



Camp Fire

PEOPLE & IMPACT

2019-2020



This report is dedicated to everyone in our Camp Fire family who lost their lives to COVID-19 or had family members and friends who did. At the time we published this report in May 2021, 569,875 people in the U.S. have lost their lives in the pandemic. We carry the weight of this reality with us and dedicate this report to you.

Introduction



2020. Quarantine began, schools closed, jobs were lost or furloughed, and 99% of in-person Camp Fire programs didn't happen. Councils adapted quickly: they offered emergency childcare for health-care workers, helped meet basic needs in their communities like providing meals and snacks, or began offering virtual programs so kids and teens could still have a place to connect with each other.

That wasn't all. We were in the middle of multiple pandemics. Protests erupted after George Floyd was murdered and numerous other Black lives lost. It was yet another reminder that systemic racism was still alive and well, and that there is much to be done to end it — and that Camp Fire has a role to play in that effort. The previous year, we had started to examine our work and organization through an equity lens, but 2020 only solidified the importance of investing time, energy, and attention in this work. We met with young people, staff members, board members, and other stakeholders to talk about the kind of organization we want and NEED to be for our young people — to become truly inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist, and actively break down the barriers of access for more young people so they can and want to come to Camp Fire.

In times of crisis, you see what people are really made of. For Camp Fire, our councils' unshakeable commitment to young people was evident. The network led with innovative, creative solutions. We rose to the challenges and worked tirelessly to help our kids and communities through a disruptive, difficult year. We continue to respond to these challenges in 2021.

We are committed to creating spaces where every young person can be their whole self and connect with others in a safe, affirming environment. We hear from Camp Fire youth that often our programs remain the only place where this holds true. The long-term impacts of COVID-19 and so many of our nation's youth being at home remain to be seen. But one thing is for sure: youth need connection more than ever. That is why our work remains so critical.

This report will be a bit different than those of past years. We use these pages to tell our 2020 story.

I am proud of this organization and all of you who came together, stepped up, and met the needs of your community in such a trying, atypical year. We continue to move forward together with the same vision: creating a place where all young people can thrive.

With hope and gratitude,



Greg Zweber

Section One

A Program Year Interrupted: COVID-19's Impact on Camp Fire's Programming

"As masks and social distancing remains part of our daily lives, we are reminded that we all need connection and a strong support network."

- Kaw Valley Center Health Systems

2020 was a program year like no other. COVID-19 made its appearance in the United States in the middle of the 2019-2020 school year, creating a dramatic halt to in-person programming. Youth were quickly transitioned to attending school virtually, many parents and guardians began working from home while simultaneously homeschooling, employers were forced to furlough or let go of many staff due to the economic impact, and the entire country was, and still is, encouraged to social distance and self-quarantine. We have yet to know the long-term impacts of COVID-19, but what became

clear was the opportunity programs like Camp Fire create for youth to connect with themselves, others and nature, and how deeply it is felt when those opportunities are no longer available. This section of the People & Impact Report shows how drastically programming changed once COVID-19 struck the nation. It also paints the picture of how the opportunities for youth to connect diminished in the face of COVID-19, and the need for innovative solutions.

YOUTH & FAMILIES SERVED

2019-2020:

98,945 youth and families served across 859 sites

2018-2019:

175,000 youth and families across 1,300 program sites

Why It Matters:

Camp Fire served youth and families in 441 fewer physical program sites than the year before. When looking at the total youth and families served in 2019-2020 program year compared to the 2018-2019 program year, 76,000 fewer youth and families had the opportunity to connect with others in Camp Fire programs. That leaves us with the question, if that many youth did not have access to Camp Fire programs and the resources available through those programs, including positive developmental relationships with caring adults, where were those needs met?*

See more about the COVID-19 impact on afterschool programs [here](#).

Absolutely Incredible Kid Day®

Camp Fire's digital AIKD campaign reached 16 million+ people globally. This was a 6 million increase from the previous year.

Absolutely Incredible Kid Day® (AIKD) is Camp Fire's holiday (established 1997) when adults are called on to encourage the young people in their lives.

Why It Matters:

Every kid deserves to know they are incredible. #AIKD is a huge opportunity for Camp Fire to increase brand awareness and make a big impact in the lives of young people. Thanks to our collective efforts, #Kidday secured a partnership with Amazon Studios' "TROOP ZERO" and Disney's "Call of the Wild".

* While most [afterschool] programs have innovated to stay open, they are only able to reach a fraction of the children and youth they were serving pre-COVID, with the average number of students served decreasing from 933 students per program to 368. http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Afterschool-COVID-19-Wave-1-Fact-Sheet.pdf?utm_source=sendinblue&utm_campaign=State_nets_week_8320_events&utm_medium=email

STUCK INSIDE: ACCESS TO SUMMER & OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

2019-2020

17 councils offered environmental and camp programs

- *2,814 youth served*
- *In-person Day Camp: 22 programs*
- *In-person Resident Camp: 3 programs*

2018-2019

41 councils offered environmental and camp programs

- *36,560 youth served*
- *In-person Day Camp: 53 programs*
- *In-person Resident Camp: 33 programs*

Why It Matters:

The number of youth served in outdoor programs dropped drastically from the 2018-2019 program year, due in large part to state restrictions on summer programs because of COVID-19. Connecting young people to the outdoors is a part of Camp Fire's DNA—we know it is a vital part of helping youth thrive and be their best selves. When we see how few youth had access to outdoor programming through Camp Fire because of COVID-19, that gives us great pause. In the summer of 2020, having in-person outdoor programming was not a viable option for everyone.

