

because
a summer
can last a
lifetime

2017 Annual Report

the *Fresh Air* fund

“Best.
Summer.
Ever.”

—Aaliyah, 12, *Fresh Air* child



THE FRESH AIR FUND

Since 1877, The Fresh Air Fund has unlocked the limitless potential of more than 1.8 million New York City children from low-income communities. Each year, thousands of children experience outdoor summer adventures through visits with volunteer host families along the East Coast and Southern Canada and at The Fund's five overnight camps in Fishkill, NY. Fresh Air children also participate in year-round leadership and educational programs. The magic of a Fresh Air summer, full of new experiences and new friends, is simple yet transformative.





This summer as I met our NYC families, children, volunteers, host families, and supporters, I observed that every summer has a story for every person... it is different for everyone and uniquely special to each involved. Mothers told me how our summers have expanded perspectives for their children. Host families and city families alike shared how they have built meaningful relationships with new families and friends. At camp, children shared their excitement for trying new things, like archery or the high ropes course. In several instances, I heard from our young people themselves how our programs are motivating them to do better in school as they look forward to not missing any summer fun.

Coupled with my many great conversations, this past year we launched a robust impact and evaluation review of our work. We surveyed a wide range of our stakeholders to gauge their thoughts about program quality and their favorite parts of summer, and to gather early indicators of the effects of our work.

We learned some great things. Parents and guardians report that The Fresh Air Fund has made noticeable differences in their child's life. 86% of parents/guardians surveyed report that their child's experience has made them open to trying new things. 83% report their children are more comfortable in new places, and 82% report that their child is more confident.

Similarly, 90% of Friendly Towns youth and 83% of campers report feeling brave for trying new things through their Fresh Air Fund experience. And, for the majority of new participants, this was their first time away from NYC overnight. When we asked our children what word would best describe their Fresh Air Fund experience, the #1 word of 2017 was **FUN**, with AWESOME and AMAZING, being second and third, respectively.

Anecdotally and in survey results, we are seeing that The Fresh Air Fund is as relevant today as it was when it was founded over 140 years ago. As we hear from alumni and connect with long-standing host families, we continue to learn how Fresh Air Fund summers have impacted lives—and continue to transform lives many years later. We have learned that a summer can last a lifetime.

“Every summer I look forward to exploring new places and making new friends.”

—Saniyah, 10, *Fresh Air child*

With that, we are delighted to focus this annual report on how your support and partnership allows us to provide free summer experiences to thousands of children from New York City's underserved and under-resourced communities—**because a summer can last a lifetime**. You are helping us give opportunities to make memories with new friends, have fun, try new things, and see new places.

Our work would not be possible without the amazing generosity of our volunteers and supporters. Thank you for being a part of The Fresh Air Fund family and for all you do for Fresh Air children.

Sincerely,

Fatima Shama
Executive Director

Every summer, The Fresh Air Fund creates opportunities for children to spend time in the country with volunteer host families or at one of our summer camps. Much more than a highlight of a season, these experiences can make a significant impact on a child's life and mark a turning point in their future. Fresh Air children are discovering new interests, gaining valuable skills, and widening their circle of friendships. At a pivotal moment in their lives, they're exploring new pathways to their educational and career goals.

limitless possibilities. Campers enjoy swimming, hiking, interactive science and tech activities, and, of course, making s'mores.

2017 was the third year of programming at The Blavatnik Family and Warner Music Group Center for Music at Camp Hidden Valley, and music is heard throughout the camp sites. Singing around the campfire, and guitar and drumming lessons are favorite activities; Fresh Air children can learn to play instruments, practice dance and create music in studio sessions.



The opportunity I have each year to witness this work in action, alongside hundreds of campers and staff, at Camp Day at The Fund's Sharpe Reservation is indeed a highlight of *my* season, and 2017 was no exception. As a group, we participated in fun-filled educational activities, toured Camp Tommy and the waterfront, participated in art workshops and cheered on the sports program. We enjoyed lunch at Camp Hayden-Marks, made paper airplanes together and above all, we laughed and reveled in the beauty of the outdoors. This time spent in nature with these remarkable children always reinforces my commitment to our outstanding organization; the very "seeds" it plants, and all the good it accomplishes.

