

Camp Encourage



General Information

Contact Information

Nonprofit	Camp Encourage
Address	4025 Central Street Kansas City, MO 64111
Phone	(816) 830-7171
Fax	816 301-6228
Website	campencourage.org
Facebook	facebook.com/http://www.facebook.com/campencourage
Twitter	twitter.com/campencourage
Email	info@campencourage.org

At A Glance

How to donate, support, and volunteer

- Donations can be sent by form of check to "Camp Encourage" at 4025 Central, Kansas City, MO 64111
- Information on in-kind donations can be found here: <https://campencourage.org/donate/>
- Volunteer opportunities are outlined here: <https://campencourage.org/volunteer/>

Mission & Areas Served

Statements

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to encourage social growth, independence, and self-esteem in youth with autism spectrum disorders through a quality, overnight camp experience located in the greater Kansas City area.

Background Statement

Camp Encourage was founded in 2007 due to the community expressing a dire need for a quality camp opportunity for children with autism spectrum disorder. Camp Encourage gives youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) an opportunity to “be themselves” in a structured, supportive, and supervised environment. Our programs are designed specifically to provide an environment for children with autism where: abilities are celebrated, campers are comfortable taking risks and trying new adventures, campers grow and become more socially confident and independent, and the necessary supports are in place to meet their needs.

In just ten years of operation, Camp Encourage has more than quadrupled our services while continuing to keep our operating costs low. Our organization is run by two year-round, part-time staff members and governed by a Board of Directors. In 2017, we (excitedly!) added additional seasonal staff to assist with programming, event planning, and database entry, including one staff member on the autism spectrum. The remaining camp staff--ranging from activity facilitators, camp counselors, and medical staff--are all pre-screened volunteers who give over 22,500 hours to the organization each year.

In fourteen camp sessions thus far (not including the four 2017 sessions), we have served a total of 701 youth -- 533 on the autism spectrum and 168 same-aged peers. In the same period, we have distributed \$406,205 in scholarship funding to campers who would have otherwise not been able to attend. Despite very little marketing, each year the number of campers wanting to attend camp far exceeds available slots and the 85% reapplication rate among campers is a great indicator that our programs are very meaningful for the individuals we serve.

Impact Statement

In 2016 and 2017, we:

- Added overnight weekend sessions beginning in March 2017, increasing the amount of campers served to 170 in 2017 (over FOUR times the amount we served in our initial year!)
- Celebrated TEN years of providing this important service
- Commissioned the design of a new website and branded materials
- Increased our staff size and capacity
- Completed our 2014-2017 Strategic Plan

Goals for the coming year include:

- Create a new Strategic Plan to guide our work over the next three to four years
- Increase our marketing efforts, especially in urban and rural areas where our programs are less known
- Increase the diversity of our campers; begin reaching out and partnering with programs in the urban core to include them in our services
- Continue to maintain our quality services while growing our programs to further meet the needs of youth with autism in our region

Needs Statement

The success of Camp Encourage depends on the active support and participation of our community. Current needs include:

- **Scholarship funds** to support the approximately 65% of campers annually in need of financial assistance. In 2017, over \$58,000.
- **Volunteers.** As our services continue to grow, so does our need for volunteers throughout the year and during camp sessions.
- **Program support and activity supplies** (cash or in-kind). Materials that we frequently consume and have to replace each camp session include:
 - Sensory materials such as beans, rice, and cornmeal
 - Art supplies such as Sharpies, colored pencils, markers, crayons
 - Medical supplies
 - White cardstock
 - Ziploc bags of various sizes
 - Hanging name badges
 - Paper towels
- **Marketing support** on our Board of Directors or through Committee involvement so that we can continue to reach individuals on the autism spectrum not currently aware of our programs, especially those in the urban core.
- **Storage materials** for our camp supplies, including 2 (or more) storage shelves, medium and heavy duty storage tubs, and packing tape.

CEO/Executive Director/Board Chair Statement

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has steadily been on the rise over the last forty years, impacting 1 in every 68th child by current CDC estimates. Despite the rapid growth, few opportunities for supportive and inclusive recreational activities exist in our region. With a goal to meet that need, we support families with quality care, empower youth with ASD, and give those served the support and confidence needed long after camp has ended.

