

Camp Camarillo grant proposal

This proposal was written for Camp Camarillo, a ministry program for the church I was attending in the 1990s. I have included only the text of the proposal. The complete proposal included many attachments that I helped compile but did not write.

The text of the proposal that follows was completely written by me. I read everything available regarding the ministry, conducted interviews and researched government records to become informed before writing. Then I wrote and rewrote the proposal.

The grant was funded by a California based charitable foundation.

CAMP CAMARILLO PROPOSAL

Summary of Request

This proposal is on behalf of Camp Camarillo, a non-profit agency serving the needs of Ventura County children since 1989. We run a Before and After School program and a Summer Day Camp for children ages 4 to 12. Our program involves taking the children to school in the morning and picking them up from school in the afternoon. We maintain a fleet of three vans to accomplish this task. Our program has experienced tremendous growth and three vans are no longer adequate to meet our program needs. We are requesting a grant in the amount of \$12,000 for the purchase of used 15-passenger van.

Introduction to Camp Camarillo

The vision of two men, Kenneth (Bud) Harley and Mike Ford, Camp Camarillo was designed to give children a safe and engaging way to spend their summer and to give working parents a viable option for reasonable child care that is committed to the welfare of children. Having worked in similar summer camps, Bud and Mike were both convinced that a church was the ideal environment for such a program. Upon meeting with church officials they were invited to begin Camp Camarillo at Camarillo Baptist Church, Camarillo, California. The Camp holds its 501(c)(3) non-profit status through this church. While Camarillo Baptist Church lists Camp Camarillo as one of its programs, we are completely self supporting and receive no financial benefits from the church other than free rent.

That first summer saw registrations grow from 35 to 110 children with an average daily attendance of 38. Our summer program has continued to grow to a high registration in 1994 of 400. Average daily attendance this past summer was 117. In September 1992 Camp Camarillo expanded to year round programming with an After School program. Before School care was

added in January 1993. This program too, has seen tremendous growth. Beginning with 13 children in September of 1992 the Before and After School program now registers over 200 children with an average daily attendance over 100. Please see enclosed charts.

In addition to our two main programs, we also have a kindergarten program that averages 25 in attendance. This program parallels the half day kindergarten classes held at public school. Children who attend afternoon classes at public school come to Camp Camarillo in the morning and then come back to camp when the public school class has ended. Afternoon sessions are held at Camp for morning public school kindergarteners. This summer we also started a pilot program for Jr. High teens called Summer Servants. These teenagers had the opportunity to travel to Mexico to work at an orphanage and up to Oregon to work in a community children's program. The program was well received by teens and their parents and will probably be held again next year if funding allows.

Our camp has full-day programming whenever school is closed during the school year. We run a two-week Christmas camp and a one-week Easter camp. When a local school has a teacher in-service day, camp runs all day for those children affected. With the exception of major holidays, if school is closed, camp is open.

From its inception Camp Camarillo has been committed to investing in children. With an adult to child ratio of about 1 to 8, counselors are trained to discern and meet individual needs. Building one-to-one adult-child relationships is at the foundation of this investment. Programmed activities are geared to lend to this relationship building.

During Summer Day Camp the campers are divided into teams of about 15-20 children with an assigned counselor. About 1/3 of each day is spent in team activities, allowing for camaraderie and disciplined interaction. About 1/3 of each day is spent in structured activities that do not involve team assignment. Campers are able to choose from many different activities such as arts and crafts, games and sports, and other options. The enclosed Summer Day Camp brochure details many of these activities. Each activity is overseen by one or more staff counselors

allowing children to interact with adults not assigned to their team. This gives counselors and campers a chance to build relationships on the basis of personality and emotional need.

About 1/3 of each day is given to free time. The church facility has a large grassy area where children can play with the Camp Camarillo sports equipment. There is a school sized swing set which includes a rope swing. The grassy area has a covered shady place with benches. The large church parking lot also doubles as a playground. It is equipped with basketball hoops, four square courts and hop scotch. A jump rope can usually be seen at work. Many card and checker games are played during free time. Electronic and computerized pocket games are not allowed at camp. Staff counselors are with the children at all times during their free time. This is, in fact, the most productive time for counselors to interact with children on a one-to-one basis. Many times a counselor can be seen sitting and talking with one or two children during free time.

The structure for the Before and After School program is more focused than Summer Day Camp. A major portion of each afternoon can be spent in the homework room which is separated from the main camp area. This room is equipped with children's encyclopedia, maps and other resources. At least one staff counselor is on duty in the room at all times. Tutoring is available as needed. On any given afternoon, other activities may include arts and crafts, games and sports, supervised indoor board games and occasional children's videos.

At the beginning of Summer Day Camp and the Before and After School program campers are given a set of 20 conduct rules which they are expected to maintain. Most are simple guidelines about what is and is not allowed within and around the camp facility. No gum, no electronic games, no bouncing balls in certain areas are typical of the list of rules. "No fighting, swearing, name calling, or any aggressive behavior of any type is allowed at camp." This is the only rule addressing attitude. Children are allowed to be children, while a safe and comfortable environment is maintained for all. Counselors are trained to act in a way that prevents discipline problems before they occur. Disciplinary action is rare and each is documented. A list of these rules is enclosed.

