

FEBRUARY 2021

CAMP

**A FIELD GUIDE FOR HOSPITALIZED
STUDENTS' BEST SUMMER YET**



**PREPARED BY
SCOTT ZAGALAK, M. ED & KATIE VAUTIER, M. ED**

SCHOOL SERVICES COORDINATORS

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Answer these questions before starting your camp planning process.

- 1) When do most schools in your area break for summer?
- 2) How many days/weeks of camp are feasible for your organization?
- 3) Where will you set up camp, and are there any space limitations?
- 4) Who will be camp counselors, and do you need more help?



- Most Chicagoland schools break in mid June through early August.

- Eight weeks of camp, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons in regular times, and Tuesday through Thursday all day in pandemic times.

- Camp is held in our classroom which holds approximately 16 people at a time, with a bedside component. During pandemic times, it is held strictly at the bedside.

- Our staff consists of two School Services Coordinators, two Academic Liaisons, and four volunteers. During the pandemic there is no volunteer support.

NOW IT IS TIME TO PLAN!

01

Select Themes

02

Meet With Potential Sponsors

03

Plan Activities

04

Reach Out to Community Partners

05

Decorate Your Space

06

Order Supplies


07

Create Camp Rosters

08

Promote Camp throughout the Hospital

We will break each of these tasks down for you in the coming pages, so you can see how Camp Urban Explorers approaches them and how you can approach them with your own hospital in mind.



01 SELECT THEMES

All eight weeks of camp have their own theme. Some students are hospitalized the entire summer, and having a new theme each week ensures they are receiving new content and instruction. Camp is open to all school age students (and their siblings in non-pandemic times) ages 5-18 years old. Consider themes that would interest this wide age span. Aim to have four to six different activities for each themed week.

Below are a list of themes fitting the above criteria that have worked well for us in the past:

- Camp Kick-Off
- Mad Science
- Birthday
- STEM
- Color Me Crazy
- Animal
- Super Spy
- Superhero
- Around the World
- Music
- Movie
- Art
- Outer Space
- Dinosaur
- Creepy Crawly
- Green/Environment
- Game
- Olympics



02

MEET WITH POTENTIAL SPONSORS

Are there any corporations that often reach out to your hospital for involvement opportunities? If so, camp is a great way for them to get

involved and for your summer program to get sponsored! As incentive for our corporate sponsor, we invite them to join us for three weeks of camp. They bring volunteers on-site to be guest counselors, as well as help plan and prepare the activities for those three weeks. During the pandemic, our corporate sponsor was unable to join us in person, however we were able to keep them connected through videos, weekly updates, and camp postcards. Our sponsor mailed us supplies and activity packs for STEM week. This is their favorite week because it most aligned to their organization's passion. If you find a potential sponsor, discuss what their passion is and how you might be able to incorporate that into a themed week.

03 PLAN ACTIVITIES

We aim to have four to six activities per each themed week of camp. We make sure that each of the activities follow these guidelines:



APPROPRIATE FOR K-12

Can the activity be differentiated to challenge and engage an elementary school student as well as a high school student? If not, is it an activity that an older student might be able to help a younger student complete while in a group setting? Try to think of activities beyond craft projects only! Think about also offering experiments, games, an array of activities that would be appealing for all interests regardless of age. If an instruction sheet is necessary for the activity, make sure there are pictures to accompany each step for students that do not read.



BEDSIDE COMPATIBLE

During regular times, it is important that at least three of your activities for each week can go bedside for the inpatient population of isolated students. During the pandemic, it is crucial all activities have the ability to go bedside. Think about how you will individually pack the activities so that you are only needing to clean a few shared items between each room (scissors, tacky glue, tempera paint). Everything else should be able to stay with each student so be sure to order accordingly (glue sticks, watercolor paint, crayons).



HOMEMADE > STOREBOUGHT

We have found that homemade projects, experiments, and crafts tend to be much better quality than store or internet bought. Rain sticks, kaleidoscopes, periscopes, and more were all purchased in past years as activity kits. The quality was so low! Making our own versions proved to be much more successful and engaging. Get creative, think kitschy and crafty, and do not feel like you need to reinvent the wheel! We have tons of homemade experiments, activities, and crafts that only require everyday materials and an open mind. **Reach out to us for ideas/templates!**

CONFIRM ALL ACTIVITIES ARE COMPLIANT WITH HOSPITAL INFECTION CONTROL PROTOCOL.

