreed that the team had strong leadership. Similarly, 98 percent of Site Coordinators strongly agreed or agreed that Certified Camp Staff appeared to have strong leadership.

All local volunteers strongly agreed (82%) or agreed (18%) that they received enough support from the Site Coordinators during camp. Most Certified Camp Staff strongly agreed (53%) or agreed (38%) that they received enough support from Camp Noah staff and/or their Team Leader. All 12 Site Coordinators strongly agreed that they received enough support from Camp Noah staff before and during camp.

### ***How well did staff and volunteers get along? What kinds of interpersonal issues or dynamics emerged within the group?***

Few comments described any interpersonal issues or challenges with dynamics. Most of the concerns mentioned were related to leadership.

*If you're going to have a leader, make sure that they recruit a full dependable staff!*

*The group leader was very rude and disrespectful to me. I knew what my role was so I just focused on that. I also had to teach a class of 9 1st graders by myself. Not fun!!!!!!*

*The community site leaders did not understand the camp and its purpose. Therefore, it negatively affected my experience with Camp Noah.*

## **Recommendations**

- Facilitate early communication between Site Coordinators and Team Leaders, and provide guidance regarding issues that they should discuss and resolve in advance of camp.
  - Provide guidance for resolving conflicts and avenues for staff and volunteers to address concerns about camp leadership.
- 

## **Satisfaction of staff and volunteers**

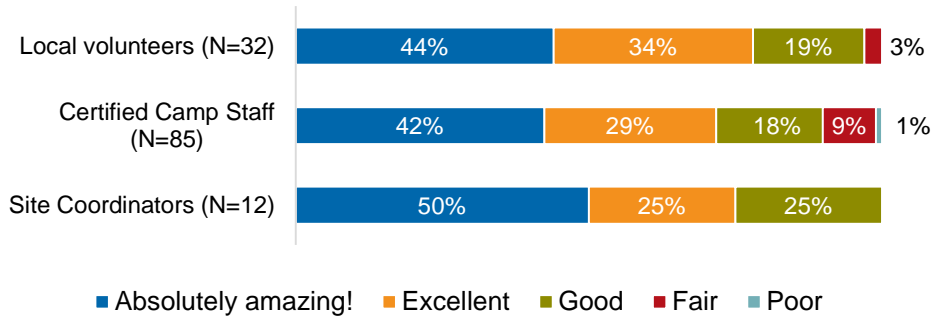
### ***How satisfied were staff and volunteers with their camp experience?***

**Most staff and volunteers rated their overall Camp Noah experience as excellent or absolutely amazing.**

When asked to rate their overall Camp Noah experience, 44 percent of the local volunteers rated it as absolutely amazing and 34 percent rated it as excellent. Similarly, 42 percent of Certified Camp Staff rated their experience as absolutely amazing and 29 percent rated it as excellent. Half of the Site Coordinators rated their own experience as absolutely amazing and 25 percent rated it as excellent (Figure 15).

---

## 15. Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: Ratings of own experience with Camp Noah (2015)



### Local volunteers made new friends and found common ground with other participants.

Local volunteers who rated their experience as excellent or absolutely amazing tended to explain their ratings based on the quality of the staff and volunteers, the amount of fun that the campers had, and the opportunity to meet new friends with shared values. One local volunteer shared that he or she would have liked to have the opportunity to work more directly with the campers.

*I had a great time helping out. Met new friends and saw awesome people instilling life-long values and changes into the children.*

*The children were so excited and they loved being creative, meeting new friends and having something in common with other participants.*

*I had a blast and if the same staff was running it again I would definitely volunteer again.*

*Everyone was so very nice to work with and appreciative of my help.*

*Since I have my Masters in Counseling Psychology I would have liked to have been a volunteer working with the kids more directly.*

### Staff felt their Camp Noah experience was rewarding and provided an opportunity to learn more about themselves.

Certified Camp Staff who rated their experience as either absolutely amazing or excellent tended to comment that they had a strong team and that it was rewarding to work with the children. Others commented that the experience allowed them to learn more about themselves.

