



# **A Comprehensive Evaluation of Camp PALS: Impact on Volunteers**

## **Final Report December 2018**

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# **I. Executive Summary**

## **A. Introduction**

The primary mission of Camp PALS is to foster relationships between peers with and without Down syndrome in order to create friendships that have an impact beyond the summer months. Since its conception in 2004, Camp PALS has served thousands of campers and volunteers in locations all across the country. In its fifteenth year, Camp PALS served over 1,200 young adults with and without Down syndrome throughout the country during the summer of 2018.

## **B. Methods**

In 2018, PALS Programs, in collaboration with the Center for Social Development and Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston, carried out the first formal evaluation of Camp PALS, building upon previous informal assessments conducted by PALS Programs. The goal of this evaluation was to learn more about the type of person who chooses to volunteer for Camp PALS, as well as to explore the impact Camp PALS has on the volunteers, in particular their perspectives on people with Down syndrome, confidence in their role as a volunteer, personal growth, development of friendships and sense of belonging, and motivation to make a difference in the lives of others. The evaluation consisted of a pre-camp and post-camp survey, administered to volunteers prior to and at the end of each Camp PALS session.

## **C. Findings**

### **1. Camp PALS volunteers**

Six-hundred and eighty volunteers at all 14 Camp PALS sessions were contacted and 70% completed both the pre-camp and post-camp survey. The final sample provided insight into the type of person who volunteers for Camp PALS. Approximately half the volunteers were new (47%) and half were returning (53%). The majority of the volunteers were female (65%), white (93%), and approximately two-thirds (68%) were between the ages of 16 to 21, while one-third (32%) were ages 22 to 30 and over. Of volunteers who were college age, 84% were pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree.

The volunteers came from various professional backgrounds, with early careers ranging from education to engineering, business marketing to school counseling, and despite their differences in background, almost all were social-justice oriented. They believed that it was important to help others and to make a difference in their community; this was reflected in volunteers' willingness to sign petitions, express their views in front of others, and post to social media.

## 2. Impact of Camp PALS on volunteers

Within just one week, Camp PALS had a profound impact on volunteers.

- New volunteers became significantly more positive in their perceptions of the capabilities of people with Down syndrome as a result of their experiences with campers. By the end of Camp PALS, volunteers viewed people with Down syndrome as possessing the necessary skills to live independently, such as acting appropriately around strangers (93%), handling their own money (73%), and handling emergencies appropriately (63%).
- Volunteers gained new insight about people with Down syndrome. They saw them as being more alike than different from them, and as individuals who had “the same interests” and were “capable of feeling the same emotions” as everyone else.
- Both new and returning volunteers became significantly more confident in their role as a volunteer by the end of their session at Camp PALS, for example, new volunteers felt significantly more comfortable addressing any possible inappropriate behavior from a camper (93%) and confiding in a camper about a personal issue (81%).
- By the end of the week, volunteers felt more confident around not only people with Down syndrome, but “in meeting new people” and “connecting with all different kinds of people.” For many volunteers, Camp PALS gave them the confidence to step out of their comfort zone and engage with people they normally might not have interacted with otherwise.
- As a result of their participation in Camp PALS, volunteers learned the importance of compromising (75%), how their attitudes affect others (78%), and in particular, learned to be more patient (85%) with all individuals, not just those with Down syndrome. As a result, they reported that they gained confidence in themselves and their overall abilities (78%).
- By the conclusion of Camp PALS, over three-quarters of the volunteers (78%) reported that they started thinking more about who they are and how they experienced a positive turning point in their life. This was true for both new and returning volunteers.
- For many volunteers, Camp PALS “strengthened,” “confirmed,” “solidified,” and “reaffirmed” that they had chosen the right career path. Camp PALS also reawakened volunteers’ passion for their career and helped them “rediscover” why they chose their line of work.
- Volunteers gained “genuine”, “lifelong” friendships with both campers and co-volunteers, and maintained these relationships beyond the summer and their time at Camp PALS, for example, almost all returning volunteers kept in touch with campers and co-volunteers from previous summers (90% and 97%, respectively).

- Almost all volunteers expressed a deep gratitude to Camp PALS for what it had given them and what they took away from their experience, for example, almost three-quarters (74%) of returning volunteers reported coming back to camp each summer because it provided them with a sense of belonging.
- Almost all new volunteers (83%) reported that they joined Camp PALS to make a difference, and new and returning volunteers alike ended their session even more motivated to make a difference in the lives of people with Down syndrome, and more broadly, the world “outside of PALS.”
- In reflecting on Camp PALS programming, over three quarters of the volunteers (76%) felt that the support they received was outstanding and as a result, were highly positive about their experiences with their campers (78%) and the overall Camp PALS program (86%).
- Focusing on the quality of Camp PALS programming, volunteers reported that the on-campus and off-campus activities were outstanding (60% and 77% respectively).
- Most new volunteers learned about Camp PALS through a friend (62%), and by the end of the camp, these new volunteers would highly recommend Camp PALS to their own friends (98%).

#### **D. Conclusion**

In summary, volunteers varied in terms of interests and career choices but shared a commitment to social justice. Throughout the week at Camp PALS, volunteers gained new perspectives on people with Down syndrome and they walked away from camp feeling more confident in their role as a volunteer. For many volunteers, Camp PALS provided them with an opportunity to improve existing skills or acquire new skills. It also had a profound impact on how they thought of themselves and their future. In addition to new perspectives, increased confidence, and the acquisition of new skills, volunteers gained new friendships, and more importantly, a sense of belonging. To conclude, Camp PALS gives volunteers the opportunity to engage in a summer program that changes perspectives, develops skills, and has the potential to guide their future endeavors.

## II. Introduction

Since its conception, the mission of Camp PALS has been to foster relationships between peers with and without Down syndrome in order to create friendships that have an impact beyond the summer months. Founded by three high school students in 2004, Camp PALS began as a small camp located in Philadelphia, consisting of 16 campers with Down syndrome and 16 volunteers without Down syndrome.<sup>1</sup> Over the past 15 years, PALS Programs has broadened its impact by expanding its summer program in size, age range, and location. In 2018, Camp PALS hosted 14 weeklong sessions in 13 locations across the U.S., uniting more than 1,200 young adults with and without Down syndrome.

While many other summer programs focus on developing life skills, Camp PALS focuses on championing inclusion. The week at Camp PALS is meant to facilitate new, fun experiences and to give the campers with Down syndrome the same opportunities as their peers without Down syndrome. Camp PALS aims to provide individuals with Down syndrome a sense of belonging through creating a caring, accepting environment and an opportunity for independence and personal growth. Programming is carefully curated, allowing for organic, yet purposeful interactions between campers and volunteers throughout the week. The experience is designed for both the attendees with Down syndrome, as well as the volunteers, operating under the belief that shared experiences will build relationships that will ultimately change perspectives.

In order to provide an environment conducive to the formation of these relationships, Camp PALS sessions are set up in a distinct way. Camp sessions are hosted on college campuses, typically located near major U.S. cities. Camps vary by size, hosting either 20, 40, or 60 campers and a corresponding number of volunteers, as well as by age, with campers ranging between 12-30 years old and volunteers from 16 to over 30. In 2018, Camp PALS introduced four new camp sites in Boston, Maine, New York City, and Richmond. Campers and volunteers are divided into teams and share dorm rooms, meals, and other opportunities for downtime during the week to help facilitate relationship development. Throughout the week, campers and volunteers participate in on-campus activities, such as karaoke night, yoga, and Olympic-style games, as well as off-campus activities in partnership with the community such as sightseeing, wine tastings, beach days, sporting events, and amusement park trips. These experiences are designed to be immersive as volunteers and campers participate together in everything. Activities are age-appropriate, appealing to both volunteers and attendees with Down syndrome.

Given its mission, it is important to understand the impact Camp PALS has on volunteers. As a first step in documenting this impact, in 2018, PALS Programs conducted its first formal evaluation of Camp PALS, in collaboration with the Center for Social Development and Education (CSDE) at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The evaluation focused on the unique experiences of the volunteers and how these experiences impact volunteers' perceptions of people with Down syndrome, confidence in their role at Camp PALS, personal growth, development of friendships and

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from <https://www.palsprograms.org/our-story/>

sense of belonging, and motivation to make a difference in the lives of others. This report provides an in-depth profile of the type of person who volunteers with Camp PALS and documents the unique benefits volunteers gain from camp after just one week.

### **III. Methods**

#### **A. Participants**

Participants in the evaluation consisted of volunteers from each of the 14 Camp PALS sessions offered in the summer of 2018. Before camp sessions began, volunteers received a mass email from PALS Programs with an anonymous link to a pre-camp survey. Of the 680 who were contacted, 80% of the volunteers completed the pre-camp survey. Only volunteers who had completed the pre-camp survey later received the post-camp survey, after participating at their respective camp session. Of these volunteers, 473 completed the post-camp survey, for an overall response rate of 70%.

Participants who completed both the pre- and post-camp surveys were comprised almost equally of new (47%) and returning (53%) volunteers. For those participants who returned to Camp PALS in 2018, most (86%) had been involved with the program for two to four years and offered a range of perspectives. Almost all (92%) had been a counselor at least once while volunteering at Camp PALS and another 62% of returning volunteers had, for at least one summer, held other volunteer roles, including Camp PALS Support Staff (CPS), or a leadership position such as Head Counselor or Camp Director. The majority of participants, new and returning, were white (93%), female (65%), and between the ages of 16-21 (68%). Most participants were highly educated, with 84% of college-age volunteers pursuing a degree. See Table 1 for more information about participants.