04

REACH OUT TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Once your themed weeks and activities are planned, think about how organizations in your own community can compliment them. What museums, aquariums, theaters, zoos, and other sites that cater to children's learning in your community? Do not be shy, reach out to them! Our community partners are always eager to come and provide exciting learning opportunities for our campers. Penguins, baby sharks, and jellyfish came for a visit courtesy of the Shedd Aquarium. The Art Institute of Chicago brought prints

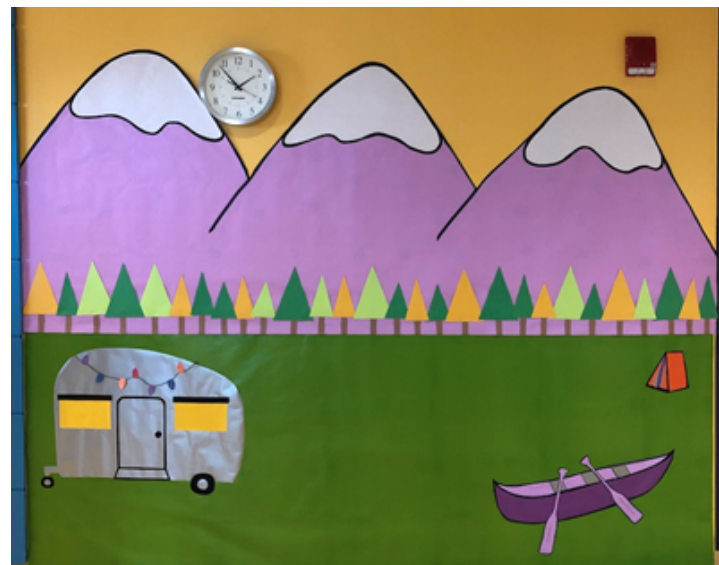


of famous paintings along with materials for students to recreate iconic artwork. In pandemic times the collaboration had to be virtual, but it was worthwhile and created more expansive learning opportunities. For example, The University of Chicago Fossil Lab recorded a whole tour of its facility showing T-rex and mega-croc bones found right here in the United States! Involving community partners is a win-win because it exposes their organizations to families and encourages them to visit once out of the hospital. Have fun with this!

05

DECORATE YOUR SPACE

Check out some of our before and after photos to see how we transformed our classroom and its outer walls. You want this to feel like a true camp for your students! Get as creative as you can and, remember, homemade is always better. Construction paper, sharpies, glue, pool noodles, and paint will go a long way!



05^{1/2}

DECORATE YOUR SPACE (PANDEMIC STYLE)

During the pandemic, the classroom and all play areas were closed to students and families. Because of this, we did not decorate like we usually do. However, to preserve that true camp-like feel, we adjusted the target of our decor. We used large, plaid print bags in which we packed all of our individual bedside packets. We put "cabin number" stickers outside patient rooms, and we always tried to dress the counselor part. If your camp is going to go bedside, think of ways to decorate your items and the students' rooms so they feel like this is a true camp experience!



The approximate average cost per camper only calculates to

\$5.60!

Budget Breakdown

Total Expenses =
\$2,688

- T-shirts = **\$1,252**
- Backpacks = **\$945**
- Supplies for activities = **\$491**

06

ORDER SUPPLIES

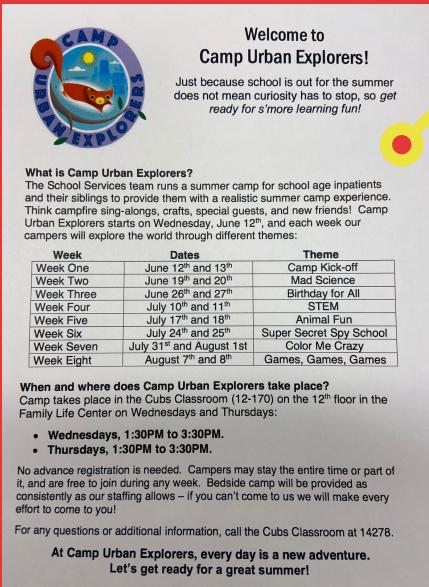
You might be thinking, "How will we ever afford all of this?!" Do not fear! Due to the fact that we rely heavily on handmade activities, projects, and decor, our camp expenses truly are minimal. The most expensive part of Camp Urban Explorers is actually the logo t-shirt and backpack that we give to each student. We feel that creating a camp brand and having authentic experience for our students is important, but we also realize that it may not be realistic or necessary for all hospitals. If these items do not fit into your budget, do not stress.

You can come up with creative ways to "brand" your camp such as have a student logo making activity or have them decorate their own shirts during Camp Kick-Off week. As always, get creative! Be sure to place bulk orders for items such as glue sticks, crayons, construction paper, and plastic bags (for stuffing bedside packs) in plenty of time prior to your first week.