Our Annual Spring Gala at Chelsea Piers honored Baron Davis, Hill Harper and Board member, Kimberly E. Steward. Sarah Jones, our talented and creative emcee, kept our 550 guests engaged throughout the evening, which raised over \$1.2 million. And The Fresh Air Fund Council, a group of dedicated young New Yorkers, sponsored "One Night in Rio," the Annual Fall Benefit and Silent Auction at Chelsea Piers, with more than 700 supporters raising over \$570,000.

On behalf of The Fund's Board of Directors, I want to offer heartfelt gratitude to our Executive Director, Fatima Shama, for her vision, warmth and leadership, and most of all to our exceptional volunteers, funders, partners and staff.

Thanks to your generosity of spirit, acts of kindness, loyalty and support, a summer *can* last a lifetime for thousands of our Fresh Air children.

Sincerely,

William P. Lauder
Chairman

“Each day there’s always something exciting happening, like playing the guitar and going to the waterfront, where you get to swim!”

—Nalani, 10, *Fresh Air child*

The Fresh Air Fund opens up horizons of learning and develops innovative programs, both in the summer and throughout the year. Our camps are located on a more than 2,000-acre wilderness property that provides an outdoor classroom with

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

FRIENDLY TOWNS



A Fresh Air summer means running barefoot in the backyard, riding bikes down country roads, learning to swim, sailing on tranquil lakes, catching fireflies, playing board games, building sandcastles on the beach, making new friends and, above all, having fun. Fresh Air children spend their bright summer days and moonlit nights in a new world of self-discovery, while forging new relationships and connections.

In 2017, thousands of volunteer host families opened their homes to Fresh Air children from low-income New York City communities. For one to two weeks each summer, boys and girls, ages seven to 18, visit over 275 Friendly Towns in rural and suburban communities along the East Coast and Southern Canada. Many children are invited back to stay for extended visits with the same host families, year after year.

Volunteer leaders and their committees recruit new hosts, conduct home interviews and screen references. During the summer, Fresh Air staff members and volunteers are available for support 24 hours a day. Christina, a host, said,

“I wanted my son to see that there is a world outside our city.”

—Lylianna, *Fresh Air parent*

“We love how brave Alex is because he teaches our kids how to be fearless. He serves as a good example for them.”

In New York City, children register for free Fresh Air programs through a network of social service and community organizations. The Fund continues to expand its outreach by partnering with organizations that serve New York City’s culturally diverse communities. Rhodesia, a Fresh Air parent, said, “All that my daughter has learned will stay with her for a lifetime. The experience has shaped her decisions about her education and goals.”

...because a summer can last a lifetime.



CAMP



“I never imagined myself going to the farm, canoeing or hiking. Fresh Air made me who I am today.”

—Davina, *Fresh Air alumna*

Through immersive outdoor summer experiences, campers gain self-confidence, learn to adapt to new situations, develop life skills and make new friends. Campers learn to swim, hike along nature trails and stargaze while roasting s'mores. Counselors become mentors, friends and role models.

In 2017, 3,000 boys and girls experienced the joy of fun-filled recreational activities layered with academic enrichment during two-week sessions at The Fund's five camps, situated on more than 2,000 acres at The Fund's Sharpe Reservation in upstate New York.

The Fresh Air camps are: Camp Anita Bliss Coler for girls, ages nine to 15; Camp Hayden-Marks Memorial for boys, ages nine to 12; Camp Tommy, for 12- to 15-year-old boys; Camp Hidden Valley for boys and girls with and without special needs, ages eight to 12; and Camp Mariah, which

houses the Career Awareness Program, for boys and girls in 7th to 9th grades. Camp Mariah is named after Board member Mariah Carey, and Camp Tommy is named after Tommy Hilfiger, in recognition of their very generous support.

With nature as their classroom, campers compost, learn basic wilderness skills and develop a greater understanding of how we all have a responsibility to care for the environment.

Facilities are available for rent for day trips and weekend camping retreats. Close to 18,000 people from community and school groups in the tristate area participate in year-round programs at Sharpe Reservation.

Brianna, 15, said, “High ropes is one of my favorite activities because I get to overcome my fears with my friends.”

...because a summer can last a lifetime.



TEEN LEADERSHIP

The Fund's Teen Leadership Program provides young women, ages 13 to 17, with a safe, nurturing environment to focus on their future goals. Campers are challenged to develop their leadership skills and express themselves within an emotionally safe and supportive environment. They discover and develop their potential, and become more independent and self-confident. Teen leaders at Camp ABC participate in traditional camp activities in addition to leadership development and team-building workshops, creative writing classes and poetry slams.

