

Destiny



**National Grid Foundation
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The Twenty Fifth Destiny Edition



A Match Made in Summer Camp Heaven

By Christine Berardi

Fiver Children's Foundation and Far Rockaway Giants Create Unique Event

Sleep-away summer camp inspires children to have fun, learn, grow, and discover life beyond home. Fiver Children's Foundation, located in upstate Poolville, NY, combines traditional activities along with environmental education lessons. It gives children 8-18 from Central NY and New York City an extraordinary two-to-four-week summer camp experience of a lifetime.

That was true for twin brothers Andre and Jonathan Jean-Pierre who are now paying it forward so boys from Far Rockaway, NY have the same amazing experience they had more than 15 years ago. Now, Andre is a Police Officer in Far Rockaway, NY and Jonathan works at Google and is on the Fiver Board of Directors.

As children, they had no idea how the years of environmental learning and summer camp pleasures would help shape their lives once they graduated from the Fiver Program in 2011. The brothers are instrumental in bringing Camp Fiver to the boys Officer Jean-Pierre works with in the Far Rockaway – Harlem Giants Mentoring program, a joint program with the NYC Police Foundation and the Department of Education.

In 2018, Lt. Lenora Moody established the program as part of the Neighborhood Coordination School Initiative to combat the cycle of violence and to reach at-risk boys with homework help,

a successful competitive NYPD-organized flag-football program and the opportunity to foster a better relationship between the community and the police.

This year, 255 youngsters participated in Camp Fiver's Environmental Education Program where 52 teenagers hiked and camped through the Catskills Mountains. After the traditional camp season ended, Fiver welcomed the Far Rockaway – Harlem Giants to the campgrounds in August.

According to Officer Jean-Pierre, the camp benefited their students and gave them the opportunity to attend the four-day sleep-away camp with their police mentors. This was the children's first sleep-away camp.

Over 40 children attended along with seven police officer mentors. "Parents felt if the cops were not the child camp counselor, they probably wouldn't allow their child to attend the camp. This shows the trust between the families and the police. It was a huge factor on how comfortable the parents felt about the trip," said Officer Jean-Pierre.

He continued, "This was a great experience because the Camp Fiver camping trip greatly enhanced our bond."

Lt. Moody explained, "I had the privilege of witnessing firsthand how the Fiver team instilled



Photo: De'Andre Henderson

in our boys the values of teamwork, community, leadership, and confidence. These are traits they will carry with them throughout their lives and will shape their futures in powerful ways."

Camp Fiver youth participated in core camp elements including courses in public speaking, health, literacy, environmental education, and college access. With National Grid Foundation's support Fiver youth explored their relationship to nature, how their actions impact the environment and learned about gardening, nutrition, composting, and leave-no-trace camping ethics.

Far Rockaway youth enjoyed traditional Camp Fiver activities including the Fiver Carnival, creek walks, lake and pool time, boating and fishing, group games, tennis and weaving.

Students were proud of their program experience. Jayce H. said, "I was proud when I caught crayfish with my friend because I have never gotten a chance to catch any type of fish."

Many participants tried weaving for the first time. While many children were skeptical about

the class, they grew to love weaving. Preston R. wove a lot in a very short time. At the end of class, he asked the weaving instructor to support him in honing his craft. Preston took supplies home so that he could continue learning to weave throughout the summer.

"When we formed this new partnership with Lt. Moody and the NYPD's Community Affairs Department, we quickly realized that National Grid Foundation was a supporter of both programs. I immediately contacted the Foundation to share the news of this exciting collaboration. They were thrilled to hear that two grantees were coming together to provide this unique camp experience to even more kids. The Foundation mobilized additional resources to support this initiative. We are honored to partner with such responsive and intentional funders like National Grid Foundation!" Christie Ko, Executive Director. 🌱





“The potential for greatness lives within each of us.”

– Wilma Rudolph

