

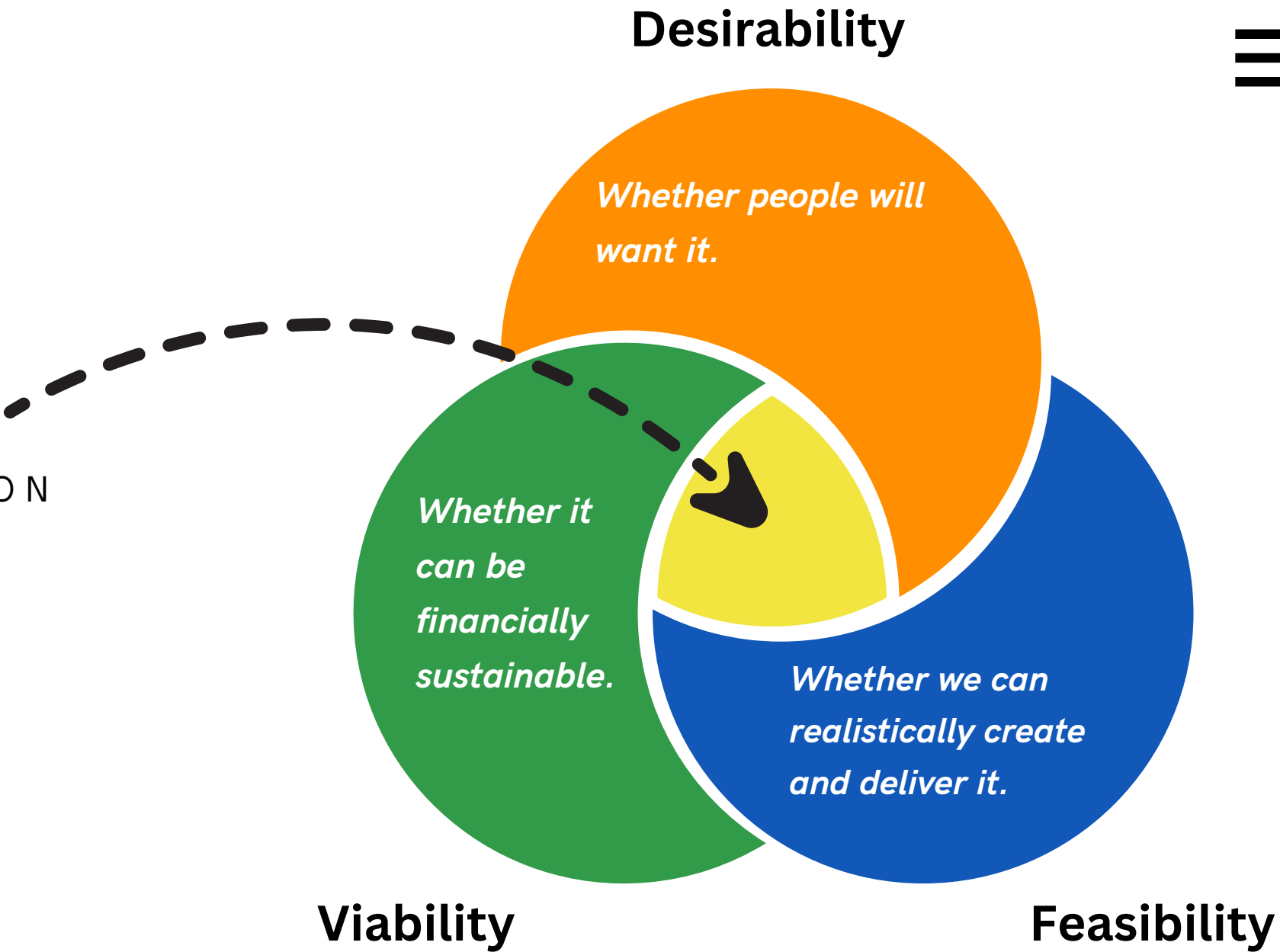
Wilderness Program Exploration

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

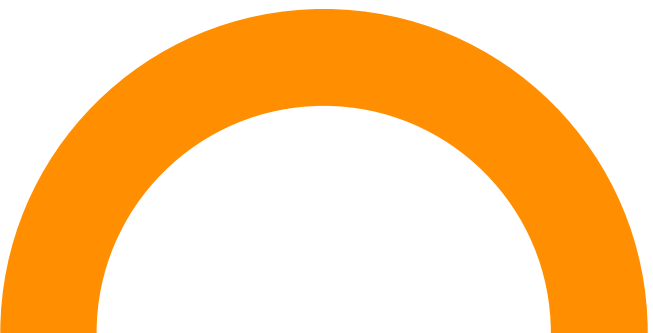
Our Approach

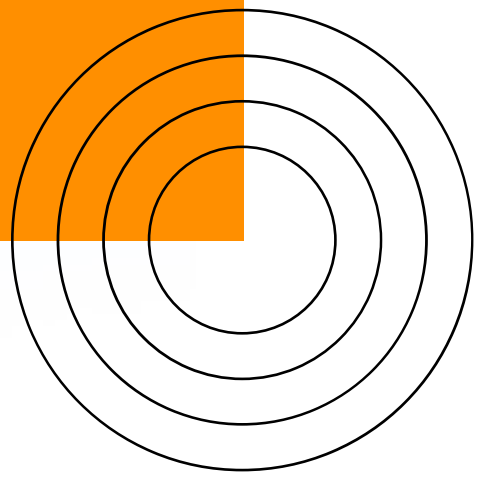


OUR PRIMARY GOAL IS TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE WILDERNESS PROGRAM OUR ORGANIZATION CAN OFFER - CONSISTENTLY AND SUSTAINABLY.



**Phase 1:
We conducted
research to
produce a robust
understanding of
what families want
from a wilderness
program.**





What is a “wilderness program” at Farm and Wilderness?

The Wilderness Programs at Farm and Wilderness provide participants with a profound sense of social comfort, belonging, and recognition within a close-knit community. Individuals are not only known but also integrated into a shared identity, disrupting traditional societal norms and allowing for the full expression and acceptance of diverse identities. Moreover, the emphasis on participants' dependency on and closeness to the earth, cultivates a sense of awe and deeper appreciation for the natural world.

Intentional deconstruction of time creates an environment of “timeless peace”, free from the pressures of everyday life. This facilitates a deeper spiritual life for each participant. Learning and daily practice of skills to live in comfort with nature can be leveraged for personal growth, finding challenge and fulfillment in individual and communal outdoor activities. This uninterrupted and constant close connection with the land, combined with community rituals and celebrations, fosters self-confidence and resilience, empowering participants to navigate and thrive in future environments.



What have we gotten right about wilderness programming in the past?



WE SURVEYED PARENTS OF
FLYINGCLOUD AND RED
SPRUCE GROVE CAMPERS
FROM THE LAST 5 YEARS.

A few highlights

- We surveyed families of ~ 20 campers
- We asked them to note if there were super fans of the program or not, to contextualize their responses



What have we gotten right about wilderness programming in the past?



CONNECTION TO NATURE

ALIGNMENT OF VALUES

PERSONAL
TRANSFORMATION

DIGITAL DETOX

FREEDOM AND
INDEPENDENCE

COMMUNITY BELONGING
AND INCLUSIVITY

“ —

THE COMBINATION OF CHALLENGE IN OFF-THE-GRID LIVING AND BECOMING IN TUNE WITH NATURAL RHYTHMS. HER PERCEPTION THAT PEOPLE'S VALUES AT RSG ALIGN WITH HER OWN -- INCLUSIVITY, DEPTH OF THOUGHT, SEARCH FOR ULTIMATE MEANING.

RSG FAMILY '21-'23



Where and how might our future programming be distinct from our peers?

WE EXAMINED COMPETITOR PROGRAMS OFFERING "WILDERNESS" EXPERIENCES TO UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT MARKET FOR THIS KIND OFFERING.

A few highlights

- We looked at 30+ wilderness programs, nationally
- Our examination included a review of their marketing materials and their inferred value propositions



Where and how might our future programming be distinct from our peers?

WHAT OUR PEERS ARE OFFERING

- Connection to the natural world
- Personal Growth
- Stewardship of the natural world (taking back new habits)
- Alternatives to traditional culture and ways of living
- Adventure
- Skill development and cultivating self-reliance

WHAT OUR CURRENT FAMILIES DON'T WANT TO LOSE:

- Connection to legacy and being "a part of something"
- Opportunities to be accepted and feel included
- Authentic self discovery
- Experiential learning & connection to nature

We examined the marketing materials and program overviews for just over 30 different competitor programs offering "wilderness" experiences.



How can our future programming be relevant to new families?

WE SURVEYED PROSPECTIVE FAMILIES (NOT CURRENT F&W FAMILIES) NATIONALLY ON THEIR MOTIVATIONS FOR SENDING THEIR KIDS TO CAMP.

A few highlights

- 120 families completed survey
- All of them had kids of varying ages
- These families were nationally located and reported their income range but not racial identity.

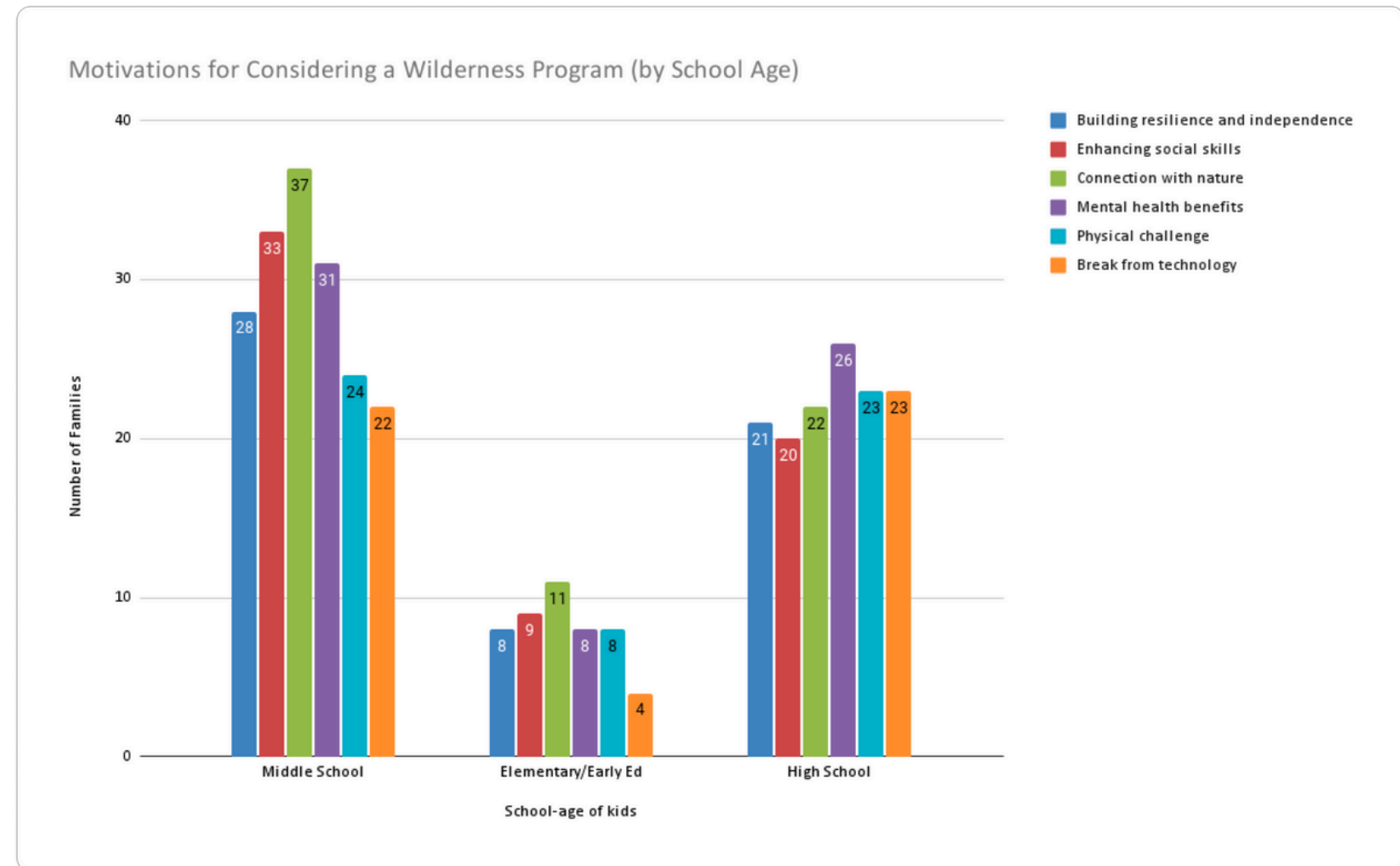


How can our future programming be relevant to new families?

