



2019

Highbrook Lodge

Camp Report

By Jenny Schaeffer,
Camp Manager
August 2019



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Message from Leadership



Dear friends,

Not long after Cleveland Sight Center opened in 1906, a protest slogan could be heard from coast to coast, demanding "Bread for all, and roses too!" This simple phrase inspired a wave of social change that we still enjoy today. It asserts that we all have the right to a life that is both sustained by things like shelter and employment and one that is made beautiful by things such as nature, art, and play.

I cannot help but think that this century-old idea illuminates why Highbrook Lodge is such an essential part of the work we do at Cleveland Sight Center. Much of our organization's work ensures that our clients have access to the bread of life, like the security and opportunities they need in order to live. Highbrook Lodge complements these efforts by providing our clients with roses that are just as important - moments of community, joy, and beauty.

At Highbrook, I witnessed time and again how the worries of our clients - like access to transportation, safety from crime, employability, education, and the need to maximize vision - fade away with the peaceful sounds of summer crickets. This is because Highbrook Lodge was designed to serve as an empowering and safe place where people with vision loss and blindness could enjoy the tranquility of nature, connect with one another, and try new things.

Now, at the culmination of my first summer as Camp Manager, I am honored to be a part of such a special and important place to so many. I also feel proud of all the important work my team accomplished together. This summer, with the help of my colleagues at CSC and the Highbrook community, we took a big risk and decided to take Highbrook in a different direction from where we were heading. We came to recognize that a Therapeutic Recreation focus would not help us deliver the types of programs our community desired. Instead, we now understand that our camp is at its best when we are all simply present in the moment.

What does this mean? We seized each and every day at camp! Free from the distractions and demands of the outside world, our campers and staff were able to prioritize their relationships; be mindful of their surroundings; and find the many opportunities for playful fun. This summer we danced the night away at prom, canoed across a reservoir, splashed in the pool, laughed constantly, had epic water balloon fights and prank wars, watched audio-described movies under the stars, bowled frame after frame, created a gallery of crafts, went on countless hikes, and so much more.

As I reflect on 2019, I am nothing but confident that my wonderful team of leaders and counselors will continue to provide our clients with the roses of life in the many years to come. I look forward to continuing the important work we do at Highbrook and for your continued support.

Sincerely yours,

Jenny Schaeffer
Camp Manager, Highbrook Lodge

Founded in 1928, Highbrook Lodge has been providing a unique summer camp experience for those of all ages who are blind or have low vision for over 90 years. In fact, we were the first camp built specially for individuals with vision loss.

Since then, we've been utilizing the benefits of our natural environment to promote friendship, growth, independence and self-sufficiency through traditional camp activities adapted to the needs of our campers. Some of the benefits of attending Highbrook include:

- Opportunities for **adventure**, skill building, risk taking, and personal development
- The chance to grow within a **community** where one can socialize, feel safe and comfortable, and connect with others who also experience vision loss and blindness
- Experience **nature**, unplug, and recharge away from outside pressures
- Have the space to **play**, laugh, and create



2019 at a Glance

In 2019, we will offer a total of 20 different residential and day sessions for young people (aged 7-21), adults (aged 18 and over), and families (with campers aged 0-10). These include 2 off-season programs; 7 day programs; and 11 residential summer sessions.

This summer, we provided 129 unique over-night camp experiences and 135 unique day-trip experiences to over 150 clients.

Youth Sessions

Youth Day Away
Outdoor Adventure Camp
Summer Youth Work Experience
Youth Week 1
Youth Week 2
Youth Week 3
Youth Extended



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Summer Profile

56 youth camper experiences
25% of youth campers attended more than one session
19 first time youth campers
34% of youth campers experience at least one additional physical or developmental disability

Tuition by the Numbers

- 2 sessions were free-of-cost for youth (Youth Day Away and Summer Youth Work Experience)
- Of the 43 Youth Campers responsible for their camp tuition, 53.4% sought scholarships and financial aid to help pay for their tuition
- 13 Youth Campers were awarded tuition funds from Cleveland Sight Center, totaling in \$9,720 in scholarships
- 10 Youth Campers utilized third-party funding sources for one session

New for 2019

- We hosted our first ever 'Outdoor Adventure Camp' for campers interested in spending the majority of their time with us in the great outdoors. Activities included fishing, raft and shelter building, canoeing, hiking, and cooking over the camp fire.
- Because of our families' busy schedules, we opened up our Youth Extended session by allowing for campers to attend either for 5 days or for all 12 days!

