STRIDE Annual Report 2022

Presented to Interim Meeting - November 5, 2022

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**Overview**

During the Summer 2022 camp season, STRIDE supported over 30 campers! This camp season, STRIDE continued to support campers through camper tuition, transportation, gear, orientation, and general camper assistance. Similarly to last year, most campers chose to attend camp Opequon. Opequon creates the space for our campers to engage with arts & crafts and tap into their creativity. Campers were able to form bonds and connect with friends. A few of our campers expressed interest in becoming junior counselors in the coming years!

**Challenges**

This camp season, STRIDE supported campers' overall camp experiences. We are also working through supporting STRIDE campers post-camp by responding to critical feedback about their camping experiences. In particular, our older campers had a very tough transition to Teen Adventure, and many decided to leave camp early. Overall, some campers experienced harmful experiences, and we are actively rectifying these harms while actively listening to our STRIDE campers, STRIDE families, and community partners.

**STRIDE Liaisons and collaborations**

Growing Diverse Leadership Committee (GDL) liaisons remained active with the STRIDE groups. Each liaison is in touch with their group and typically joins its regular virtual meetings. Each also helps support fundraising and enters STRIDE "movie night" and other events. STRIDE also has liaisons on the Camping Program Committee (CPC) and the newly formed anti-racism subcommittee. STRIDE remains active with the Reparations Action Work Group (RAWG) and Working Group on Racism (WGR) and connects with change groups throughout the year. In collaboration with the Camping Program Committee, STRIDE is still committed to creating an Opequon STRIDE liaison. This liaison would assist with communications from camps to STRIDE. The liaison would also serve as a familiar face and resource for STRIDE campers needing extra support. We hope to add this liaison position to Catoctin and Shiloh. We want all campers to have a familiar face and resource available at our camps.

**Changes to STRIDE's programming**

During this pandemic, the needs of our families and volunteers have changed. To honor this change and better meet the needs of STRIDE, the following is proposed:

* STRIDE core members can now live (anywhere) with the preference of living in the DC, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia areas or with access to these areas.
* Support members are preferably geographically located (DC, Philadelphia, Baltimore).
* Creating STRIDE's Youth Advisory Committee - Nothing for young people without their input. Youth should have a say in how the STRIDE program delivers services as we collaborate with them.
* The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) functions similarly to a board of directors. It is a governing body that provides guidance and vision like a board. It also can influence decision-making as a board does. Our YAC will be youth-led which means that youth members are involved in all aspects of planning and implementation of the program, such as setting agendas and running meetings. However, YACs do require adult support, structure, and resources. They will be assisted by STRIDE and GDL members. The creation of the YAC answers our anti-racist query, how will we provide opportunities for those most likely to be directly affected by our decision to influence that decision?

**Reflection**

As we build trust, we remain reflective and committed to our work and collaboration with our camps. STRIDE is amazed by the work S'Mores Melanin and Camping continue to do by enhancing EDI (Equity Diversity Inclusion) training, professional development, and staff support to create genuinely inclusive and welcoming spaces for all campers.

We worked in collaboration to create a more inclusive incident report. This report includes precise protocols for responding to racist incidents and all threats to emotional and physical safety inside and outside our camps. This reporting system was able to aid camp staff, and campers navigate challenging moments, as it was created to do so. We are still working towards increasing opportunities for Friends of color throughout the camping environment and intentional spaces to build community and connection.

STRIDE is still committed to advocating for these steps to be acted upon fully, carefully, and lovingly, with input from those most affected. STRIDE will continue to hold brainstorming sessions with partner organizations around camp and healing spaces. We are committed to conversations around organizing, mobilizing, and reimagining. We look forward to collaborating with our community partners and creating community experiences that best serve our STRIDE communities.