Zebra Crossings

• Empower • Connect • Care •



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Mission Statement

Zebra Crossings' mission is to enrich the lives of youth with chronic medical conditions by fostering greater self-confidence, a sense of independence and a desire to realize their full potential through fun and engaging enrichment programs that build a strong and caring community support network for families.

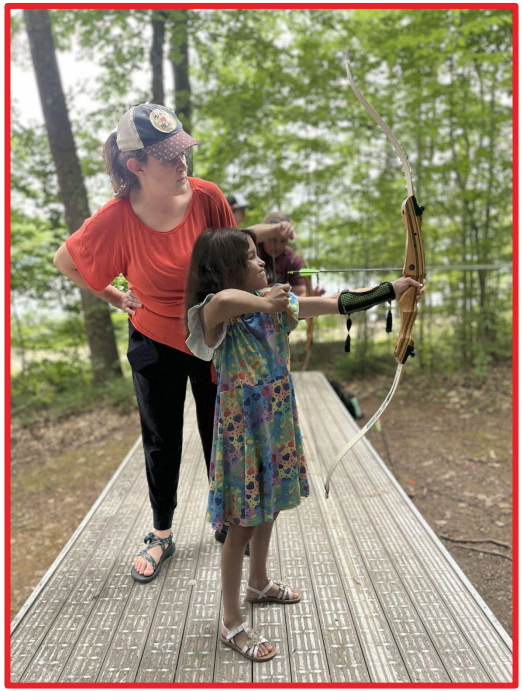
Why a “zebra crossing”?

In Europe, crosswalks are referred to as zebra crossings. They are a place for pedestrians to safely cross the road. Zebra Crossings similarly creates a safe place of support, belonging and encouragement for youth to access activities they might not otherwise be able to reach on their own.

Zebras are also herd animals that huddle together in a “dazzle” for safety, using the unity of their combined stripes to deter predators.

The Need

- 1 in 4 youth in NH face special health care needs [1]
- Mainstream programming often unintentionally excludes children with additional needs
- Families with children with special health care needs often have difficulty meeting basic essentials [2]
- Medical expenses add up quickly
- Boston University School of Public Health study (2024-2025)



Target Population

- Youth ages 6 - 18
- Chronic medical conditions include but are not limited to asthma, autoimmune disorders, albinism, CLOVES syndrome, diabetes, Down syndrome, epilepsy, heart conditions, hemophilia, JRA, Lyme disease, Proteus syndrome, POTS, severe allergies, skin conditions, and other rare and undiagnosed conditions
- Siblings and parents are also invited to participate in programs, creating a sense of community and belonging for the whole family



Programming

- Modified to meet multiple abilities; accessible
- Come-as-you-are approach
- Free or greatly reduced cost
- Overnight camp retreats lasting 3-4 days
- Day outings and “Guardians Night Out” events
- Activities occur throughout the year
- Overall program participation grew by 19% in 2026



2026 Overnight Camps

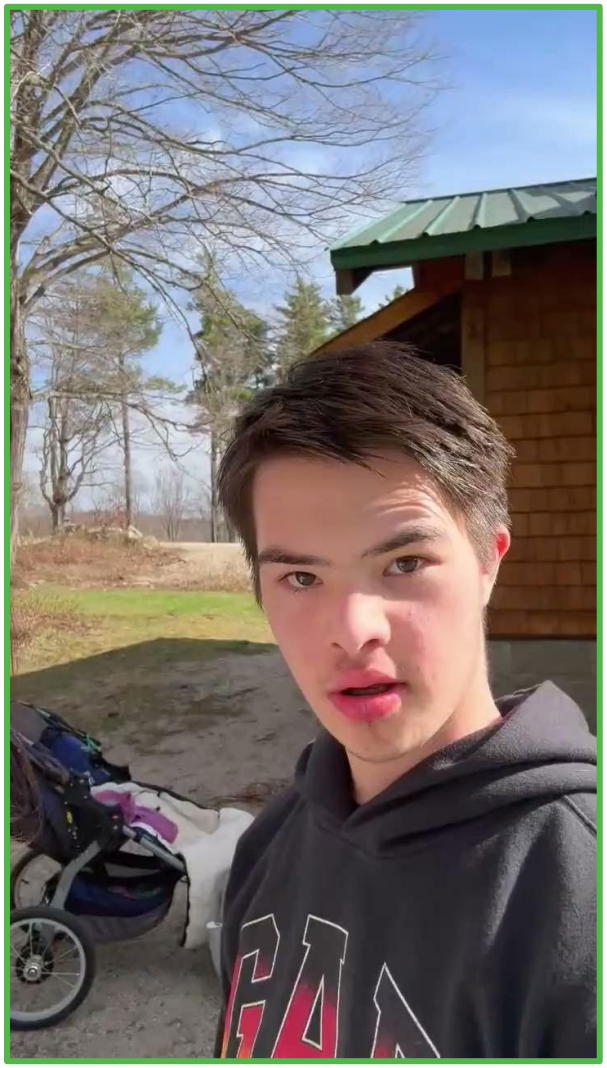


- **Camp Blue Sky (April 2026)**
  - 2 night, 3 day camp for youth with Down syndrome and their families
  - Translator offered at camp
- **Betsy's Camp (June 2026)**
  - 3 night, 4 day camp for youth with CLOVES syndrome and their families
  - Put on in partnership with the CLOVES Syndrome Community
- **Epilepsy Camp (July 2026)**
  - 2 night, 3 day camp for youth with epilepsy
  - Put on in partnership with Epilepsy Foundation New England
- **Camp Spinnaker (August 2025)**
  - 3 night, 4 day camp for youth with asthma and their families
  - Features asthma education led by physician, McGreggor EMS, and Breathe NH
- **Camp Dazzle (November)**
  - 2 night, 3 day camp for youth with chronic medical conditions
  - Our first all-conditions camp!

Camp Blue Sky Clip

Featured Camper: Taylan





Community Day Outings

- Open to all youth with chronic medical conditions and their families
- Held monthly throughout New Hampshire and Southern Maine
- Outings include:
  - Adaptive Ice Skating
  - Snowshoeing
  - Maple Sugaring
  - Music Therapy
  - Touch a Truck
  - Gundalow Sail
  - Sunflower Festival
  - Guided Mushroom Hike
  - Fishing
  - Dover Parade
  - Caroling



Guardians Night Out

- In Partnership with Mass General Brigham/WDH
- A night of fun for kids; adults go out!
- Respite for caregivers
- Medically supervised
- Plan to host these events quarterly in 2027



Looking Forward

- Partnership with area medical facilities for referrals and volunteers
- Partnership with condition-specific foundations and organizations
- Expansion in New Hampshire
- Additional camps to meet growing need, including a second Camp Blue Sky
- Grow program participation by 10%



Closing

I want to have this camp again because I believe it's a very great experience for people with my syndrome and their family members to come out and connect with each other and just get to have fun and do stuff that usually people with my syndrome can't do. Like I did a that I didn't t to do in my life. I did the rock climbing and I got top, and I didn't think it was physically possible for me to do that and … I did it.



~Charlie, PSF Family Sunshine Retreat (Proteus Syndrome)

Thank you!



References

1 - New Futures, new-futures.org, citing *Children with Special Health Care Needs/ KIDS COUNT Data Center*, April 2025

2 - New Futures, new-futures.org; citing The Annie E. Casey Foundation, July 14, 2024, *Children with disabilities and special health care needs.* https://www.aecf.org/blog/the-state-of-children-with-disabilities-and-special-health-care-needs