This year we celebrate our tenth year of providing overnight camp programming for youth with autism spectrum disorder! I can say without doubt that this is the strongest the organization has ever been. As one of the founding Board members, I am pleased to see what great strides Camp Encourage has made in governance and organizational growth. We have successfully passed through the startup phase, and have worked to strengthen our organizational capacity with the addition of processes and policies regarding the operational control of Camp Encourage. We have an excellent working relationship between the founding Executive Director, the Board of Directors, and the other stakeholders, which include the clients and their families, volunteers, donors and granting agencies. Our Board is actively engaged and our community continues to provide support and encouragement. All decisions made are focused on the mission of Camp Encourage with a consistent focus on maintaining QUALITY supports for the population of youth with autism which we serve. One of our main challenges will be to increase our staff capacity while continuing to keep operating expenses low. Our success is -- in large part -- due to our commitment to delivering quality services, and we recognize the need to add additional staff members (and/or increase current staff hours) to maintain that level of quality we are known for in our community. We also recognize the need to expand our marketing efforts to begin to reach individuals and portions of the community not currently served.

With these challenges in mind, we are eager to begin a new phase of growth in 2017 and beyond to further meet the needs of the growing population of youth with autism spectrum disorder in our region. One thing I can say with full confidence: regardless of what comes next for our small organization, I have full confidence Camp Encourage will continue to grow and provide this important service to our community due to the Board and staff's commitment to excellence, transparency, and good governance.

Service Categories

Autism

Camps

Youth Development Programs

Areas of Service

Areas Served

Areas

In a specific U.S. city, cities, state(s) and/or region.

KS

MO

Priority is given to those residing in Missouri and Kansas.

Programs

Programs

Overnight summer camp programs for youth with autism spectrum disorder

Description	<p>Camp Encourage provides a safe environment for youth (ages 8 - 18) with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) where: abilities are celebrated, campers are comfortable taking risks and trying new adventures, campers grow and become more socially confident and independent, and the necessary supports are in place to meet their needs. Our overnight summer camp sessions last four days and three nights.</p> <p>With all of our camp sessions, we combine a mixture of traditional camp activities such as horseback riding, arts and crafts, fishing, singing around the campfire, and swimming with additional activities throughout the day that are individualized according to each camper's needs and abilities. Past offerings have included photography, videography, Lego construction, theater, chess, art, and music therapy. Individual camper needs are met throughout the day (and often, night), and may include positive behavioral supports, frequent sensory breaks, and other individualized supports and instruction.</p>
Category	Recreation & Sports, General/Other Camping
Population Served	Other Named Groups, ,
Short-Term Success	<p>Upon arrival to Camp Encourage, we want campers to feel accepted and appreciated for being just who they are. We want them to confidently feel that Camp Encourage is a place where strengths are the focus, rather than difficulties and differences.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence from surveys indicate that campers, after an initial camping experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet new friends;• Meet others with similar interests and/or needs;• Feel good about themselves;• Demonstrate enhanced self-esteem;• Feel they have been provided with opportunities for social growth;• Try new activities (which is significant for this population of individuals that are often resistant to do so), and• "Stand a little taller" (as many parents describe).
Long- Term Success	<p>Goals for each CAMPER include increasing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills of independence• Self-esteem• Self-understanding and acceptance• Social abilities• Recreation skills• Connections with like individuals <p>We also provide PARENTS and SIBLINGS with much needed respite. Our focus for the PEER MODELS and VOLUNTEERS is increasing: his or her knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of ASD, and his or her appreciation of individual differences.</p>

Program Success Monitored By

We use an online survey immediately following camp. Surveys are completed by volunteers, parents, campers, and peer models. Each year, the feedback allows us to refine camp operations and better meet the desires and expectations of youth with ASD and their families. Past feedback has included:

- "(My son) came back from Camp Encourage very happy, more independent, and self-sufficient! It is no accident that his self-confidence increased and his enjoyment in the summertime shined through his spirit. Thanks for putting together a great program that gave our son a chance to be himself and find happiness being with others." -Parent
- "I felt that I was finally part of the group and that people like me for me." -Camper
- "Camp Encourage felt like family!" -Camper

In 2017 we are working with a doctoral student from the University of Kansas to further collect and analyze data on the impact camp has on those who attend.

