

# PALS



## 2015 Annual Report

*“ I have been going to camps since  
I was nine. But Camp PALS is the BEST  
CAMP I have ever gone to. ”*

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PALS camper



# Executive Director Letter

When PALS began over a decade ago, I imagined a place where my brother, and others with Down syndrome like him, could be surrounded by a community of passionate, supportive friends.

Over 1200 campers later, we've realized that the magic in PALS is not simply because we created a place for one group of people. The magic of PALS is that we've built ourselves a world of acceptance and inclusion unlike any other. A place where campers and counselors build friendships powered by individual growth, genuine respect, and a love of dance parties. A place where each and every one of us can be ourselves at a level we never knew was possible.

This year we learned that our place can look different across the country. Our place can be a sunset cruise off the coast of Portland, Maine. Or a kayaking trip down a river in Hocking Hills, Ohio. Or an art class at the University of Scranton. Our place continues to expand and develop, but the experience, the feeling, and the community, stays the same.

In our 2014-15 Annual Year, we added three new Camp PALS locations,

and doubled the size of our PALS Adventures program. We also added two additional full-time staff members, investing in our ability to continue to grow the PALS community with the right amount of support. This year we shared the story of PALS with more people than ever before—we were featured on national TV on The Meredith Vieira Show. This broadcast helped us launch our most successful outreach with The Congratulations Project yet, providing letters to over 240 new families of babies with Down syndrome this year.

The growth of PALS Programs continues to demonstrate the great power in young volunteers, the great beauty in genuine friendships, and the great desire we all have to find a place we can call our own. This is our place, and it is our vision that the world will be changed because of it.

Thanks for joining us.

**Jenni Newbury Ross**

Executive Director & Co-founder  
PALS Programs

# *This is our place...*

*“ There is no where else that I feel more included, happy, and positive about the world than I do at Camp PALS. ”*

—  
PALS Counselor



PALS Programs began in 2004. The vision was clear—changing perspectives through relationships built on shared experiences. We paired up individuals with Down syndrome one-on-one with their peers to grow in independence, to tackle new experiences, and to build friendships along the way.

The programming is simple—we go on trips, we try out new activities in small groups, we compete in the PALS Olympics, and we host the best dance parties you’ve ever seen.

And while the programming is simple, the rest of it is magic. Over the years we’ve built a commitment to this place—to this world where the boundaries of judgment, the fear of exclusion and the stress of fitting into some pre-designed mold are gone.

Our programming begins with Camp PALS, our week-long summer sleep away camps held on college campuses across the country. The experiences continue with PALS Adventures, weekend getaways during our off-season at retreat centers, resorts, and rented homes. And we strengthen our community with The Congratulations Project, reaching out to congratulate and welcome new families of babies with Down syndrome through letters written by our campers.

While our programming continues to expand, our model stays the same. We believe in one-to-one pairings that create strong bonds and lifelong friendships. We focus on peer-to-peer relationships, trusting in young volunteer leaders to develop age-appropriate programming and to be eager to affect social change. We value residential experiences—recognizing that real impact comes from immersive experiences, and real change comes in the moments you least expect it.

We hold specific values of who we are. We are welcoming and supportive. We are a family that is passionate and genuine, and always has fun.

PALS has shaped the lives of hundreds of individuals over the past twelve years. Half of us have Down syndrome, but all of us know the value of friendship, the thrill of being on a team, and the best place to experience summer. Together, we challenge each other to be a little better, and to see the world a little differently, with each passing year.

*“ PALS is a testament to the hearts and minds of young people. ”*

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PALS Parent

# Our mission

PALS Programs creates immersive experiences where young adults with Down syndrome and their peers have fun, grow as individuals, and build transformative friendships.

*“ Camp PALS simply provides the mission and opportunity for all of us to bring out our best self. ”*

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PALS Counselor



# *Our programs*

<b>Camp PALS Columbus</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>PALS Adventures</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Camp PALS Philadelphia</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>The Congratulations Project</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Camp PALS Princeton</b>	<b>9</b>		
<b>Camp PALS San Francisco</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>Camp PALS Maine</b>	<b>11</b>		
<b>Camp PALS Georgetown</b>	<b>12</b>		
<b>Camp PALS Poconos</b>	<b>13</b>		
<b>Camp PALS Chicago</b>	<b>14</b>		



# Camp PALS Columbus

We began our summer at the largest campus PALS has ever seen—Ohio State University. Camp PALS Columbus brought together 22 campers and 26 volunteers for a week that included a visit to the COSI science center, a local waterpark and an epic day of outdoor adventure at Hocking Hills. We explored downtown Columbus and introduced the OSU community to traditional PALS events like outdoor dance parties and karaoke.