MEET THEIR DESIRED OUTCOMES

Connection with nature and mental health benefits show up as two of the biggest motivators for sending their kids to wilderness camps.

- Middle school families have “Enhancing social skills” as a close second
- High school families have and “Physical Challenge” as second

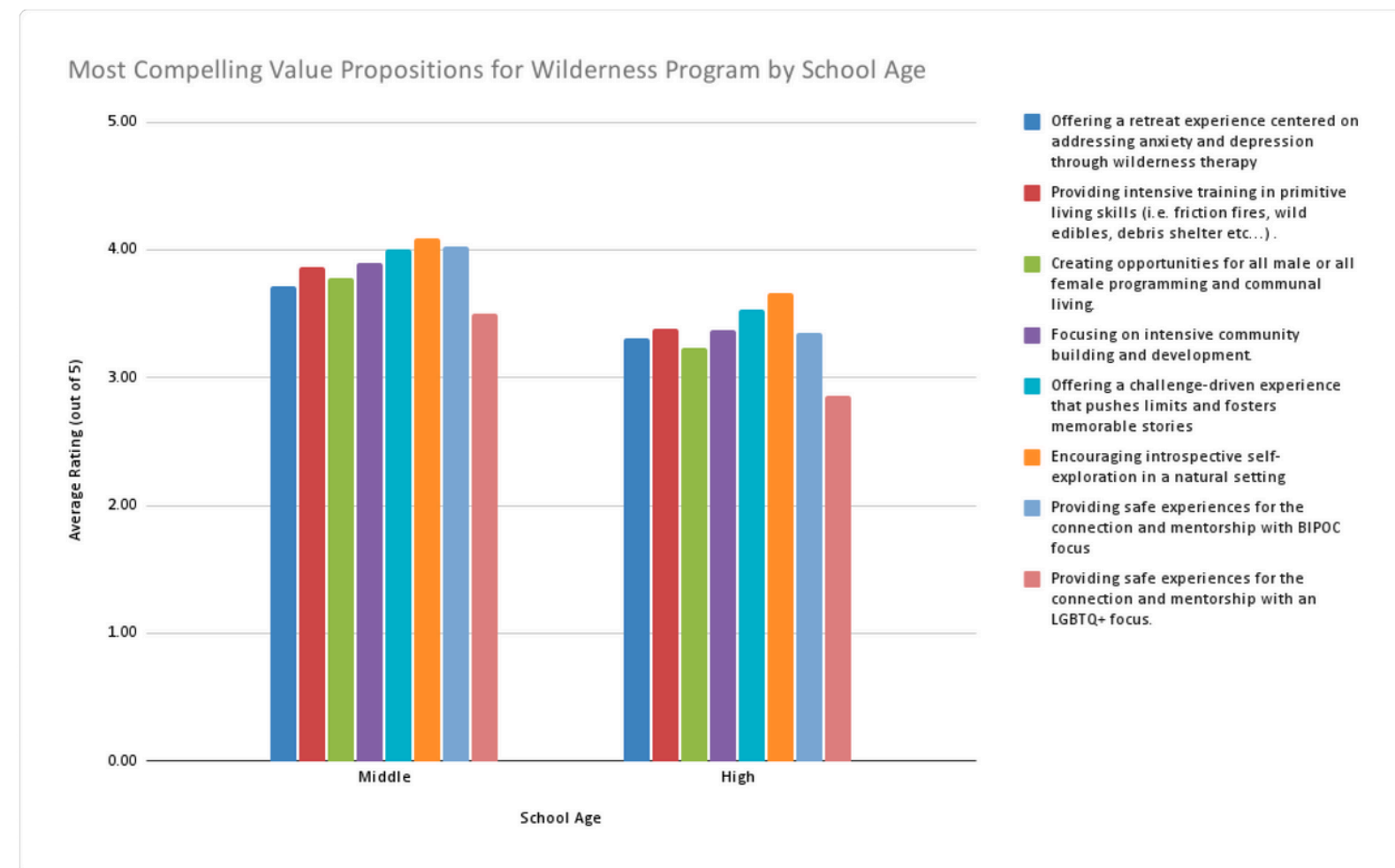


How can our future programming be relevant to new families?

HONOR WHAT FEELS LIKE
A COMPELLING REASON
TO COME

Introspective self exploration is a compelling value proposition for middle and high school families.

- “Badass” experiences are close seconds for both.
- Middle families are also interested in identity based program

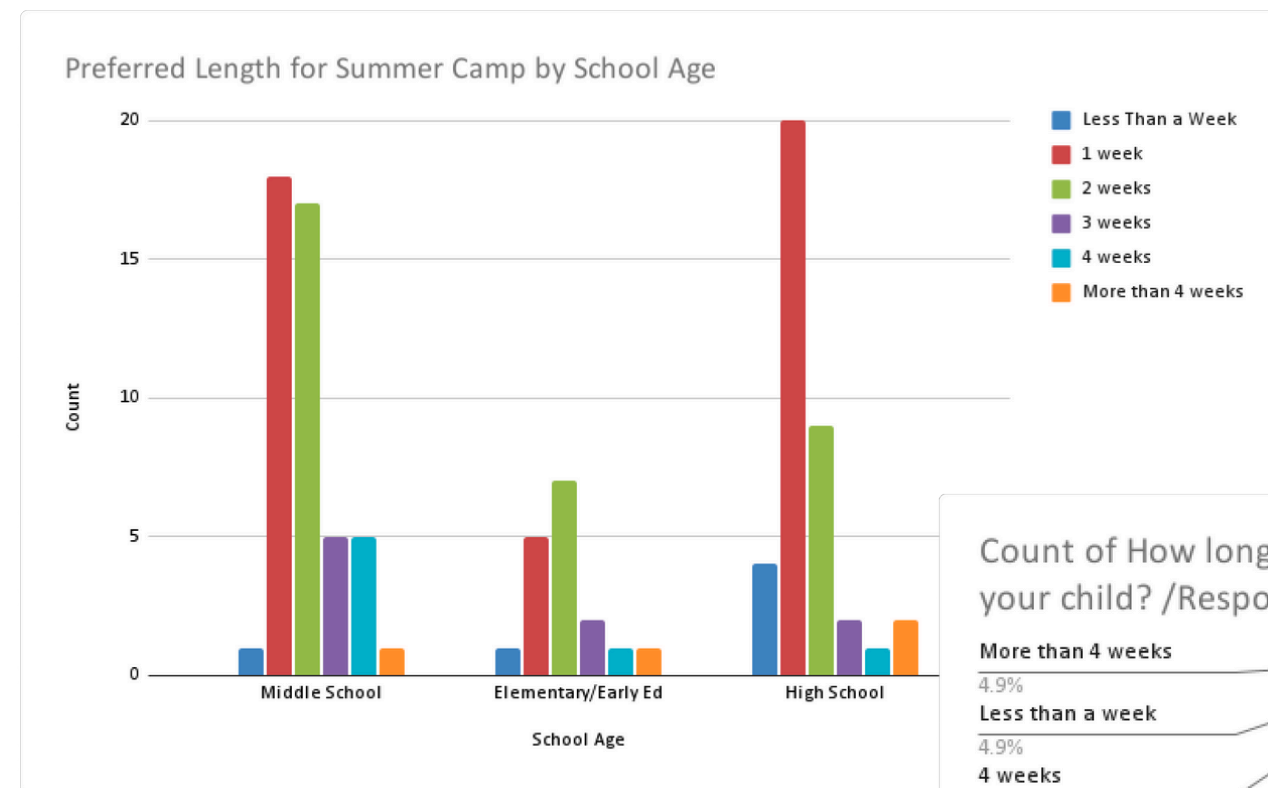


How can our future programming be relevant to new families?

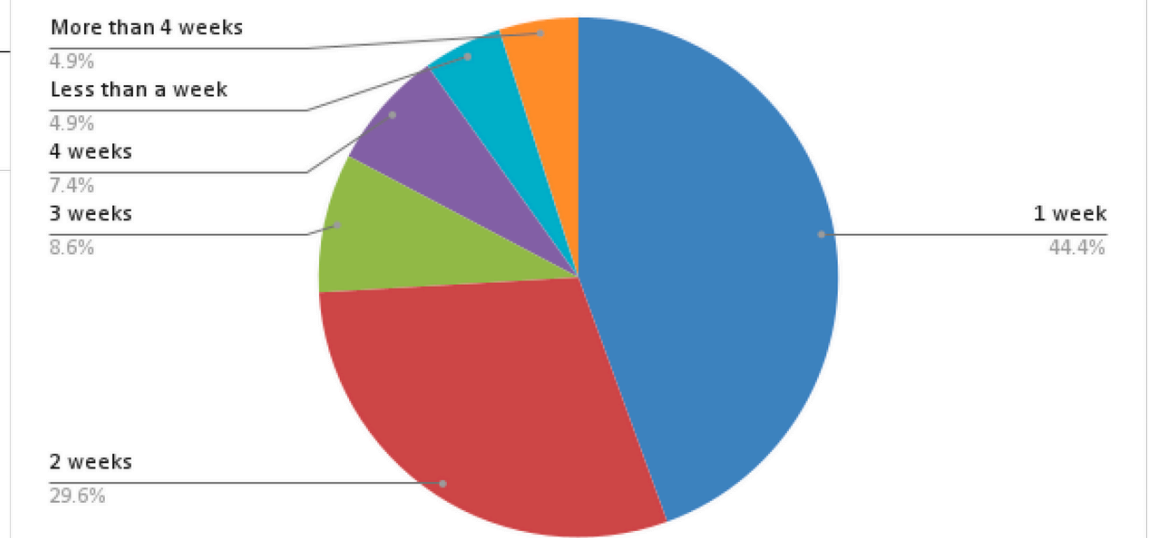
ADAPT WHEN AND HOW
THEY CAN BE HERE

Shorter sessions are more appealing to families not currently in our network.

- Middle school families have a strong preference for 1&2 weeks.
- High school families have a preference for 1 week only.



Count of How long would you prefer the camp session to be for your child? /Response





Phase 2:

We established an advisory committee to help us imagine new program concepts to test with new families.

