



Camp Lilac
3583 Ingleside Road
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122
camlilac.org * 216-702-4207

Dear Friends,

September 18, 2023

I am writing to you today as the Executive Director of Camp Lilac, an overnight camp for transgender and gender diverse youth, with a volunteer staff who are also transgender or gender diverse. I want you to know that we are here in case you know folks who might benefit from Camp Lilac, either as campers or as volunteer staff members. In addition, I would like to ask for your help in sponsoring a child to come to camp. I invite you to support tuition for a camper who needs Camp Lilac and cannot afford tuition independently.

Camp Lilac provides a comfortable and casual environment where transgender youth can socialize with their peers, an important part of development for all young people. Many of our campers face negative feedback throughout their lives, so a safe and comfortable environment can be a scarce resource. An opportunity to simply be themselves, relax, and have fun with other trans youth is a special and valuable experience.

Many of our campers come from communities that do not accept and support them. For example, many attend schools where they cannot go to the bathroom all day for fear of abuse. Many are also not accepted by their families, and are misunderstood and isolated at home. Such experiences cause high stress, which in turn can lead to hopelessness and depression, thoughts of suicide, self-harm, and attempted suicide. For transgender youth, such self-destructive behaviors occur at much higher rates than in the general population.

Fortunately, these outcomes are not inevitable. Research shows that experiences of acceptance can act like a buffer for stress, decreasing depression and self-harm. At Camp Lilac, as part of a community of transgender youth and young adults, our campers find acceptance and a sense of community, transforming hopelessness and depression into hope and pride.

I am asking for help for these vulnerable children. We believe all who want to attend Camp Lilac should be able to do so. We don't want the cost of camp to be a barrier for anyone who needs it. We invite you to help by sponsoring a week (or a day) at camp for one or more children in your community. Camp tuition is \$950 for the week, for one child. This pays for the space in a woodland setting, fresh nourishing food, and many outdoor activities such as boating, swimming, ropes course, archery, arts and crafts — all the typical things that you would find at any other overnight camp. With your donation, if you would be interested in a link to your web page or Facebook Page on the Camp Lilac website, please let us know.

We are working toward the day when everyone is protected and treated equally. Meanwhile, Camp Lilac offers our campers respite from a stressful “regular life” and a chance to experience a safe, warm, accepting community. Our campers have said it best: “We want to just be ourselves and have fun together.”

Thank you in advance for considering helping a camper, I remain, sincerely,

JodiLyn Solomon
Executive Director
GenderSphere, dba Camp Lilac