Subject line: Will 6th Grade Camp Continue?

Dear Parents

You are receiving this email because sometime during the last four school years you have sent your child/grandchild to 6th grade camp. 6th grade camp is at risk of ending for the La Mesa Spring Valley School District (LMSV) students, and we need your help.

6th grade camp has been offered by the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) for the past 71 years. The LMSV school district participated in the program from its inception until approximately 2008.

Prior to the 2008 financial crisis, 6th grade camp was offered as a formal part of the LMSV curriculum. That meant students in the district attended camp as part of the regular school year, and not during their spring or fall breaks. However, the 2008 crisis forced all school districts to make difficult financial decisions. As part of their response, LMSV—like a few other school districts-- opted to eliminate 6th grade camp from its curriculum.

In order to preserve the experience and value of 6th grade camp, volunteer parents jumped into action, and crafted a work-around: LMSV students would attend camp--***as a non-school group***--during their school breaks. The Outdoor Opportunity Group was created by the volunteer parents to serve as the liaison between the parents/students and the SDCOE to facilitate the prerequisite camp processes: registration, fee collection, cabin assignments, transportation, chaperon recruitment, etc., processes that were previously performed by the LMSV school district.

The participation of the LMSV students as a non-school group was seen as a temporary remedy and not as a permanent solution. Regardless, the remedy now faces two major obstacles:

1. School districts take priority when scheduling camp dates.

Non-school groups, like LMSV, receive a lessor priority when scheduling camp dates. As more districts reinstate 6th grade camp back into their curriculum, the options for non-school groups to attend camp become fewer and less predictable.

1. District Discounted Rates

The SDCOE has revamped their fee schedule for 6th grade camp – please see: <http://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/outdoored/Documents/2017-18-cos-fee-schedule.pdf>

The new discounted rates provide a $90.00 equity credit to the school district for each student identified as socio-economically disadvantaged. However, non-school groups are not eligible to receive the new discounted rates.

For the last four school years, Stacy Evans and I have worked as parent volunteers to coordinate 6th grade camp for the LMSV district. As many of you have heard us say during the camp registration meetings, this year (2017) will be our last.

Aside from another volunteer parent assuming the camp coordinator role, the aforementioned obstacles are easily overcome if the LMSV district elects to reinstate 6th grade back into its curriculum. As the economy has improved, a number of the other local districts have reinstated 6th grade camp. It is time for the LMSV district to do the same.

Please consider contacting the School Board members and/or attending a School Board meeting.

Board of Education meetings are normally held the first and third Tuesday of each month

at 7:00 p.m. All regular meetings are open to the public. Meetings are held at the Education Service Center, 4750 Date Avenue, La Mesa, CA 91942

<https://www.lmsvschools.org/domain/50> (link to LMSV School Board)

Up-coming School Board Meeting

December 12, 2017

January 16, 2018

February 6, 2018

February 20, 2018

March 6, 2018

March 20, 2018

Board Policy: <http://www.gamutonline.net/DisplayPolicy/545235/9>

Public Participation

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| Per Board Policy:  2. At a time so designated on the agenda at a regular meeting, members of the public may bring before the Board matters that are not listed on the agenda. The Board shall take no action or discussion on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except as authorized by law. (Education Code [35145.5](http://www.gamutonline.net/displayPolicy/131393/9); Government Code [54954.2](http://www.gamutonline.net/displayPolicy/145074/9))  5. A person wishing to be heard by the Board shall first be recognized by the president and shall then proceed to comment as briefly as the subject permits. Individual speakers shall be allowed three minutes to address the Board on each agenda or non-agenda item. The Board shall limit the total time for public input on each item to 20 minutes. With Board consent, the Board president may increase or decrease the time allowed for public presentation, depending on the topic and the number of persons wishing to be heard. The president may take a poll of speakers for or against a particular issue and may ask that additional persons speak only if they have something new to add. |

I have requested to be placed on the School Board’s agenda to provide a presentation on the pending dilemmas faced by non-school groups seeking to attend 6th grade camp. I have not yet heard back. I will continue to make an agenda request. If, however, the School Board members hear from a majority of the 1200 families that have attended 6th grade camp over the last four years, that would surely help move the process along.

Our concerted effort may be able to bring 6th grade camp back into the regular school year as a formal part of the 6th grade curriculum.

Please forward this email to other families in the district, especially those with younger children. 6th grade is a unique and valuable experience that all children should have the opportunity to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Sharon Jenkins and Stacy Evans