During the summer, girls participate in Leaders-in-Training and Counselors-in-Training programs. In 2017, close to 200 campers were served through The Fund's Precious Center for Teen Leadership at Camp ABC. The Center was created with the generous support of The Gary Magness Family Foundation. Sarah Siegel-Magness and Gary Magness were inspired

“The Fresh Air Fund helped me realize that I don't have to follow the path that has been set out for me; instead, I can choose my own path.”

—Rosalee, *Fresh Air alumna*

by producing the film *Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire*. During the academic year, the youth-led Young Women's Giving Circle teaches girls about the importance of community service and the power of philanthropy.

Samantha, 16, said, “I didn't know what a role model was until I came to camp, and I always find out something new about myself. The workshops that I have attended have helped me with issues in school.”

...because a summer can last a lifetime.





“I’ve learned the difference between a job and a career. I want a career. I want to be a lawyer.”

—Jonathan, 12, Fresh Air child

The Career Awareness Program begins as an intensive 24-day summer camping experience for 300 boys and girls and extends into year-round academic enrichment programs. Students apply in the 6th grade and attend Camp Mariah, The Fund’s Career Awareness Camp. The program continues during the school year in New York City and at camp to expand educational options, academic support and career exploration.

The curriculum highlights several areas of the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) career pathways. During the summer, campers participate in lessons about the environment, both in the sciences and sustainability, interactive classes in music and technology, and lessons on math and its concepts.

During the academic year, at the annual Career Fair, volunteers lead interactive workshops to introduce students to possible future career paths, and Job Shadowings are hosted by a

range of partners who share with students the “behind the scenes” view of an industry. The weekly Tutoring Program pairs students with mentors and provides a structured curriculum that supports literacy skills development and strengthens critical thinking.

After 9th grade, students, many of whom will be the first in their family to attend college, transition into the College Connections Program, which provides the resources and support they need to apply to and graduate from college. The program offers SAT prep courses, college tours, and help applying for financial aid and scholarships. In addition to working closely with Fresh Air program staff, students meet weekly with volunteer mentors who provide ongoing guidance and support. Once in college, students stay connected with their mentors. Nayla, 18, said, “The Fresh Air Fund changed my life and prepared me for my future.”

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ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

NYC VOLUNTEERS



New York City volunteers play a vital role by supporting Fresh Air children year round and giving generously of their time, talent and creativity.

Volunteers become children's role models and mentors by offering guidance, support and inspiration. Tutors and mentors meet weekly with students in the Career Awareness Program, while other volunteers help with outreach efforts and much more.

In 2017, corporate volunteer teams included AYR, Blink Fitness, Bloomberg L.P., Con Edison, Cravath, Swaine & Moore, Equinox, ESPN, The Estée Lauder Companies, Fitch Ratings, Foursquare, HBO, HSBC, Morgan Stanley, MUFG Bank, NASDAQ, Proskauer Rose, Shake Shack, Showtime Networks, The TJX Companies, UNIQLO USA, The Walt Disney Company and Warner Music Group.

Corporate partners host Job Shadowings where students learn more about career options, volunteer at bus departures, and coordinate fundraising events, marketing campaigns

and drives for books and camp supplies. At The Fund's camps, volunteers participate in projects ranging from leading sports and arts and crafts workshops to acting as Counselors for a Day. Special thanks to Con Edison, Cravath, Swaine & Moore and The Estée Lauder Companies for donating in-kind printing services, to HBO for hosting the Volunteer Recognition Party and to Con Edison for hosting the annual Career Fair.

“I wanted to give back to the community and help students who are very much like me.”

—Bryan, *Fresh Air volunteer*

Michelle, a mentor, said, “The Fresh Air Fund is a family, and I feel so fortunate to be a part of it. Mentoring is more than just a volunteer activity. I am helping to change lives.”

...because a summer can last a lifetime.