*Having our own teen volunteers was awesome. The campers related to them - much more than to the adult.*

*We received additional staff support from a Wisconsin group and found a lot of common ground. We meshed well and supported each other during the week.*

*I always have a great time serving at Camp Noah. No matter how many issues happen during the week, the ending of the Camp is always worth it.*



*My expectations were surpassed with the experience I got from camp. It was truly life changing for me.*

*Being part of a team that was devoted to loving and supporting children was very rewarding to me.*

*It was the best week of my life.*

*Love the team that I work with. We are a very well-oiled machine and know to help one another when needed and are supportive of one another.*

*I believe I learned from the children as well. It was worth the investment of my time. Very blessed to have been a part of such an important program.*

*I learned a great deal about myself...and I shamelessly stole a great deal of youth from the kids!*

*I was a child when the 1997 floods hit the Red River Valley. I needed something like this, and I have been living my life recently with the idea that I should give to others what I needed. Sort of the old Ghandi thing, "Be the Change You Want to See in the World." This is me being.*

Only one local volunteer explained ratings of good or fair.

*I have to say that I scratched my head when it came to the "rules" for contact with the kids. I was told one day that I couldn't sit at a table that was about 10 feet from one of the small groups, because the yellow shirt folks had been background checked. But, I could stand within a foot of them while taking pictures, take them to the restroom, and eat at the same table with them. For the record, I would have let Camp Noah run a background check. I teach preschool at my church, and background checks are nothing new.*

No strong themes emerged in the comments provided by the Certified Camp Staff who gave ratings of good or fair. A few people expressed concern about site support or campers' behavioral challenges. Others mentioned feeling unprepared in the beginning of camp. A couple of Mental Health Professionals felt their role as a teacher was not a good fit.

*It was overwhelming and draining because it was my first time serving and I was unprepared for the hyperactivity of the children.*

*I had the older kids, and discipline was a huge issue all week.*

*Felt lost for the first 3 days! Enjoyed every job but too many and being a small group leader.*

*It was overall a good experience however it was exhausting since it was the first time I participated in this!*

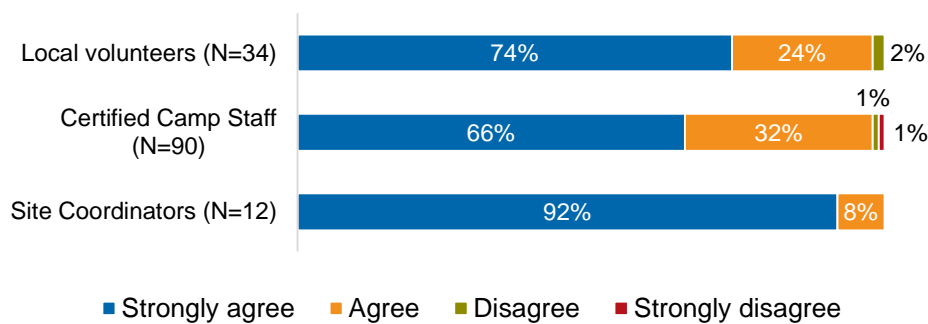
*My role at Camp Noah was to be like a teacher and I am not a teacher for a living by choice. I am a counselor at a mental health agency and all counselors were required by my job to work Camp Noah so for personal reasons, this was not an ideal experience for me.*

*I didn't love it, just because I am a counselor but played the role of a teacher at Camp Noah. Classroom management is not my strong point, but the Camp Noah trainings helped some with that.*

## Most staff, volunteers and Site Coordinators would volunteer again and would recommend Camp Noah to others.

All Site Coordinators and almost all local volunteers (98%) and Certified Camp Staff (98%) strongly agreed, or agreed that they would recommend Camp Noah to others as a positive service experience (Figure 16). Similarly, 97 percent of the local volunteers and 92 percent of the Certified Camp Staff strongly agreed, or agreed that they would volunteer for Camp Noah again in the future. Only 3 percent of local volunteers and 8 percent of Certified Camp Staff disagreed that they would volunteer again.

### 16. Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: I would recommend Camp Noah to others as a positive service experience (2015)



## Other thoughts from staff and volunteers

### *What other advice should be shared with volunteers?*

#### **Local volunteers all offered a number of recommendations for future volunteers.**

Local volunteers were all asked what advice they would share with potential future volunteers. Many volunteers said Camp Noah had powerful and important benefits for children, families, and communities. Many also highlighted the value for staff and volunteers. Often, volunteers simply said that they would tell others that they should volunteer for Camp Noah.