#### **B. Procedures**

##### **1. Pre-camp survey administration**

Survey administration was a collaborative process between the CSDE and PALS Programs. In June of 2018, before any Camp PALS sessions began, staff at PALS Programs sent a mass email with an anonymous link for the survey to all volunteers registered for the summer. Volunteers followed the link to Qualtrics, the online platform used for both the pre- and post-camp survey. PALS Programs provided the CSDE with a list of volunteers from each camp session, which was used to track who completed the pre-camp survey. One week before each camp session began, the CSDE sent PALS Programs a list of volunteers who had not yet completed the pre-camp survey. Using this list, PALS Programs then sent these remaining volunteers an individual email reminder. This process was repeated again two days before each session.

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics

Variable	%
Volunteer	
New	47%
Returning	53%
Years at Camp PALS	
Two	40%
Three	27%
Four or more	33%
Position <sup>2</sup>	
Counselor	92%
CPS	27%
Head Counselor	24%
Camp Director	11%
Media/Medical	8%
Gender	
Male	35%
Female	65%
Age	
16 -21	68%
22-30+	32%
Race	
White	93%
Non-white	7%
Education <sup>3</sup>	
Undergraduate degree	64%
Graduate degree	20%

## 2. Post-camp survey administration

At the end of the pre-camp survey, volunteers had the option to provide their name and email address in order to receive the post-camp survey. The CSDE loaded this contact information into Qualtrics for the post-camp survey, which was administered through Qualtrics via individual links sent to volunteers one week after their camp session ended. Volunteers were asked to respond within one week. A reminder email was sent out via Qualtrics midway through the week to volunteers who had not yet completed the post-camp survey. At the end of the week, the CSDE sent PALS Programs a list of volunteers who had not yet completed the post-camp survey. Using this list, PALS Programs then sent these remaining volunteers an individual email reminder. PALS Programs sent a final email reminder to all remaining volunteers before the CSDE closed the post-camp survey on Qualtrics at the end of August 2018.

<sup>2</sup>Volunteers were asked to mark all positions they had in previous summers at camp; percentages will not add to 100%

<sup>3</sup> Not included are volunteers who were in high school or were not enrolled in any type of school.

## C. Measures

The pre-camp and post-camp surveys were designed based on input from PALS Programs staff, qualitative data from past informal Camp PALS evaluations, questions from relevant instruments used by the CSDE in past research and evaluation, and literature on activism and volunteering. While the CSDE oversaw the evaluation, the process of developing the surveys was highly collaborative. Staff from PALS Programs provided insight into focus areas they wished to learn more about through the surveys, and assisted in developing items for some of the scales that they felt were germane to Camp PALS and volunteering with young adults with Down syndrome. As a result of this collaboration, the pre- and post-camp surveys, when taken together, focused on six key areas related to volunteers' experiences at Camp PALS:

1. Volunteers' personal characteristics, including demographics and civic engagement/activism
2. Volunteers' perceptions of the capabilities of individuals with Down syndrome
3. Volunteers' confidence in working with people with Down syndrome
4. Volunteers' personal growth
5. Volunteers' development of friendships and sense of belonging, and
6. Volunteers' motivation to make a difference in the lives of others

In order to evaluate these six focus areas, the pre- and post-camp surveys used a mix of closed- and open-ended, write-in responses. The following section describes the instruments used in the pre-camp and post-camp surveys. For the complete pre- and post-camp survey instruments, see Appendices A and B.

**Civic Engagement Scale.** To measure volunteers' civic engagement, revised versions of three of the subscales from the *Active and Engaged Citizenship Questionnaire* were used in the pre-camp and post-camp surveys.<sup>4</sup> The first two adapted subscales each consisted of four items that reflected civic duty, while the third subscale consisted of seven items that addressed civic skills. In the first subscale, volunteers responded with how important they felt certain things are, such as "Helping to make sure all people are treated fairly," or "Speaking up for equality." Volunteers responded to the first subscale on a five-point scale, from "Not important" to "Extremely Important." Possible sum scores ranged from 0 to 16, with higher scores reflecting a greater perception of civic duty. The coefficient alpha index for internal consistency of the first subscale was .76. In the second subscale, volunteers rated how much they agreed with certain statements, such as "It's not really my problem if my neighbors are in trouble and need help," or "I believe I can make a difference in my community." Volunteers responded to the second subscale on a five-point scale, from "Completely Disagree" to "Completely Agree." Possible sum scores ranged from 0 to 16 (one item reverse-scored), with higher scores reflecting a greater perception of civic duty. The coefficient alpha index for internal consistency of the second subscale was .67. Finally, the third subscale, which focused on civic skills, asked volunteers about their likeliness of performing certain activities, such as

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<sup>4</sup> Zaff, J., Boyd, M., Li, Y., Lerner, J.V., Lerner, R.M. (2010). Active and engaged citizenship: multi-group and longitudinal factor analysis of an integrated construct of civic engagement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39, 736-750.

“Contact[ing] an elected official about a problem,” or “Writ[ing] an opinion letter to a local newspaper.” Volunteers responded to the third subscale on a five-point scale, from “Not at all likely” to “Very likely.” Possible sum scores ranged from 0 to 28, with higher scores reflecting more civic skills. The coefficient alpha index for internal consistency of the third subscale was .82. The three-subscals were used for demographic purposes in order to describe the type of person who volunteers for Camp PALS.

**Perceived Capabilities Scale.** To measure volunteers’ beliefs about the capabilities of people with Down syndrome, a revised version of the *Prognostic Belief Scale* was used in the pre-camp and post-camp survey.<sup>5</sup> The revised version included 20 items and volunteers were instructed to select the items they believed people with Down syndrome were capable of doing. Examples of items include “Use public transportation independently” and “Take care of a pet.” The scale was used in both the pre-camp and post-camp survey in order to reflect any change in volunteers’ perceptions of people with Down syndrome as a result of the week they spent at Camp PALS. Possible sum scores ranged from 0 to 20, with higher scores indicating more positive beliefs about the capabilities of people with Down syndrome. The coefficient alpha index for internal consistency was .87.

**Confidence Scale.** To measure volunteers’ confidence in their roles working with people with Down syndrome, a revised version of the *Self-Efficacy Scale for Physical Education Teacher Education Majors toward Children with Disabilities* was used in the pre-camp and post-camp survey.<sup>6</sup> The revised version included eight items, with questions such as “How confident are you in your ability to support someone with Down syndrome in daily activities?” and “How confident are you in your ability to keep someone with Down syndrome physically safe while in a city?” Volunteers responded on a five-point scale, including “No confidence,” “Low confidence,” “Moderate confidence,” “High confidence,” and “Complete confidence.” Possible sum scores range from 8 to 40, with higher scores indicating more confidence. The coefficient alpha index for internal consistency was .87.

**Youth Experiences Survey.** To measure volunteers’ personal growth as a result of Camp PALS, a revised version of the *Youth Experiences Survey 2.0* was used in the post-camp survey.<sup>7</sup> The revised version included 14 items, with questions such as “Because of Camp PALS, did you start thinking more about your future?” and “Because of Camp PALS, did you learn to be patient with other group members?” Volunteers responded on a four-point scale, including “Not at all,” “A little,” “Quite a bit,” and “Yes, definitely.” Possible sum scores ranged from 14 to 56, with higher scores indicating more personal growth. The coefficient alpha index for internal consistency was .90.

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<sup>5</sup> Wolraich, M.L. & Siperstein, G.N. (1983). Assessing professionals’ prognostic impressions of mental retardation. *Mental Retardation*, 21(1), 8-12.

<sup>6</sup> Block, M.E., Hutzler, Y.S., Barak, S., & Klavina, A. (2013). Creations and validation of the Self-Efficacy Instrument for Physical Education Teacher Education Majors toward inclusion. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 29, 184-205.

<sup>7</sup> Hansen, D.M. & Larson, R. (2005). *The Youth Experience 2.0: instrument revisions and validity testing*. Unpublished Manuscript, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

## IV. Results

### A. Characteristics of Camp PALS Volunteers

The evaluation provided insight into the type of person who chooses to volunteer for Camp PALS. Volunteers came from many walks of life; for some, Camp PALS marked their first experience being in close proximity with people with Down syndrome, while others were in contact with people with disabilities nearly every day. Further, the academic interests of Camp PALS volunteers greatly varied. While some volunteers were studying in fields directly related to working with individuals with disabilities, such as special education or occupational therapy, other volunteers were interested in fields such as criminal justice, nursing, and finance. Volunteers' diverse interests were further represented in their careers; volunteers' current jobs represented everything from hospitality and food service to teaching and engineering. See Table 2 for examples of volunteers' careers and educational interests.

**Table 2.** Examples of volunteers' careers and educational interests

Interests	Example Comments		
Career	"Cashier"	"Financial services"	"Personal assistant"
	"Civil engineer"	"IT"	"Special Education teacher"
	"Dance instructor"	"Landscaping"	"VIP tour guide"
	"Development associate"	"Nurse"	"Waiter"
	"Doctor"	"Pediatric physical therapist"	"Yoga teacher"
Education	"Biology"	"Education"	"Political science"
	"Business marketing"	"English"	"Psychology"
	"Criminal justice"	"Film"	"School counseling"
	"Design"	"Medicine"	"Sports management"
	"Ecotourism"	"Occupation therapy"	"Theatre"

While the volunteers differed in terms of education and career, overall, Camp PALS volunteers were very social-justice oriented. Most volunteers felt it was extremely important to treat people fairly (86%) and to help other people (88%); it is evident that those who chose to be volunteers for Camp PALS demonstrate prosocial tendencies. Coupled with these beliefs, almost all volunteers (92%) perceived themselves as able to make a difference in their community, and almost all volunteers (96%) felt it was important for them to contribute to their communities and society. In this way,

volunteers perceived themselves as capable of being a force for positive change. Accordingly, volunteers' orientation toward social justice was reflected in their willingness to sign petitions (80%), express their views in front of others (60%), and post to social media about an issue (62%). However, volunteers were limited in the extent to which they felt comfortable engaging civically. Only a third were inclined to take direct civic action by contacting a newspaper, elected officials, or community representatives (30%, 34%, and 33%, respectively). As expected, volunteers possessed a strong moral compass and sense of purpose that went beyond themselves. See Table 3 below for a summary of volunteers' characteristics.

