



Merry *Heart* Children's Camp



2020-2021

Annual Report



<https://merryheartchildrenscamp.org>

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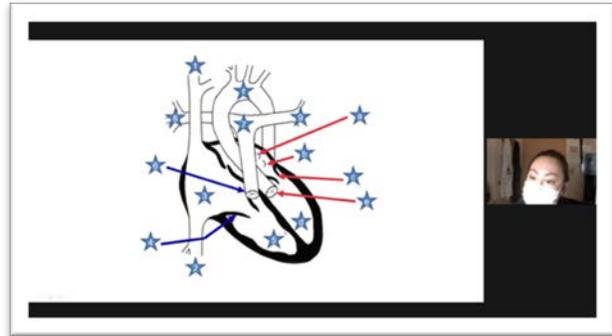


Message from Board Vice-President

Dear Friends of Merry Heart Children's Camp,

Coming off our 2020 virtual camp, we were gearing up and excited to have an in-person camp for 2021; however, that changed with the emergence of the delta variant of COVID and the increasing risk to our campers with heart conditions.

We held lengthy discussions with dozens of leaders in the pediatric cardiology community about whether an overnight camp would be safe for our campers. Of note, our nursing staff was concerned about discerning COVID symptoms from allergies, anxiety, homesickness, and other common infections. After exhaustive research, we made the difficult decision for Merry Heart Children's Camp to be virtual again this summer. While we hoped to gather again in-person for the week, we also knew that it would be too unsafe for our many high-risk campers. Our first priority is always to have a camp that is safe for all. We endeavored to spend one day together in person taking all the necessary COVID precautions and the rest of the week was spent online.



Jennifer Huang, MD, Board Vice-President, showing the campers how the heart works.

Despite the virtual platform, the kids still had a ton of fun. Staff continued to provide the campers with interesting activities, heart education and opportunities for small and large group interaction and bonding. Parents expressed satisfaction with and gratitude for the chance they had to spend several hours with the other parents during the in-person picnic day at Camp Howard. The board president, Dr. Paul and another board member facilitated a heart-felt conversation that reminded parents they were not alone, even in this highly stressful and isolating time of the pandemic.



Isabella, counselor, helping a camper with bracelet making.

Please read further for two stories and know that we appreciate every bit of support you have given Merry Heart Children's Camp. Thank you, ***YOU make the difference, and we know it!***

Jennifer Huang, MD
Board Vice-President

Mission

The mission of Merry Heart Children's Camp is to provide a safe, nurturing and fun outdoor experience for youth with heart conditions where they can meet new friends and develop courage and independence without fear of being judged by others.

Benefits

Our camp helps these young people by providing opportunities to:

- Interact with their peers.
- Be educated about their heart conditions.
- Explore issues surrounding their heart conditions.
- Learn new skills.

Programs

Our Virtual Program

We had our 7th camp in August 2021. By May, with no real improvement in the pandemic, the pediatric cardiology community and the nursing volunteers recommended that camp go virtual for the second year in a row. Twenty enthusiastic young people and nearly as many staff participated to make the camp a success.



The board decided to host a picnic for the campers and their parents the day before the virtual camp was to begin. The families were given a jump rope to promote healthy exercise. At the picnic, there was a round robin where the campers introduced themselves and their parent(s) and each camper named their heart condition and explained the interventions they'd had. After this more heart-specific camp activity, they practiced more typical camp skills such as a balloon toss and rubber band bracelet making. All participants wore masks and practiced social distancing in order to get stay healthy for the upcoming week's adventures in online camp.



The format for the virtual camp

followed the successful schedule of Merry Heart Camp 2020, with 3 hours of virtual camp in the morning. While online, campers were divided into "cabins" of 5-7 with a Counselor-in-Training and a Counselor, and the whole camp population spent time



together, as well. Each child received a Camp-in-a-Box filled with an activity book, materials for the activities, their camp T-shirt, a soft stuffed moose, a Smart Game, and many other fun camp items. Counselors-in-Training demonstrated the crafts in the morning online and, the campers made their own activity in the afternoon and demonstrated their results to their cabin mates the next day. We maintained our traditional Merry Heart camp spirit with singing, a talent show, and even popcorn to snack on during a movie night with their families. There were talks about the human heart, their own care and fun, meaningful stories that supported their ongoing health and wellness. Everyone had a ton of fun and campers were able to be with, if mostly virtually, their cabin mates and counselors which is one of the most important goals of our camp: unity and connection.



