



Camp PALS Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

Since 2004, PALS Programs has been fostering relationships between peers with and without Down syndrome through weeklong summer programs held on college campuses across the country. In 2018, PALS Programs, in collaboration with the Center for Social Development and Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston, carried out a formal evaluation of the impact Camp PALS has on the volunteers.

WE CHANGE ATTITUDES

The PALS experience changes volunteers' attitudes about individuals with Down syndrome, and about their own capabilities.

New volunteers became **significantly more positive** in their perceptions of the capabilities of people with Down syndrome as a result of their experiences with campers

78% of volunteers gained confidence in themselves and their overall abilities, including the ability to lead, advocate, and speak in front of others

Volunteers learned the importance of compromising (**75%**), how their attitudes affect others (**78%**), and learned to be more patient (**85%**) with all individuals

WE TRANSFORM LIVES

Volunteers develop new friendships, and new perspectives that will change their lives forever.

80% of volunteers felt they experienced a positive turning point in their life at Camp PALS

Volunteers gained **"genuine," "lifelong" friendships**. **97%** of returning volunteers kept in touch with campers or co-volunteers from previous summers

WE INSPIRE A WORLD OF BELONGING

Our campers and volunteers create a uniquely inclusive community and are inspired to bring that experience to the world.

74% of returning volunteers reported coming back to camp each summer because it provided them with **a sense of belonging**

88% of new volunteers reported that they began to think more about their personal future and career path because of Camp PALS

Almost all new volunteers (**83%**) reported that they joined Camp PALS to make a difference. New and returning volunteers alike ended their session even **more motivated to make a difference in the lives of marginalized communities, and in the world in general**

I want people to know that there is hope that this world could be different. That we could live in a world that loves openly and deeply and fiercely. That we could be a people who is capable of loving all people despite all differences. I know that it is possible - because for a week, it was my reality.
- PALS Volunteer