Adult Sessions

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Working Adult Weekend

Adult Day Trip 1

Adult Celebration

Adult Excursion Weekend

Adult Day Trip 2

Adult Resort



Summer Profile

68 adult campers, aged 19 to 84

9.8% of adult campers attended more than one session

7 first time adult campers

60% of our adult campers experience at least one additional physical or developmental disability



"I enjoyed everything! It was beautiful, the staff was wonderful... nothing to complain about!"

Tuition by the Numbers

- 52% of Adult Campers sought scholarships and financial aid to help pay for their tuition
- 29 Adult Campers were awarded tuition funds from the Cleveland Sight Center, totaling \$13,433 in scholarships
- At least 7 Adult Campers utilized third-party funding sources to pay for one session

2019 in Focus

In Dec. 2018, Camp Leadership hosted a focus group to hear how Highbrook could better serve our Adult Campers. Feedback from this informative meeting included the hope for flexibility in scheduling, more field trips, and greater opportunities for socialization. These points were thoughtfully incorporated into all of our 2019 adult programs and were met with appreciation and positive feedback. Because of all of the excitement around camp, we even had a wait-list for our Adult Resort session!



"The [Highbrook] staff was beyond compare, so kind and helpful"

New this Summer

Two new sessions were introduced in 2019: Working Adult Weekend (WAW) and Adult Excursion Weekend (AEW).

- WAW was designed specially for adults still in the workforce and featured a relaxed activity agenda.
- AEW was created for adults who wanted to go on field trips to explore all that Geauga County has to offer.

In 2019, we also introduced original creative programming across all of our sessions. New activities included: aquatics lessons, prom night, mini-field trips, a murder mystery party, and visits to the drive-in theater!



Family Sessions

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Bright Futures Weekend
Bright Futures Day Trip

Why Family Camps?

Because our infant, toddler, and child clients are not ready to camp on their own, we welcome families with young children who experience vision loss and blindness to experience all that Highbrook has to offer with their entire families by their sides! These sessions are also beneficial for the parents and siblings, as the weekend serves as a chance for them to connect with others who share similar experiences.



Summer Profile

- 7 families attended our family camp
- 2 families stayed just for the day
- 5 families joined us for the entire weekend
- 27 attendees in total
- 2 first time families

Tuition by the Numbers

- 3 families utilized third-party funding
- 4 families paid out-of-pocket



Additional Programs

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Winter Weekend	February
Support Group Day	July
Friends and Family BBQ	August
Fall Weekend	October
Holiday at Highbrook	December
TLC meetings	Varies

More than a 'Summer' Camp



Throughout the year we host several programs outside of our traditional summer schedule. These include weekend sessions for adults; day-trips for young people; an activity day for those new to vision loss and blindness; TLC meetings hosted by our social work department; a BBQ to close out our summer season; and holiday parties for adults and young people.

Many of these sessions are attended by other Cleveland Sight Center employees, day-of volunteers, and on-going volunteers.



24 Cleveland Sight Center Staff called Highbrook 'home' in 2019

3 full-time CSC employees live and work at Highbrook from June 1 to August 16

Camp Manager, Jenny Schaeffer

Assistant Camp Manager / Recreation Specialist, Vince Williams

Camp Ranger, Kevin Pye

21 seasonal staff were employed this summer

2 leadership team members

16 counselors

1 camp nurse

2 kitchen/maintenance crew

4 staff members who experience vision loss/blindness

1 guide dog in residence, Artie (a very good boy)

2 contractors from Normandy Catering

Jenny and Vince make a wonderful team and really set the tone for the [Highbrook] staff

110+ volunteers helped serve Highbrook Lodge in 2019

Collectively, our volunteers donated over 700 hours to Highbrook as of August 2019.

Most were 'Done-in-a-Day' volunteers; others are on-going volunteer counselors.

"Done-in-a-Day" projects included: cleaning, painting, wallpaper removal, gardening, yard work, trail maintenance, and other odd jobs.

Thank you to our Done-in-a-Day volunteer groups: Progressive Corporate IT, Progressive IT Special Lines, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland!

15 volunteer counselors and support staff assisted with our Adult Winter Weekend, Youth Day Away, and other programs periodically throughout the summer.

Facilities and Rentals

Facilities and Rentals | Page 11

On-going Maintenance

With over 10 buildings and countless outdoor spaces, Highbrook Lodge requires a lot of tender loving care. Our Camp Ranger in residence, Kevin Pye, expertly handles the majority of the maintenance and upkeep at camp throughout the summer and off-season.

