

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

**Program: Safe Haven STARS Science, Technology, and Academic Readiness
Year: 2019**

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole report will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (as word document).

Name of the Program: Safe Haven STARS: Science, Technology, and Academic Readiness Overnight Camp

Year of activity: 2019

Name of the report's writer: Idit Codish

Function of the report's writer: Donor Relations Manager

Mail: iditc@orr-shalom.co.il

Phones: 054.6103183

Website / Facebook address of the organization: www.orr-shalom.org.il ;
<https://www.facebook.com/orrshalomisrael/>

Number of active participants in the program: Summer 2019 Session (3 weeks) served 70 children and youth while our Sukkot 2019 Session (1 week) served 46 children and youth. The number of active participants was higher than the 60 anticipated as more children were in need of a safe haven for summer and Sukkot vacations.

Estimated number of impacted participants: The number of impacted participants includes our Safe Haven STARS campers as well as our Safe Haven staff who learned about how to make educational activities fun, engaging, and interactive.

Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines): With tremendous thanks to the Foundation, we were able to implement science and technology activities in two of our 2019 Safe Haven sessions, for a higher than anticipated number of participants. The Camp Director, the Counsellors, and most importantly, the children, are all very satisfied with STARS and have come to look forward to their "science days"! We would so very much love to continue this program for all four of 2020's Safe Haven sessions as the need for Safe Haven, and the need for a good science and technology education, continues to expand amongst our children.

The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.): Orr Shalom's Safe Haven Overnight Camp is the only solution for the children in Orr Shalom's Therapeutic Family Group Homes with nowhere to go during vacation periods. This year, even more children were in need of Safe Haven as their biological

and/or extended family were unable to provide them with a safe environment. The children at Safe Haven are at a real disadvantage, through no fault of their own: they have no reliable biological family support, they have extremely traumatic histories, the majority come from a low socio-economic background, and many have some form of learning disorder only diagnosed once they have been referred to Orr Shalom. The overwhelming majority of the children attending Safe Haven face a wide educational gap, again, through no fault of their own. This gap that will only widen without the proper intervention. Children who are able to, and encouraged to, pursue science education in an informal setting are able to ignite their latent spark of curiosity, and it is this spark that can become a motivating force, even improving traditional classroom performance. Safe Haven STARS ignites this spark, this hunger, this curiosity about what their future could look like. It allows them, many for the first time, to reach for the STARS.

Summer 2019 STARS: This summer session was split into two sessions, for those children who were able to go to extended family for part of the time but not for an entire three weeks. 51 children attended each session, serving a total of 70 individual children. In essence, 30% of the children in our Therapeutic Family Group Homes have nowhere else to go during summer vacation. Of these 70 children, 20 were boys and 50 girls, and 22 were in the “big brother/big sister” group (ages 14-17) while 48 are “little siblings” (ages 6-13). 14 counsellors were on staff full time, as well as 6 National Service mentors, our Camp Director, and an on-call nurse and psychiatrist. This summer we partnered with Big Idea (<https://bigidea.co.il/>), where campers spent a total of 5 days. Each day was split into 2 half-day long workshops. Big Idea staff helped our campers explore the world of computers and technology and gave them hands on experience with ideas and skills that will be invaluable to them in the future. Workshops included website design and building; graphic design such as photoshop; youtube; video editing; and computer gaming design. Campers were extremely engaged and the older teens especially enjoyed the video editing workshop. A separate 3-part interactive series (2 hours each part) was held on the brain and the brain/body balance and included scientific and physiological elements. The series specifically addressed how to handle challenges, changing belief and behavior patterns, and manifesting a better brighter future. Campers learned how believing in themselves is of crucial importance to actually succeeding – and investigated the science behind this and related hypotheses. Feedback from this series was overwhelmingly positive. In terms of English, while the staff at Big Idea spoke Hebrew with our children, all important computer and technology components were taught and learned in English! This will definitely serve our children well in the future.

Sukkot 2019 STARS: Sukkot was also larger than anticipated. There were 46 children who needed a safe haven and so we held STARS at Kannot Youth Village, where we usually hold our summer session. Over the week of Sukkot, campers spent two full days with Park Carasso staff. One day was spent at Park Carasso, learning about and experimenting with 3D printing, as well as learning about dinosaur fossils and paleontology. One day, Park Carasso came to Kannot to lead a full day of science experiments with our campers!

The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...): We have received very positive feedback. While in the first year of STARS there was resistance to “studying,” this year they knew what to expect – and were looking forward to it! Our staff also knew what to expect and took their lessons from last year (talking a new language to encourage participation) and it paid off in the end. Internal staff evaluation has led

to some conclusions, which will guide the advancement of the program in the future (see below). Our external evaluation – in terms of formal and informal reports from the campers themselves – is heartening, and is attached as our Evaluation Report (PDF) to this document. On the whole, the feedback from the children was enormously positive to the point where house parents in the Therapeutic Family Group Homes have said that their children who did not attend STARS were talking about how much fun it sounded! The buzz surrounding the children's experiences can definitely be felt amongst all the children in the homes.

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year: Our 2018 pilot sessions of STARS was a highly successful opening in terms of developing camper's interest, and it really taught us how to interact educationally with the children while ensuring a fun vacation experience. This was an invaluable lesson that we continued to learn in 2019, and hope to continue developing in 2020.

In terms of lessons learned and conclusions for the future, pending a renewal from the Nitzan Matanel Foundation, we plan to go back to 2018's model of basing our science and technology element at Park Carasso, rather than collaborating with Big Idea. For 2020, we are in discussions with Park Carasso as to how to implement a complimentary English program alongside the science program, as we did with Big Idea. Park Carasso has been a great partner and they are very interested in helping us build a program suited to our unique needs.

Safe Haven cares for Orr Shalom's most vulnerable children, and we must care for their material and emotional needs. However, thanks to this very generous gift, we were also able to considerably upgrade the camp in order to impart valuable knowledge, skills, and tools -to the children who would most benefit from this type of upgrade. We exposed them to subjects that they had not previously considered interesting, and engaged them in new and positive ways. Their feedback is what guides us in continuing to offer this program – they are thirsty for challenging educational activities presented in this fun format.

Organizationally, through the experience of running Safe Haven STARS!, we have realized the need to upgrade the overall educational programs year-round within our Therapeutic Family Group Homes. We are currently reevaluating our educational program so as to ensure that all 230 children in the homes have the chance to reach his/her full potential. We plan to take steps towards incorporating lessons learned from STARS! In 2020 throughout our programs.

Please join the Evaluation Report, the Financial Report and the list of the participants to the program (as PDF documents): Please see attached.

Please join photos – as JPG files – and any link or any other document connected to the program which will seem to you relevant – as PDF document: Please see attached.

Please join a 5 minutes movie which presents your institution and the particular project supported by the Matanel Foundation. The movie should be accessible to the philanthropic world and to other potential donors. Please see our link here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vil-znk5J_M