**Table 3.** Social justice characteristics of volunteers

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Percentage of volunteers</b>
Believe it is important to treat people fairly	86%
Believe it is important to help other people	88%
Believe they are able to make a difference in their community	92%
Believe it is important to contribute to their community and society	96%

Despite volunteers' common orientation toward social injustice, it is important to draw a distinction between the two groups of volunteers who participated at Camp PALS: new and returning volunteers. New volunteers participated in Camp PALS for the first time during the summer of 2018, while returning volunteers had been attending Camp PALS for two or more years. For some of the new volunteers, this was their first time engaging with people with Down syndrome, while for some returning volunteers, this was their eighth summer doing so; those who were new did not know what to expect from the week while those who returned already had a sense of what goes on at Camp PALS and the type of people who get involved. Given this, it is important to consider how the perspectives and experiences of new volunteers were similar or different to volunteers who were veterans of Camp PALS.

### **1. New Volunteers**

Looking at those who were new in the summer of 2018, there were multiple ways volunteers found out about Camp PALS. The most common way (62%) was through a friend who had been a camper or volunteer in the past, and to a lesser extent (19%), through a family member who had been a camper or volunteer. Considering both friends and family, the majority of new volunteers found out about Camp PALS through someone close to them who was already associated with the program. In contrast, few volunteers (16%) found out about Camp PALS through their school or university or through social media. Clearly, the most common ways new volunteers heard about Camp PALS was through word of mouth and grassroots advertising from those who had participated in the past.

Just as there were multiple ways new volunteers found out about Camp PALS, most new volunteers (73%) gave multiple reasons for participating for the first time in 2018. Most new volunteers (83%) had altruistic intentions and chose to participate because they wanted to make a difference in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities (ID). This is not surprising, given that in general, people who choose to volunteer for Camp PALS tend to be motivated to help others, as evidenced

through their commitment to social justice. Many volunteers, however, also indicated external motivators for their participation. For example, over half of new volunteers (54%) decided to try Camp PALS because a friend, family member, or professor suggested they participate. Further, almost half (45%) attended Camp PALS for the first time because it aligned with their area of study or career path. Thus, most volunteers chose to attend Camp PALS for numerous reasons. See Table 4 for a summary of the reasons new volunteers chose to participate in Camp PALS.

**Table 4.** New volunteers’ reasons for participating in Camp PALS

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Percentage of new volunteers</b>
To make a difference in the lives of people with ID	83%
A friend, family member, or professor suggested it	54%
Aligns with area of study or career path	45%

## 2. Returning Volunteers

Most volunteers who returned for the summer of 2018 had been attending Camp PALS for several years; in fact, the majority of those who were returning (86%) had been involved in Camp PALS for two to four years. Throughout the years, returning volunteers held several roles at camp. Almost all volunteers (92%) had been a Counselor at one point, meaning they had been paired with and roomed with a camper with Down syndrome for a week. About a quarter (27%) of volunteers had been Camp PALS Support Staff (CPS). Further, several volunteers also held a leadership role; for example, 24% had been a Head Counselor at a camp session. A few volunteers (9%) had attended Camp PALS as either Medical or Media Staff, meaning they served as on-site nurses and EMTs or as photographers and videographers. A few volunteers (11%) had even been Camp Directors. See Table 5 below for the positions returning volunteers held in past years at Camp PALS.

**Table 5.** Returning volunteers’ previous roles at Camp PALS

<b>Role</b>	<b>Percentage of returning volunteers</b>
Counselor	92%
Camp PALS Support	27%
Head Counselor	24%
Camp Director	11%
Media	6%
Medical	3%

Returning volunteers contributed their decision to come back to Camp PALS to their many positive experiences in previous years. For example, three-quarters of returning volunteers (74%) felt that Camp PALS provided them with a sense of belonging and a chance to feel like themselves (57%). In addition to the positive feelings Camp PALS evokes each year, returning volunteers also cited social incentives for their continued participation; over half (57%) of volunteers indicated that they returned to Camp PALS each year to see friends they had made during previous summers. Clearly, Camp PALS is a family. See Table 6 below for the reasons volunteers chose to return to Camp PALS.

**Table 6.** Volunteers’ reasons for returning to Camp PALS

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Percentage of returning volunteers</b>
Provides a sense of belonging	74%
Gives me a chance to feel like myself	57%
To see friends made in previous summers	57%

For volunteers who had been involved for multiple years, Camp PALS does not end on the last day of camp. Almost all returning volunteers reported that they had stayed in touch with campers (90%) and co-volunteers (97%) from previous summers, mostly through social media. Similarly, talking on the phone and texting with campers (81%) and co-volunteers (95%) were also popular ways volunteers kept in touch between summers. In-person meetings were not as common, which is understandable given that volunteers came from all over the United States to attend their camp session. Although these meetings may not have been feasible due to the geographic distance between volunteers and campers, volunteers clearly still put in the effort to maintain relationships made at Camp PALS.

### **3. Summary**

Volunteers varied in terms of interests and career choices but shared a commitment to social justice and passion for Camp PALS. When looking at the impact of Camp PALS, it is important to take into consideration both new and returning volunteers. Most new volunteers found out about Camp PALS from friends or family who were volunteers or campers in the past. They were motivated to participate for the first time by a desire to improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and because Camp PALS was relevant to their career or education. Most returning volunteers had been participating in Camp PALS for several years and had the opportunity to experience several roles during their time at camp. For them, Camp PALS evoked positive feelings and provided them with a chance to reconnect with friends they had made in previous summers.

## **B. Impact of Camp PALS on Volunteers**

In addition to learning more about the type of person who volunteers for Camp PALS, the evaluation also examined the impact of Camp PALS on volunteers, in particular on their perceptions of people with Down syndrome, confidence in their role as a volunteer, personal growth and development, friendships and sense of belonging, and their motivation to make a difference. The following sections provide an in-depth look at the impact Camp PALS had in these five areas.

### **1. New Perspectives on People with Down syndrome**

Prior to participating in Camp PALS, it was important to explore how new volunteers perceived their soon-to-be camper with Down syndrome in order to see if these perceptions changed over the course of the week. Overall, new volunteers had high expectations for the campers. For example, almost all new volunteers (96%) viewed people with Down syndrome as capable of washing and dressing independently, and all (98%) believed they were capable of having a job. Given this, new

volunteers thought of people with Down syndrome as having necessary independent living skills. Further, most believed people with Down syndrome have robust social skills, which includes engaging in simple conversation (100%), using social media (88%), having an active dating life (90%), and even getting married (82%). While people with Down syndrome vary with regard to their adaptive behavior, which includes social skills, self-help skills, and independent living skills, new volunteers perceived them to be “mildly challenged.” As expected, returning counselors also thought of people with Down syndrome as more mildly challenged. While both new and returning counselors viewed people with Down syndrome as very capable, returning counselors perceived people with Down syndrome as more capable ( $M = 16.81, SD = 3.29$ ) than new volunteers ( $M = 15.21, SD = 4.00$ ),  $t(424) = 4.72, p < .01$ . Refer to the *Perceived Capabilities Scale* in Appendices A and B.

Most importantly, though new volunteers’ overall perceptions of people with Down syndrome were positive before camp, they became even more positive as a result of participating in Camp PALS. For example, while most new volunteers (78%) initially believed people with Down syndrome can act appropriately around strangers, almost all (93%) shared this belief by the end of camp. Similarly, before camp, only half of the new volunteers (56%) thought people with Down syndrome are capable of handling their own money, while by the end of camp, more than three-quarters (79%) of them shared this perspective. In fact, by the end of camp, new volunteers viewed people with Down syndrome as just as capable ( $M = 17.14, SD = 3.18$ ) as returning volunteers had at the start of camp, ( $M = 16.81, SD = 3.29$ ),  $t(219) = 9.38, p < .01$ . Clearly, Camp PALS positively impacted the way new volunteers saw people with Down syndrome. By the end of the week, volunteers saw people with Down syndrome as having the fundamental skills needed to live independently.

Beyond the numbers, volunteers’ “take aways” from Camp PALS shed even more light on how their perspectives on people with Down syndrome changed from the beginning to the end of the week. For some volunteers, their time at camp pushed them to deal with their stereotypes or misguided conceptualizations of people with Down syndrome. For example, several volunteers admitted that before camp, they tended to think of people with Down syndrome as all the same, viewing them as a homogenous group rather than individuals. However, after their interactions with the campers, they realized that these perceptions were inaccurate and unfounded.

At Camp PALS, volunteers began to see people with Down syndrome as individuals with unique personalities and capabilities. One volunteer described her shift from thinking about people with Down syndrome as a group to viewing them as individuals: “I will definitely take away a new understanding of all individuals with Down syndrome. They are all different, just like every person has different personalities.” Similarly, the interactions volunteers had with campers prompted them to think beyond the diagnostic label of Down syndrome in order to view each camper as “their own person.” By viewing people with Down syndrome as individuals, volunteers were able to “see people for who they are, instead of seeing their disability.” As one volunteer put it, “people with Down syndrome are people first.”