# Camp PALS Philadelphia

We celebrated our 12th year at Cabrini College during Camp PALS Philadelphia this year. With 52 campers and 78 volunteers, Camp PALS Philadelphia returned to Ocean City for our ninth summer thanks to our generous sponsors. We continued our partnership with The Franklin Institute in downtown Philadelphia, this year with access to a special traveling exhibit. We also spent time at Dave & Busters and the Camden Aquarium.





# Camp PALS Princeton

PALS returned to Princeton University again for our New Jersey program. Together with 39 campers and 46 volunteers we took a trip to Ocean City and spent time in downtown Princeton for a night out on the town. Our sponsor returned to host our annual Casino Night, we spent time canoeing, and we even went for a day to Six Flags!



# Camp PALS

## San Francisco

The California sun shined bright on Santa Clara University and our 39 campers and 51 volunteers who attended Camp PALS San Francisco this year. We returned to Google Headquarters for our annual exploration of their campus and our technology training with their team. The group also hit the boardwalk at Santa Cruz and went for the first time to visit the Exploratorium in downtown San Francisco.





# Camp PALS

Maine  
In memory of Myrna



Camp PALS Maine, in memory of Myrna, was our first dedicated program as an organization. With 19 campers and 30 volunteers, our group was hosted by the beautiful University of New England. We took a quick trip to winter for some afternoon ice skating, enjoyed a sunset cruise off the coast of Portland, and explored the outdoors during a day at Camp Tall Pines.

# Camp PALS

## Georgetown

We returned for our third summer at Georgetown University, thanks to the wonderful generosity of their administration. Our 40 campers and 59 volunteers explored DC by taking kayaks out on the Potomac River over to Theodore Roosevelt Island. This year, we hit the American History Museum and cheered on the Washington Nationals for an evening baseball game.



# Camp PALS Poconos



The first year of Camp PALS Poconos took place at the University of Scranton. With 42 campers and 61 volunteers, our group explored the great outdoors at Promised Land State Park and even threw out the first pitch at a Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders game. We also hit Montage Mountain for some waterpark fun, had an evening paint night complete with sparkling cider and cheese, and competed in the Tough Mudder PALS Olympics.

# Camp PALS Chicago

This year our last destination was Camp PALS Chicago with our incredible hosts at Elmhurst College. The program was filled with 33 campers and 42 volunteers and included a trip to Dave & Busters and of course, the bean. Our annual day in Chicago included the view from the top of the Willis Tower, an afternoon at the Aqua Building, and a beautiful sailing trip out on Lake Michigan, thanks to the generosity of our great sponsors.





# PALS

## Adventures

Our PALS Adventures program is growing in a big way. While we continued to have day events—reuniting at Buddy Walks, spending an afternoon at the Philadelphia Zoo, and attending the annual World Down Syndrome Day event at Google, we focused our energy on creating 3-day, 2-night, usually weekend, Adventures. This year we brought together 241 campers and counselors at 6 weekend Adventures across the country. We started the year at Great Wolf Lodge in the Poconos where our campers and counselors spent the weekend at an indoor water park. From there, we celebrated New Year’s Eve at a retreat center in Maryland, complete with a formal dance and countdown. PALS returned to Wisconsin Dells in February, enjoying the indoor waterpark fun as well as snow-tubing while staying in local villas at the hotel. We hit the west

coast for the Russian River Adventure in March, exploring the Redwoods and the Bodega Bay Marine Lab. In April, we returned to the beautiful home on the Chesapeake Bay, for a weekend of basketball, kayaking and swimming. We finished our Adventures season at Hershey Park, staying in the local cabins for an easy commute to the roller coasters and Hersheys Chocolate World.

*“This was an awesome experience for my son—he had a blast! It is truly a wonderful thing what these individuals are doing to enrich the lives of individuals with a disability that otherwise may not get this experience of friendship and adventure! For my son, personally, it meant a lot for him to be independent of the family...an adventure all his own! He was beyond excited for this opportunity. There is absolutely no monetary value that can be placed on this experience. So, again, I thank each and every one of you!”*

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PALS parent

# The Congratulations Project

The Congratulations Project continues to be a powerful piece of our organization, allowing our campers to take time every summer during their week at Camp PALS to write letters welcoming and encouraging new parents of babies with Down syndrome. We began our fiscal year with an incredible publicity opportunity surrounding The Congratulations Project. After being featured on The Meredith Vieira Show in October, we were given a year-long partnership with Toys R Us. With this partnership we were able to package donated toys and gift cards with each of our letters to new families of babies with Down syndrome. Over 240 letters were given out this year, reaching families in 34 states and countries including Australia, Canada and New Zealand. We are excited to continue that momentum with partnerships and support from organizations like the National Down Syndrome Congress, National Down Syndrome Society and DownSyndromePregnancy.org. Our new website at [CongratulationsProject.org](http://CongratulationsProject.org) now includes a direct way for families to request letters and even respond to campers. Moving forward, we are looking for a new sponsor to donate gifts

to be included with our camper's letters to help us welcome these families. Our goal is that every time a family receives a letter, they are given a glimmer of hope, a chance to see the possibilities, and an opportunity to dream about the future of their child.