Heart Education

This year's Heart Education was about healthy lifestyle in eating right and maximizing one's wellness. Amy Halloran-Steiner, a board director and social worker, presented tips for a healthy diet as well as how to weave the components of a healthy mind into one's life. She also led a discussion about how to cope with stress related to the camper's heart conditions as well as the pandemic.

Volunteers

Camp Merry Heart is made more wonderful by our amazing volunteer Counselors and CITs. They were awesome this year, stepping up and providing the diverse experiences of our virtual camp: they demonstrated making a walking robot, a campfire art picture, a lantern, and other clever crafts. Dr. Jennifer Huang, board vice-president and a pediatric cardiologist, engineered a heart model which the campers were able to build in their afternoon free time. Learning and fun went hand in hand. Our volunteers provided 3306 hours of their time during this past fiscal year. Another mild milestone during this pandemic year.



Program Impact

Impact Story – “A Happy Camper”



Ben (right) with his camp friend, Alijah.

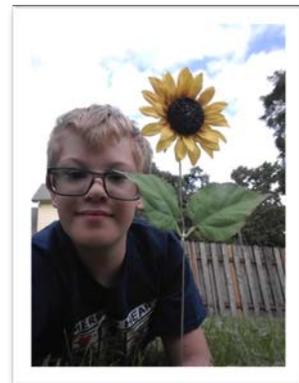
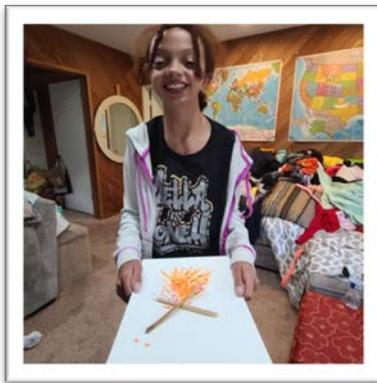
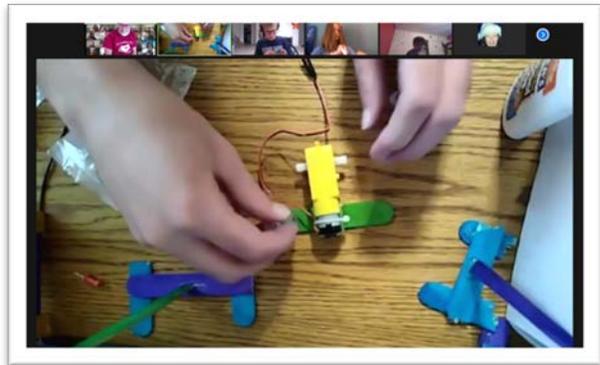
Ben

“This year will be my 5th year going to camp and I always look forward to going and seeing old friends. I enjoy meeting new people, the activities, and being a happy camper!”

Camp means I have somewhere to go where other people are the same as I am, a kid with a heart condition. Camp lets me know there are other kids with heart conditions out there living close to me. I don't know of anyone in

my school with a heart condition, so going to camp makes me realize I'm not as different as I thought I was.

Camp is important to me because I enjoy having the opportunity to go and hang out with other heart kids! I'm grateful to Mary and Rob for starting Merry Heart Children's Camp for kids like me. I may have a heart condition, but I'm still a kid that likes to have fun!”



Impact Story 2 – “Camp Is a Magical Place”

Mayme Marshall, MD

“Camp is a magical place where kids are free from parents' expectations; they can be silly, brave, and adventurous. Becoming a camp doctor has always been a #careergoal for me! My dream came true Summer of 2019, when I was the camp doctor for Merry Heart Children's Camp!