It became apparent, as the week progressed, that campers were perfectly able to participate in a wide range of activities. Volunteers quickly realized that people with Down syndrome are “totally capable of doing [the] everyday activities” that comprised the Camp PALS day. In fact, after the week at Camp PALS, some volunteers reflected on the ways in which society often treats people with Down syndrome, or people with disabilities in general. One volunteer acknowledged that “there are people that don’t even know how to communicate with people with Down syndrome because they think you have to baby talk to them.” However, volunteers possessed a different mindset and believed that people with Down syndrome should be held to high expectations, which would give them “space to grow and learn on their own.”

Throughout the week, as volunteers participated in activities, roomed, and dined with campers with Down syndrome, they began to recognize that they shared more similarities than differences with the campers. In fact, if volunteers came away with any lessons from their week at Camp PALS, it was that people with and without Down syndrome “are more alike than different.” For example, volunteers came to realize that campers “have the same interests” as them and are “capable of feeling the same emotions.” While some volunteers came away from Camp PALS with a better idea of what people with Down syndrome are capable of, many volunteers were not surprised to find that campers were able to do many of the same things as them. According to one volunteer, Camp PALS demonstrated that “individuals with Down syndrome have the ability to do what everyone else without Down syndrome [is] doing... they are capable of holding friendships and loving other people.” Clearly, Camp PALS provided an environment in which campers’ disability was irrelevant, and instead the person they are—their likes, dislikes, feelings, and talents—was more relevant. Refer to Table 7 for more of volunteers’ new perspectives on people with Down syndrome.

## **2. Confidence in Being a Volunteer**

In addition to gaining new perspectives on people with Down syndrome, volunteers also walked away from camp feeling more confident. New volunteers entered Camp PALS with varying degrees of experience interacting with people with Down syndrome; because of this, they entered camp generally confident in their role as a volunteer. For example, new volunteers felt confident in their ability to become friends with someone with Down syndrome (97%); similarly, 88% felt confident they could keep someone with Down syndrome physically safe while in a city. There were, however, a few areas in which new volunteers were less than confident. Only 66% of new volunteers felt highly or completely confident addressing the inappropriate behavior of someone with Down syndrome. Further, just 57% were confident about confiding in someone with Down syndrome about a personal issue.

**Table 7.** Volunteers’ perspectives on people with Down syndrome after Camp PALS

Example Comments
“Individuals with Down syndrome are simply just other people with differences. I now view this “disability” as a difference, akin to blonde hair vs. brown hair, or different education.”
“Individuals with Down syndrome can do everything that anyone else can do.”
“Individuals with Down syndrome are no different than I am.”
“Individuals with Down syndrome may be a little different, but we are more alike than we are different.”
“People with Down syndrome are able to do most activities on their own and are very normal teenagers.”
“The biggest thing I am going to take away from PALS is that all people with Down syndrome deserve to have the same opportunities as anyone else because they are just as capable as any other person.”
“Individuals with Down syndrome are more alike than different. Independence should be expected.”
“People with Down syndrome are no different than the rest of us without disabilities.”
“I am more alike with the campers than different.”
“That everyone’s uniqueness makes them special and we are so much more similar than we are different.”
“We are so alike in so many different ways regardless of any type of disability.”

To further explore the factors that contribute to counselors’ confidence at the start of camp, regression analyses were conducted focusing on volunteers’ prior experience in Camp PALS, their gender, and their perception of the capabilities of people with Down syndrome. All three factors significantly predicted level of confidence. New volunteers had lower confidence than returning volunteers, female volunteers had more confidence than male volunteers, and volunteers who perceived people with Down syndrome as more capable (accounting for their prior experience and gender) had more confidence than volunteers who perceived people with Down syndrome as less capable. Clearly, female volunteers who had prior experience volunteering for Camp PALS and who expected their camper with Down syndrome to be highly capable started the summer 2018 session with high confidence. Refer to the *Confidence Scale* in Appendices A and B.

After just one week with their camper, almost all of the new volunteers (93%) felt confident addressing the inappropriate behavior of someone with Down syndrome and confident confiding in them about a personal issue (81%). Overall, new volunteers were more confident about working with people with Down syndrome ( $M = 37.34, SD = 3.12$ ) at the end of camp than they had been before their week at Camp PALS ( $M = 34.16, SD = 4.41$ ),  $t(219) = 13.00, p < .01$ . Interestingly, returning volunteers were also more confident by the end of camp ( $M = 38.30, SD = 2.43$ ) than they had been at the beginning of the week ( $M = 36.53, SD = 3.48$ ),  $t(251) = 9.23, p < .01$ . It is obvious that volunteers come away from Camp PALS as individuals more confident in their ability to work with people with Down syndrome after just one week; however, it is even more obvious that repeated participation further boosts volunteers' feelings of confidence. See Table 8 for more details in the changes in volunteers' confidence before camp to the end of camp.

**Table 8.** Volunteers' confidence before and at the end of camp

	Before Camp		End of Camp	
	N	Mean (SD)	N	Mean (SD) <sup>8</sup>
New volunteers	220	34.16 (4.41)	220	37.34 (3.12)
Returning volunteers	252	36.53 (3.48)	252	38.30 (2.43)

When given the opportunity to elaborate on the impact of Camp PALS, volunteers, both new and returning, shared anecdotes that confirmed this boost in confidence. Through Camp PALS, volunteers became “more confident in [their] ability to work with [people] with Down syndrome,” or more generally, “more confiden[t] to work with people with disabilities.” Others highlighted how their week at camp increased their confidence not only in their ability to work with individuals with Down syndrome, but in their relations with them as well, emphasizing that they felt “more confident interacting.” In fact, by the end of the week, volunteers felt more confident around not only people with Down syndrome, but “in meeting new people” and “connecting with all different kinds of people.” For many volunteers, Camp PALS gave them the confidence to step out of their comfort zone and engage with people they normally might not have interacted with otherwise.

Not only did volunteers become more confident working with and engaging with people with Down syndrome, they also became more confident in their skills, capabilities, and who they are as a person. For example, volunteers elaborated on becoming more confident in their abilities to “speak in front of others,” “lead,” and “advocate”—all skills they had the chance to practice throughout the week. Further, as a result of Camp PALS, volunteers became more confident in themselves, akin to increased self-esteem. As one volunteer put it, Camp PALS gave her “confidence in expressing [her] true self.” Another volunteer shared a similar sentiment, and wrote about the “confidence gained from being with a group of people who are unafraid to be themselves.” Just as they learned about acceptance of people with Down syndrome, volunteers became more accepting of themselves. One volunteer’s comment reflected this new attitude towards self-acceptance, stating that Camp PALS gave her the “confidence as a person to love who [she] is.”

<sup>8</sup> Possible scores on the *Confidence Scale* ranged from 0 to 40.

### 3. Personal Growth and Development

#### Skills

For both new and returning volunteers, Camp PALS had a profound impact on how they thought of themselves and their future. In fact, 80% of volunteers felt they experienced a positive turning point in their life because of participating in Camp PALS. For many volunteers, the week they spent at camp provided them with an opportunity to improve existing skills or acquire new skills. For example, they learned about compromising (76%) and learned how to be patient with others (85%). Further, hundreds of volunteers provided insight into their experience at camp, creating a wealth of information that further highlighted the skills they honed throughout the week. One of the skills volunteers repeatedly mentioned improving was their ability to communicate with others. According to one volunteer, Camp PALS showed her “the importance of communication.” Another volunteer stated that Camp PALS helped her learn how to “communicate with people from all different walks of life.” Camp PALS strengthened volunteers’ communication skills, which as a result, also helped them to more effectively work with others; day to day, they learned the importance of teamwork. Throughout the many activities of the week, volunteers had to work side by side with both other volunteers and campers; because of this, many believed Camp PALS helped them “become a better team member.” Volunteers emphasized the importance of getting to “know [their] team” in order to provide the best experience for the campers, as well as the importance of communication and collaboration. While volunteers got better at collaborating with others throughout the week, they also got better at leading others. Volunteers described Camp PALS as having “shaped [their] leadership” abilities through providing opportunities to take on leadership roles. One volunteer described the ways in which Camp PALS had gotten him to think differently about what it means to be a leader:

Being a leader of a group doesn’t mean you direct every action of the group. It’s important for a leader to be supported by a team in which they feel comfortable and can trust handing off responsibilities. The spread of responsibilities makes a team grow stronger.

Clearly, volunteers came away from Camp PALS with new and improved skillsets. See Table 9 below for more of volunteers’ comments about their skill development.

**Table 9.** Volunteer’s perspectives on skill development

Skill	Example Comments
Communication	<p>“Camp PALS has shown me how to communicate in a clear and meaningful way with individuals with disabilities.”</p> <p>“I learned how to cope with frustrations, communicate with my team, and resolve issues effectively and creatively.”</p> <p>“I have fully embraced the importance of communication and inclusion through Camp PALS.”</p> <p>“I never wanted to raise my voice with my roommate if she did something that I didn’t think was right, so I took a deep breath and we just talked it out.”</p>
Teamwork	<p>“I learned a lot about collaborating in a team and communicating in effective ways from other people at Camp PALS.”</p> <p>“I think Camp PALS has taught me a lot about people and communication skills, as well as how to work together as a team in tough situations.”</p>
Leadership	<p>“I have stepped into leadership roles through PALS, and that encouraged me to be more of a leader at work.”</p> <p>“I will definitely take away some leadership skills and finding ways to make PALS as special for other people’s first time as it was for me.”</p> <p>“I took away the values of patience, discipline, and leadership—all while having the greatest, most fulfilling week of the summer.”</p> <p>“I know that I can do way more than I thought and am capable of leadership.”</p> <p>“I will take away many new leadership skills from being a CPS.”</p> <p>“Leadership skills that PALS taught me this summer will stay with me forever.”</p> <p>“I am leaving camp with a new perspective on leadership.”</p> <p>“The PALS Program has given me lifelong friends, the most amazing community, expanded my love for special needs, and challenged me to become a more accepting and strong leader. Because of the amazing leadership above me this summer, I’ve decided I want to have a future leadership role with PALS and other organizations like this one.”</p>

## Values

Similar to skills, volunteers reported on how their time at Camp PALS reinforced or caused them to consider their personal values. For many volunteers, inclusion was a value they viewed as especially important. After spending the week alongside peers with Down syndrome and seeing firsthand what they are capable of, volunteers more strongly supported the idea that everyone should be included. Camp PALS is a place where “inclusion is the norm” and because of this, some volunteers reevaluated previous ideas they had about inclusion. One volunteer shared how he went from feeling indifferent towards inclusion to being an advocate for it:

I want to be a physical education teacher. Being able to experience Camp PALS allowed me to understand why everyone is pushing for inclusion. I can say honestly that in the past it didn't bother me either way. But now, inclusion is the best option as it gives everyone an equal opportunity to share experiences and make new friendships.