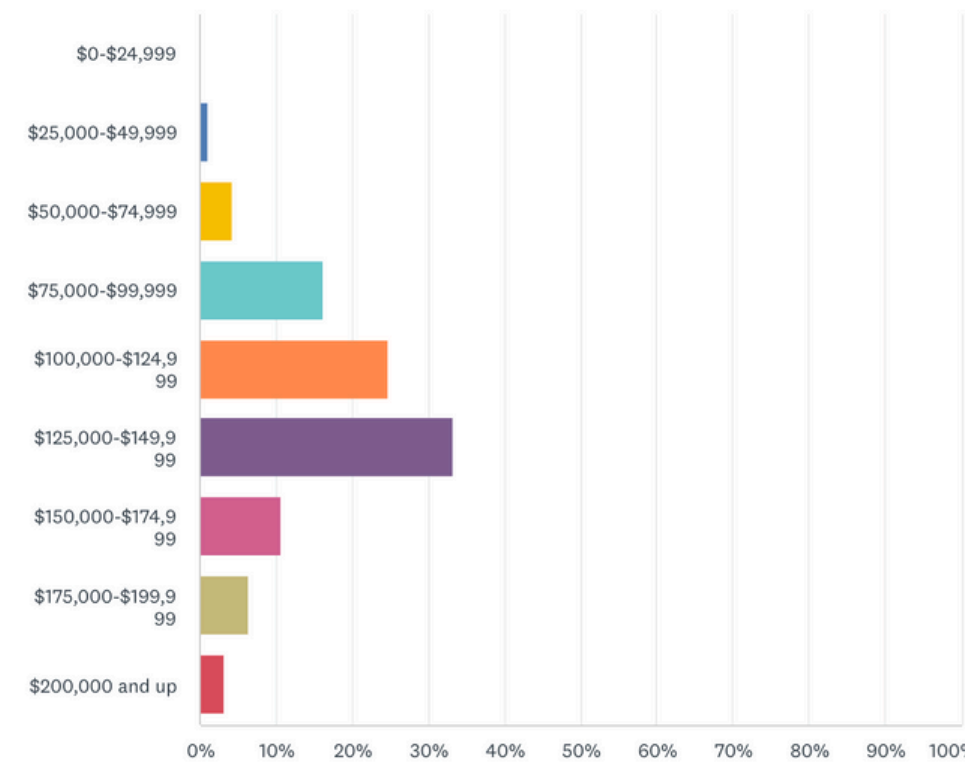
We presented those concepts through surveys to new families to help us build confidence on the right direction.

Concept Survey Respondent Demographics

- All from New England & Tri-State area
- 100% intend to spend money on summer camp in the next 1-2 years

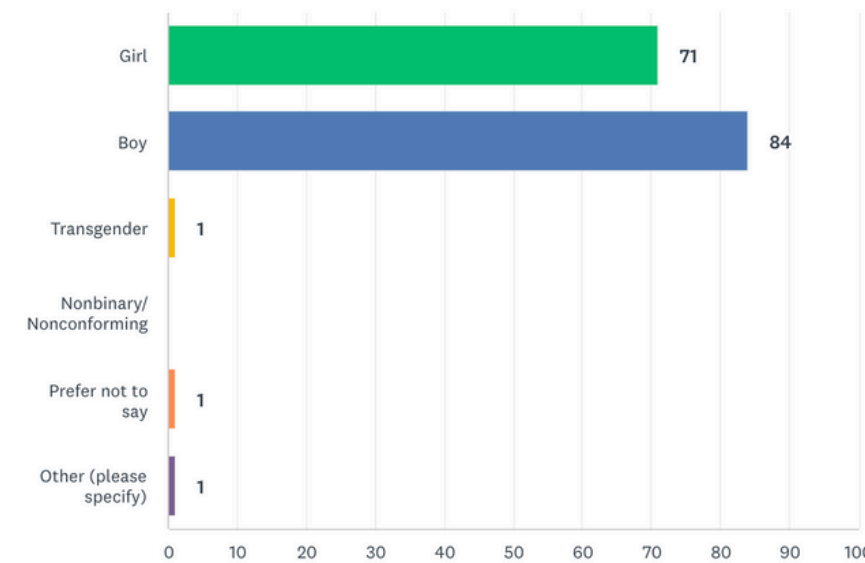
What is your approximate average household income?

Answered: 93 Skipped: 43



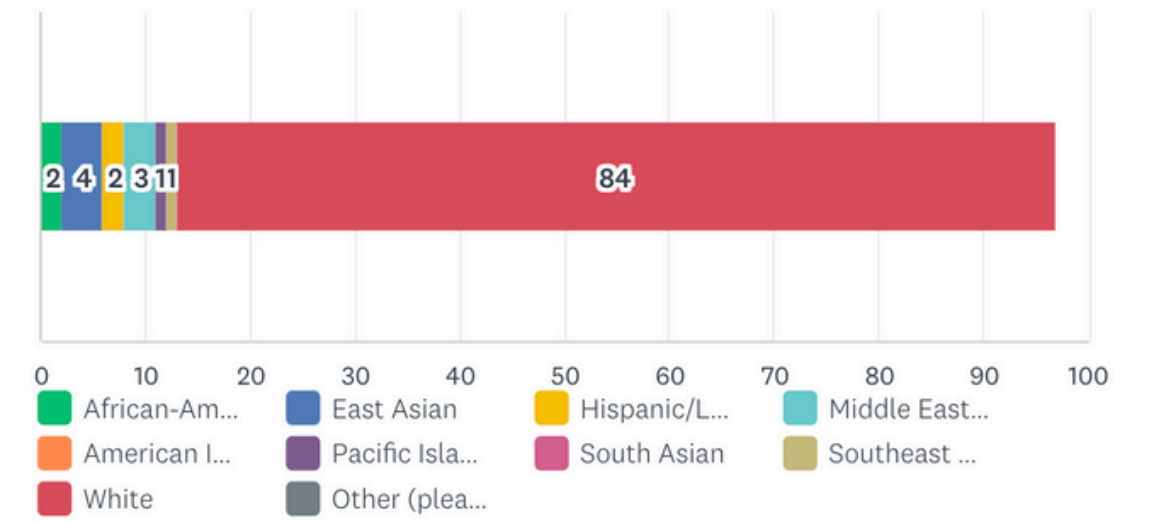
For each of your children, what is their gender identity? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 93 Skipped: 43



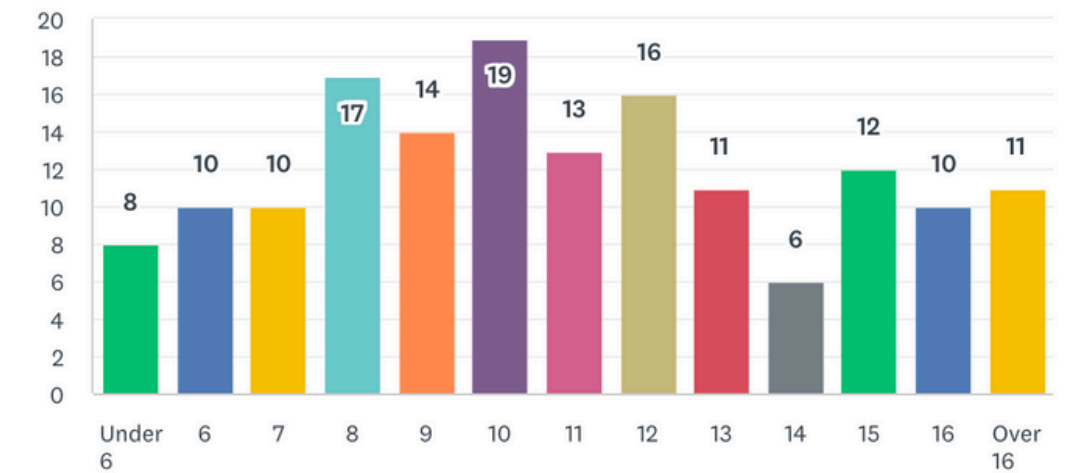
What is your racial or ethnic identity? (Select all that apply.)

Answered: 93 Skipped: 43

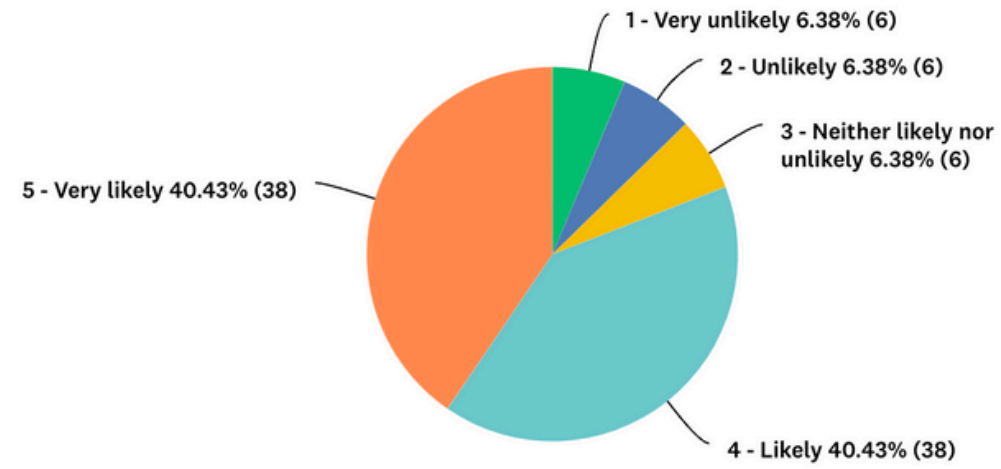


What are ages of the kids in your household?

