

To Tell Our Story...

By Kat Shreve

When we took a breath this past winter and reflected on 2017, we proudly compiled our successes and articulated them in written form in our annual report, appropriately titled [“More Than Just a Number.”](#)

In that same breath, we felt realized the important need to show hard data to coincide with our anecdotal evidence of the impact of our programs. Admittedly, taking a deep look at our practices and procedures in our programs towards diabetes health management takes a lot of moxie as an organization. We are excited to see the work we do translated into quantifiable, measurable outputs to caption our photos, testimonials, and grant requests.

I am often asked to speak to non-camp people about camp. I have traveled all over the world during my career and spoken to a variety of groups, organizations, and people about the virtues of having a camp experience. There has been more than one occasion when I was sure I was speaking to a group of crickets (very camp-like, I know) as I tried to explain C-A-M-P to the group... it isn't a familiar idea to everyone for a variety of reasons. Occasionally, I am asked why I don't come right out and share that camp is a FUN thing to do. (I truly shy away from using that word, FUN). I typically answer that question like this: Chuck E Cheese is fun...if you still have quarters left...but camp is both a giant outdoor classroom and a catalyst for child development.

Camp is an experience that supports a camper's life journey. It is a process of safe risk taking and new skill development that is very, very, very different from the indoor classrooms found at school. Critical thinking takes place, friendships are developed, independence is fostered, self-confidence is boosted and... well, I could go on and on. We will measure the benefits of camp this summer in a way that we haven't in the past. We will use outcomes measurements to examine the influence Camp Kudzu has on these life skills of our campers.

I often explain outcomes measurement in this manner: we will measure our progress and treat that information very differently than a perfect 10 score concerning the temperature of the soup. And, while we want to earn a “10” on soup (who doesn't like a bowl of French Onion on a chilly day?), we also want to know that we are providing a great environment that delivers a mix of education, learning, and activity for our campers.

Thanks to a partnership with Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourist Management, we will have the tools to undertake this project. We thank them in advance for the technology and the people power to undertake this endeavor.

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