Another volunteer shared a similar anecdote, emphasizing how Camp PALS enabled her to see the value in inclusion, which she now carries forth in her job everyday:

I am a full-time teacher. I choose every year to teach the inclusive class in my grade level. Oftentimes, teachers do not want to be the teacher for this class—more work, more accommodations, more parent calls, more behavior, etc. I ask to be this teacher because PALS has shown me that we are all more alike than different.

Volunteers' comments, such as these, highlight the way Camp PALS emphasized the importance of all people and the unique talents and capabilities individuals bring. Because of this, volunteers saw the value in inclusion.

Similar to inclusion, Camp PALS also influenced the value volunteers placed on acceptance. Through interactions with both co-volunteers and campers, volunteers learned how to “be accepting of all, with or without a disability.” Volunteers described Camp PALS as an “accepting environment” and left the week with “hope that the world can become more accepting of all people.” See Table 10 below for more of volunteers' perspectives on the value of inclusion and acceptance.

**Table 10.** Volunteers’ perspectives on inclusion and acceptance

Value	Example Comments
Inclusion	<p>“Social inclusion is the absolute best way to get results and to allow for independence and improve confidence.”</p> <p>“Each summer I learn more about inclusion and patience. Even when I think I’ve learned all that there is to know, I am surprised yet again with a great learning experience each week I spend at PALS.”</p> <p>“PALS is always a reminder to preach inclusion and acceptance wherever you go. That’s something I always take away.”</p> <p>“True inclusion is possible and nowhere in the world does it better than PALS!”</p> <p>“Inclusion is everything.”</p> <p>“It’s a constant reminder that full-hearted inclusion is possible and that we need to keep working towards that year-round.”</p> <p>“I took away new knowledge of inclusion and that it is “we,” not “they.”</p> <p>“I should be a more inclusive person—describing to others my relationships and positive experiences with people with disabilities. I am going to become a more influential advocate in my society for this. Being inclusive does not only relate to people with disabilities; it relates to everyone.”</p> <p>“I will try to always be more inclusive and try to live everyday with my “cool cap” off.”</p>
Acceptance	<p>“I want to make the world a better and more accepting place...”</p> <p>“Be accepting of others in all situations.”</p> <p>“It was truly a life-changing experience that taught me so much about having confidence and acceptance.”</p> <p>“I will take away patience, self-love, and acceptance, along with the need to show unconditional love as shown by many of my peers at Camp PALS.”</p> <p>“An even greater acceptance for those around me and the Down syndrome community as a whole.”</p> <p>“I will take away an outstanding amount of acceptance and love for everyone no matter who they are.”</p> <p>“Everyone deserves acceptance.”</p>

## Future goals

In addition to enhancing skills and values, volunteers began to think more about their future as a result of their time at Camp PALS. This was especially true for new volunteers. For example, 88% of new volunteers reported that they began to think more about their future because of Camp PALS, specifically in terms of career path. These new volunteers who felt that Camp PALS prompted them to think more about their future shared several characteristics. The majority (71%) were enrolled in an undergraduate program. Typically, students use their undergraduate years to explore areas of study that might interest them; they are in the initial stage of developing their career. Given that this is an impressionable time personally, professionally, and academically in their lives, Camp PALS seems to serve as a catalyst for new volunteers in considering what their future could be.

Given that volunteers were mostly young adults, the most salient impact of Camp PALS was on their career path. For many, Camp PALS confirmed volunteers' choice of their undergraduate or graduate major or career path. In fact, volunteers described this impact in almost every way possible, emphasizing how Camp PALS had "solidified," "affirmed," "reaffirmed," "strengthened," and "reinforced" their educational or career choice. Volunteers provided statements such as "It has reassured me that working in special education is what I want to do for the rest of my life," and it "really confirmed that I am going into the right field." For many volunteers, especially those going into a field that involves people with disabilities, their week at Camp PALS helped reassure they were making the right decision.

For volunteers who were not so certain about their area of study or career choice, Camp PALS opened other avenues for majors and careers and helped these volunteers gain a better sense of their future. They described how their experience at Camp PALS "made them think more" about what degree or career might best suit them. For some volunteers, this meant broadening the scope of their current or potential career or clarifying areas of their career aspirations that had remained vague. For example, one volunteer wrote about how she had "known that I wanted to be a teacher all my life, but getting involved in PALS...truly showed me that I wanted to work as a special education teacher." For other volunteers, Camp PALS gave them a new starting point or completely diverted their path from one career or major to a completely different one. For one volunteer, Camp PALS "allowed [her] to pick [a] major" that would enable her to eventually pursue a career working in a school. For this volunteer, Camp PALS presented a starting point. In contrast, other volunteers discussed how Camp PALS had influenced them to change from one major to another. For example, one volunteer "switched from general education to special education." Further, another volunteer changed from one major to an entirely different major as a result of her experiences at Camp PALS:

After my first year at Camp PALS, I switched my major from music business to psychology and education because I realized that I would be a happier person if I was able to help those with special needs live independent lives.

Thus, for many volunteers, their experiences at Camp PALS provided much-needed clarification for the future; for other volunteers, Camp PALS provided a launching pad for them to begin a new field of study.

While Camp PALS was able to confirm, guide, or jumpstart the aspirations of some volunteers, for others, Camp PALS reawakened passion and enthusiasm for their area of study or career. These volunteers left their week at Camp PALS with a renewed interest and ambition in jobs or studies that had once begun to feel stale. For these volunteers, Camp PALS allowed them to “rediscover who I truly am.” For example, one volunteer who had initially pursued special education discussed how Camp PALS influenced her to revisit that path: “Camp PALS pushed me to go back into teaching special education, something I have always wanted to do but got lost in when I began college.” Another volunteer discussed the way Camp PALS had rejuvenated her passion for teaching and her hope for future generations of students:

It was profoundly life-changing for me. I was totally blown away by the awesome dynamics of the campers and the counselors. I [had] reached a point of burn out. Last week renewed my faith that the next generation has wonderful, devoted leaders and are not in it for them.

Clearly, Camp PALS provided a space in which volunteers were able to reflect on what truly fulfilled them and reawakened passions that may have been sidelined in the rush of everyday life. For more of volunteers’ perspectives of the impact of Camp PALS on their major or career path, refer to Table 11.

**Table 11.** Volunteer perspectives on the impact of Camp PALS on career and education

Impact	Example Comments
Confirm	<p>“[Camp PALS] strengthened my decision to someday pursue being a special education teacher.”</p> <p>“Since I am going into the field of special education, it has made me realize that I have most definitely selected the right career path for myself.”</p> <p>“I’ve always wanted to work as a higher level nurse in a NICU setting. PALS solidified my desire to do this, especially with families just delivering a baby with Down syndrome.”</p> <p>“Camp PALS has confirmed my interest in working with individuals with disabilities as a career and has increased my passion for the field.”</p> <p>“I’ve always known I’ve wanted to be in a career where I can help people and forming relationships at PALS has solidified that for me.”</p>
Redirect	<p>“After my first Camp PALS I changed my major and began pursuing occupational therapy for infants with Down syndrome.”</p> <p>“I originally wanted to be a computer science major but I realized that my real area of expertise was in problem solving, both in a PALS settings and with my studies, and I would not have switched majors if it weren’t for my realizing that.”</p> <p>“Before Camp PALS I had just transferred to another school and had no clue what major to declare. As soon as my first PALS experience ended, I knew that I wanted a career within the disability community.”</p> <p>“I had never thought of going into a career path that involves young adults with Down syndrome but after this camp I feel as though I have changed dramatically. The combination of meeting the greatest counselors and coolest campers has really made me come out of my shell and want to stick around the kind of people involved in this kind of career.”</p>
Reawaken	<p>“Hanging out with the campers opened my eyes and allowed me to rediscover who I truly am. The random dance parties and karaoke reminded me how much I want to be a part of this community and advocate for these absolutely amazing individuals. Whether that means focusing on policymaking or lobbying, I will have to figure out, but PALS definitely help me come to this decision.”</p> <p>“Camp PALS made me realize that it is so important to find a job you love rather than chase money.”</p> <p>“I met people, both counselors and campers, who focused their attention on their happiness and what they loved. The temptations from high-profile jobs made me stray from focusing on my passion as a job.”</p>

#### 4. Friendship and Sense of Belonging

Not only did volunteers leave Camp PALS with skills and new perspectives, they ended the week with new friendships, and more importantly, a sense of belonging. Many volunteers emphasized that these newfound friendships included both co-volunteers and campers, indicating no limits to the relationships that volunteers were able to form with others at camp. However, most strikingly, volunteers described in-depth the friendships they formed with campers with Down syndrome. In fact, several volunteers expressed gratitude for their “amazing friendship with their roommate,” or enthusiasm that “my camper is now my best friend.” Further, volunteers provided insight into the development and nature of these friendships. For example, one volunteer described how the week had started with challenges between him and his camper, but ended in friendship: “My camper tested me, but I learned how to grow from that and work with it throughout the week. Now we’re super close friends, and I couldn’t be more thankful.” Another volunteer described the special dynamic that existed between him and his camper:

The biggest take away is my incredible and complex friendship with my camper. While he was somewhat low-functioning, he understood me better than most people, often asking me “are you happy?” when things were right or when they weren’t right. This friendship is one that I will hold on to in my future and I will seek out more of these friendships as I go forward.