*It should make you smile to see how happy the kids were.*

*Don't hesitate! Changing your schedule for one week can make a positive change in the lives of dozens of children for many weeks.*

*It is a great program and you will have fun even though you are working. It should be one of things you should volunteer for at least once in your life because it is worth it.*

*Awesome experience! Do it! You will be glad you did.*

*Volunteering with camp Noah is the best thing you can do! It's so much fun and you really learn that kids have the biggest hearts.*

*Just do it. All the smiling faces and children laughing is well worth the time.*

*Enjoy the experience!*

*Jump in and have fun.*

*They should volunteer for at least one thing.*

Others urged future volunteers to fully engage in the camp activities and that volunteers should expect to work hard and be flexible.

*To participate and be a part of the activities.*

*Join in on the activities with the kids they love when you do.*

*Go in with an open heart and be ready to serve in any capacity.*

*Be flexible and to assist when needed.*

*Come prepared to work.*

*Be ready to serve the campers, the Site Coordinator and the youth counselors.*

One local volunteer highlighted the importance of having patience, particularly in working with this targeted population of traumatized children.

*Patience! You have a lot of different kids with different back grounds. Some have witnessed and seen more than the average adult has and ever will. So they will test you and push your buttons you just have to figure out different ways to reach them. Because some will remember you for the rest of their lives.*

When asked what they know now that they wished they had known, Certified Camp Staff shared thoughts that that echoed the advice of volunteers, including the how enriching the experience is as well as the amount of work that goes into the camp.

*How much fun and enriching this would be to everyone!*

*How easily the kids adapt to whatever your abilities are. They just want to have fun and be loved. Even if I can't run with them, I can help them with something else.*

*Every kid has their own unique way of showing that they are grateful.*

*Get more sleep at night!*

*How exhausted I'd be every day!*

*How completely exhausted I was every day.*

# Section 3: Community experience

## Benefits to the community

*Does Camp Noah impact the broader community? If so, how?*

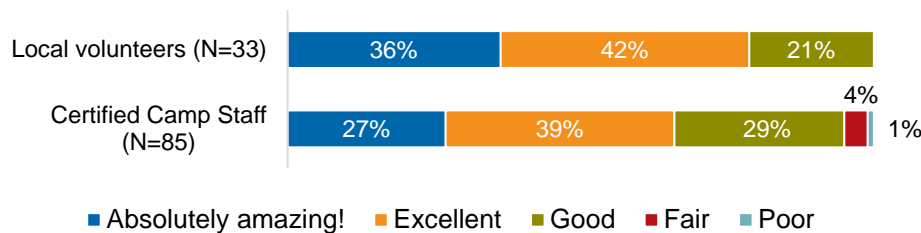
**There was general agreement that Camp Noah impacted the broader community.**

When asked about how they felt Camp Noah went in their communities, more than half of Site Coordinators (58%) said that it was absolutely amazing and another 25 percent reported that it was excellent.

All local volunteers and Site Coordinators strongly agreed or agreed that Camp Noah had a positive impact on the community. All local volunteers felt that the camp went absolutely amazing (36%) or excellent (42%) or good (21%) in the community. About one in four Certified Camp Staff rated the camp as absolutely amazing (27%) for how it went in the community. Another 39 percent rated it as excellent (Figure 17).

---

### 17. Local volunteer and Certified Camp Staff surveys: On a scale from 1-5, how do you feel Camp Noah went in the community? (2015)



Respondents reported a variety of ways that the camp had impacted their community's recovery process.

**Camp Noah filled a unique need in focusing on recovery and resilience among children in the community.**

Site Coordinators and local volunteers remarked that the camp helped increase awareness of the needs of children after a natural disaster.

*Word had spread from the other camps that we'd held and it helped families know there was a place for their kids to tell their story and heal.*

*The impact was a very positive one, lots of parents commented on how the kids loved it and weren't afraid.*

*It helped the children feel better and be able to cope with what happened.*

*Supports the mental and spiritual health of kiddos who would never be able to share their experiences of the tornadoes without this great program.*

*Help them realize that things happen and that they can talk about it*

*The enjoyment of helping kids become better. Parents who dropped off kids repeatedly mentioned that their kids looked forward each day to coming. Several kids came in later after things they could not change just to be there to enjoy all of the events.*

*The children from the neighborhood community appeared to enjoy themselves. It gave them an opportunity to come together and to really express their feelings as well as their hopes for changes.*

