



Fostering Kinnections Through

# Camp Connect



# ENDURING SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS



- Primary source of socialization & learning
- Impacts identity development & attachment
- Increase in resilience
- Reduced internalizing behaviors
- Increased placement stability
- Offers protective factors across lifespan
- Higher life satisfaction
- Lower rates of depression



# Siblings in Out of Home Placement

- 75% of children entering OOH placement have a sibling
- Up to 65% are separated from one or more siblings
- When parental rights are terminated, legal rights to siblings are severed
- Sibling separation may exacerbate traumatic effects of parental separation
- Sibling estrangement may increase as children move through foster care system



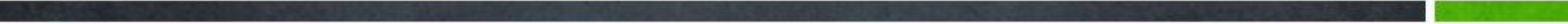
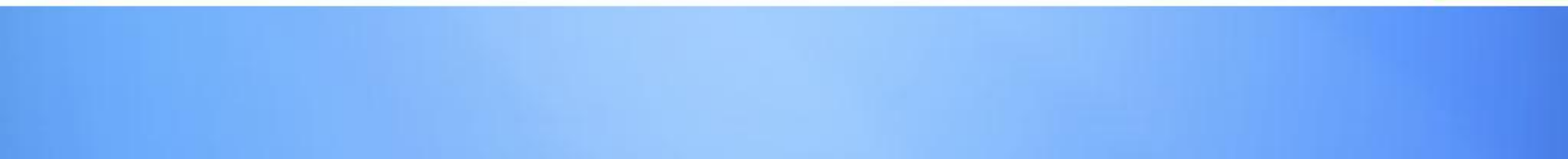
# Camp Connect....Where it All Began in 2001

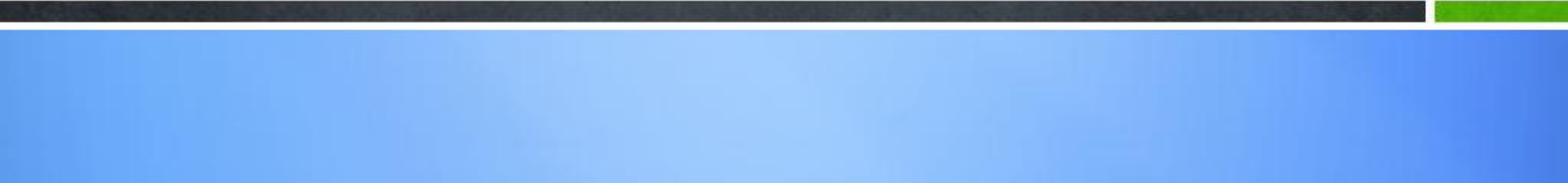


- ❁ Modeled after Camp to Belong, a sib camp in CO
- ❁ Local departments staff and volunteers
- ❁ Only state funded sibling camp in the country; no cost for campers



# Camp Connect Goals

- ❁ **Memorable experiences that siblings share for a lifetime**
  - ❁ **Boost sense of competence and self efficacy**
  - ❁ **Increase self-esteem**
  - ❁ **Unique and positive experience with child welfare professionals and volunteers**
  - ❁ **Decreased sense of isolation**
- 
- 



# The “How”

- 55 campers divided into 6 ‘family groups’
- 3-4 siblings groups in each family and 4-6 counselors
- Families stay together for all daytime activities & meals
- All-camp activities each evening
- This year camp will require social distancing & masks
- Sisters share bunks with sisters, brothers with brothers
- 1.5 days of orientation for counselors pre-camp
- 5 nights, 6 day camp experience

# The “Who”

**Counselors:** local department staff, CASAs, attorneys, others interested in the welfare of children & partnership with the Naval Academy

**What’s in it for them:** an unforgettable exhausting & exhilarating week





# Campers

- Ages 7 - 17; only one sib needs to be in care - others may be home, with a relative, or in an adoptive home
- COVID vaccinations required for those who are eligible
- High staff:camper ratio allows for close supervision
- Not equipped for physically or severely developmentally disabled children
- Statewide recruitment and programming managed by Baltimore County DSS and volunteers
- **Deadline: July 1st - apps to be forwarded shortly**

# WHERE & WHEN?

- Manidokan Camp and Retreat Center:  
Knoxville, Maryland (Washington  
County)
- Transportation provided by to camp  
from Drumcastle Building, 6401 York  
Rd. in Baltimore
- **DATES: August 10 - 15th**

# Camp Activities Designed to...

**Provide  
opportunities to  
nurture sibling  
relationships**

**Enhance  
Self-Esteem and  
build confidence  
and competence**

**Just be a kid!**





General George Washington Resigning His Commission to Congress  
Commissioned for the Bicentennial of the U.S. House of Representatives  
Kurtis W. Miller, 2014  
Historical Clearing House





# ARTS & CRAFTS



- ❁ Personalized mementos made for siblings
- ❁ Activities include making pillows, blankets, t-shirts, teddy bears that are gifted from one sibling to another
- ❁ Projects become keepsakes, a way to experience closeness outside of camp even though separated
- ❁ "All of us still have our scrapbooks from Camp Connect" "I've moved from coast to coast but wherever I go, my sib camp mug is always with me"

# Adventures



- ✿ Pushing campers out of their comfort zone
- ✿ Trying something new
- ✿ Building trust and confidence
- ✿ Includes ziplining, ropes course, rafting, archery, horseback riding
- ✿ “Having my sisters there make me want to be brave, make me want to be tough, go out of that comfort zone”



# JUST BEING A KID



- 🌸 Swimming, swimming and more swimming (did we mention swimming?)
- 🌸 Field Games
- 🌸 Carnival
- 🌸 Separate Girl's and Boy's Nights
- 🌸 9 square and gaga
- 🌸 Adventure Park

“the best part of Camp Connect is everything”



**CAMP CONNECT 2019**  
**VIDEO**





Qualitative research conducted in collaboration with UMSSW:

[“Knowing that I wasn’t Alone: Evaluation of a Therapeutic Camp Reunifying Siblings in Foster Care”](#)

Campers and counselors identified lasting impacts of the camp experience including improved relationships as well as personal and professional growth.





# Questions??



For more information contact:  
[susan.loysen@maryland.gov](mailto:susan.loysen@maryland.gov)  
[jane.addams5@gmail.com](mailto:jane.addams5@gmail.com)