CONDENSED SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Current Funds at Year Ended September 30,

	2017		2016	
Operating Support and Revenue				
Off-Season Use of Camps	\$ 1,222,558	7.4%	\$ 970,052	5.7%
Investment Income	5,527,832	33.7%	6,683,863	39.1%
Contributions*	9,671,826	58.9%	9,446,316	55.2%
Total Support and Revenue	\$ 16,422,216	100.0%	\$ 17,100,231	100.0%
Operating Expenses				
PROGRAM SERVICES				
Friendly Towns Activities	\$ 4,216,003	25.7%	\$ 4,218,148	24.7%
Fresh Air Camps	7,501,220	45.7%	7,406,623	43.3%
SUPPORTING SERVICES				
Management & General	1,106,885	6.7%	1,757,561	10.3%
Fund-Raising	3,598,108	21.9%	3,717,899	21.7%
Total Expenses	\$ 16,422,216	100.0%	\$ 17,100,231	100.0%

Notes to Financial Statements

Not included in the above are:

(a) Bequests and Trusts and Other Gifts added to funds functioning as Endowment	\$ 3,159,098	\$ 1,144,304
(b) Net gain (loss) on investment transactions	5,609,575	(4,851,548)
(c) Contributions to Land, Buildings and Equipment Fund	1,300,000	27,500
(d) Depreciation expense	(1,616,286)	(1,557,734)

* Total contributions raised also include items (a) and (c).
(Total contributions for 2017: \$ 14,211,490.)

A copy of our financial reports may be obtained from The Fresh Air Fund, 633 Third Avenue, 14th floor, New York, NY 10017 (212) 897-8900, or from the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271 ©2018 The Fresh Air Fund

The Fresh Air Fund is very grateful to our loyal and generous donors for support of our programs. The following names are listed in recognition of their gifts received from October 1, 2016, through December 31, 2017.

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LEGACIES & BEQUESTS INCOME

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If a bequest is made to The Fund, the suggested language is:

“I give and bequeath the sum of \$_____ (or _____% of my residuary estate)
 to The Fresh Air Fund for its general corporate purposes.”

The Fresh Air Fund is a not-for-profit corporation and is tax-exempt under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts are tax-deductible in the manner prescribed by law.

For additional information, please contact:
 Department of Development
 The Fresh Air Fund
 633 Third Avenue, 14th Floor
 New York, New York 10017
 Telephone: (212) 897-8900

As of September 30, 2017:

Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets	(\$)	Amount
Assets	\$	136,377,775
Liabilities	\$	539,522
FYE 2016, net assets balance	\$	127,385,866
FYE 2017, net assets balance	\$	135,838,253



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OUR TEAM



“ My favorite part about visiting my host family is spending every day outside.”

—Angel, 14, *Fresh Air child*



The New York Times

APRIL 28, 2017 EDITORIAL

Diving Into Summer With the Fresh Air Fund



Photo credit: Caleb Kenna for *The New York Times*

Alexis De La Rosa, 19, attends Middlebury College in Vermont on a full-tuition scholarship. He is majoring in pre-med and theater, which he says are “polar opposite fields of study” but “definitely provide a nice balance.” This would not be Mr. De La Rosa’s first tricky balancing act.

He was 7 when he learned how to swim. At the time, he lived with his mother and three siblings in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. That summer, his mother wanted to find something different for him to do. So off he went on a bus to New Canaan, Conn., for a two-week stay with the Reeds, a volunteer host family for the Fresh Air Fund.

Although getting to know new people in new surroundings was difficult at first, he eventually settled in. And when the Reeds invited him back the next year, he happily agreed. “The second summer was so much better,” Mr. De La Rosa said, “and the relationships got stronger.”

He continued to visit the Reeds for several summers. Most days were spent swimming, diving and playing tennis, with a few reading and math lessons in between. For Mr. De La Rosa, it was the “little things that resonated,” like having a daily routine that he was able to apply when he got back

home. By the time he reached high school, he worked up enough courage to join the swim team.

Mr. De La Rosa says he still plans to go to medical school one day, but he will take a year or two after graduation to explore “what the theater world has to offer.” He still keeps in touch with the Reeds. They have provided educational advice and emotional support through the different phases of his life. “Now,” he said, “I feel really comfortable in any space that I’m put in.”




This year, the fund aims to serve more than 7,000 New York City children from low-income communities and hopes to raise \$12 million by the end of September. Many children also participate in year-round academic enrichment programs. The cost of sending a child on a two-week vacation with a host family is \$1,172, and one session at a summer camp is \$1,925.

Tax-deductible donations can be sent to the Fresh Air Fund, 633 Third Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017, or made online at freshair.org. Families who wish to be hosts can write to the same address, fill out a host inquiry online or call 800-367-0003.

the *Fresh Air* fund
because a summer can last a lifetime™

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