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the *Fresh Air* fund

serving children since 1877

FACTS ABOUT THE FRESH AIR FUND

THE FRESH AIR FUND, an independent, not-for-profit agency, has provided free summer vacations to more than 1.7 million New York City children from low-income communities since 1877.

Nearly 10,000 New York City children enjoy free Fresh Air Fund programs annually. In 2008, close to 5,000 children visited volunteer host families in suburbs and small town communities across 13 states from Virginia to Maine and Canada. 3,000 children also attended five Fresh Air camps on a 2,300-acre site in Fishkill, New York. The Fund's year-round camping program serves an additional 2,000 young people each year.

FRESH AIR CHILDREN

Children are selected to participate in The Fresh Air Fund Friendly Town program based on financial need. Children are from low-income communities. Fresh Air youngsters are registered by more than 90 social service and community organizations in all five boroughs of New York City.

FRESH AIR FUND FRIENDLY TOWN PROGRAM

Fresh Air children, boys and girls from six to 18 years old, visit 300 Fresh Air Friendly Towns in the summer. Fresh Air children on first-time visits to Friendly Town host families are six to 12 years old and stay for up to two weeks. The program also has a special one-week option for New York City families who would like to host children on their summer vacations in the country. Over 65 percent of all children are reinvited to stay with host families, year after year. Reinvited youngsters may continue with The Fund through age 18, and many spend the entire summer in the country. Fresh Air children and volunteer families often form bonds of friendship that last a lifetime.

FRIENDLY TOWN HOST FAMILIES

Fresh Air Fund volunteer host families open their homes to inner-city children for two weeks or more in the summertime. Each Friendly Town community is supervised by a committee of volunteers. Committee members select host families after reviewing their applications, visiting them in their homes and checking their personal references.

There are no financial requirements for hosting a Fresh Air child. Most hosts simply want to share their homes with inner-city youngsters. Host families are not paid. The Fund has a program for placing children who have special physical or emotional needs.

FRESH AIR FUND CAMPING PROGRAM

3,000 New York City youngsters, ages eight to 15, attend five Fresh Air camps on a 2,300-acre site in Fishkill, New York. Camp Hidden Valley is for boys and girls with and without special needs, eight to 12 years old; Camp Tommy is for 12- to 15-year-old boys; Camp Anita Bliss Coler is for girls, nine to 12-years old; Camp Hayden-Marks Memorial is for nine- to 12-year-old boys, and Camp Mariah is a coed camp for 12- to 14- year-old career campers. Additionally, 2,000 young people participate in year-round weekend camping experiences. Special features shared by all camps include a planetarium, model farm, wilderness trail and ropes course. Camp Tommy is named in honor of Board member/designer Tommy Hilfiger for his dedication and support of Fresh Air children.

CAREER AWARENESS PROGRAM

The Fresh Air Fund's innovative Career Awareness Program is designed to help New York City youngsters understand the relationship between school and work and how to make choices that will determine their futures. In New York City, 12- to 14-year-olds participate in job shadowings that offer close-up views of business and a career fair. The year-round program includes weekend camping trips and an intensive three-and-a-half week summer session at the Career Awareness Camp – Camp Mariah. The career camp is named in honor of Board member/singer Mariah Carey for her dedication, support and commitment to Fresh Air youngsters. Career awareness graduates continue to receive support through the PreOccupations Club and benefit from the guidance of volunteer mentors.

FRESH AIR FUND HISTORY

In 1877, the Reverend Willard Parsons, minister of a small rural parish in Sherman, Pennsylvania, asked members of his congregation to provide country vacations as volunteer host families for children from New York City tenements. This was the beginning of The Fresh Air Fund tradition. By 1884, Reverend Parsons was writing about The Fund for New York's Herald Tribune, and the number of children served grew. In 2007, close to 10,000 New York City children experienced the joys of summertime in Friendly Towns and at five Fund camps in upstate New York.

FRESH AIR FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

The Fresh Air Fund is a not-for-profit agency, depending primarily on support from private contributions. It costs The Fresh Air Fund \$986.00 for a visit with a volunteer host family and \$1,542.00 to send a child to Fresh Air camp. Over 75% of The Fund's contributions come from individual donors. Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to The Fresh Air Fund, 633 Third Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10017. Families who wish to be hosts may call The Fund at (800) 367-0003.

NEW YORK CITY VOLUNTEERS

The Fresh Air Fund has an active group of New York City volunteers. Metropolitan area volunteers help The Fund reach out to New York City parents and children, support Camping, Career Awareness and Friendly Town programs and seek in-kind donations. To volunteer, call (212) 897-8900 or visit www.freshair.org.

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