For this volunteer, the friendship he had with his camper was different than one he might have had with a co-volunteer, but was powerful nonetheless. Clearly, for him, and likely many other volunteers, this friendship allowed him to approach future relationships with a more open mind.

When reporting on the friendships they formed at Camp PALS, volunteers emphasized certain characteristics. According to one volunteer, camp “show[ed] what true friendships should look like.” Based on statements similar to this, there were a number of ways volunteers described these “true friendships.” Many volunteers highlighted their happiness with these new relationships, describing them as “amazing, “incredible,” or “wonderful.” Interestingly, one volunteer described the friendships made at Camp PALS as “mature,” noting that friendships made at Camp PALS required acceptance and patience.

Yet above all, there were two words volunteers used most when describing the friendships made at Camp PALS: “genuine” and “lifelong.” When describing these friendships as “genuine,” volunteers explained how they did not have to hide their true selves or feel pressured to be anything they are not. In fact, they described Camp PALS as a place where they could take off their “cool caps” and let go of the “fear of being judged, made fun of, or embarrassed;” this vulnerability allowed relationships that were truly genuine to develop among campers and volunteers. Just as popular a descriptor, volunteers used “lifelong” when elaborating on their friendships. As one volunteer put it, “I will definitely take away the lifelong friendships and memories that I made with campers and counselors this week.” Overall, the majority of volunteers believed the friendships they formed at Camp PALS were based on a reflection of their true selves and were relationships that would

endure long after the final days of camp. Please refer to Table 12 for more of volunteers' descriptions of the friendships formed at Camp PALS.

**Table 12.** Characteristics of friendships made at Camp PALS

Characteristic of Friendship	Example Comments
Genuine	<p>“Friends can come from anywhere and PALS friendships are some of the closest and most genuine.”</p> <p>“I made some of the most genuine friendships in a week then I have in my entire life. I am so lucky to have met the people that I did.”</p> <p>“I will take away the genuine friendships I built, with campers and counselors alike.”</p> <p>“The people that take part in Camp PALS are truly special people and the friendships made are so pure and genuine.”</p>
Lifelong	<p>“It was a beautiful experience that left me with lifelong friends.”</p> <p>“Within a week, I made so many lifelong friendships and learned a lot about myself and my capabilities.”</p> <p>“I am taking away firstly lifelong friends, both with and without Down syndrome.”</p> <p>“I will definitely take away the lifelong friendships and memories that I made with campers and counselors this week.”</p>

Given how volunteers' perceptions of people with Down syndrome changed and the meaningful friendships they formed within a week, it is clear that Camp PALS is a special environment where all of this is possible; in other words, Camp PALS provides a sense of belonging. As one volunteer described, Camp PALS is a place where she “feel[s] like I can be my true self for the entire week.” Volunteers also elaborated on the overall feel of Camp PALS, highlighting the “positivity” at the camp. While they acknowledged that life could sometimes feel cold and artificial, Camp PALS served as a reminder that the “world... is still kind and genuine.” Because of these characteristics, volunteers saw Camp PALS as a place that fostered acceptance and inclusivity; everyone could present a true version of themselves and everyone belonged. As one volunteer put it, Camp PALS “is a place for everyone to feel loved and welcome.”

Volunteers recognized that while Camp PALS had a welcoming environment, it only got to be that way because of the people at camp. People at Camp PALS are those who believe it is “important to

get to know people for who they are, rather than make judgements based on superficial qualities or preconceived notions.” For one volunteer, this was her first summer at Camp PALS, and she was a bit nervous before camp started. However, she found that her co-volunteers were “not judgmental” and were actually “so kind and thoughtful.” Her fears had been completely dissuaded and she found that “they were the most selfless people [she] had ever met and [she] thought that those kind of people didn’t exist” prior to arriving at camp. Other volunteers shared her sentiments and talked about the “acceptance” and “compassion” that abounded at Camp PALS; for many, camp offered one week in which volunteers and campers could “exist without judgement” and simply be themselves.

During their week at camp, volunteers grew close to their co-volunteers and campers, so much so that they thought of them as “a community and a family that creates bonds and friendships.” These bonds were able to form because of shared passions. One volunteer accentuated this point, and stated “every year I gain acceptance and belonging by surrounding myself with like-minded individuals who embrace diversity and uniqueness.” Volunteers came to Camp PALS as individuals who valued acceptance and respected difference and left the week as part of a family who felt empowered knowing they “can create a place in this world that is a sanctuary for pure joy, happiness, and love while being free of prejudice and judgement.”

## **5. Making a Difference in the Lives of Others**

Finally, volunteers came away from Camp PALS motivated to make a difference. For some, this meant positively impacting the lives of people with Down syndrome. Specifically, volunteers wrote about being advocates. One volunteer expressed a desire to be “more hands on with [her] advocacy” by helping teach life skills to people with disabilities. Other volunteers saw different routes to advocacy, such as “fundraising.” Yet most strikingly, many volunteers talked about the ways they could make a difference in the lives of people with Down syndrome through their career. For example, one volunteer described how Camp PALS had shown her how she could be an advocate through her job in the medical field:

[Camp PALS] keeps me grounded in the reasons why I want to be a doctor and work in medicine—to help those around me regardless of background and ability since I believe health is a universal right. I want to serve as a greater advocate in the special needs community and work with these individuals to help bridge the gap in public understanding.

Similarly, one volunteer elaborated on how Camp PALS inspired her to question something in her everyday life that she thought was unfair:

I have always wanted to be in the health field but now I want to go further and have my own practice and make all doctor and pediatrician offices more available to families that have a child with Down syndrome. The doctor’s office I interned [at] does not accept patients with Down syndrome because of mainly the heart conditions that could happen. I questioned the doctors and they agreed to accept the patients which made me feel like I can actually make a

difference and make life a little easier for these patients who would have to typically drive 45-60 minutes just to see a general physician.

Another volunteer shared a similar sentiment and emphasized that people with Down syndrome “need more advocates in the medical field.” Even volunteers at the beginning of their career paths wrote of a desire to promote acceptance for people with Down syndrome. As one volunteer expressed, “I need to have a career that will allow me to advocate for those with Down syndrome.”

This motivation to make a difference was not limited to only people with Down syndrome. Volunteers also wrote about their desire to make a difference in the lives of other marginalized communities, or the world in general. Camp PALS influenced these volunteers to want to “help advocate for those communities who are so often silenced and underestimated.” Volunteers’ experiences at Camp PALS empowered them and helped them realize that they are “capable of helping people in ways that [they] did not know [about] before camp.” Because of their experiences, volunteers expressed feeling more “confident and capable helping people,” and felt they could carry this confidence into their lives outside of camp. As one volunteer put it, “it has made me more excited to see what kind of difference I can make outside of PALS.” See Table 13 for the ways volunteers described making a difference.

**Table 13.** Volunteers’ perspectives on making a difference

Example Comments
“I know that I want to work with people with disabilities and tell their stories to make a difference in the world.”
“After doing PALS I really wanted to make a difference in people’s lives as much as I can. I want to travel the world and market/advertise how to make a difference in communities that people may not know a lot about.”
“I want to be part of this community and advocate for these absolutely amazing individuals.”
“I want to advocate for Down syndrome and spread PALS love to everyone.”
“[I learned] how to be a better advocate for the Down syndrome community. I would love to reach out to my neighborhood community and become friends with those who have Down syndrome.”
“Camp PALS has shown me I want to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities and this will carry me into my career.”
“PALS is a constant reminder that I am helping to make a difference in this world, both at camp and every day at school.”
“I can change someone else’s life for the better while they are changing mine.”

## 6. Summary

Volunteers left Camp PALS as different people than they were a week prior. Within the span of just a few days, volunteers came away with new perspectives on people with Down syndrome and rid themselves of stereotypes they had previously held. Both new and returning volunteers became more confident in their own abilities and believed they possessed the capabilities to fulfill their role at Camp PALS. Further, volunteers gained or refined skills throughout the week, reflected on their values, and thought about their futures. They developed friendships throughout the week, and along with that, a sense of belonging; the campers and other volunteers at Camp PALS became like “family.” Finally, volunteers left camp motivated to make a difference, both in the lives of people with Down syndrome and, more broadly, the world. For these volunteers, Camp PALS provided valuable takeaways they believed they “[could not] find anywhere else.”