*Before Camp Noah, there wasn't a huge resource like this in our community. We hosted 46 kids and they were from all over the community. Camp Noah has come here twice and each time has been such a great experience for the campers and their families. I think our community has found a great resource for kids and even families. I have heard from so parents, grandparents, etc. how happy they are to have been a part of Camp Noah. Our community I think has done well in facing the disaster of the flood but Camp Noah, to our community was more than the flood, it was a way to help face trauma and personal disasters which is some things our community needs to tend to and Camp Noah was a great start to facing it.*

### **Camp Noah provided communities an opportunity to work together on a shared project.**

Some respondents indicated the benefits of involving residents, churches, and organizations in contributing to a common cause that benefited the community. Some respondents detailed the strengthened connections that resulted from groups working together to support the camp.

*I think that bringing in as a group it allows the children to see the personal impact on where we live. Seeing other children they usually didn't see every day at school or in neighborhood allowed them to help realize what community is and that it's beyond our immediate surrounding.*

*Camp Noah brought members of the community together for a common goal. We made new contacts and friends as a result. In addition, these campers will one day run the community. They will be more resilient and prepared adults because of Camp Noah. They will be ready to handle the "storms" of life, both literally and figuratively.*

*We had good media coverage leading up to Camp and during. We also were able to engage many businesses and organizations to play a role for Camp Noah, for example, donating food for the meals. The Greeley Evans Moose Lodge was instrumental in providing the venue free of charge. Redeemer Lutheran Church was instrumental in soliciting volunteers.*

*Brought people together that might not otherwise have met each other.*

*It brought kids together from different areas of the city. Many of the parents and grandparents said it was a good idea and they were very pleased with what the kids learned.*

**Communities also benefited from having a camp from outside the community come in to help out.**

Several Site Coordinators, local volunteers and Certified Camp Staff also shared that having a team come in from the outside reinforced that their community was cared about and had not been forgotten.

*Let's them know that they are not forgotten and that we still care.*

*The community was impressed that so many people cared so much about strangers and their children.*

*The community knows that there are people who care and are concerned about the total well-being of the whole family.*

*Shows that there is help from all over, even from people you don't know.*

Local volunteers and Certified Camp Staff described their excitement for the Camp Noah experience. A few mentioned how the parents and community expressed appreciation for Camp Noah.

*The community was thrilled to have the opportunity and would love Camp Noah to come every summer! The parents seem to love the curriculum.*

*At the camp closing, several of the parents/guardians in attendance took the time to personally thank me for the experiences their charges had during the week.*

*People would comment when we were out with our Camp Noah shirts on, thanking us for helping the kids.*

*We had thirty-eight children from the community. Some parents expressed interest in a next year experience.*

*The excitement that everyone felt with Camp Noah being there and we had more children than we could accommodate. More children came to sign up and participate when the camp started. We had to turn people away because the ones that participated were telling everyone what a great experience they were having and how they have learned about safety when it storms. They also asked if there was a way they could sign up for next year.*

*I have heard lots of positive comments from people within the community after each of the 3 Camp Noah's. There were people who valued the experience so much they wanted their children to go to learn resiliency skills and coping mechanisms even though their kids didn't suffer any trauma as a result of the Nov. 2013 tornado.*

One local volunteer shared how Camp Noah helped improve relations with the Hispanic community.

*It had a positive impact on the kids that came to the camp, and their families. Most of the kids were of Hispanic descent. I think some Spanish folks have some distrust of whites. At least for the families that were involved, I think those fears were alleviated. It appeared that all had a great time, and the parents expressed their appreciation.*

A few Certified Camp Staff also suggested strengthening promotion of the camp to more children who were affected by disasters.

*I am wondering if there couldn't have been a more effective way of promoting the camp. There were thousands of kids affected by the flood, and only 23 kids attended.*

*It's too bad that more children didn't take advantage of this camp.*

*Needed different time of year so more students would have attended.*

*Wish we had more kids but with only 6 weeks to prepare and advertise it was pretty good.*

*As we played rec outside one day a passerby asked how he could sign his children up for the camp. It went so obviously well that more children wanted to participate as the week went on and parents inquired about next year. Although unfortunately we couldn't take any more kids and would not be back the following year.*

***Would Site Coordinators and local volunteers recommend Camp Noah to other communities who have experienced natural disasters?***

**All of the Site Coordinators and local volunteers would recommend Camp Noah to other communities.**

On the survey completed at the end of camp, all of the Site Coordinators (N=12) and local volunteers (N=34) strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend Camp Noah to other communities as a post-disaster resource. Almost all of the Certified Camp Staff strongly agreed (64%) or agreed (33%).