However, the need to have camp and outdoor programs available to youth in the summer of 2021 cannot be overstated.

"Now more than ever, it is crucial that we strategically and consciously create space for young people to move their bodies, be outside, and connect face-to-face with peers."

- Catherine Menendez for the American Camp Association

* <https://www.acacamps.org/news-publications/blogs/camp-connection/summer-camp-even-more-vital-2021-beyond>

RELATIONSHIPS LOST: SUMMER & OUTDOOR PROGRAM STAFF

2019-2020:

Total Full-time, Part-time, and seasonal staff: 1,826

Summer staff:

- *Resident Camp: 47 direct delivery staff*
- *Day Camp: 208 direct delivery staff*

2018-2019:

Total Full-time, Part-time, and seasonal staff: 2,395

Summer staff:

- *Resident Camp: 820 direct delivery staff*
- *Day Camp: 760 direct delivery staff*

Why It Matters:

Due to layoffs, furloughs, and not having summer programming, Camp Fire employed significantly fewer staff members than the previous year. The importance of positive developmental relationships is a big part of Camp Fire programming. With the reduction in staff and programming, young people missed the opportunity to be around adults who care about them, support them, and encourage growth..



Section Two

Camp Fire's Response to COVID-19

There were a lot of moments in 2020 where councils rose to the occasion and created innovative ways to meet the changing needs of their communities.

100,447

*Youth and Families
Served Virtually**

Why It Matters:

Camp Fire councils in collaboration with Camp Fire National Headquarters worked quickly to create opportunities for youth and families to have access to Camp Fire programming, even with stay-at-home orders. Across the country, councils provided ways for youth to get outside, help their communities (while social-distancing) and stay physically active.*



* This number contains some duplication from those participants who were also served in-person. This also includes the resource downloads from Camp Fire National's COVID-19 Resource Page <https://campfire.org/covid-19-resources/> and <https://campfire.org/familyactivities/>

MAKING AN IMPACT

Meeting Youth Where They Are: Camp Fire Alaska

When the pandemic hit Alaska, it was clear that Camp Fire program staff would not be able to travel to the rural communities they normally serve. But they knew that the youth in those communities still needed a place to connect with each other and with supportive adults. So instead of sending staff to the communities, Camp Fire Alaska trained members of each community on how to deliver Camp Fire programming and provide social-emotional learning opportunities. Offering support from a distance, Camp Fire Alaska equipped each community while keeping themselves and the youth they serve safe.

Creating Community Support: Camp Fire Heartland

Camp Fire Heartland saw very quickly that the pandemic was going to create a huge obstacle for young people to stay engaged in learning as schools started going virtual. As the need for access to technology and safe learning environments grew, Camp Fire Heartland reached out to other local youth serving and community serving organizations to meet the need, creating an Out-of-School Collaborative (the first of its kind in Kansas City!).

Camp-In-A-Box: Camp Fire Heart of Oklahoma

Camp Fire Heart of Oklahoma quickly pulled together a creative solution to help youth connect with nature even when summer camp couldn't happen: Camp-in-a-Box! Families signed up to receive a curated box of resources and activities to do as a family while staying socially distanced and safe.

Collaborative Support: Camp Fire Central Oregon

Camp Fire Central Oregon partnered with their local school district, the Better Together collaborative, and eight other community organizations to offer emergency childcare and educational support to their community once COVID-19 hit. The schools identified youth and families that needed extra support during the pandemic and had regular Zoom meetings with both the partner organizations and the executive director of elementary schools to solve problems.



User Groups Increased

- ***154 Groups***
- ***6,924 Youth and Adults Served***

Why It Matters:

More families than ever before had access to Camp Fire campgrounds and cabins, which allowed families to get outdoors and connect with each other and nature, all while continuing to social distance. Councils were also able to get creative with ways they could use the assets they have to help fill the gap in programming that was interrupted by COVID-19.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Getting Families to Camp: Camp Fire Columbia

When it became clear that summer camp was not going to happen for Camp Fire Columbia, the team started thinking of ways to get families outside together in safe ways. For the first time ever, the council rented out their camp cabins to individual families to serve as a getaway during the COVID-19 stay-at-home mandate. Their cabins and campground served as a place that families could connect with one another and nature all while staying socially distanced and safe.

Staff Professional Development

- *2019 Promise to Practice Conference* 15 hours*
- *2019 National Leadership Conference* 22 hours*
- *2 distance learning courses (Training of the Trainer and Virtual Learning Bootcamp) 9+ hours*
- *6 webinars for program staff from April 2020 – August 2020 6 hours*
- *4 new online courses added to Learning Lab (online learning platform) April 2020 – August 2020 8 hours*
- *7 Program Leaders Calls April 2020 – August 2020 7 hours*
- *10 Marketing Calls 10 hours*

Over 77+ hours of Professional Development offered

Why It Matters:

While councils could not offer programs in the same ways, many took the opportunity to offer additional professional development trainings for their staff. This also gave councils the opportunity to share with each other what was working in their communities. Camp Fire National Headquarters also sent virtual care packages to help staff members across the country feel connected and inspired.



Course Completions

From May through June 2020 there were 969 Learning Lab course completions

CAMP FIRE AT A GLANCE

2019-2020:

430 partner organizations

2018-2019:

900 partner organizations

Why It Matters:

One of the ways Camp Fire reaches so many youth and families is through our community partnerships. Camp Fire is part of a web of community support, working in partnership with schools and community-based organizations to meet the social and emotional needs of young people, provide mental health support, provide resources to meet their basic needs, and more.

YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS

