



CAMP FIRE USA
GREEN COUNTRY
COUNCIL

TULSA, OKLA.

CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2007 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

AN EXTENDED CAMP FIRE FAMILY

For years, families have called themselves “Camp Fire families” because of their involvement in Camp Fire activities. Today, the Camp Fire USA Green Country Council deliberately capitalizes on family engagement. Beyond programming, the Council’s organizational philosophy focuses on strengthening families. From including families in its strategic plan to incorporating employee policy that accommodates college classes, the Council recognizes the important role that families play in children’s lives in nearly every aspect of its work. “Children are better able to succeed when their families and parents are succeeding,” says Executive Director Bobbie Walker Henderson. “That’s why involving and supporting parents is so important, and we make a conscious effort to incorporate families into all we do.”

In public housing communities, child care centers and other locations throughout northeastern Oklahoma, Green Country Council reaches nearly 3,000 children and their families aiming to strengthen community resource connections, build support networks, enhance economic stability and provide opportunities for community service. The result is an extended Camp Fire family of community members who support each others’ growth and achievements.



WE WORK HARD TO CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND BUILD SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES AMONG FAMILIES. PARENTS ARE OUR MOST IMPORTANT PARTNERS IN HELPING CHILDREN REACH THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

—Bobbie Walker Henderson, executive director of Camp Fire USA Green Country Council

BUILDING A COMMUNITY NETWORK OF SUPPORT

In eight Community Family Clubs located throughout the Tulsa area, as many as 60 families gather three or four times a month to have fun and learn about important issues and resources. At club gatherings, families share a meal and enjoy field trips, such as attending cultural and sporting events, visiting museums and picnicking. Parents also gain community connections through speakers from Camp Fire community partners, including agencies in the East Tulsa Prevention Coalition, on topics ranging from health, fitness and nutrition to first-time home-buying. While informative and fun, the clubs strengthen social support networks among participating families.

Clubs are parent-driven in nature, so family and community needs make each club unique. At the Hispanic Community Family Club and a Community Family Club at the Indian Health Care Resource Center, the Council provides culturally sensitive support and connections to resources, including a Hispanic health fair and programs in literacy, GED and English language learning. A bilingual staff member also helps parents link to needed services and facilitates communication between parents and their children's schools.

The Council also holds an annual family campout that draws about 75 families for a weekend of fishing, canoeing, rock-climbing and sleeping in the wilderness that is not only fun, but builds social support networks among families that last beyond the weekend. Parents and children not only have fun with each other, but also build bonds with other families in the community as well. "Parents are able to find support in each other, and they appreciate being able to know the parents of their children's friends," Henderson says.

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Camp Fire USA, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize Camp Fire USA councils with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.

In hundreds of communities across the nation, Camp Fire USA serves nearly 750,000 children and their families, cultivating young leaders and boosting families toward brighter futures. By offering club, after-school, camp, self-reliance and service-learning programs, Camp Fire helps children from infancy to age 21 build confidence and responsibility, while also supporting and engaging parents. “Our councils work hard to build partnerships and meet the many diverse needs of their communities and families so that children can thrive,” says National President and CEO Jill Pasewalk. “By helping families achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, community connections, health and positive family relationships, we are helping children achieve greater success.”

CAMP FIRE USA GREEN COUNTRY COUNCIL

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