As a physician, the best part of camp is watching our patients just be kids. I love hearing the incessant laughter, watching the triumph of pulling a fish out of the pond, and witnessing the camaraderie among campers and counselors. Witnessing as campers build relationships with peers who can relate to their own stories, or a camper who finds out their favorite counselor shares the same diagnosis as them, now that's powerful.

The community of Merry Heart Children's Camp (including campers, counselors, volunteers, medical and leadership teams) extends past the week of summer camp; it creates an atmosphere of inclusivity, empowerment, and friendship.

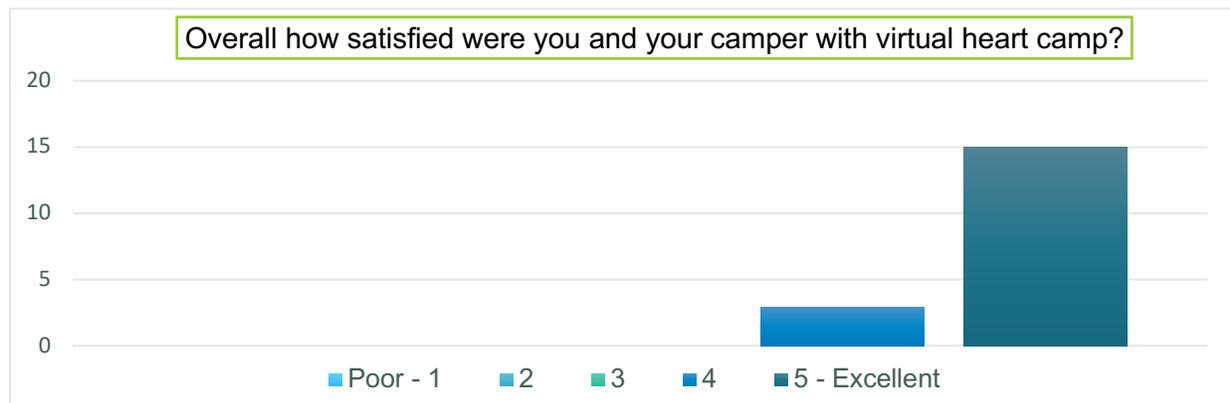
I can't wait to attend in-person camp again in the future!”



Dr. Marshall (first left) with our nursing volunteers.

Camper Satisfaction

After camp, we had a Zoom post camp review with staff, counselors, and counselors-in-training where we discussed what worked and what did not and how to improve the camp if we need a virtual camp next summer. We also sent a post camp questionnaire to campers and their parents which will be reviewed at our next board meeting.



Events

This past camp fiscal year, we were not able to have any in-person events, but we did our second Summer **CAMP**aign letter drive in which we sent a letter to more than 150 camp supporters. We also emailed a weekly newsletter to share more camp stories, update supporters on how the campaign was going, and include new information about the second virtual camp.

The Summer **CAMP**aign was also a success. We received donations from long-time supporters, and first-time donors resulting in more than \$2,900.



Thank you, donors, foundations, volunteers, camp families, and board members for believing in Merry Heart Children's Camp. We are lucky to be supported by YOU!

