

# Orr Shalom

## External Affairs Department



### **Orr Shalom's Safe Haven STARS: Science, Technology, and Academic Readiness 2019 Evaluation Report to the Nitzan Matanel Foundation**

With tremendous thanks to the Foundation, Orr Shalom was able to offer Safe Haven STARS! to over 70 individual children, who represent our weakest children. The children at Safe Haven have no biological family support, have extremely traumatic histories, the majority come from a low socio-economic backgrounds and have never had access to this type of enrichment learning, and many have some form of learning disorder only diagnosed once they have come to Orr Shalom.

**Proposed Goal:** To advance Safe Haven to the next level by transforming Safe Haven to Safe Haven STARS: Science, Technology and Academic Readiness.

**Current Goal Benchmarks:** With the receipt of a generous donation from the Nitzan Matanel Foundation we transformed 2019's Summer and Sukkot sessions into Safe Haven STARS!

**Proposed Objectives:** 1. To engage 60 of Orr Shalom's most vulnerable children in fun, exciting science, English, and arts programming. 2. To kindle the spark of curiosity and wonder latent in every child, affording them the inner motivation to learn and succeed. 3. To give our most vulnerable children practical tools/skills to succeed in the future.

**Current Objective Benchmarks:** We have met our proposed objectives to the fullest extent, even offering the program to more than 60 children. Please refer to the following pages for our evaluation metrics.

**Thank you for helping these children access opportunities not readily available to them.  
Thank you for providing them with the tools and skill sets necessary to build a solid foundation.  
Thank you for helping them to reach for the STARS!**

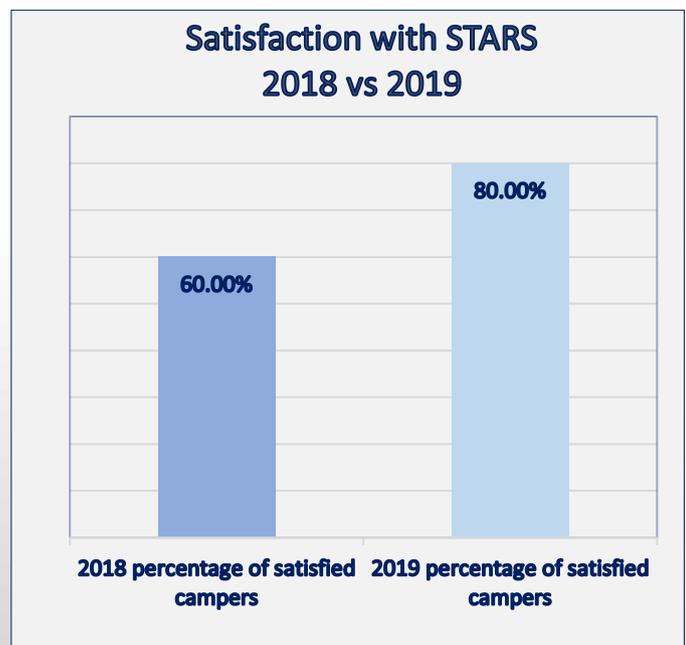
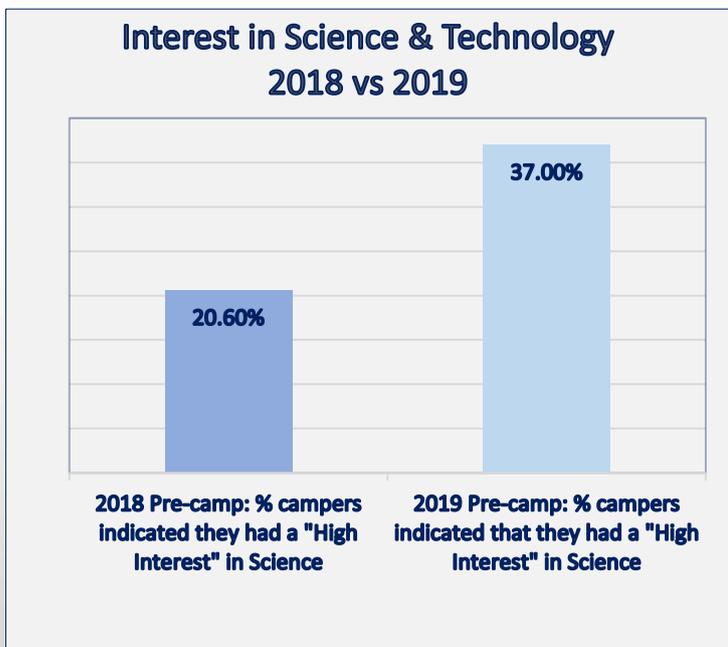
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**Quantitative Evaluation:** Most campers were already familiar with the model as they had attended Safe Haven STARS! in 2018. Thus their pre-camp indication of interest was already higher than their 2018 pre-camp indication. Overall satisfaction levels were likewise higher in 2019 than in 2018, by a jump of 20%. This can be attributed both to the fact that the technology activities were engaging and were taught in an engaging style heavily reliant on the camper's actively participating, as well as to the subject materials taught (photoshop, youtube, video game creation, etc.).

**Not only our Safe Haven STARS! campers engaged & learning valuable skills, they are enjoying themselves. As French philosopher Simone Weil wrote, *The joy of learning is as indispensable in study as breathing is in running.* The more joy our campers get out of learning, the more these lessons will stick with them, and the more motivated they will be to continue reaching for the stars.**



Please refer to the following page for qualitative evaluation

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**Meet Liam, 10.** As is the case with many 10 year old boys, Liam loves playing video games. At STARS!, Liam had the chance to actually learn how to create his own video game! He began learning and was creating virtual characters to live in his game. His teacher at Big Idea saw something very special in Liam's skills and praised him and pushed him to the next level. They were able to get excited together about Liam's potential. Not only did Liam have a great time, he was learning valuable skills for his future. He was also learning self-confidence and self-motivation, which are indispensable tools to getting ahead, personally or professionally. In fact, the Director of Safe Haven saw a remarkable shift in Liam's overall behavior, and he attributes this to the encouragement and boost Liam received from being able to spark his technological prowess – whereas Liam has in the past been fairly cautious and introverted, this summer he emerged into his own and made friends, and tried new things he'd never tried before, most notably, jumping off the diving board, and playing on the trampoline.

**Meet Yasmin, 13,** referred to Orr Shalom at the age of 7 under tragic circumstances. When she was younger, Yasmin used to attend Safe Haven; however, in recent years, she has spent vacations with her uncle and grandmother, building a connection with her biological family. This summer, when her social worker stopped by to do a home check, she saw that she needed more support and guidance than she was receiving, and referred her to Safe Haven even though it was the middle of the session. As she had not attended STARS! in 2018, she was quite unenthusiastic about moving from an unsupervised summer vacation to a “boring school” summer vacation. By the end of the summer, Yasmin couldn't get enough and even complained at the end– because we didn't devote enough time to more photoshop!

An interactive workshop series was held on the brain and the brain/body balance, which specifically addressed how to handle challenges, how to change belief and behavior patterns, and how to best achieve a brighter future. Campers learned how believing in themselves is of crucial importance to actually succeeding – and investigated the science behind this and related hypotheses. **Tamir, 12, says “Every kid in Orr Shalom, every kid EVERYWHERE should learn about this! Shirel, 17, says “This is the best thing I ever heard. You have helped me to see my challenges differently – and think about my future potential differently.”**