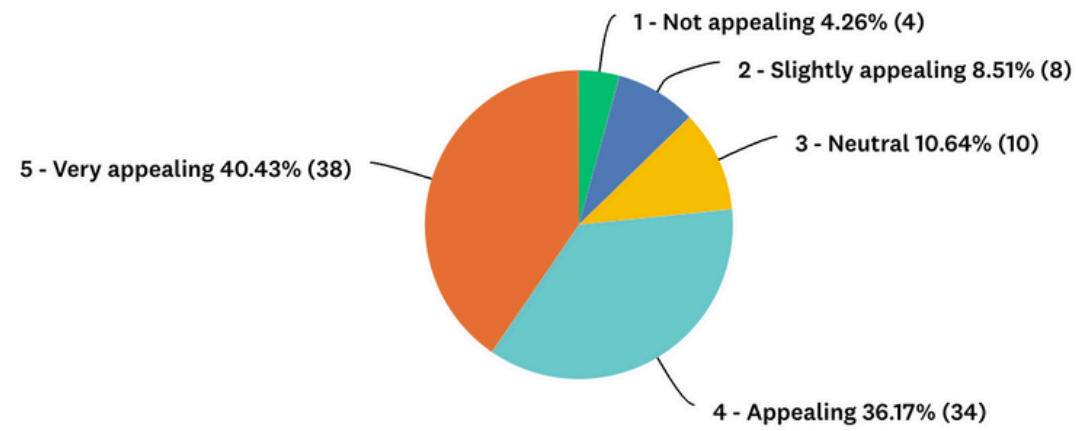
Answered: 93 Skipped: 43



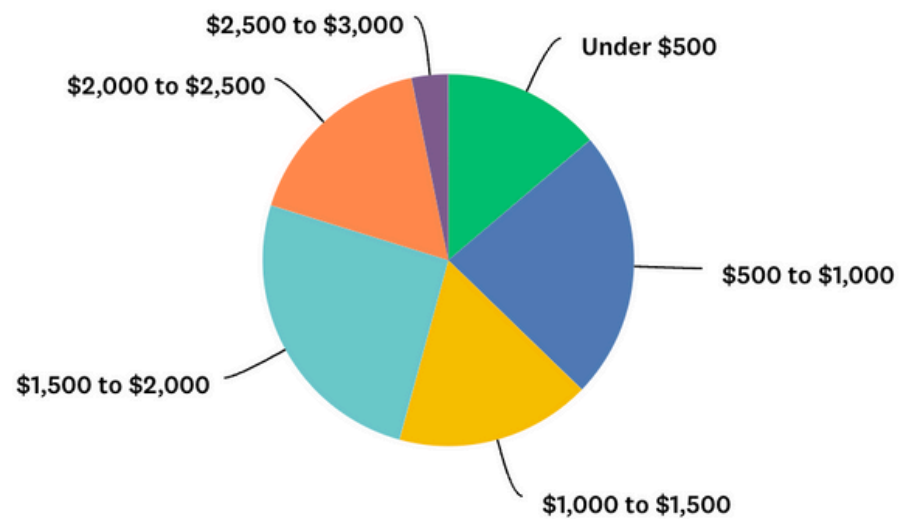
LIKELINESS TO SEND KIDS TO F&W



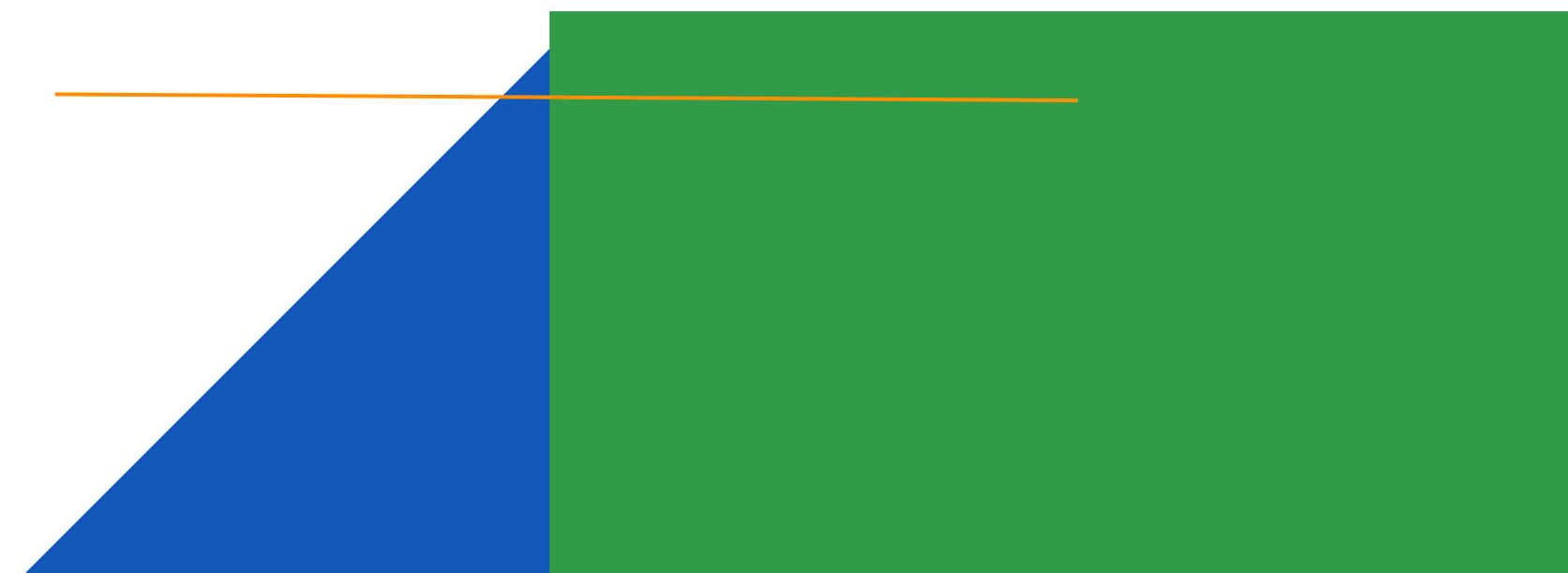
APPEAL OF OUR WILDERNESS PROGRAM



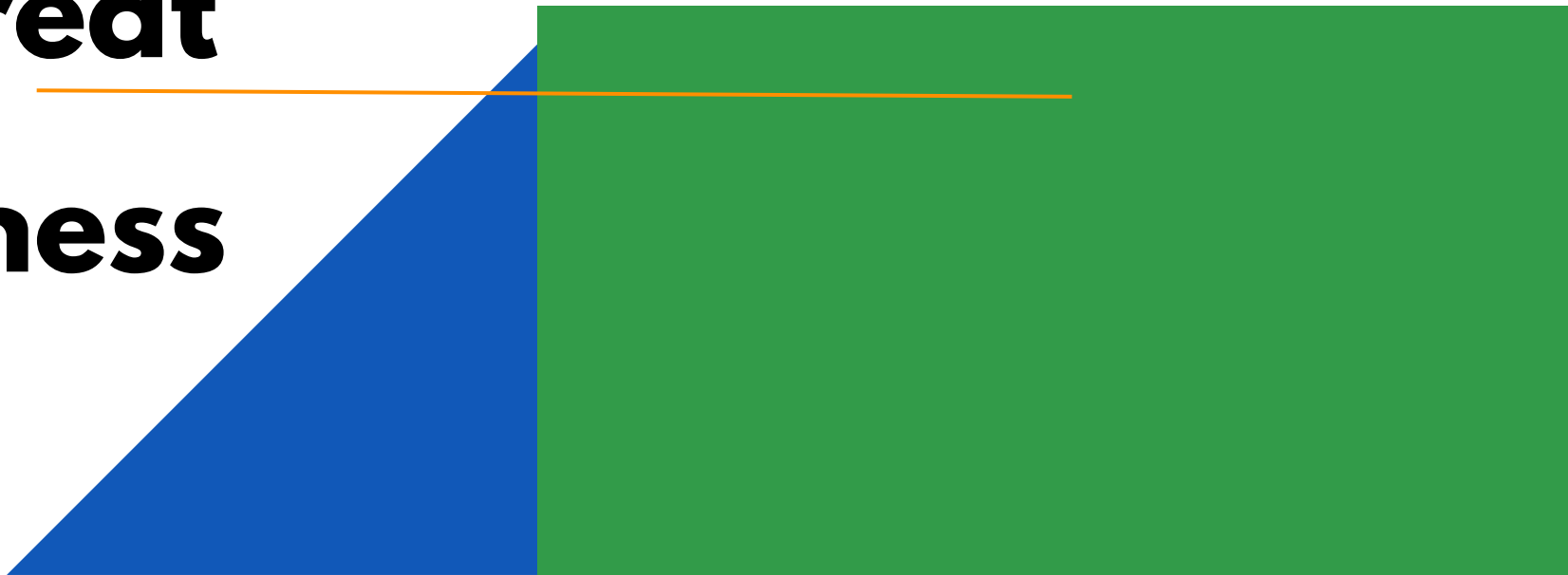
PREFERRED COST FOR SUMMER CAMP



Concept Survey Respondent Interests and Preferences

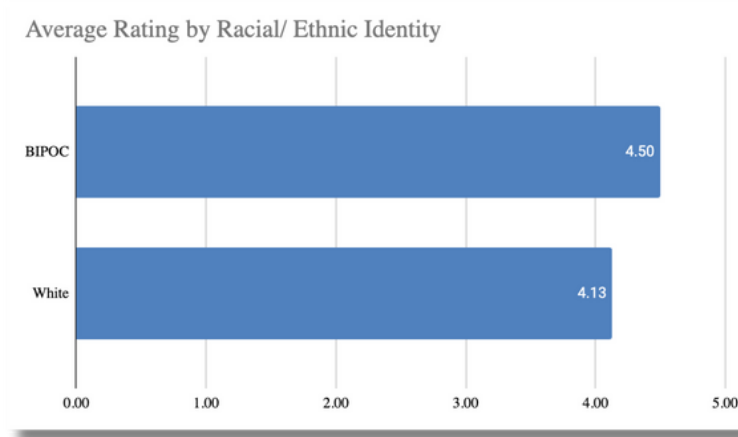
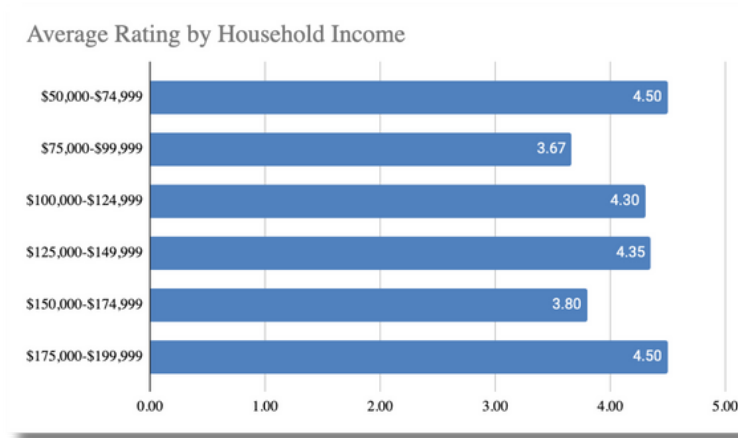
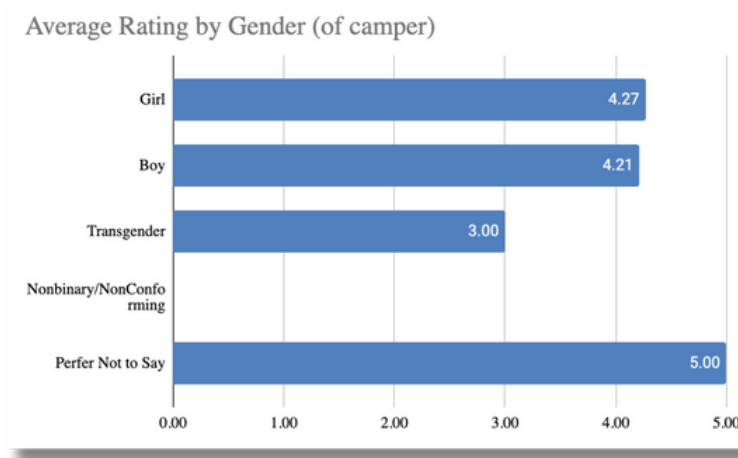


We Tested 5 Concepts With Survey Respondents :

- 1. Wilderness Stepping Stones**
 - 2. Future Leaders**
 - 3. Rites of Passage Wilderness
Experience**
 - 4. Wilderness Wellness Retreat**
 - 5. Challenge-Based Wilderness
Adventure**
- 

Concept 1: Wilderness Stepping Stones

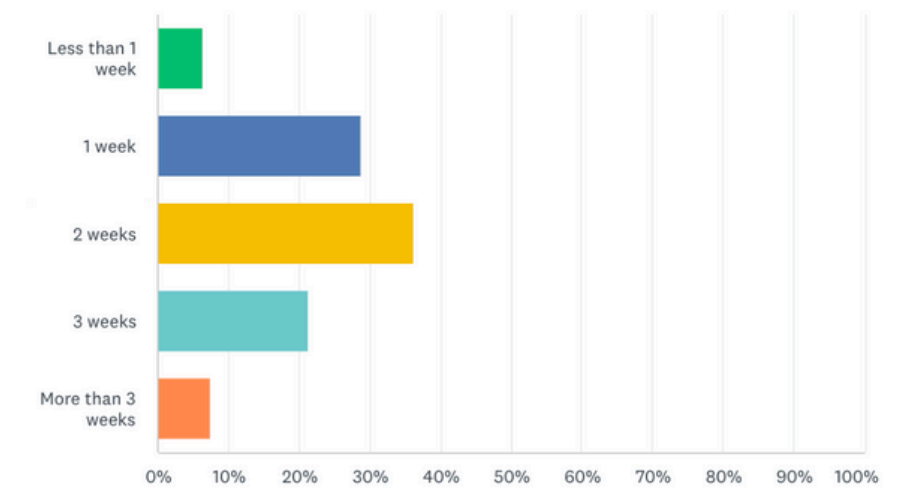
4.1★
average rating



IDEAL LENGTH

What do you believe is the ideal length for a program like this one?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 42



WHAT PARENTS LIKED

“

I like that it creates a sense of self reliance and focuses on survival skills. I also really like the "level up" concept because if my son is truly interested and had a good experience, we won't want to advance his skills.

“

I like the concept of gradually transitioning kids from day camp and then the overnight camp. That will make it a lot easier for kids and homesickness.

