



Benefiting Big Brothers Big Sisters' Girls Leadership Programs

Camp Oty'Okwa

Camp Oty'Okwa has been owned and operated by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio since 1942 and consists of 737 acres in the Hocking Hills of southeastern Ohio. The mission of Camp Oty'Okwa is to provide structured camping programs and outdoor education experiences in an atmosphere that builds self-esteem, self-confidence and the skills that children facing adversity need to succeed. At Camp Oty'Okwa, Big Brothers Big Sisters extends its proven mentoring program to youth in a group setting by training mentor-counselors to model appropriate behaviors, create opportunities for one-to-one bonding, and engage youth in team building activities. Camp staff is trained to make the most of the many teachable moments that happen throughout the day, particularly those that relate to the development of self-esteem and leadership.

Camp Oty'Okwa provides a positive, safe and nurturing environment for campers to grow and learn. Cabin groups are set up in family-style to eat and do activities together. These cabin groups are then a part of the larger community represented by camp, which works to improve campers' self-confidence, competence and caring. Not only do campers improve their knowledge and appreciation of the outdoors, they develop leadership and social skills: how to interact and work with peers, care for others, work as a team, and understand and accept people that are different.

Project Need

The Women's Fund of Central Ohio's 2011 One Girl report documented the challenges young women face:

- **Nearly 60% of the girls in grades six through ten report pressure to be thin or look a certain way as an issue worth discussing with other girls.**
- **By seventh grade, nearly 80% of girls are concerned with dating. They also report beginning to experience harassment from boys and pressure to engage in sexual behavior.**
- **By ninth grade, nearly two-thirds of girls say that "drama" and "girl bullying" are major issues in their lives.**
- **Only about 23% of ninth grade girls want to discuss their involvement in community service projects or leadership development opportunities (Hinkelman, 2011).**



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Central Ohio





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The Girls Leadership Programs at Camp Oty'Okwa

The **Girls Leadership Programs** build on our existing leadership programs at Camp Oty'Okwa, but focus on the specific needs of girls and young women. The programs begin with young campers (ages 5-10) and continue through the pre-teen and teenage years, progressively building confidence, skills and leadership abilities in participants along the way.

Through a series of activities including cohesive group cabin living, traditional camp outings, structured workshops, service projects, social, cultural, and educational events, and group mentoring, we continue to see the following results.

Girls Leadership Programs Outcomes

5-10 **11-13** **14-17**
 year olds year olds year olds

			Girls learn to feel significant.
			Girls learn skills and have new experiences that allow them to feel competent.
			Girls learn that they have control over their lives and the personal power to direct their lives in a positive way.
			Girls learn values and norms that allow them to live in a family and community and impact these structures in a positive, successful manner.
			Young women develop the key leadership skills of empathy, esteem, and example.
			Young women use tools and equipment to learn additional skills that boost confidence.
			Young women learn about careers and opportunities available to them and what levels of education are needed to succeed in those careers.
			Young women receive mentoring experiences necessary to successfully navigate their high school years.
			Young women learn the importance of "paying it forward."

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