Examples of Program Success

Data focused on our goals is collected and analyzed through pre- and post- camp surveys from campers, parents, and volunteers. We collect many stories and anecdotes about the impact of camp, including:

- A camper who was barely verbal when she began camp as a young teenager in 2008, and is now serving as an advocate and leader for young adults with autism in the region
- Campers who aged out of the program but now possess the skills and confidence to serve as counselors or activity facilitators during camp
- Peer models who decided pursue autism-related studies in college after attending Camp Encourage
- Feedback from parents who notice changes in their youth such as:
 - "He was not the least bit reluctant to attend, unlike other experiences. This camp has helped him to become more self confident and independent."
 - "He is going to bed all by himself now! He has made huge gains in his life and social skills. It was a big deal for him to go to camp without Mom or Dad being there and he flourished."

Weekend mini-camp programs for youth with autism spectrum disorder

Description	<p>Camp Encourage provides a safe environment for youth (ages 8 - 18) with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) where: abilities are celebrated, campers are comfortable taking risks and trying new adventures, campers grow and become more socially confident and independent, and the necessary supports are in place to meet their needs. Our mini-camp weekend sessions last two days and one night.</p> <p>We combine a mixture of traditional camp activities (depending on the season) such as horseback riding, arts and crafts, fishing, and singing around the campfire with activities throughout the day that are individualized according to each camper's needs and abilities. Choice activities that allow campers to pick activities based on their interests and abilities, rather than having to participate in activities they may not like or cannot do. This also reduces the instances of negative behavior, and allows our campers to meet, interact with, and make friends with other individuals who have similar interests.</p>
Category	Recreation & Sports, General/Other Camping
Population Served	Other Named Groups, ,
Short-Term Success	<p>Similar to our overnight summer camp programs, we want campers to feel accepted and appreciated for being just who they are. We want them to confidently feel that Camp Encourage is a place where strengths are the focus, rather than difficulties and differences.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence from surveys indicate that campers, after an initial camping experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet new friends;• Meet others with similar interests and/or needs;• Feel good about themselves;• Demonstrate enhanced self-esteem;• Feel they have been provided with opportunities for social growth;• Try new activities (which is significant for this population of individuals that are often resistant to do so), and• "Stand a little taller" (as many parents describe).
Long- Term Success	<p>Similar to our overnight summer camp programs, the goals for each CAMPER include increasing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills of independence• Self-esteem• Self-understanding and acceptance• Social abilities• Recreation skills• Connections with like individuals <p>Additionally, the shorter weekend programs give campers the opportunity to try overnight camp before committing to the longer summer session and/or providing an opportunity for campers to reconnect with our mission and each other more than once a year.</p> <p>We also provide PARENTS and SIBLINGS with much needed respite.</p> <p>Our focus for the PEER MODELS and VOLUNTEERS is increasing: his or her knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of ASD, and his or her appreciation of individual differences.</p>

Program Success Monitored By Similar to our overnight summer camp programs, we use an online survey immediately following camp. Surveys are completed by volunteers, parents, campers, and peer models. Each year, the feedback allows us to refine camp operations and better meet the desires and expectations of youth with ASD and their families.

Examples of Program Success 2017 is our first year of providing the shorter weekend sessions, and we are still gathering data on the impact the shorter programs have on those who attend.

Our first weekend session took place in March 2017, and feedback about the program included:

- "My favorite memory was laughing with everyone." -Camper
- "I loooooooved it! One of the best experiences of my life. I need to keep my positive, uplifting, and patient attitude 24/7. Great energy there from absolutely everyone!" -Volunteer
- "This was the first time he spent any time away from us. I think it gave him a different perspective on how life can be." -Parent

CEO Comments

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates autism spectrum disorder, often referred to as ASD or autism, affects at least one in every sixty-eight children currently. While the number of youth affected continues to increase, opportunities for inclusive and specialized recreational activities for them remains limited, especially in the greater Kansas City region. Youth with ASD often present greater needs than their non-spectrum peers, including: lack of self-esteem and self-understanding, decreased understanding of healthy lifestyles (many exercise little, have selective or restricted diets, or have side effects from medications), and delays or differences in social and emotional development. These increased needs make it more difficult for them to grow and succeed in the "traditional" recreational programs.