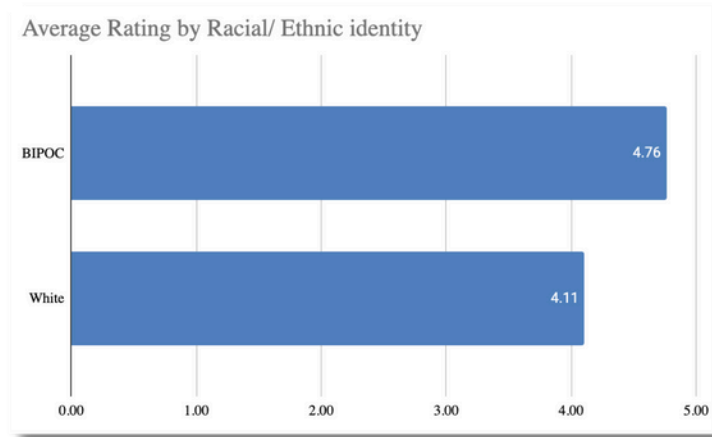
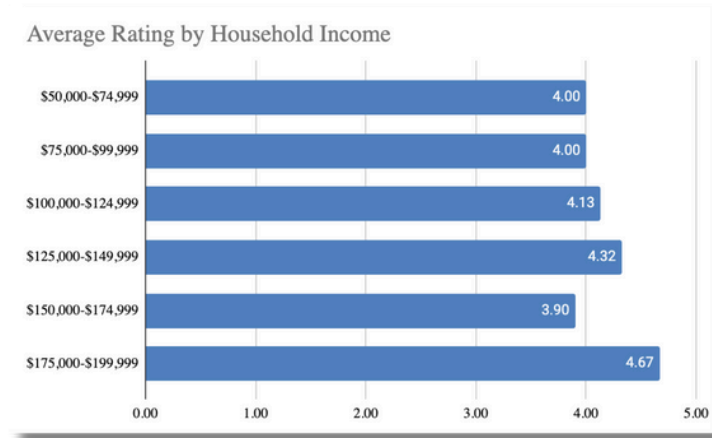
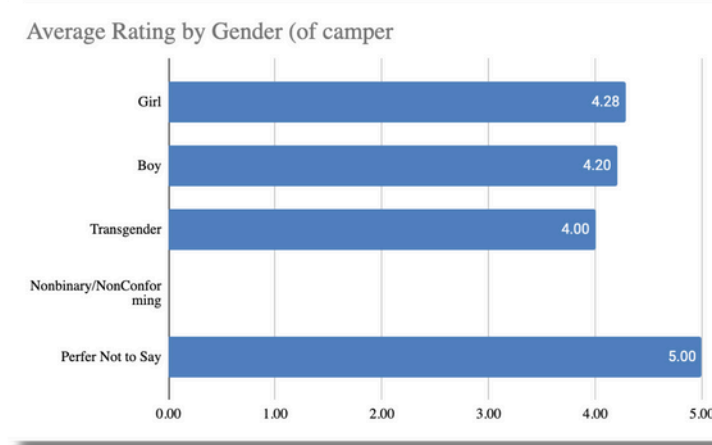
“

Sense of graduation instilling independence

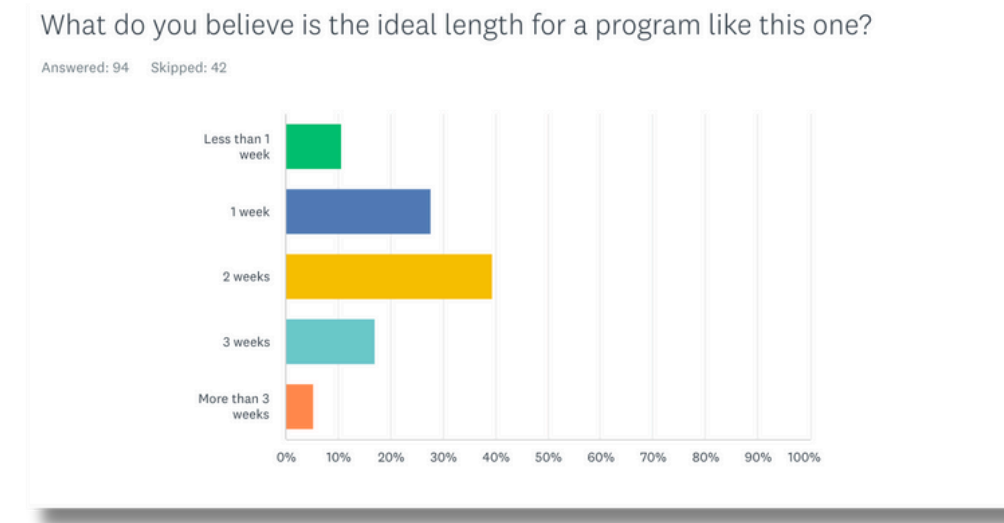


Concept 2: Future Leaders Wilderness Camp

4.1★
average rating



IDEAL LENGTH



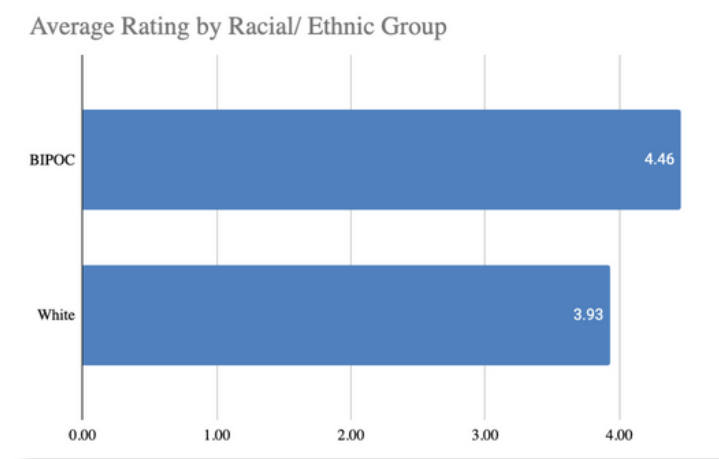
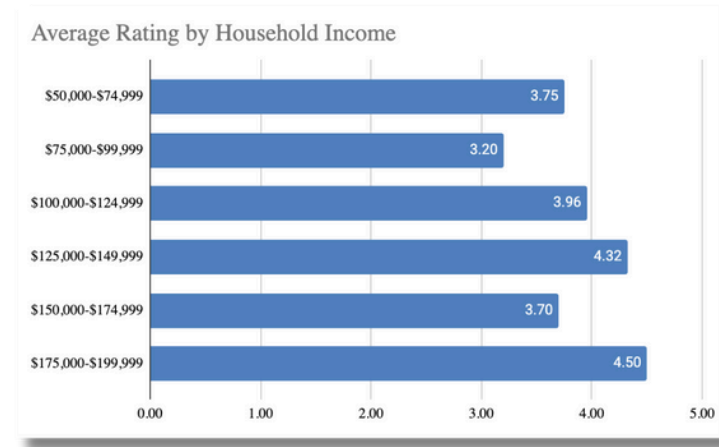
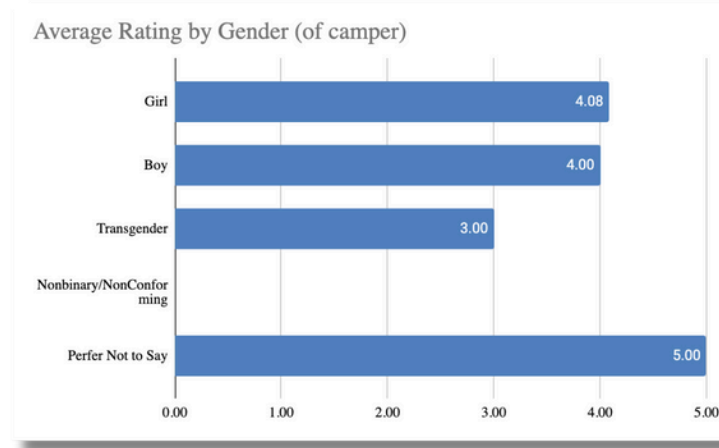
WHAT PARENTS LIKED

“The idea for older kids getting chance to support younger campers and learn age appropriate skills.

“I like that the campers are given responsibilities as part of the program. If executed well, this can be very empowering. If not, it does have the possibility of going off the rails and becoming a very "Lord of the Flies" situation. I would really want to know what bullying safeguards are in place prior to sending my child.

Concept 3: Rites of Passage Wilderness Experience

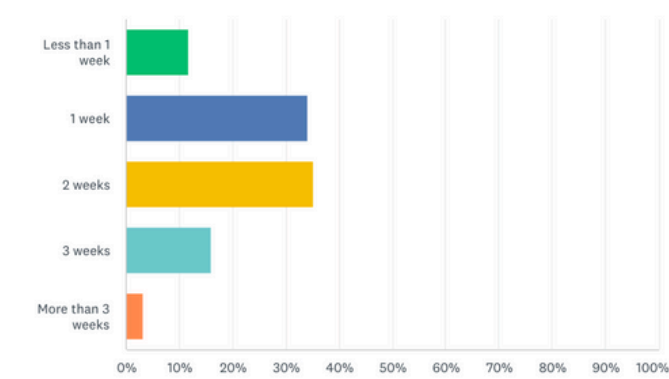
3.9★
average rating



IDEAL LENGTH

What do you believe is the ideal length for a program like this one?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 42



WHAT PARENTS LIKED

“

I like the idea of expanding their skills so that they can become conscious human beings. How to be helpful and a part of a bigger picture

“

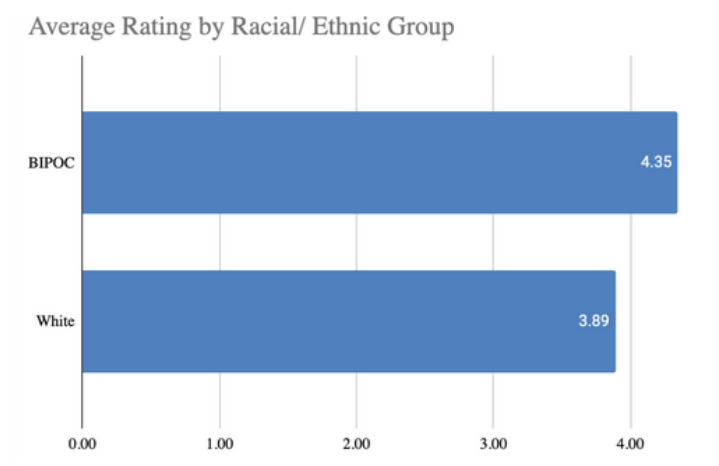
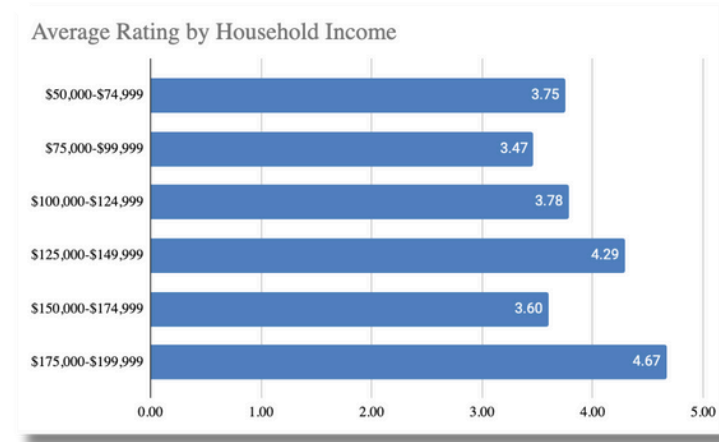
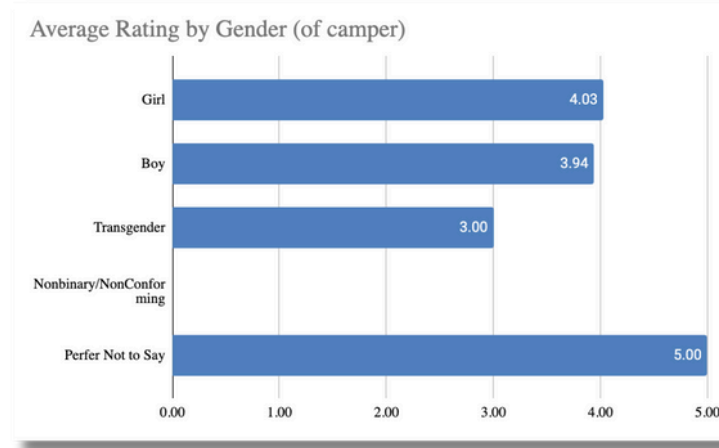
I like the opportunity to have Solo experiences. However as a parent, I would want my child to be in their late teens first. Even then, I'd want to make sure he was well equipped and had the right skills prior to sending him.

