

Birch Family Camp

A Program of Camp Heartland, Inc.

FACT SHEET

<p>A HAVEN FOR FAMILIES WITH HIV/AIDS SINCE 1989</p>	<p>For nearly 20 years, Birch Family Camp has been a haven for families affected by HIV/AIDS. Set in the woods of upstate New York, the summer camp program offers New York families the chance to come together, strengthen bonds and enjoy a rare opportunity to relax and unwind away from the pressures, hardships and stigmas they often face at home in the city. While children experience the liberating, confidence-building activities of traditional summer camp, parents enjoy the rare opportunity to relax, participate in workshops on various issues regarding health and wellness, and help establish support and social networks that are crucial to connecting isolated families to their community.</p> <p><i>Families gain a greater sense of connection within and beyond their own family unit, hope for the future, knowledge about issues affecting their lives and an increased sense of physical well-being.</i></p>
<p>PROGRAMMING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY</p>	<p>Founded on the principal that illness affects the whole family and not just the member afflicted, the program welcomes family members of all ages for a one-week summer camp session. Campers participate in age-appropriate activities, enabling each participant to build relationships and share experiences with others their own age, while strengthening family bonds during mealtimes, evening programs and special activities during the day.</p> <p>All age groups enjoy social and recreational activities, however, teens and adults also benefit from discussion groups, expert speakers and other life skills programming to address legal, financial, health and emotional issues. Because children are not required to know their family's HIV/AIDS status, HIV/AIDS is discussed in adult group sessions only.</p> <p>Birch Family Camp offers two one-week sessions each August. Sessions are staffed by more than 200 volunteer counselors, activity leaders and health professionals.</p>
<p>A PROGRAM-SAVING PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>Following the 2006 summer season, Birch Family Camp lost funding from its founding organization. After 18 successful summers, it appeared the program would need to close.</p> <p>However, thanks to a partnership with Camp Heartland, Inc., a Midwest-based national program that provides camping for youth affected by HIV/AIDS, Birch Family Camp became a part of the Camp Heartland family of programs in 2007. The first sessions under the Camp Heartland umbrella are scheduled for August, 2007. While new efficiencies will be created utilizing Camp Heartland's administrative infrastructure, programming will be seamless to camper families – assuring Birch Family Camp families continue to receive the same vital services for years to come.</p>
<p>A PERFECT ADDITION TO THE CAMP HEARTLAND FAMILY</p>	<p>Camp Heartland, Inc. is a national program dedicated to making life better for children, youth and their families facing HIV/AIDS, poverty, grief, and other painful life challenges. Since 1992, the organization has provided year-round camp programs for children and teens affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as youth leadership and life skills programming to help prepare the children for the “real world” as they approach adulthood. With programming for children, teens and young adults, the Birch Family Camp family camp program is the perfect addition to Camp Heartland's continuum of direct service care.</p> <p>Camp Heartland, Inc. owns and operates a year-round camp and conference center in Willow River, Minnesota. The organization also partners with Los Angeles-based Hollywood HEART to operate a week of summer camp in Malibu, CA each August. Additional Heartland programs include year-round camper support, the Journey of Hope AIDS Awareness speakers' bureau and collaboration programs with like-minded organizations across the world.</p>
<p>HOW YOU CAN HELP</p>	<p><i>Please consider investing in this important program.</i> As an independent non-profit organization, Camp Heartland relies on the generous donations of funds, supplies and time from individuals, corporations and foundations. Camp Heartland must raise more than XX each year to operate the Birch Family Camp program. Tax-deductible donations are gratefully accepted.</p>
<p>CONTACT</p>	<p>For more information, go to www.campheartland.org or call 800-724-4673.</p>