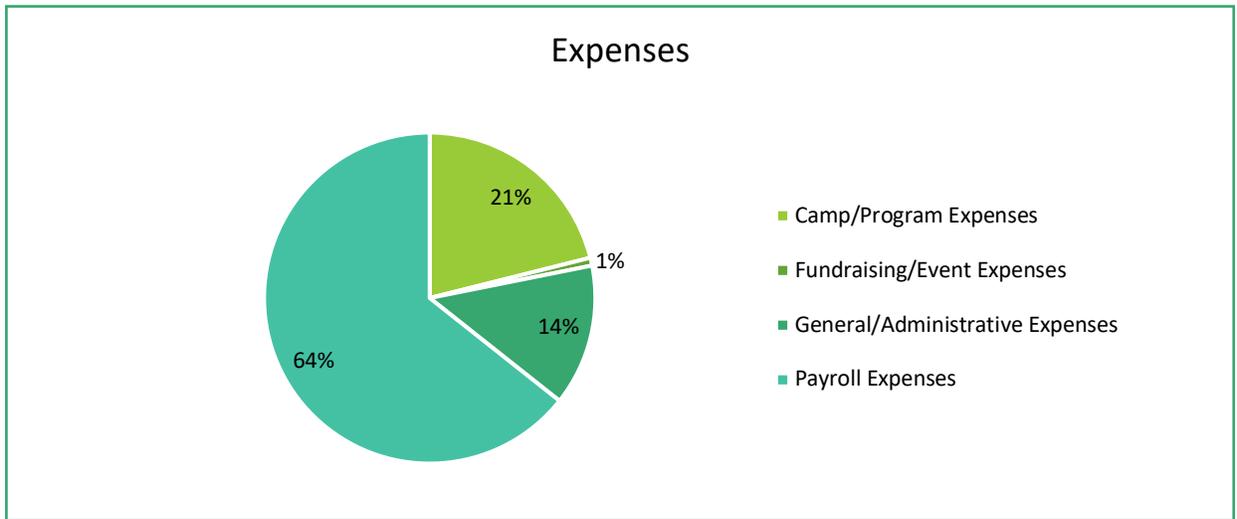
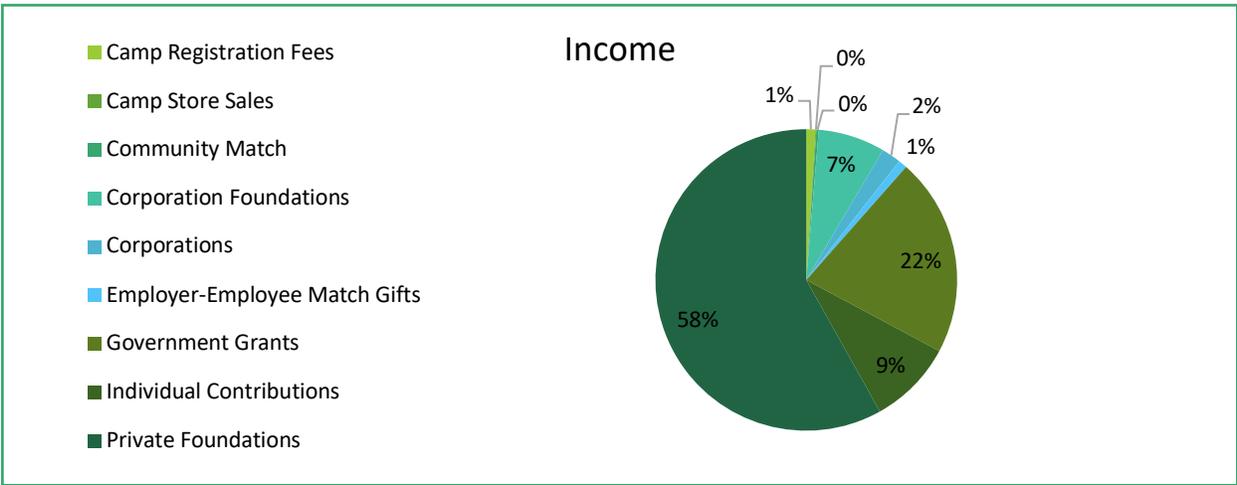
Resources & Financial Management

It was another year with the pandemic, and, like other nonprofits, we had to limit events and in-person interactions. Our 2020-2021 camper fiscal year operating budget was \$77,103 and our camp/program budget was \$33,098.

Our administrative costs increased primarily because we hired an independent contractor and our program budget decreased because we had a virtual, not in-person camp. Our full intent was to have an in-person camp, but with the major limitations as described in the Vice-President's message, the money used for our program decreased substantially. As a result, we were able to place a full year of operations money in a rainy-day fund to support camp in lean years.