Research shows that increased exposure to the natural environment -- especially in prolonged settings, such as an overnight camp -- can have the same positive impact on youth as our stated goals for our campers:

- Increased independence, focus, and social abilities
- Increased self-esteem, self-awareness, and acceptance
- Teaching positive values and decision-making skills
- Fostering a love for the outdoors and more active hobbies
- Promoting adventure and exploration
- Connecting with other individuals who have similar interests or abilities

With programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of youth with autism, Camp Encourage helps fill the gap in available services, providing a quality, often life-changing experience for the growing population of individuals on the autism spectrum in our region. Since our founding year, we have always had more individuals wanting to attend than we have had available slots. We were eager to add overnight weekend sessions in 2017 to continue to meet the needs of the growing population of individuals on the autism spectrum, and look forward to additional further growth.

Our staff and our Board of Directors strongly believe in our mission and can see the positive impact camp has on the individuals who participate--both as campers and as volunteers. Our hope is that with the support of the community and the families involved in our camps, the weekend sessions will grow continue to grow to the point of one per quarter or one per month. As a smaller organization, it is difficult to provide service to every individual in Kansas and Missouri, but we are ready to take on the challenge, and serve as many individuals as possible while maintaining the level of quality services we are known for in our community.

Leadership & Staff

Executive Director/CEO

Executive Director	Mrs. Kelly Nicole Lee M.S.Ed.
Term Start	Apr 2007
Email	info@campencourage.org
Compensation	\$0 - \$50,000

Experience

Kelly Lee has always had a passion for teaching and a heart for those with special needs. She received an undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia in Learning Disabilities, Behavior Disorders, and Cognitive Impairments (K through 12). At KU, Mrs. Lee obtained a Masters Degree in Special Education with an emphasis in autism. Prior to her present role as the Camp Encourage Executive Director, Mrs. Lee served as an Autism Specialist for seven years, taught special education for seven years in the elementary and high school settings, designed and facilitated community-based social development groups for children ages 12-18, worked as a counselor at a local outdoor and diversity education camp through two summers, and served roles for seven years at **Camp Determination** as a volunteer, counselor, and Director. Attending camps as a child, she knows the positive impact such experiences can have on one's character, beliefs, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and abilities.

Staff

Paid Full-Time Staff	0
Paid Part- Time Staff	5
Volunteers	200
Retention Rate	0%
Paid Contractors	0

Formal Evaluations

CEO Formal Evaluation	Yes
CEO/Executive Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually
Senior Management Formal Evaluation	Yes
Senior Management Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually
NonManagement Formal Evaluation	Yes
Non Management Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually

Plans & Policies

Organization Has a Fundraising Plan	Yes
Organization Has a Strategic Plan	Yes
Management Succession Plan	Under Development
Organization Policy and Procedures	Yes
Nondiscrimination Policy	Yes
Whistleblower Policy	Yes

Collaborations

Camp Encourage partners with Tall Oaks Conference Center, the nonprofit that owns the campgrounds where camp takes place. Tall Oaks offers the facilities and staffing that allow our programming to take place, they are keenly aware of the needs and supports our campers require in order to have successful a successful overnight camp experience.

Since 2011, between six and twelve students from the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program of the Missouri Health Professions Consortium are present at Camp Encourage. As part of the students' coursework toward certification, students assist at Camp Encourage for a total of roughly forty hours, supporting the sensory needs and daily living skills of our campers. Through this hands on experience, the students are able to develop activities and supports while also putting their training into practice.

Perhaps the most important partnership is the entire Camp Encourage volunteer base. Each year, over 300 volunteers across the region, some coming from as far as Minnesota and Nebraska, generously give over 10,000 hours of service to Camp Encourage. Without these volunteers, who come from a wide-range of backgrounds, Camp Encourage would not be possible.

Government Licenses

Is your organization licensed by the government?