# Recommendations

The results of this evaluation were very positive. Campers not only felt that camp was fun, but many also demonstrated sustained benefits of participation, such as feeling more prepared for storms. Similarly, the many staff and volunteers who supported Camp Noah during this period also described benefits they had experienced through their involvement with Camp Noah.

In general, camp went smoothly across a diverse array of communities. However there may be opportunities for Camp Noah to further these efforts through camper recruitment, staff and volunteer recruitment, training and support, camp curriculum and activities, and lastly, staff and volunteer roles. The following recommendations, based on the 2015 evaluations, were developed to help Camp Noah continue and further the positive impacts experienced by campers, parents, staff, volunteers and the community.

## Camper recruitment

1. Provide resources to Site Coordinators to support camper recruitment, including templates for school fliers.
2. Consider ways to support Site Coordinators in reaching out to families more directly during recruitment.
3. Reinforce the age limits for the camp to ensure that the camp is reaching children who are of the appropriate age.
4. Consider ways to leverage parents' reasons for sending their children to camp in marketing and recruitment materials.
5. Review recruitment strategies to ensure that Camp Noah is reaching communities and families that have been most affected by disasters.

## Staff and volunteer recruitment

1. Consider recruiting Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators earlier so they have adequate time to prepare for camp.
2. Make sure that teams have enough Certified Camp Staff to comfortably fill all roles.
3. When recruiting volunteers and Certified Camp Staff, clarify the physical requirements of the work.



4. Continue to engage and build upon the experience and expertise of previous volunteers who have had multiple experiences participating with Camp Noah.

## Training and support

1. Consider ways to provide Certified Camp Staff with more information about the campers' background and the local community.
2. Provide Certified Camp Staff with more detailed information about the daily activities earlier, such as in the training materials.
3. Build in ways for Certified Camp Staff to better communicate with parents and the children's mental health team about the child's experience during the week, as appropriate.
4. Increase the emphasis on addressing behavioral and emotional issues in training, including working with children who have experienced multiple types of trauma.
5. Provide additional support and guidance for Certified Camp Staff to help them manage their own emotional responses to hearing the children's stories over the course of the week.
6. Consider providing training or resources to prepare staff and volunteers for the end of camp.
7. Facilitate connections between the Certified Camp Staff, Site Coordinators, and local volunteers before camp, and consider adding team-building activities to the meeting the night before camp begins.
8. Provide an opportunity for Certified Camp Staff to meet the campers ahead of time, such as with a meet-and-greet with families the day before camp begins.
9. Consider providing additional support to Site Coordinators in raising funds and managing a budget.
10. Provide additional guidance to Site Coordinators about securing facilities that have individual space for small groups to meet, such as local schools.
11. Look into additional transportation options, such as vans or small buses, or partnering with local car rental agencies and hotels to provide lodging for Certified Camp Staff.

## Camp curriculum and activities

1. Review the current curriculum to consider how it can better support children who have experienced other traumas beyond disasters.
2. Consider modifying some of the camp activities to better suit the youngest and oldest campers.
3. Consider simplifying the camp schedule or activities to allow Certified Camp Staff to spend more time on each activity and avoid feeling rushed.
4. Provide additional guidance to Certified Camp Staff about how best to prioritize available activities.
5. Consider modifying or eliminating some of the craft activities, such as the Ark, and reducing the number of take-home items

## Staff and volunteer roles

1. Provide additional guidance, especially to Site Coordinators and Team Leaders, about their respective roles and responsibilities.
2. Facilitate early communication between Site Coordinators and Team Leaders, and provide guidance regarding issues that they should discuss/resolve in advance of camp.
3. Consider whether the current size of the teams, especially Certified Camp Staff, is adequate for the requirements of camp.
4. Provide guidance for resolving conflicts and avenues for staff and volunteers to address concerns about camp leadership.
5. Consider ways to leverage the roles of the local volunteers to help out with activities and ensure that the local volunteers have meaningful volunteer experiences.