Balance Sheet Summary		
	2020	2020-2021
Total Assets	\$167,658.17	\$247,037.91
Total Liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$167,658.17	\$247,037.91
Variance		\$79,379.74

On another positive note, we were very fortunate to obtain a one-time grant from the State of Oregon Legislation, the Oregon Camps Relief State Funding Grant (administered by YMCA of Columbia Willamette). The grant helped pay for our independent contractor, medical supplies, and camp program activities. We also received an exciting grant from the Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation to assist us in hiring an executive director for next year. We are extremely grateful for this recognition of the good work we are doing for the kids at Merry Heart Children's Camp.



Looking Forward To 2022

We are working hard to continue to provide a meaningful camp for our kids with heart conditions. Here is a quick summary in each area:

Finance: We are moving forward in hiring an executive director this coming fiscal year to increase our funding through online donations, increase our donor base, do an annual event each year and increase the amount of grants support.



Programs: We are planning to have an in-person camp next summer for at least 48 campers. A third of our campers are under the age of 12, so we'll seek approval from the CDC to enable us to hold an in-person camp next year. We plan to continue our counselors-in-training program for at least 6 teens.

Notable Upcoming Events: We are planning to have our second annual social event with a goal of raising \$20,000. Other plans are to have smaller virtual events and work toward having more community support for the camp.

Sustainability: We continue to develop long-term relationships with all our donors, corporations, private and public foundations and to prove that Merry Heart Camp merits ongoing funding.

Thank You to All of Our Donors

Merry Heart Children's Camp is honored to collaborate with individuals, private foundations, corporations, and corporate foundation sponsors who help create a camp dedicated to youth with heart conditions. We would not be able to have this camp without you. **THANK YOU!**

Heart Guardian (\$5,000 and up)

Marie Lamfrom
Charitable
Foundation
Oregon Camps Relief
State Funding Grant

Heart Hero (\$4,001 - \$5,000)

Henry Lea Hillman, Jr.
Foundation
Juliet Ashby Hillman
Foundation
Medtronic. Inc.
The Autzen Foundation

Heart Champion (\$2,501 - \$4,000)

Juan Young Trust
June and Julian Foss
Foundation
Marie Lamfrom
Charitable
Foundation
OCF Joseph E. Weston
Public Foundation
Zera Foundation

Heart Keeper (\$1,001 - \$2,500)

Biotronik
Pacific Power
Foundation
Mary Rice and Robert
McDonald
OnPoint Community
Credit Union

**Heart Friend
(\$501 - \$1,000)**

Matthew and Roberta
Carter
Paul Francis
iQ Credit Union

**Heart Helper
(\$101 - \$500)**

Anonymous
David Adams
Michele and Robert
Arluna
Jennifer Bost
Michael Brown-Hayes
Robert Cretsinger
Miles Ellenby
Jerry and Sherry Feakes
Amy Halloran-Steiner
Lisa Heberlein
Jill and Daryl Houtman
Jean and Gregg Howard
Pierce Kenny
Maurita Klement
Suniti Kumar
Karen Kustritz
John and Mary LaBarge
John V. LaBarge, Jr.
Robin Shaughnessy
Susan Spitzer
Laurens and Susan
Thornton

**Sweetheart
(<\$100)**

Suzy Abi-Rached
Nathan Camit
Benny Camit, Jr
Daniel and Denise
Dammann
Rebecca Dakin and
Theodore Christman
Lynn Davis
Paul and Debby
Droukas
Lauren Edelman
Cecillia Ferrer-Heyne
Suzanne Gebhardt
Somer Gill
Karen Green
Rebecca Green
Sara and Kelly
Gergersen
Peg Griffith Brescione
Melissa Grundy
Larry and Joyce
Houtman
Nancy Hruska
Thomas Huteson
Tim and Sara LaBarge
Kyra Leong
Pam Logsdon Camit
Joan Macari
Michael Magahay
Charles Magahay
Sherrie Magahay

Alicia McLane
Joanne Mikol
Ted Mishima
Jim Moore
Cindy Mumford
Carol Nehring
Pediatric Cardiology –
Doernbecher Children’s
Hospital
G. Michael Silberbach
and Paula Welshons
Mary Carol Radonich
Lisa and James Regan-
Vienop
Carla Sanders
Nichole Shepard Gieber
Linda Shepard
Roadman
Jen Smith
Lori Sommer
Sue Staehli
Shelly Stalnaker
Karina Stricker
Sefulu Taufette
Tim Thigpen
Earleen Thomas
Ky Wu
Tracie Yearout