## V. Next Steps

Given the findings from the first formal evaluation of Camp PALS, the following points provide recommendations of future evaluations PALS Programs could conduct to further understand the value and benefit of Camp PALS:

- Explore longitudinally the impact of Camp PALS on the lives of volunteers (e.g. careers, involvement in the community, volunteering). This will build on the retrospective data collected this past summer on returning volunteers.
- Expand the focus of the ongoing evaluation of Camp PALS to include more directly the benefits and values to campers and their families, focusing on changes that occur in their lives as a result of their participation, such as:
  - Families' increased expectations of their camper
  - Increased camper participation in the community, such as accessing recreational activities, using public transportation independently, etc.
  - Increased camper autonomy in making choices in terms of familial and community engagement, as well as personal life
- Focus on the expansion of campers' and volunteers' social networks, especially in terms of friendships, confidence in forming new relationships, etc.
  - Similar to this evaluation on the impact of Camp PALS on volunteers, document whether campers with Down syndrome leave camp with a sense of belonging
- Focus on the social and emotional learning skills campers acquire from participating in Camp PALS, specifically in the domains of social awareness, relationship skills, and self-management.
- Explore the differential impact of Camp PALS on new campers and their experiences, as well as the continuing impact on campers who have returned to camp summer after summer.
- Explore the characteristics of campers that lead to the benefits and values of Camp PALS; who are the campers (and families) who benefit most from their experiences at Camp PALS?
- Focus on leadership outcomes for volunteers, given that several volunteers felt they gained important leadership skills through their week at Camp PALS, or more closely examine the perspectives of volunteers who hold unpaired leadership positions, such as Camp Directors or Head Counselors.
- Explore whether there are different outcomes based on camp sites by grouping them by distinct characteristics, such as leadership at each camp, size of the camp, or whether or not the camp location is new or established.

- Explore how Camp PALS and its impact on volunteers and participants compares to other programs, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, using literature on mentoring and volunteer work for guidance.
- Focus on how new camper- new counselor relationships develop within a brief period of time.
  - Provides a knowledge base for building a better support structure
  - Provides an understanding of a process that does not occur in the classroom or within other models of camps
- Explore new ways of furthering the impact of Camp PALS through expansions in programming, whether at new camp sites or through recruitment of new volunteers, especially those younger than age 16.

## VI. Appendix A: Pre-Camp Survey

### Camp PALS Pre-Camp Volunteer Survey Summer 2018

#### PAGE 1:

- The University of Massachusetts Boston has been asked by PALS Programs to evaluate the impact of Camp PALS this summer.
- Your participation in this survey will help us learn more about the volunteers who give their time over the summer to participate in Camp PALS.
- By knowing more about the volunteers, Camp PALS will be able to expand opportunities for future camp sessions.
- This survey should take you about 10 minutes to complete.

PLEASE CLICK THE NEXT BUTTON TO CONTINUE.

#### PAGE 2:

- You should only complete this survey if you are volunteering at a summer 2018 session of Camp PALS.
- You should only complete this survey once, even if you are participating in multiple Camp PALS sessions at multiple locations this summer. If you have already completed this survey this summer, please do not proceed any further.
- Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can stop taking the survey at any time without consequence.
- Your answers are confidential. No information will be presented or published in any way that would permit identification of any individual. Your answers will be combined with the answers of other volunteers.
- Your answers will not be shared with Camp PALS staff or anyone from PALS Programs in a way that could identify you.

PLEASE CLICK THE NEXT BUTTON TO CONTINUE.

#### PAGE 3:

**S1. Do you consent to participate in this survey?**

- Yes
- No → SKIP TO SCREENER END FOR S1

**S2. Have you already completed this pre-camp survey for Camp PALS this summer?**

- Yes → SKIP TO SCREENER END FOR S2
- No

**PAGE 4:**

PLEASE NOTE:

- If you take this survey on a mobile device, please be aware that you may need to scroll down or rotate your device sideways in order to complete some questions.
- Do not use your browser's back button. If you need to back up, use the BACK button at the bottom of the screen.

For technical assistance with the survey please contact Kayla Landis at [kayla.landis@umb.edu](mailto:kayla.landis@umb.edu).

If you have any other questions please contact the Director of Program Evaluation at the Center for Social Development and Education, Holly Jacobs, at 617-287-7258 or [holly.jacobs@umb.edu](mailto:holly.jacobs@umb.edu).

PLEASE CLICK THE NEXT BUTTON TO START THE SURVEY.

**These first few questions are about volunteering at Camp PALS.**

**1. Is this your first summer volunteering at Camp PALS?**

- Yes
- No → If No, go to Question 4

**2. How did you first hear about Camp PALS? (Mark all that apply.)**

- Family member is a PALS camper / volunteer
- Friend is a PALS camper / volunteer
- Through my school/university
- Social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter)
- From an online search
- Other → Please write in how you first heard about Camp PALS:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Why did you decide to participate in Camp PALS this summer? (Mark all that apply.)**

- I have a family member with an intellectual disability
- It fits into my program of study / career path
- A friend, family member, or professor suggested I participate
- To meet new people
- To make a difference in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities
- Other → Please write in why you decided to participate: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4 CHECK: RETURNING VOLUNTEER**

IF Q1 = YES, SKIP TO Q9

IF Q1 = NO, GO TO Q4

**4. Including this summer, for how many summers have you volunteered at Camp PALS?**

[DROP DOWN NUMBER LIST: 2—15]

**5. What previous volunteer roles have you held at Camp PALS? (Mark all that apply.)**

- Director
- Head Counselor
- Counselor
- Camp PALS Support (CPS)
- Medical
- Media

**6. Why did you decide to return as a volunteer this summer? (Mark all that apply.)**

- To see friends I made in previous years at Camp PALS
- To give back to the community
- PALS provides me with a sense of belonging
- Being at PALS makes me feel like the world is a better place
- Chance to feel like myself
- Other → Please write in why you decided to return: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Since camp ended last summer, have you been in contact with any campers from previous summers?**

- Yes
- No → If No, go to Question 8

**7a. How have you been in contact with campers from previous summers?**

*(Mark all that apply.)*

- Through social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat)
- Talking on the phone/texting
- Hanging out together (such as shopping, going to the movies, eating at a restaurant, or visiting each other's houses)
- Participating in PALS Adventures together
- Participating in similar organizations together (such as Special Olympics, Best Buddies, or Athletes Helping Athletes)
- Other → Please write in what you did together \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Since camp ended last summer, have you been in contact with any volunteers from previous summers?**

- Yes
- No → If no, go to Question 9

**8a. How have you been in contact with volunteers from previous summers?**

*(Mark all that apply.)*

- Through social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat)
- Talking on the phone/texting
- Hanging out together (such as shopping, going to the movies, eating at a restaurant, or visiting each other's houses)
- Participating in PALS Adventures together
- Participating in similar organizations together (such as Special Olympics, Best Buddies, or Athletes Helping Athletes)
- Other → Please write in what you did together \_\_\_\_\_

The following questions are about situations you might encounter in your life. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers; mark the answer that describes how you feel.

**9. How important is each of the following to you in your life?**

	Not Important 0	1	2	3	Extremely Important 4
a. Helping to make sure all people are treated fairly	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Helping to make the world a better place to live in	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Helping other people	<input type="radio"/>				
d. Speaking up for equality (everyone should have the same rights and opportunities)	<input type="radio"/>				

**10. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

	Completely Disagree 0	1	2	3	Completely Agree 4
a. It’s not really my problem if my neighbors are in trouble and need help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I believe I can make a difference in my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I often think about doing things so that people in the future can have things better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. It is important for me to contribute to my community and society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**11. If you found out about a problem in your community that you wanted to do something about (for example, illegal drugs were being sold near a school, or high levels of lead were discovered in drinking water), how likely do you think you would be to do each of the following activities?**

	Not at all likely				Very likely
	0	1	2	3	4
<b>a.</b> Contact a radio station or TV talk show to express your opinion on an issue	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>b.</b> Contact an elected official about the problem	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>c.</b> Contact or visit someone in government who represents your community	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>d.</b> Write an opinion letter to a local newspaper	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>e.</b> Express your views in front of a group of people	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>f.</b> Sign an email or a written petition	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>g.</b> Post to social media	<input type="radio"/>				

These next questions are about interactions you might have with people with Down syndrome, specifically at Camp PALS.

**12. How confident are you in your ability to...**

	No confidence	Low confidence	Moderate confidence	High confidence	Complete confidence
a. Support someone with Down syndrome in daily activities	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Become friends with someone with Down syndrome	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Help someone with Down syndrome make new friends	<input type="radio"/>				
d. Support someone with Down syndrome in learning how to stand up for themselves	<input type="radio"/>				
e. Keep someone with Down syndrome physically safe while in a city	<input type="radio"/>				
f. Address the inappropriate behavior of someone with Down syndrome, if it occurs	<input type="radio"/>				
g. Confide in someone with Down syndrome about a personal issue	<input type="radio"/>				
h. Publicly advocate on behalf of someone with Down syndrome	<input type="radio"/>				

**13. Select the items you think most adults with Down syndrome are capable of.**

- Wash and dress independently
- Prepare their own food independently
- Get married
- Follow directions
- Use public transportation independently
- Engage in simple conversation
- Handle emergencies appropriately
- Sustain friendships
- Understand a national news event
- Raise children
- Describe their health symptoms to a doctor
- Tell time
- Act appropriately toward strangers
- Handle their own money
- Use social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat)
- Live independently away from their parents
- Have an active dating life with a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Drive a car
- Have a job
- Take care of a pet

**This last set of questions is about you.**

**14. Are you male or female?**

- Male
- Female

**15. How old are you?**

[DROP DOWN OF AGES: 16—31 AND OLDER]

**16. Are you Hispanic or Latino?**

- Yes
- No

**17. What is your race? (Mark all that apply).**

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

**18. What Camp PALS session are you volunteering at this summer? (If you are volunteering at more than one camp session, please choose the first camp session you are attending).**

- Baltimore; July 22-28
- Boston; July 1-7
- Chicago; June 24-30
- Cleveland; July 8-14
- Georgetown; July 8-14
- Maine; July 22-28
- New Jersey; June 17-23
- New York; June 17-23
- New York City; June 24-30
- Philadelphia, Session 1; July 15-21
- Philadelphia, Session 2; July 29-Aug. 4
- Poconos; July 15-21
- Richmond; July 1-7
- San Francisco; Aug. 5-11

**19. Please enter your name and email address so we can contact you again after your Camp PALS session ends complete a follow-up survey. To thank you for your participation in the pre-survey and follow-up survey, you will be compensated with a \$10 gift card to Chipotle.**

[OPEN-END FOR NAME]

[OPEN-END EMAIL FIELD]

**SCREENER END:**

[IF S1 = NO] You have not given your consent to participate in this survey. Please click the NEXT button to exit this survey. Thank you.

