

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elyzabeth Marcussen, 443-837-1559

emarcussen@hospicechesapeake.org

The 91 volunteers of the summer of 2016

(Pasadena, MD, August 31, 2016) — Something happened on the weekend of Aug. 12 at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center in Millersville that could not have happened without 91 people.

They are the 91 volunteers responsible for the 51 children who attended the 25th season of Chesapeake Life Center's bereavement camps.

The late Betty Asplund – the founding director of what would become the Chesapeake Life Center – started Camp Nabi in 1982 so that grieving kids can learn they are not alone. With the help of a cadre of volunteers, they share their stories in a safe environment while enjoying fun camp activities.

Phoenix Rising was added 10 years later so that teens can experience the same healing, but on a level they can appreciate.

There were 51 Big Buddies, adult volunteers trained to stay with one child for the duration of the camp to guide them through the emotional weekend.

Nine of the 91 were camp facilitators. They are volunteers who guide each of the age groups through the activities.

Six of these volunteers were part of the nonprofit's teen corps. Then there were the 25 or so people volunteering in other ways – set up and clean up, helping with activities, providing onsite nursing services, etc.

“The Big Buddies and facilitators create a safe and trusting environment right from the start for our campers,” Chesapeake Life Center Director Laurie Harrison said. “Watching the transformation from the time the campers arrive, a little unsure and nervous, until the closing ceremony which is brimming with hugs, tears, and love...it's just extraordinary.”

The bond these volunteers create makes a lasting impression for the campers and their families. But, it also leaves an indelible mark on their own lives. Harrison shared that as she thanked one volunteer as camp was wrapping up, he replied, “No thanks are necessary. I just love it!”

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(Aug. 13, 2016) Baltimore Improv Group actor Bridget Cavaiola, demonstrates the rules for an improvisational game to staff, volunteers and campers participating in the Phoenix Rising teen grief retreat. The theatre group provided 2-hours of fun for the campers who were attending the camp for youth experiencing grief at Arlington Echo in Millersville. Photo by Elyzabeth Marcussen, Hospice of the Chesapeake



(Aug. 13, 2016) Hospice of the Chesapeake Chaplain Marie Bunt leads the youngest of the campers to a hall where their families are waiting for them after a full day of with Camp Nabi at Arlington Echo. Photo by Elyzabeth Marcussen, Hospice of the Chesapeake



(Aug. 13, 2016) Child life specialist Polly Hurlburt, left, and Phoenix Rising camper Jaamir Butler, 15, participate in an improvisational theatre game called "Marionette" led by Baltimore Improv Group actors Bridget Cavaiola, second from left, and Tavish Forsyth. The theatre group provided 2-hours of fun for the campers who were attending the camp for youth experiencing grief at Arlington Echo in Millersville. Photo by Elyzabeth Marcussen, Hospice of the Chesapeake



(Aug. 13, 2016) Camp Nabi counselors, volunteers and campers play games on a field at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center field behind a quilted banner made up of squares memorializing the loved ones participating youth are grieving. Photo by Elyzabeth Marcussen, Hospice of the Chesapeake.

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Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For more information on Chesapeake Life Center programs, call 410-987-2129 or visit www.chesapeakelifecenter.org.