Major Renovations in 2019

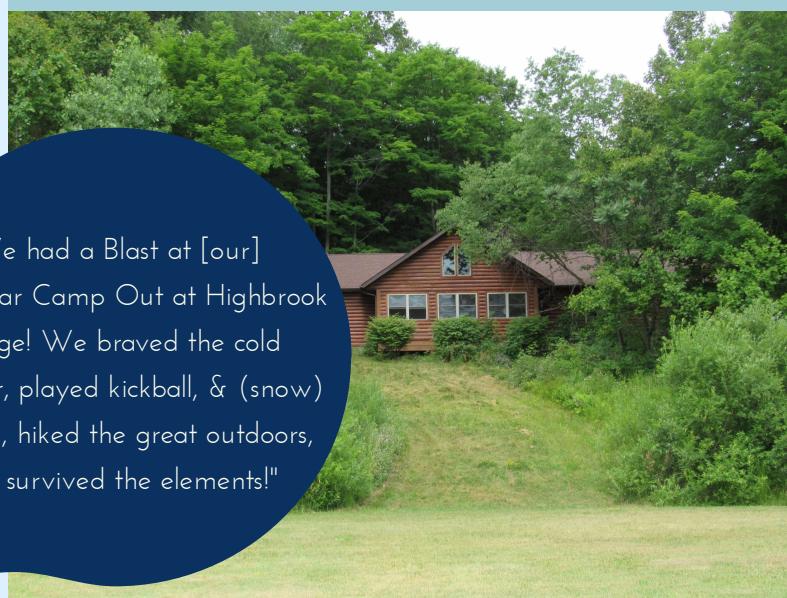
- Updated flooring in several rooms
- Upgraded air conditioning in Tall Timbers
- Redesigned camp office
- New outdoor staircase at Sears Hall
- Stabilization of pool wall and program shed
- Demolished outdoor pizza oven to create an outdoor stage

Rental Groups

Our facilities are available to rental groups during our off season - from September to May. By renting out our camp, we earn additional revenue while educating the public on the incredible mission of Highbrook Lodge.

In 2019, **4** different organizations rented our facilities for private use

By renting our camp for **18** nights, we earned
\$12,335 in revenue



"We had a Blast at [our] Polar Bear Camp Out at Highbrook Lodge! We braved the cold weather, played kickball, & (snow) bowling, hiked the great outdoors, and survived the elements!"

Bring on 2020!

Looking forward, our hope is that Highbrook will continue to flourish. To accomplish this, we will focus on:

Recruitment and Retention

- More referrals from other CSC departments (such as Children's Services, Social Work, and the Low Vision Clinic) will be imperative to reach capacity and serve a more diverse population of clients
- More recruitment efforts with outside partners and beyond our traditional service areas are needed -- especially for children, young adults, and independent adults aged 18-35 -- to expand our network
- Improving our on-going communication, special events offerings, and developing a more streamlined application process will ensure our campers keep coming back

Updates to Facilities

- Remodeling our Hall Cabin with new floors and new staff quarters will enable us to increase our camper capacity
- Modernize signage and other outdated fixtures so our camp continues to remain competitive
- Continue to work to ensure that our camp remains accessible to all of our campers

Staffing

- Hire one seasonal part-time administrative assistant to help with registration and financial aid in the off season
- Concentrate on hiring seasonal staff members specifically interested in working with special needs campers
- Recruit at least one seasonal staff member with a mental health/counseling background so we may better meet the mental health needs of our campers

Odds and ends

- Create a mindful summer schedule so we can include all of the exciting sessions we hope to facilitate
- Consider assigning seasonal staff members to photography and social media so we can have a larger online profile and additional marketing material
- Continue to pursue rental opportunities to generate more revenue
- Develop additional partnerships with other camps and organizations so we can diversify activity offerings



Thank you to the
Highbrook Lodge Community
and to all of those who have
supported our camp!

We love you!

Hmmm, I want to linger
Hmmm, A little longer.
Hmmm, A little longer,
Here with you.

Hmmm, It's such a perfect night.
Hmmm, It doesn't seem quite right.
Hmmm, That this should be
My last with you.

Hmmm, And come September,
Hmmm, I will remember,
Hmmm, Our Highbrook days ,
Of friendships true.

Hmmm, And as the years go by,
Hmmm, I'll think of you and sigh.
Hmmm, This is good night
And not good bye.

Hmmm I want to linger.
Hmmm A little longer.
Hmmm A little longer,
Here with you.
- Highbrook Lodge, closing campfire song

Report written by: Jenny Schaeffer

For more information, contact Jenny
and the Highbrook team at:

clevelandsightcenter.org/highbrook-lodge
camp@clevelandsightcenter.org
+1 (216) 791-8118
+1 (216) 658-4596 (direct)

Business Address:
1909 East 101st St.
Cleveland, OH 44106

Camp Address:
12944 Aquilla Rd
Chardon, OH 44024