



Camels Hump Middle School

Mark Carbone - Principal

Wilhelmina Picard - Assistant Principal

Dear Richmond Selectboard,

This letter is to serve as support for Our Community Cares Camp (OCCC), a non-profit that has been enriching the lives of students in our middle school for the past 10 years. Our Community Cares Camp was created by Marie Thomas and a small group of concerned individuals who realized that our communities' children needed a summer program option that provides enriching activities and two nutritional meals daily. The Richmond community was fortunate to have a Marie Thomas who through her dedication, tenacity, and commitment to children created much more than a summer camp. Marie created a community of care. OCCC is more than two summer camps and a 5000 meal distribution center. OCCC is a community development resource. Campers who age out of the program become "counselors in training" then counselors, and finally group leaders. College age students return to volunteer or assist because of their experiences at camp. Their fundamental "lessons learned" from their participation are that a community cares about them and giving back to your community is important.

As the Principal of Camels Hump Middle School, I have witnessed tremendous growth in our children. Over the years I have recommended many young children for OCC camp and then watched those same children, years later, become camp counselors teaching and modeling the skills/behaviors of care and concern. OCCC has created a place for our young people to learn, to support one another and to develop the employability skills they will need to be successful. OCCC is truly a community camp supporting, teaching and caring for our youth from ages 5 through college.

I recognize that the town budget is complicated and a lot of thoughtful consideration is put into funding community resources. I am strongly recommending that the town budget fund Our Community Cares Camp through this transitional period so that we can serve our children and provide them with what they need during the summer: food, educational and challenging programming, and adult support.

Please support the funding request proposed by board members of OCCC. By doing so, you will be investing in the future of our children and our community. Without a paid Executive Director and supporting fundraising staff, the organization will no longer be able to exist. I know that with the town and the community support, this can be a successful transition in a time of organizational growth that will benefit our children and families for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Carbone
Principal, CHMS

