



Cradle Beach Needs Assessment

Cradle Beach

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INTRODUCTION

Cradle Beach, whose mission is to help every child reach his or her potential by providing high quality, evidence-based, innovative programming; has been serving Western New York children from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and children with disabilities for over 123 years. Nearly 85% of those children who attend our summer residential program come from the neediest, poorest parts of the City of Buffalo, with 76% living at or below the poverty level. In 2010, approximately 800 economically and educationally disadvantaged children as well as children with disabilities between the ages of 8-16 attended the life changing experience of Cradle Beach. These 800 children were divided into 5 sessions based on their age, each session containing 150 children and lasting 10 residential days. Due to the campers' special needs, the camper-to-counselor ratio is almost 1:1 and consists of counselors from all over the world. CB campers in 2009 were 56% Caucasian, 39% African-American and 5% Hispanic/other. From the beginning of the camp, we have strongly believed that by combining those with disabilities with those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds you gain a benefit that is mutual, exponential, and long-term. Cradle Beach is the only program in the nation that serves children with special needs and economically and educationally disadvantaged children together in an inclusionary 10-day residential learning program.

Building on the success of our summer enrichment program, we added Project Soar and expanded our programming into the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) where we are in classrooms partnering with teachers and working with children in order to close the achievement gap by building on skills that are cross-promoted at camp. Project SOAR (Success, Opportunity, Achievement, Responsibility) is modeled after the national evidence-based Fiver Children's Foundation work where 88% of students earned a high school degree and 73% continued on to college. The proposed service delivery model builds on Fiver's success and extends our summer enrichment program throughout the school year by offering tutoring, in-class instructional support, one-on-one support, and mentoring for 3rd and 4th Grade students at Lovejoy Discovery School – BPS #43. In addition, we added 3 overnight weekend retreats (field trips) that bridge between classroom and summer session and close our programming continuum with the development of higher level skills like critical thinking, problem solving, inquiry, complex reasoning, writing, teamwork, and decision making. This innovative effort combines year-round services with congruent goals, objectives, and outcomes.

Overnight Weekend Retreats/Field Trips: Weekend retreats are used to provide experiential learning opportunities for participants, enhance their classroom learning, conduct individualized programming, and enhance science and math development. Weekend retreats can be held throughout the year at our facility in Angola where students will experience educational stations that include but are not limited to sports, computers, culinary arts, dance, music, beach and nature, photography, sensory, and theater. Weekend retreats are incorporated into the program to provide an off-site experience that many of these students have never experienced. Furthermore, the weekend retreats strengthen students' commitment to their education and the program, increasing the overall impact on their educational and personal lives and increasing program retention rates.

10-day Residential Summer Enrichment Program: The Summer Enrichment Program is designed to combine students with disabilities with students who come from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This one-of-a-kind format allows students to gain much more than they

would simply by attending a summer camp with a similar cohort. Similar to the weekend retreats, we utilize educational stations and activities designed to provide students with and without disabilities opportunities to learn from each other, grow through the interaction, and develop their emotional intelligence. This experience is often said to have a lasting impression on students because they develop stronger abilities to understand their own feelings, manage their feelings, read other's feelings, and develop meaningful relationships based on those skills. Combined with the In-School and the Weekend Retreats, the Summer Enrichment program is the capstone of what will likely be a life changing experience for these Buffalo Public School students.

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Buffalo, New York, located in Erie County, is a city marked by a variety of economic, educational, social, and health stresses, the least of which is the disenfranchised and disconnected disability community, particularly for parents of children birth to 26. Erie County's overall population decline since the 1990's is due largely to the City of Buffalo, even as the rest of the County's population grew. The 2010 census reaffirms the continued decline of the region. The single parent family segment of the population has grown steadily since 1990, with three times the amount of single parents living in the City of Buffalo as compared to the suburbs and most tending to have a low income, higher rates of poverty, lower levels of educational attainment, and overall lower rates of employment. The City of Buffalo has one of the highest unemployment rates (12.4%, City Data, 2009) among the major metropolitan areas in New York State which is facing the highest unemployment rate (9%, 2011) in 33 years (Dept. of Labor, June. 2009), is marked by high drug abuse and crime rates (Erie County Risk Indicator Database, 2007), and continues to struggle to provide the basic supports that so many families in high needs areas require.

Buffalo is currently the second largest city in NYS with a population of approximately 261,310 (2010), a 31,000 decrease since the 2000 and a decrease two-and-a-half times greater than any other metropolitan area in NYS. Fifty-four percent of Buffalo residents identify themselves as White-Non-Hispanic, 37.23% African American, 7.54% Hispanic, 1.4% Asian, and 2.7% as some other race (2000 Census). In 2009 the average household income in Buffalo, is \$29,285, as compared to a statewide average of \$54,659, a \$25,274 difference. According to a recent analysis of census data, Buffalo has the sixth-highest rate of child poverty in the nation, with nearly 45.3% of the city's children considered poor (2009). Moreover, poor families in Buffalo are 4 times as likely to be single parent homes with female head of households (City Data, 2009)