# Appendix

---

## 18. 2015 Certified staff survey: What was your role at Camp Noah? (N=101)

What was your role at Camp Noah?	N=101
Small Group Leader	49%
Small Group Helper	31%
Skit Actor	26%
Puppet Show Performer	21%
Mental Health Professional	12%
Recreation Helper	10%
Recreation Leader	7%
Craft Helper	6%
Noah	6%
Craft Leader	5%
Team Leader	4%
Large Group Leader	3%
Music Leader	3%
Other	6%

Note: Other included chaperone for HS volunteers, driver, logistics, A-V person, photographer, transportation, volunteer helper for K, 1 group.

---

## 19. 2015 Local volunteer survey: What was your role at Camp Noah? (N=34)

What was your role at Camp Noah?	N= 34
Preparing/serving meals	59%
Providing transportation	12%
Assisting with registration/check-in and dismissal	38%
Assisting with camp activities (such as crafts or recreation)	18%
Providing security	6%
Other	12%

**20. Parent survey: Number of children in household attending camp (2014 and 2015)**

	<b>2014 (N=146)</b>	<b>2015 (N=177)</b>
1	55%	56%
2	34%	34%
3	7%	7%
4	3%	3%
5	1%	1%
6 or more	0%	0%

**21. Registration Materials: Number of children under 18 in the household (2014 and 2015)**

	<b>2014 (N=139)</b>	<b>2015 (N=117)</b>
1	15%	16%
2	43%	36%
3	22%	28%
4	13%	14%
5	4%	3%
6 or more	2%	3%

Note: Data from 2014 was collected through the parent survey.

**22. Parent survey: My child(ren) wanted to go to camp each day and My child(ren) felt comfortable participating in the activities. (2014 and 2015)**

	<b>2014 (N=141-143)</b>		<b>2015 (N=178)</b>	
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>
My child(ren) wanted to go to camp each day.	90%	9%	81%	17%
My child(ren) felt comfortable participating in the activities.	80%	18%	72%	24%

**23. Parent survey: I felt safe sending my child(ren) to Camp Noah. (2014 and 2015)**

	<b>2014 (N=140)</b>	<b>2015 (N=178)</b>
Strongly Agree	92%	81%
Agree	8%	17%
Disagree	0%	1%
I don't know	0%	1%

**24. Camper survey: Percentage of campers saying that each camp component is "fun" (2014 and 2015)**

	<b>2014 (N=882-926)</b>	<b>2015 (N=654-671)</b>
Blankets	99%	99%
Backpacks	98%	97%
Teachers	98%	97%
Friends	97%	97%
Crafts	97%	95%
Recreation	95%	94%
Food	95%	95%
Noah	94%	93%
Songs	87%	87%
Stories	87%	86%

**25. 2015 Local volunteer, Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators surveys: Camp Noah had a positive impact on the campers.**

	<b>Local volunteers (N=33)</b>	<b>Staff/Vol (N=94)</b>	<b>Site Coordinators (N=12)</b>
Strongly Agree	70%	61%	92%
Agree	30%	38%	8%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%
I don't know	0%	1%	0%

**26. Camper survey: Percentage of campers saying "yes" to each item (2014 and 2015)**

	<b>2014 (N=849-857)</b>	<b>2015 (N=661-669)</b>
I learned that I am somebody special.	97%	97%
I have hopes and dreams for the future.	96%	96%
I know my safe place, and I can go there when I feel worried or afraid.	95%	93%
I learned ways to relax.	94%	93%
I learned what my gifts and talents are.	94%	92%
I learned how to stay safe during stormy weather.	95%	90%
I feel more prepared for stormy weather.	93%	90%
I had a chance to tell my story to others.	85%	78%

**27. 2015 Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators surveys: Before camp started, I had enough time to prepare for my role.**

	<b>Certified Camp Staff (N=90)</b>	<b>Site Coordinator (N=12)</b>
Strongly agree	40%	58%
Agree	39%	33%
Disagree	18%	8%
Strongly disagree	3%	0%

**28. 2015 Local volunteer, Certified Camp Staff, and Site Coordinators surveys: I invested a reasonable amount of time in my Camp role.**

	<b>Local volunteers (N=34)</b>	<b>Certified Camp Staff (N=90)</b>	<b>Site Coordinator (N=12)</b>
Strongly agree	62%	58%	67%
Agree	35%	41%	33%
Disagree	3%	0%	0%
Strongly disagree	0%	1%	0%

**29. 2015 Local volunteer, Certified Camp Staff, and Site Coordinators surveys: The facility (e.g., church, school, community center) was appropriate for the Camp activities.**