“

I love how it helps kids who are seeking to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

Concept 4: Wilderness Wellness Retreat

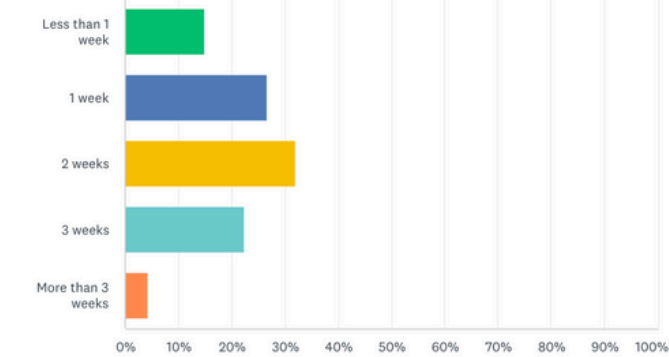
3.9★
average rating



IDEAL LENGTH

What do you believe is the ideal length for a program like this one?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 42



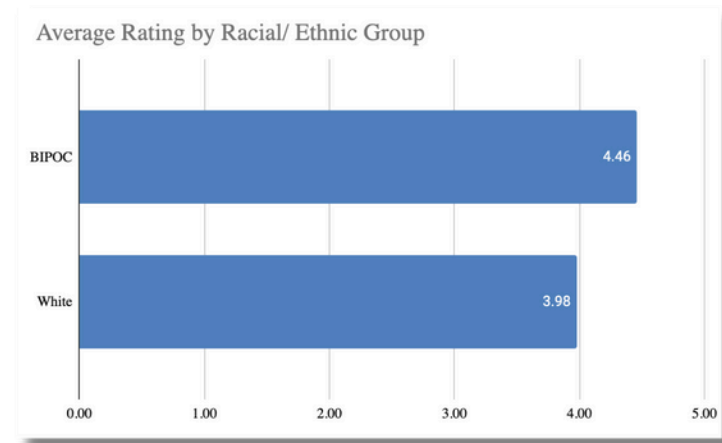
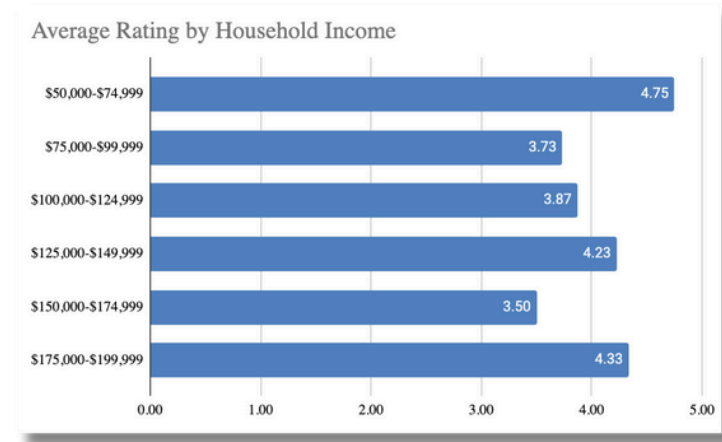
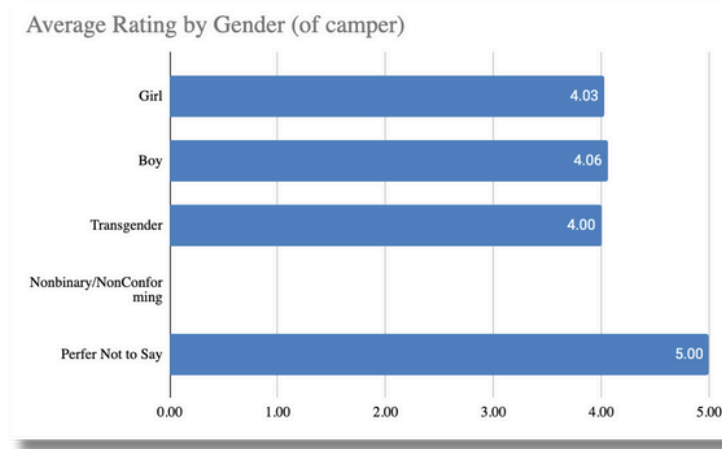
WHAT PARENTS LIKED

“ To help kids connect with something that is greater than themselves as well as deepen their connection with themselves.

“ this would be a good fit for them to bond with others

Concept 5: Challenge-Based Wilderness Adventure

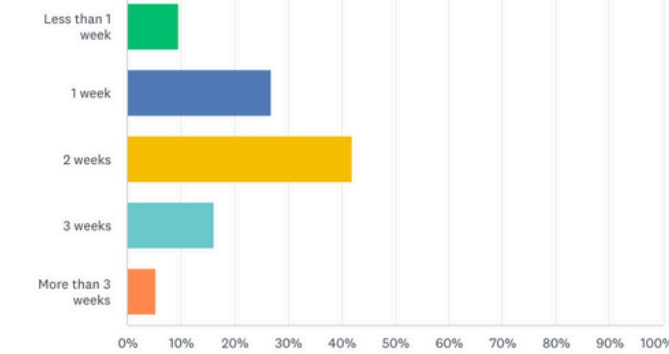
4.0★
average rating



IDEAL LENGTH

What do you believe is the ideal length for a program like this one?

Answered: 93 Skipped: 43



WHAT PARENTS LIKED

“The idea of finding new limits for yourself and be challenged both physically and emotionally. Gaining self confidence and resilience.

“I like this the best because it seems like good blend of skills, teamwork, and personal growth. I also like the focus on problem solving.

Favorite Concept

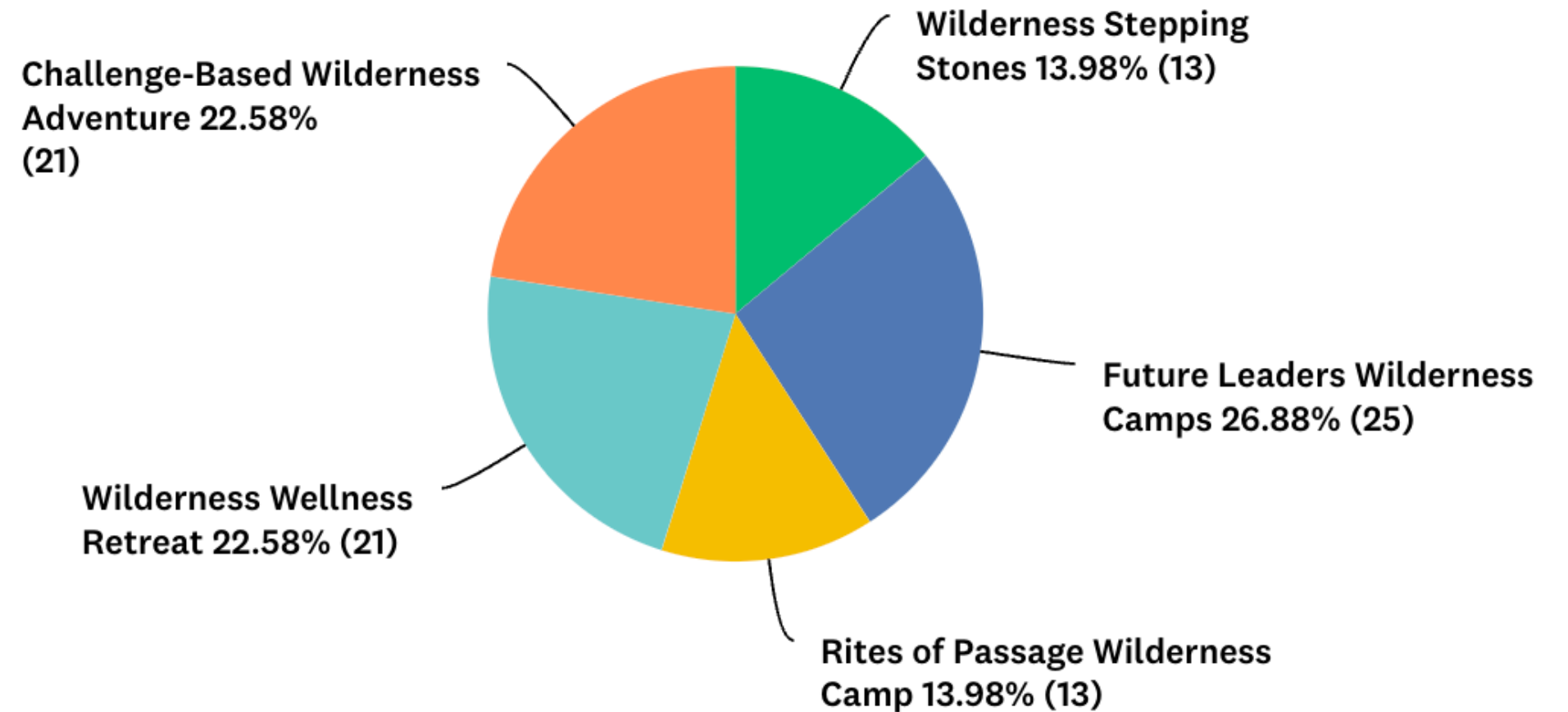
REASONS FOR THEIR SELECTION

“—
Seems to build self confidence, self worth, skills, and perseverance in the face of adversity.

“—
Leadership is most important for college admissions.

“—
It seemed like the best option with the most benefits and a good balance of supervision and support.

“—
I think it would be the most interesting not only for me but more importantly..... my daughter.



Recommendation

REGARDLESS OF THE NEW PROGRAM'S FORMAT, CERTAIN COMPONENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE THE UNIQUE HISTORY OF THESE CAMPS AND ENSURE THEY CONTINUE TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL AND IMPACTFUL EXPERIENCES FOR CAMPERS.

TIMELESSNESS

The tradition of timelessness breaks campers from daily routines, promoting mindfulness and significant mental and emotional health benefits, thereby enhancing community connections.

SIZE

The camp's intimate size of 30 to 45 campers ensures everyone feels included and integral to the community, fostering close personal connections.

RITUAL & REVERENCE

The remote and isolated setting of the camp is crucial for developmental growth, allowing campers to detach from daily life and explore personal and interpersonal dynamics in new ways.

RE MOTENESS

Rituals and reverence differentiate the program by deepening spiritual connections to the earth and each other, providing unique, culturally sensitive experiences that align with the organization's values.



Recommendation

MIXED - GENDER

The next version of wilderness programming at F&W should be mixed gender.

TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES

The next version of wilderness programming at F&W should provide transformational experiences.

MAINTAIN AGE

The next version of wilderness programming at F&W should serve the same age range.

LENGTH

The next version of wilderness programming at F&W should run 2-week sessions.