In-Kind Sponsors

Smart Game

We Need Your Help

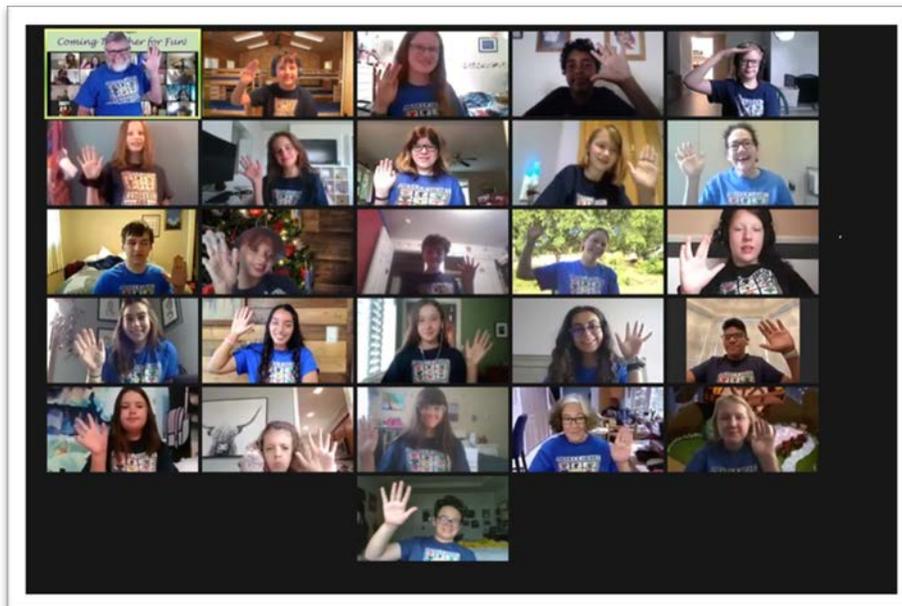
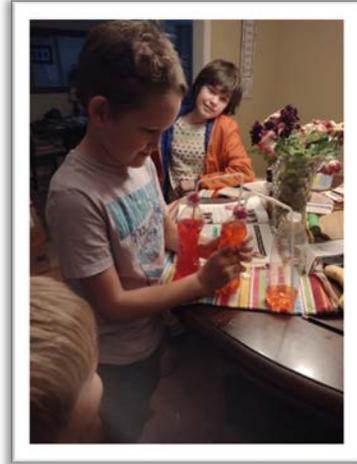
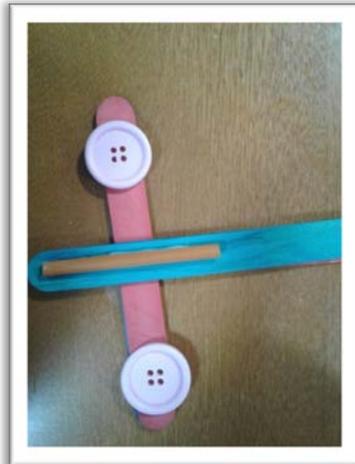
Every Penny Matters

With the current environment, every penny matters when it comes giving kids with heart conditions a place to go to meet their peers, be safe and just have fun under the observation of our great medical volunteers.

It is a simple process to give by going to our [donation page](#) to donate. The other way is to donate by mail to Merry Heart Children’s Camp, PO Box 80413, Portland, OR 97280.

Volunteer and Help Make a Difference

Not everyone can make a financial contribution. You can help in other areas of support such as helping write grants, assisting with our annual fundraising event and other events, or volunteering for camp. Please visit our [website to volunteer](http://www.merryheartchildrenscamp.org) or send an email to director@merryheartchildrenscamp.org to learn more about volunteer opportunities.



Merry *Heart* Children's Camp
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Facebook: MerryHeartCC // Twitter: MerryHeartCC // Instagram: @merryheartcc

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