	<b>Local volunteers (N=34)</b>	<b>Certified Camp Staff (N=91)</b>	<b>Site Coordinator (N=12)</b>
Strongly agree	65%	48%	92%
Agree	32%	44%	8%
Disagree	3%	4%	0%
Strongly disagree	0%	3%	0%

**30. 2015 Certified Camp Staff surveys: The curriculum materials were clear and easy to use and follow.**

	<b>N=90</b>
Strongly agree	42%
Agree	46%
Disagree	12%
Strongly disagree	0%

**31. 2015 Certified Camp Staff survey: We had enough Certified Camp Staff to meet the Camp's needs.**

	<b>N=90</b>
Strongly agree	38%
Agree	33%
Disagree	19%
Strongly disagree	10%

**32. 2015 Camp Staff surveys: My role on the team was a good fit for my interests and skills.**

	<b>N=91</b>
Strongly agree	53%
Agree	45%
Disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	1%

---

**33. 2015 Certified Camp Staff surveys: Our team worked together effectively. (N=90)**

	<b>N=90</b>
Strongly agree	63%
Agree	34%
Disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	1%

---

**34. 2015 Site Coordinators surveys: The Certified Camp Staff appeared to work together effectively. (N=12)**

	<b>N=12</b>
Strongly agree	75%
Agree	25%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%

---

**35. 2015 Local volunteer, Certified Camp Staff, and Site Coordinators surveys: The local volunteers and the Certified Camp Staff coordinated with each other effectively throughout Camp.**

	<b>Local volunteers (N=34)</b>	<b>Certified Camp Staff (N=90)</b>	<b>Site Coordinator (N=12)</b>
Strongly agree	65%	43%	58%
Agree	32%	48%	42%
Disagree	3%	8%	0%
Strongly disagree		1%	0%

---

**36. 2015 Certified Camp Staff surveys: Our team had strong leadership.**

	<b>N=90</b>
Strongly agree	62%
Agree	30%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	2%



**37. 2015 Site Coordinators surveys: The Certified Camp Staff appeared to have strong leadership.**

	<b>N=12</b>
Strongly agree	75%
Agree	17%
Disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	0%

**38. 2015 Local volunteer, Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators surveys: I received enough support from...**

	<b><u>Local volunteers:</u> the Site Coordinator during Camp. (N=34)</b>	<b><u>Certified Camp Staff:</u> Camp Noah staff and/or my Team Leader before and during Camp. (N=91)</b>	<b><u>Site Coordinators:</u> Camp Noah staff before and during Camp. (N=12)</b>
Strongly agree	82%	53%	100%
Agree	18%	38%	0%
Disagree	0%	5%	0%
Strongly disagree	0%	3%	0%

**39. 2015 Local volunteers, Certified Camp Staff, and Site Coordinators surveys: I would serve at Camp Noah again in the future.**

	<b>Local volunteers (N=34)</b>	<b>Certified Camp Staff (N=89)</b>	<b>Site Coordinators (N=12)</b>
Strongly agree	68%	58%	75%
Agree	29%	34%	17%
Disagree	3%	7%	8%
Strongly disagree	0%	1%	0%

**40. Site Coordinators survey: On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel Camp Noah went in your community? (2014 and 2015)**

	<b>2014 (N=23)</b>	<b>2015 (N=12)</b>
5 - Absolutely amazing!	78%	58%
4 – Excellent	17%	25%
3 – Good	0%	8%
2 – Fair	4%	8%
1 - Poor	0%	0%

**41. 2015 Local volunteer and Site Coordinators surveys: Camp Noah had a positive impact on my community.**

	<b>Local Volunteers (N=33)</b>	<b>Site Coordinators (N=12)</b>
Strongly agree	67%	75%
Agree	33%	25%
Disagree	0%	0%
Strongly disagree	0%	0%

**42. 2015 Local volunteer, Certified Camp Staff and Site Coordinators surveys: I would recommend Camp Noah to other communities as a post-disaster resource.**

	<b>Local volunteers (N=34)</b>	<b>Certified Camp Staff (N=90)</b>	<b>Site Coordinators (N=12)</b>
Strongly agree	79%	64%	100%
Agree	21%	33%	0%
Disagree	0%	1%	0%
Strongly disagree	0%	1%	0%