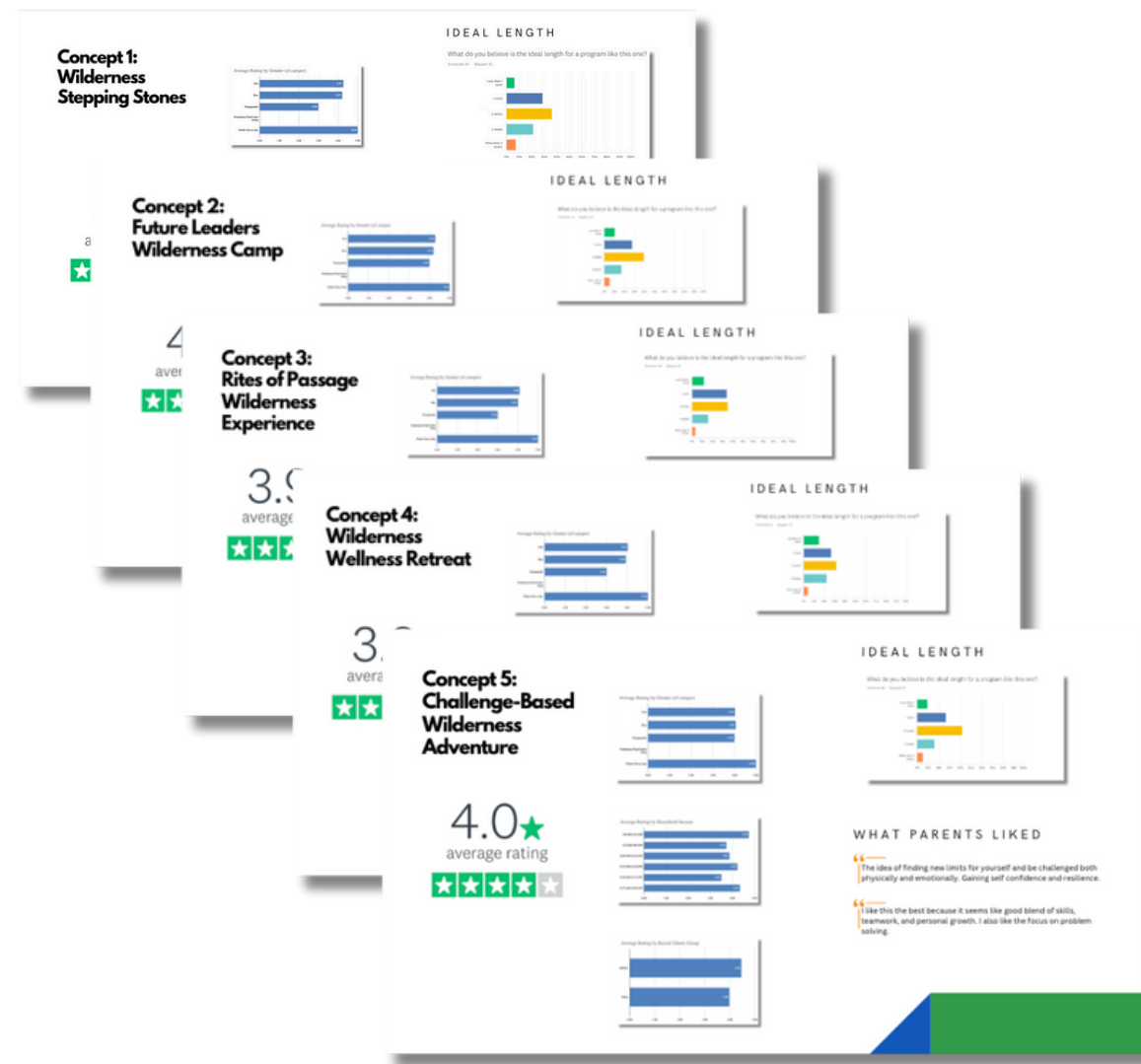
NEW FAMILIES

The next version of wilderness programming at F&W should recruit net new families.

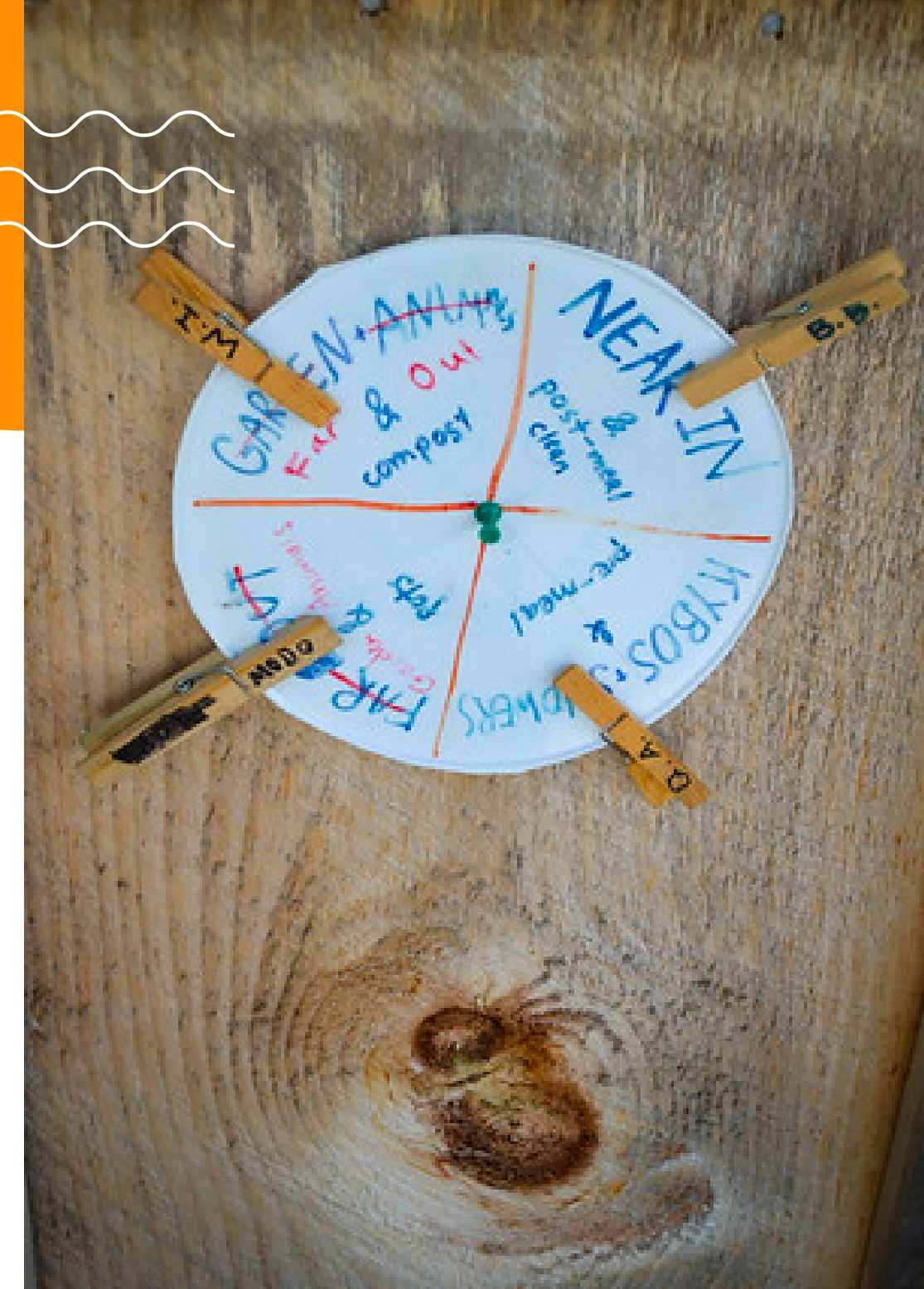


Recommendation

THE NEXT VERSION OF WILDERNESS PROGRAMMING AT F&W SHOULD BE MIXED GENDER.



- For each version of the camp we tested, there was a near equal amount of interest from parents of boys and girls (there were not enough parents of gender non-binary kids to know their interest for certain).
- Given the recent history of F&W there is a need to provide equitable access to these types of programs for all genders - not just boys.
- Peer programs in this space currently offer mix-gendered programs



Recommendation

THE NEXT VERSION OF WILDERNESS PROGRAMMING AT F&W SHOULD PROVIDE TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

- Across all of the tested concepts a theme of personal growth was present as a desired outcome for families.
 - *Personal Growth and Confidence Building (27 mentions): Many respondents appreciate the potential for personal development, self-confidence, and resilience that the camp offers. They highlight experiences that encourage self-reflection, independence, and personal responsibility.*
- For our current families, the true value of these camps lies in their ability to provide deep, introspective experiences, focusing on self-reflection, rather than adopting a 'go wide' approach filled with numerous activities and optional participation.

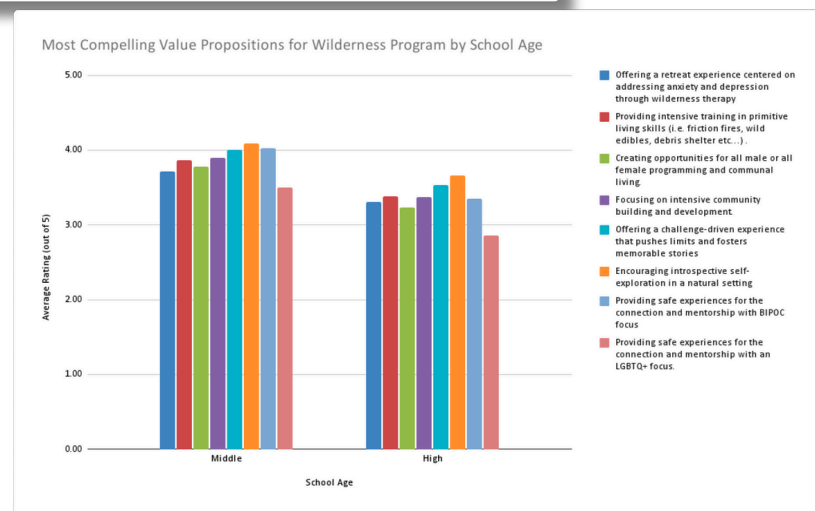
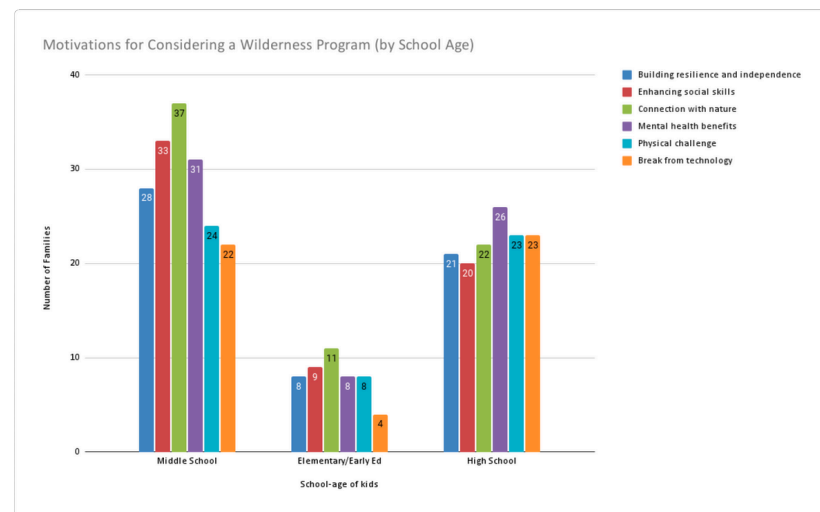
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THE COMBINATION OF CHALLENGE IN OFF-THE-GRID LIVING AND BECOMING IN TUNE WITH NATURAL RHYTHMS. HER PERCEPTION THAT PEOPLE'S VALUES AT RSG ALIGN WITH HER OWN -- INCLUSIVITY, DEPTH OF THOUGHT, SEARCH FOR ULTIMATE MEANING.