[IF S2 = YES] You have indicated that you have already completed this survey. Thank you for your participation! Please click the NEXT button to exit this survey.

**COMPLETION END:**

Thank you for completing the survey! Your responses will help make Camp PALS better in the future! Your survey will not be considered complete until you hit the SUBMIT button below.

For technical assistance with the survey please contact Kayla Landis at [kayla.landis@umb.edu](mailto:kayla.landis@umb.edu). You can also reach the Director of Program Evaluation at the Center for Social Development and Education, Holly Jacobs at [holly.jacobs@umb.edu](mailto:holly.jacobs@umb.edu) or 617-287-7258.

Please hit the SUBMIT button now.

## VII. Appendix B: Post-Camp Survey

### Camp PALS Post-Camp Volunteer Survey Summer 2018

#### PAGE 1:

The University of Massachusetts Boston has been asked by PALS Programs to evaluate the impact of Camp PALS this summer. Your participation in this survey will help us learn more about the volunteers who give their time over the summer to participate in Camp PALS. By knowing more about the volunteers, Camp PALS will be able to expand opportunities for future camp sessions. This survey should take you about 15 minutes to complete.

PLEASE CLICK THE NEXT BUTTON TO CONTINUE.

#### PAGE 2:

- Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can stop taking the survey at any time without consequence.
- Your answers are confidential. No information will be presented or published in any way that would permit identification of any individual. Your answers will be combined with the answers of other volunteers.
- Your answers will not be shared with Camp PALS staff or anyone from PALS Programs in a way that could identify you.
- To thank you for your participation in this survey, you will be compensated with a \$10 gift card to Chipotle.

PLEASE CLICK THE NEXT BUTTON TO CONTINUE.

#### PAGE 3:

**S1. Do you consent to participate in this survey?**

- Yes
- No → SKIP TO END

**S2. Did you attend [INSERT CAMP PALS SESSION]?**

- Yes
- No → SKIP TO END

PLEASE CLICK THE NEXT BUTTON TO CONTINUE.

**PAGE 4:**

PLEASE NOTE:

- If you take this survey on a mobile device, please be aware that you may need to scroll down or rotate your device sideways in order to complete some questions.
- Do not use your browser's back button. If you need to back up, use the BACK button at the bottom of the screen.

For technical assistance with the survey please contact Kayla Landis at [kayla.landis@umb.edu](mailto:kayla.landis@umb.edu).

If you have any other questions please contact the Director of Program Evaluation at the Center for Social Development and Education, Holly Jacobs, at 617-287-7258 or [holly.jacobs@umb.edu](mailto:holly.jacobs@umb.edu).

PLEASE CLICK THE NEXT BUTTON TO START THE SURVEY.

These first questions are about situations you might encounter in your life. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers; mark the answer that describes how you feel.

**20. How important is each of the following to you in your life?**

	Not Important 0	1	2	3	Extremely Important 4
a. Helping to make sure all people are treated fairly	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Helping to make the world a better place to live in	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Helping other people	<input type="radio"/>				
d. Speaking up for equality (everyone should have the same rights and opportunities)	<input type="radio"/>				

**21. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

	Completely Disagree 0	1	2	3	Completely Agree 4
a. It’s not really my problem if my neighbors are in trouble and need help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I believe I can make a difference in my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I often think about doing things so that people in the future can have things better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. It is important for me to contribute to my community and society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**22. If you found out about a problem in your community that you wanted to do something about (for example, illegal drugs were being sold near a school, or high levels of lead were discovered in drinking water), how likely do you think you would be to do each of the following activities?**

	Not at all likely 0	1	2	3	Very likely 4
<b>a.</b> Contact a newspaper, radio, or TV talk show to express your opinion on an issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>b.</b> Contact an elected official about the problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>c.</b> Contact or visit someone in government who represents your community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>d.</b> Write an opinion letter to a local newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>e.</b> Express your views in front of a group of people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>f.</b> Sign an email or a written petition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>g.</b> Post to social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These next questions are about interactions you may have with people with Down syndrome in the future, specifically at Camp PALS.

**23. If you were to come back as a volunteer next year, how confident are you in your ability to...**

	No confidence	Low confidence	Moderate confidence	High confidence	Complete confidence
a. Support someone with Down syndrome in daily activities	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Become friends with someone with Down syndrome	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Help someone with Down syndrome make new friends	<input type="radio"/>				
d. Support someone with Down syndrome in learning how to stand up for themselves	<input type="radio"/>				
e. Keep someone with Down syndrome physically safe while in a city	<input type="radio"/>				
f. Address the inappropriate behavior of someone with Down syndrome, if it occurs	<input type="radio"/>				
g. Confide in someone with Down syndrome about a personal issue	<input type="radio"/>				
h. Publicly advocate on behalf of someone with Down syndrome	<input type="radio"/>				

**24. Check off the items you think most adults with Down syndrome are capable of.**

- Wash and dress independently
- Prepare their own food independently
- Get married
- Follow directions
- Use public transportation independently
- Engage in simple conversation
- Handle emergencies appropriately
- Sustain friendships
- Understand a national news event
- Raise children
- Describe their health symptoms to a doctor
- Tell time
- Act appropriately toward strangers
- Handle their own money
- Use social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat)
- Live independently away from their parents
- Have an active dating life with a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Drive a car
- Have a job
- Take care of a pet

The following questions are about your experiences at Camp PALS this summer. When answering these questions, please think back to your experiences at [INSERT SESSION ATTENDED] last week.

**25. Because of Camp PALS, did you....**

	Not At All	A Little	Quite a Bit	Yes, Definitely
a. try a new way of acting around people?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. get to do things you don't get to do anywhere else?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. start thinking more about your future?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. start thinking more about who you are?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. experience a positive turning point in your life?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. observe how others solve problems and learn from them?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. learn that working together requires some compromising?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. learn to be patient with other group members?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. learn how your emotions and attitude affect others in the group?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. get better at giving feedback?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. get better at taking feedback?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. learn about the challenges of being a leader?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. start thinking about new job or career paths?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. gain confidence in yourself and your abilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These next few questions are about you.

**26. Choose the option that best describes your current employment status.**

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Not currently working → SKIP TO 8

**7a. You indicated that you are currently working. What do you do?**

[FILL IN ANSWER]

**27. If you are currently attending school, choose the option that best describes the type of degree you are pursuing.**

- Completing a graduate degree
- Completing an undergraduate degree
- Completing a high school diploma
- Not currently pursuing a degree

**8a. You indicated that you are pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree. What is your area of study?**

[FILL IN ANSWER]

**28. Has your involvement in Camp PALS influenced your career path and/or area of study?**

Yes → Please describe the influence Camp PALS has had on your career path and/or area of study: \_\_\_\_\_

No

**For these next questions, please consider your interactions with campers, other PALS staff, and your overall experience at [INSERT SESSION ATTENDED] this summer.**

**29. How well were you supported by Camp Directors before and during camp?**

Lacking					Outstanding
0	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>					

**30. Please rate the quality of on-campus activities at camp.**

Lacking					Outstanding
0	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>					

**31. Please rate the quality of off-campus activities at camp.**

Lacking					Outstanding
0	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>					

**32. What were your three favorite activities?**

[FILL IN ANSWER]

[FILL IN ANSWER]

[FILL IN ANSWER]

**33. What were your three least favorite activities?**

[FILL IN ANSWER]

[FILL IN ANSWER]

[FILL IN ANSWER]

**34. How likely are you to recommend Camp PALS to a friend?**

**Would Not  
Recommend**

**Would Highly  
Recommend**

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<input type="radio"/>										

**35. Please rate your overall experience with your camper.**

<b>Negative</b>						<b>Positive</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<input type="radio"/>						

**36. Given all this feedback, how would you rate your overall experience at Camp PALS?**

<b>Lacking</b>						<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<input type="radio"/>						

**37. What will you take away from your experience at Camp PALS this summer?**

[FILL IN ANSWER]

**38. Do you have an experience from your session at Camp PALS this summer that you would be willing to talk more in-depth about in a phone interview?**

Yes

No → Skip to end

**19a. We plan to interview 2-3 volunteers from each session of Camp PALS this summer. If you would like to be considered for a phone interview, please enter your name and email address.**

[OPEN-END FOR NAME]

[OPEN-END FOR EMAIL]

**SCREENER END:**

[IF S1 = NO] You have not given your consent to participate in this survey. Please click the NEXT button to exit this survey. Thank you.

[IF S2 = NO] Thank you for taking the survey. Please click the NEXT button to exit the survey.

**COMPLETION END:**

Thank you for completing the survey! Your responses will help make Camp PALS better in the future! Your survey will not be considered complete until you hit the SUBMIT button below.

To thank you for participating in both the pre-camp survey and follow-up survey, we will be sending you a \$10 gift card to Chipotle, based on the email address you provided us.

For technical assistance with the survey please contact Kayla Landis at [kayla.landis@umb.edu](mailto:kayla.landis@umb.edu).

You can also reach the Director of Program Evaluation at the Center for Social Development and Education, Holly Jacobs at [holly.jacobs@umb.edu](mailto:holly.jacobs@umb.edu) or 617-287-7258.

Please hit the SUBMIT button now.