In a report by the Ann E. Casey Foundation, "*The Growing Number of Kids in Severely Distressed Neighborhoods*" September 2003, listed the Buffalo area as one of the ten worst metropolitan areas in the US with the greatest numbers of children living in severely distressed neighborhoods (15.3%). Children residing in these neighborhoods are at increased risk for teen pregnancy, school failure, unemployment or underemployment, violence, and poverty. In addition, these communities generally lack strong community institutions and/or positive role models. Erie County, which includes Buffalo, consistently registers a higher crime rate than NYS excluding the NYC region as a whole. In 2000, Erie County's violent crime rate was 47.4 per 10,000 compared to 28.4 per 10,000 for similar regions nationally with the majority of these incidences occurring in Buffalo. Erie County has higher than state rates for adolescent arrests (ages 16-19) for property crimes (25.3 compared to a state rate of 19.4 per 1,000 youth); driving while intoxicated (44.8 per 1,000 youth ages 16-20 compared to state rate of 28.6) and the rate of persons in need of supervision ages 10-15 (18 compared to 13.2) (NYS Touchstones/Kids Count 2002 Data Book). The Crime Index for the City of Buffalo is a 6, or Buffalo is more dangerous than 94% of the cities in America (2009). In Buffalo, you have a 1 in 77 chance versus a 1 in 221 for the State

of becoming a victim to a violent crime. These crime statistics highlight the plight of the residents of Buffalo and the strain on the financial resources of the City.

BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS educates 32,607 students who are housed in 59 sites, which is over a 33% decline from just a decade ago. Students with special needs also comprise a significant percentage (22.2% or 7,239) of Buffalo's student population. In 2010, the racial composition of Buffalo's students is diverse with approximately 56% African American, 23% white or Caucasian, and 15% Hispanic, demonstrating a trend of declining Caucasian students and increasing Hispanic students. Students with special needs also comprise a significant percentage (22.2% or 9,250) of Buffalo's student population. Moreover, 85% of BPS students have been identified as having "Extraordinary Needs," 6% points higher than the New York City School District (NYS Report Card, 2005-2006).

The severe poverty of Buffalo's population is revealed in the schools, where 73.8% of students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches. This is compared to 38% of students in the rest of NYS State's school districts. Over one quarter of BPS students were suspended over the course of the academic year, 10 percentage points above the previous year. Attendance rate for the district is 87%. It is important to note that the City of Buffalo is designated as a Federal Enterprise Community by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is comprised of portions of two of the City's most distressed neighborhoods, the West Side and the East Side.

In 2010, the Buffalo Public Schools failed as a district to make AYP in Math and English Language Arts with 7 of 10 ethnic groups failing to make AYP for ELA at the elementary level and 8 of 8 or 100% failing at the secondary level. In mathematics, 7 of 8 groups failed to make AYP in mathematics at the secondary level, with only Caucasian students achieving AYP. At the elementary and secondary levels, students with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency, and economically disadvantaged all failed to make AYP. Furthermore, none of these groups made AYP in mathematics at the secondary level. Overall, in Grades 3 through 8, no grade achieved above a 32% of its students scoring at a level that demonstrated they met minimal standards in ELA or Mathematics. The secondary level fared a bit better with 50% of its students scoring at a level that demonstrated they met minimal standards in ELA or Mathematics. Finally, at both the elementary and secondary level, only single digit percentages achieved mastery of subject in ELA and Mathematics, greatly below NYS averages that averaged 20% of its students achieving mastery level (NYS Report Card, 2009 to 2010).

In the 2009-10 academic year, only 58% of all Buffalo students in the 2005 cohort graduated. More specifically, 57% of Black, 49% of Hispanic, 36% of students with disabilities, 35% of Limited English Proficiency, and 57% of economically disadvantaged students graduated from the 2005 cohort. A disproportionate number of students in the Buffalo Public Schools, over one-third or 38.4% are considered Educationally Disadvantaged. Statistics from the NYS Report Card 2009-10 indicate that these students are close to or have actually failed a significant number of final examinations. Yet, these same students are continually challenged by the more rigorous requirements of the revised New York State Standards and Assessments. If school districts like Buffalo believe that "all children can learn," then they must be provided with the resources to help those students who are most in need of achieving academic success. As a result of the recent recession, New York State, and especially its school districts, has suffered traumatic economic hardship. There has been a substantial reduction in state and federal allocations that, in the past, greatly assisted school districts, especially urban districts like the Buffalo Public Schools.

SUMMARY

Overall Cradle Beach Program: The saying, “the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts,” characterizes exactly how the three components of Cradle Beach work. First, there is a cumulative effect that builds an exponential impact on participants. Second, we have carefully created the program for each component so that the impacts are congruent and build upon the combined experiences of students. Finally, we measure impact using an evidence-based research model that tracks strategic outcomes and how they interconnect and impact academics, personal outcomes, and career outcomes. Furthermore, Cradle Beach benefits from innovative and inexpensive staffing strategies, over 123 years of experience working with BPS students, evidence-based programs, and a commitment to continuous improvement through program/process evaluation and management. The final outcome, is that our programs work to ameliorate the current fiscal, social, cultural, and educational barriers facing Buffalo, New York and the surrounding region.