RSG FAMILY '21-'23



Recommendation

THE NEXT VERSION OF WILDERNESS PROGRAMMING AT F&W SHOULD SERVE THE SAME AGE RANGE

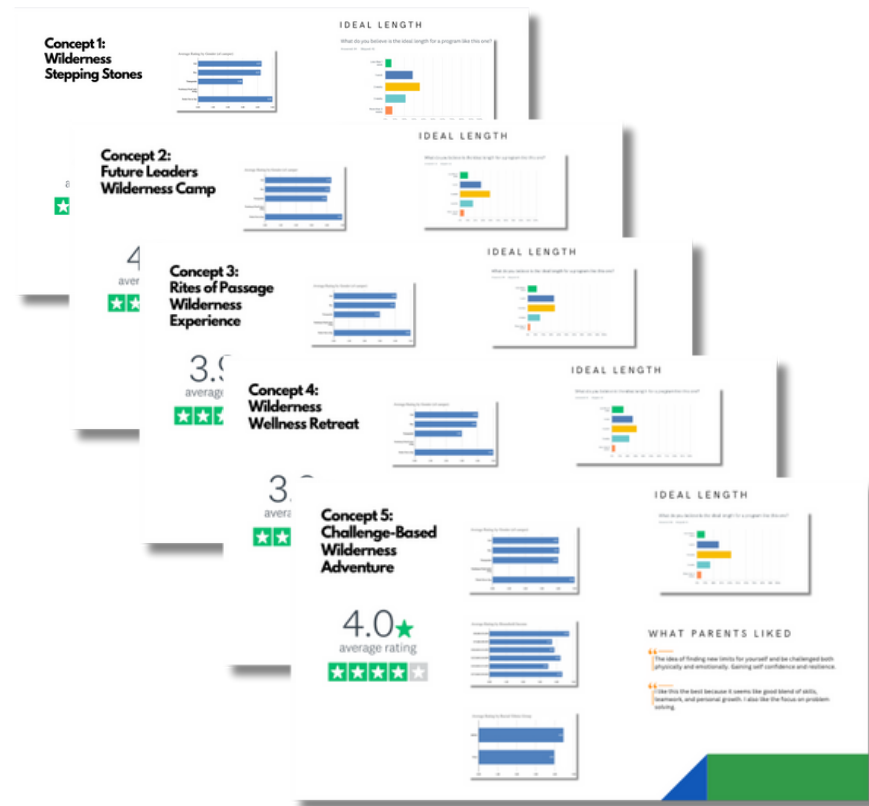


- New families of middle school aged kids are high interested in programs that enhance social skills, encouraging introspective self-exploration and mentorship – all of which are primarily available in this evolved form of the program.



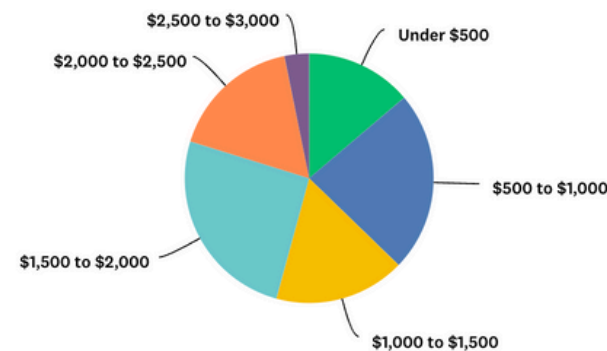
Recommendation

THE NEXT VERSION OF WILDERNESS PROGRAMMING AT F&W SHOULD RUN 2-WEEK SESSIONS



- Across all program concepts, families that are interested in F&W's wilderness programs prefer shorter sessions.
- Providing a shorter session length also allows for providing access to camp at a new price point – one that is closer to their expectations.

PREFERRED COST FOR SUMMER CAMP



Recommendation

THIS ALSO COMES WITH ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RUNNING A 2 OR 3 WEEK PROGRAM. SEE THEM BELOW.

Considerations for a 3 week program

- We need to ensure there is flexibility in the pricing structure.
- Can we implement strategies to promote long-term or repeat enrollments?
- It is necessary to demonstrate that a 3-week duration is essential, as achieving the desired outcomes in 2 weeks is not feasible. Are the outcomes realistically attainable with this timeframe?
- Should we consider implementing a mixed-gender approach in the program?
- Explore the possibility of introducing a "Spark" option. How can we integrate this as a deliberate and meaningful component of the program design?

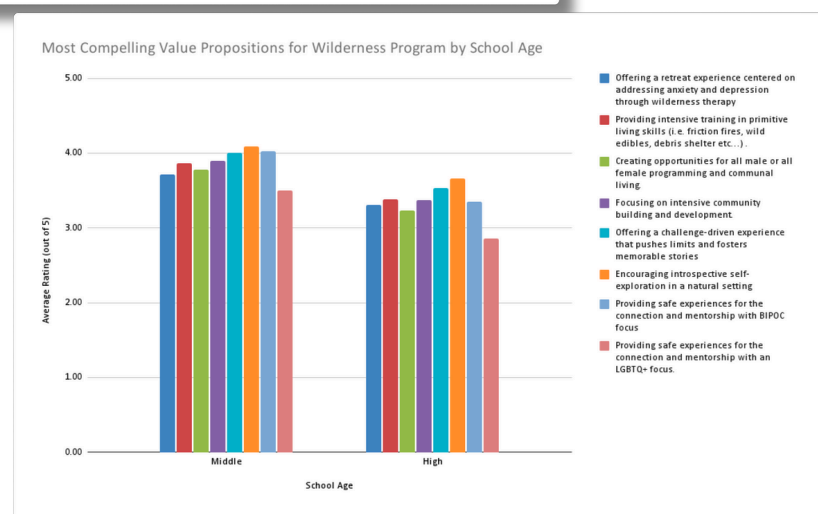
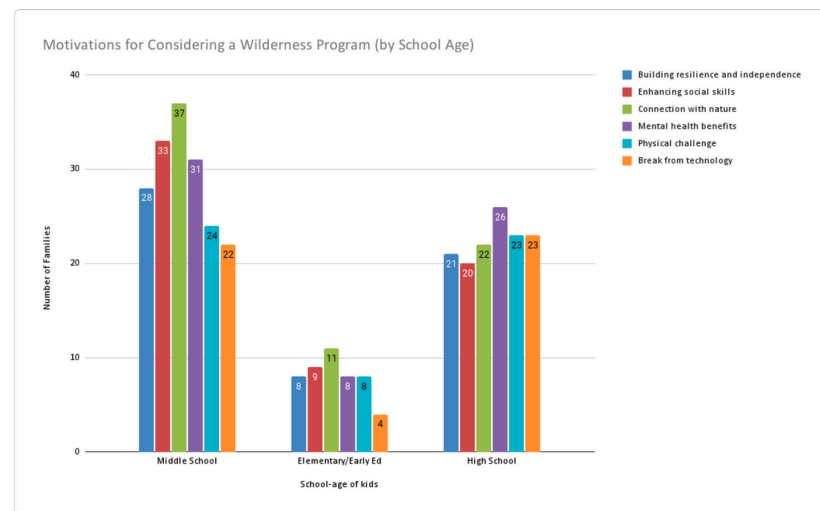
Considerations for a 2 week program

- What are the benefits of this change that justify the potential friction it may create?
- How can we ensure seamless integration of this program with other summer camps?
- What strategies can we implement to address logistical challenges for families who have children attending different camps simultaneously?
- Emphasize focused activities without distractions, centering on the essential aspects of the program.
- Eliminate day trips while maintaining overnight stays.
- Remove requirements for fair preparation.

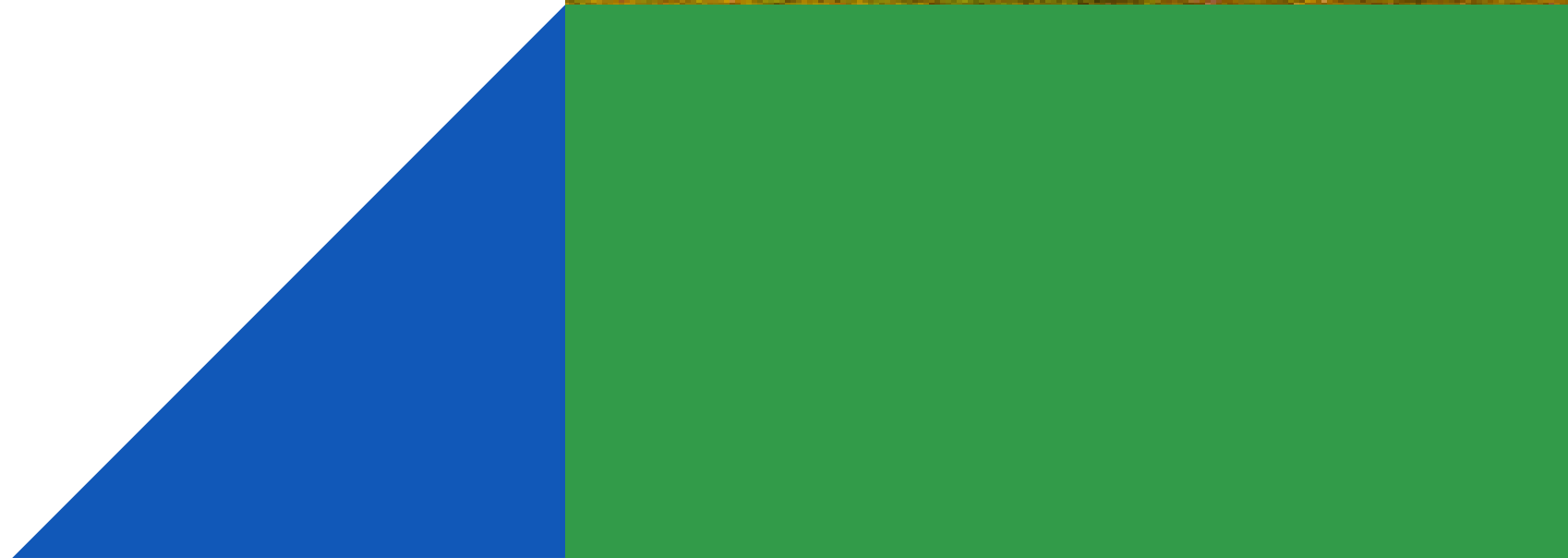


Recommendation

THE NEXT VERSION OF WILDERNESS PROGRAMMING AT F&W SHOULD RECRUIT NET NEW FAMILIES.



- A departure from history – recruitment for this program should not be reliant on intra-camp transfers. In fact it should appeal to new set of families at a new price point and commitment to length.



Phase 3: We have reviewed the early financial modeling and a “premortem” assessment of the recommendation to assess the feasibility of a new program.



Considerations

AFTER A "PREMORTEM" WITH THE LT THESE ARE THE BIGGEST AREAS OF CONSIDERATION FOR PURUSING THIS NEW PROGRAM.

Staffing

- How do we find the right staff to lead this program
- Who is accountable for its development?
- Is it going to be easier or more difficult to recruit seasonal staff for this and to potentially replace them as challenges arise (i.e. midsummer departures)
- How does the new kind of program change the way we need to train those staff?

Enrollment

- How can be sure this program wont "cannibalize" the others?
- if we attract new families can we make sure we have the staff to meet their demographic needs (l.i higher populations of campers of color)

Resource and Support

- Can we manage the logistics of 2 week program during our current 3 week sessions?
- Do we have the resources to introduce a new program while still working on the current programs?
- What improvements need to be made the physical plant for FC or RSG to increase their accessibility during an emergency?
- How to account for wildlife?

Program

- Are we able to handle the behavioral health issues that may arise from campers in this program?
- How do we continue to understand a refine our goals with "transformation" to make sure we deliver on our program promise?

How to Get Started

Start Small

Run a 2 week pilot in the summer of 2025 to test feasibility.

Create Accountability

Identify a single owner of this program's success.

Find Expertise

Bring in outside support to develop the program and then translate with our mission and values.





**We look forward
to reviewing those
findings together
on May 4th.**

Email chris@kyndredcompany.com with further questions.