Board & Governance

Board Chair

Board Chair	Mrs. Jenny Hines
Company Affiliation	Keller Williams Realty Partners
Term	Feb 2013 to Feb 2018
Email	jennynation@hotmail.com

Board Members

Name	Affiliation
Stephanie Bond	Community Volunteer
Elizabeth Boresow MT - BC	High Five
Leigh Gruber Ed.D.	Fort Osage School District
Jenny Hines	Keller Williams Realty Partners, Inc
Julius Karash	Julius Karash Communications
David Kempfe	Principal Financial Group
Kelly Lee M.S.Ed.	Camp Encourage
Sarah North	Community Volunteer
Kaye Otten Ph.D.	Assistant Professor of Special Education: University of Central Missouri
Sarah Otto	Case Management Services, Inc. and UMKC School of Special Education
John Tongier	Law Offices of John D. Tongier, LLC

Board Demographics - Ethnicity

African American/Black	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0
Caucasian	11
Hispanic/Latino	0
Native American/American Indian	0
Other	0

Board Demographics - Gender

Male	3
Female	8
Unspecified	0

Governance

Board Term Lengths	3
Board Term Limits	2

Board Meeting Attendance %	80%
Written Board Selection Criteria?	Yes
Written Conflict of Interest Policy?	Yes
Percentage Making Monetary Contributions	100%
Percentage Making In-Kind Contributions	100%
Constituency Includes Client Representation	Yes
Number of Full Board Meetings Annually	4

Standing Committees

Finance

Program / Program Planning

Special Events (Golf Tournament, Walk / Run, Silent Auction, Dinner / Gala)

Marketing

Advisory Board Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Katherine E. Cook Ph.D.	Olathe School District
Theresa Vollrath Ph.D.	University of Central MO

Financials

Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year Start	Jan 01, 2017
Fiscal Year End	Dec 31, 2017
Projected Revenue	\$249,119.00
Projected Expenses	\$231,701.00
Endowment Value	\$0.00
Percentage	0%

Detailed Financials

Revenue and Expenses

Fiscal Year	2015	2014	2013
Total Revenue	\$241,102	\$143,260	\$125,365
Total Expenses	\$220,499	\$147,114	\$123,585

Revenue Sources

Fiscal Year	2015	2014	2013
Foundation and Corporation Contributions	\$112,492	\$100,167	\$81,387
Government Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal	\$0	\$0	\$0
State	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local	\$0	\$0	\$0
Unspecified	\$0	\$0	\$0
Individual Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0
Indirect Public Support	\$429	\$0	\$0
Earned Revenue	\$113,530	\$51,315	\$46,276
Investment Income, Net of Losses	\$0	\$0	\$0
Membership Dues	\$0	\$0	\$0
Special Events	\$14,651	(\$9,119)	(\$2,298)
Revenue In-Kind	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$0	\$897	\$0

Expense Allocation

Fiscal Year	2015	2014	2013
Program Expense	\$148,785	\$94,577	\$76,658
Administration Expense	\$24,873	\$52,537	\$40,829
Fundraising Expense	\$46,841	\$0	\$6,098
Payments to Affiliates	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue/Total Expenses	1.09	0.97	1.01
Program Expense/Total Expenses	67%	64%	62%
Fundraising Expense/Contributed Revenue	37%	0%	8%

Assets and Liabilities

Fiscal Year	2015	2014	2013
Total Assets	\$50,050	\$28,752	\$32,031
Current Assets	\$43,004	\$19,205	\$32,031
Long-Term Liabilities	\$0	\$0	\$0
Current Liabilities	\$1,870	\$1,175	\$600
Total Net Assets	\$48,180	\$27,577	\$31,431

Short Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2015	2014	2013
Current Ratio: Current Assets/Current Liabilities	23.00	16.34	53.39

Long Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2015	2014	2013
Long-Term Liabilities/Total Assets	0%	0%	0%

Top Funding Sources

Fiscal Year	2015	2014	2013
Top Funding Source & Dollar Amount	Anonymous \$38,619	Camps For Kids \$25,734	--
Second Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	Anonymous \$6,628	Individual Donor \$10,000	--
Third Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	Anonymous \$5,000	Individual Donor \$5,959	--

Capital Campaign

Currently in a Capital Campaign?	No
Goal	\$0.00

Foundation Comments

- FY 2015, 2014, 2013: Financial data reported from IRS form 990.
- Foundation/corporation revenue line may include contributions from individuals.