08

PROMOTE CAMP THROUGHOUT THE HOSPITAL

Getting the word out about camp is crucial to its success! We ensure that medical and psycho-social teams, point of service staff, and anyone else that might have patient interaction know about camp and have materials ready to help answer any questions that families might have. We do this in a number of ways:



Welcome to Camp Urban Explorers!
Just because school is out for the summer does not mean curiosity has to stop, so get ready for s'more learning fun!

What is Camp Urban Explorers?
The School Services team runs a summer camp for school age inpatients and their siblings to provide them with a realistic summer camp experience. Think campfire sing-alongs, crafts, special guests, and new friends! Camp Urban Explorers starts on Wednesday, June 12th, and each week our campers will explore the world through different themes:

Week	Dates	Theme
Week One	June 12 th and 13 th	Camp Kick-off
Week Two	June 19 th and 20 th	Mad Science
Week Three	June 26 th and 27 th	Birthday for All
Week Four	July 10 th and 11 th	STEM
Week Five	July 17 th and 18 th	Animal Fun
Week Six	July 24 th and 25 th	Super Secret Spy School
Week Seven	July 31 st and August 1 st	Color Me Crazy
Week Eight	August 7 th and 8 th	Games, Games, Games

When and where does Camp Urban Explorers take place?
Camp takes place in the Cubs Classroom (12-170) on the 12th floor in the Family Life Center on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

- Wednesdays, 1:30PM to 3:30PM.
- Thursdays, 1:30PM to 3:30PM.

No advance registration is needed. Campers may stay the entire time or part of it, and are free to join during any week. Bedside camp will be provided as consistently as our staffing allows – if you can't come to us we will make every effort to come to you!

For any questions or additional information, call the Cubs Classroom at 14278.

At Camp Urban Explorers, every day is a new adventure.
Let's get ready for a great summer!

MASTER FLYER

Create a concise, yet comprehensive master flyer that you can email directly to all teams you want in the loop. Additionally, make sure you have plenty copied and posted on public area bulletin boards throughout the floors, and in the hands of any staff that might be asked details about camp. The more people know about it, the better!

SWAG FOR STAFF

The best way for people to get excited and involved in something is to entice them with free swag! We always order a handful of extra shirts and bags to distribute to staff members so that they can wear them during camp days. Families enjoy seeing the collaboration among all of their child's care team, and we have found that multi-disciplinary teams are more likely to help you spread the word about camp if they get free swag while doing so!




CAMP URBAN EXPLORERS
WEEK 1 CAMP KICK OFF ACTIVITIES

- Tie-Dye Pillowcase
- Paracord Bracelets and Keychains
- Personalized Door Hangers
- Dream Catchers
- Create a Pet Rock
- DIY Wish and Bead Bracelet

WEEKLY "MENU SHEETS"

These were extremely beneficial during the pandemic when camp was completely bedside. It helped give the students a visual of the activities for the day so that they could choose them one at a time. Due to cross contamination, these menu sheets helped cut down on wasted materials. Bedside packets brought into an individual room either had to stay in that room or be disposed. Safety is always our highest priority!

PLANNING TIMELINE

You have made it through the field guide! You are now ready to put all of your great ideas into action. Use the below timeline to help you successfully launch your first hospital-based summer camp!

3-4 MONTHS PRIOR

- If this is your first year, decide on:
 - Camp name
 - Logo
 - T-shirts
- Brainstorm themes
- Reflect on previous themes
- Discuss staffing of camp counselors
- Determine where camp will be held

2 MONTHS PRIOR

- Select final themes
- Meet every two weeks to brainstorm activities for each theme
- Reach out to community organizations and confirm participation
- Set up meeting with camp sponsors
- Order camp t-shirts and accessories

1 MONTH PRIOR

- Select activities for each theme
- Camp counselors decide which weeks to lead
- Meet with sponsors to solidify their themed weeks and activities
- Begin to order supplies
- Train additional camp staff
- Decorate the classroom
- Create camp rosters, photo consent forms, and statistics form
- Promote camp in the hospital

1 WEEK PRIOR

- Assemble activity packs
- Create activity menu sheets
- Troubleshoot the handling of shared supplies
- Continue to promote camp in the hospital --> print and distribute master flyers and staff swag

FOR MORE INFORMATION

**FOLLOW OUR INSTAGRAM PAGE
AND REACH OUT TO US VIA EMAIL**



@CAMPandLearn



CAMPandLearn@gmail.com



CAMPandLearn

Children Are Meant to Play and Learn