All Camp Camarillo counseling staff attend an annual weekend training session. This training follows a 130-page manual which covers such areas as staff policies and responsibilities, child development, communicating with children, discipline and problem avoidance skills, building self esteem in children, and child abuse recognition and response. One of the unique aspects of the Camp Camarillo staff make up is the high percentage of men. Sixty percent of the staff is composed of men in their mid to late 20s. This gives campers the opportunity to bond with a strong male role model, which many of these children are missing.

Community Need

As in all communities, Camarillo has its share of single parent families. According to the 1990 U.S. Census Bureau report Camarillo has 12,192 households with children under the age of 18. Of those, 13% are single parent families. Of those in this 13% category, 10% are headed by single women. This 10% figure represents 1,272 households, presumably many with more than one child. Even at one child per household 1,272 is a lot of children with no father in the home. It is the need of these greater than 1,300 children that touches the heart of every person who works at Camp Camarillo. It is our goal to give these children a tangible model of caring adult men.

An analysis of Camp Camarillo records indicates that we are above the community average in percentage of single parent family children. At least 18% of our campers are presently from single parent families. In every case, the parent works full time.

The Census Bureau reports that of the 87% of two-parent households in Camarillo, 63% of them have both parents in the labor force. This is the second and broader target for our services. These families are the backbone of Camp Camarillo and it is our intent to accommodate their needs in every way possible.

Goals and Directions

Camp Camarillo is committed to investing in children, within the context of their whole lives. This inevitably leads to an investment in families. It is our long term goal to enlarge our program to eventually include a family life center. This center would offer marriage and family counseling, parenting skill classes and other parent/child resources. We would envision this center to be a reality within ten years.

More immediate goals focus on more immediate concerns for the children in our community. So much of a child's time is spent in school. Like every other school district, Camarillo's schools are overcrowded and under funded. While we praise the teachers in our local schools for their valiant efforts, we believe there is room for alternative educational opportunities.

Camarillo currently has two other private schools offering pre-kindergarten to high school classes. Both are operating at capacity and each has a waiting list. We are convinced, by this and by interaction with the parents of our Before and After School children, that Camarillo would benefit by another private school.

We have begun steps to meet that need. We have been approved by the State to begin operating a preschool and are in the process of locating a director and staff. We expect to have one class functioning by September 1995. Our intention is to add one or more classes each year thereafter. Within ten years we expect to be operating a full pre-kindergarten through high school.

This will in no way diminish our child care programs. We believe it will, in fact, enhance our ability to offer more challenging programming to those who come to us from the public school each day. The greater resources we would have as a school would be available to utilize within our After School program. We are committed to maintaining this vital community service.

Economic Information

Since 1991 Camp Camarillo has operated with a positive balance. Until now our only source of funding was fees billed to those attending. We have had occasional donations in the form of scholarship money and goods and services, but these are negligible. With the addition of volunteer services by a Director of Development we are beginning to explore other forms of income that can keep our programming relevant and engaging while keeping our billed fees at an affordable rate for parents.

Along with pursuing foundation grant funds we are investigating corporate funding, gift in kind donations from manufacturers and local merchants, and we are laying the ground work for community volunteer involvement. We are committed to keeping our program staffed with highly qualified and committed individuals. At the same time we want to use every dollar as wisely as possible to keep costs down.

Immediate Camp Need

When we first began our Before and After School program we picked the children up from school in one of two buses that we had acquired. We were soon informed by the California Highway Patrol that this was a violation of their regulations and that vans were required for this task. We immediately leased two 15-passenger vans from a local church which we eventually purchased. Since then we have purchased an additional used 15-passenger van.

During the school year Camp Camarillo picks children up from nine different schools in the community. The children leave school at either 2:30 or 3:30 in the afternoon. Two times a day, we make the rounds to these schools. With only three vans to accomplish this mission there are some problems.

Going to three different schools that end at the same time, any one of our drivers is not able to stay at any one school for very long. This has on several occasions necessitated leaving without children who were expected, so that children at the next location will not be waiting unsupervised. Occasionally, we will receive a phone call from one of the schools asking that we

pick up a child who was delayed in getting to our pick-up location. We, of course, immediately go and get the child as soon as a van is free.

Because our attendance has grown so rapidly, we often pick up a whole van load of children from a single school. We must then return to Camp before others can be picked up. This condition requires that we send one of our counselors to one of the schools to supervise children who are waiting for a Camp van. The school does not provide this supervision.

Also, with only three vans, we are greatly handicapped when one of them becomes disabled. One of our vans has over 100,000 miles and the other two are fast approaching this mark. We are spending over \$1,500 a year per van in maintenance and repair costs. While, for the most part, these vans have been dependable, an additional van for our fleet would alleviate the problems that are created by a breakdown. It would also solve our routing problems and allow all of our counselors to remain at Camp where they are needed.

Last year we purchased a van from Miles Leasing Services. They sell Dodge/Chrysler vans that were used in corporate van pool programs. Their 1992, used, 15-passenger vans range in price from \$10,800 to \$12,500 (see enclosed documentation). A grant of \$12,000 would allow us to purchase a 1992 van and bring it into compliance with CHP regulations.