*“My beautiful ten week old girl, Audrey, was diagnosed with Down syndrome after birth. The overwhelming feelings of uncertainty clouded my life for her first few weeks. Seeing programs like yours has helped me everyday to look forward to the weeks and years to come for my little girl. Your program is beautiful and so desperately needed for new parents. Thank you for the hope and happiness that you have brought to me..”*

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New parent





# Reporting by the numbers

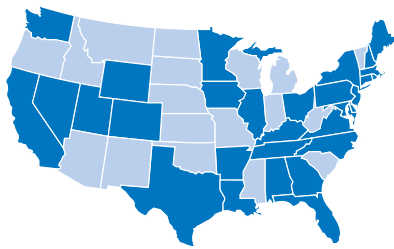
**Our growth** 18

**Our expenses** 19

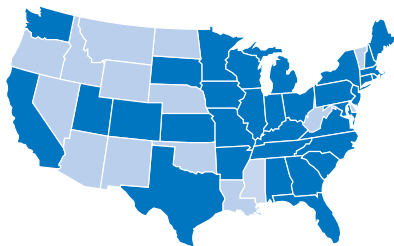
**Our revenue** 20

# Our growth

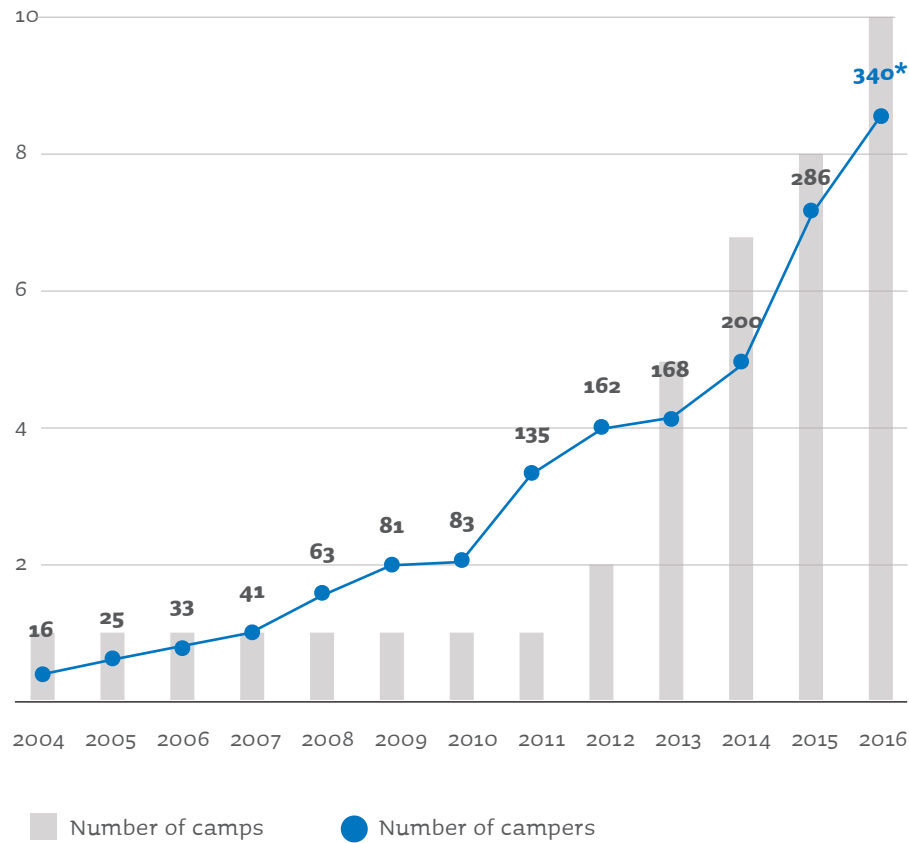
## Locations for 2015 campers



## Locations for 2015 counselors



## Total number of camps and campers each year



\*Estimated number for 2016

## 2015 Camp PALS numbers

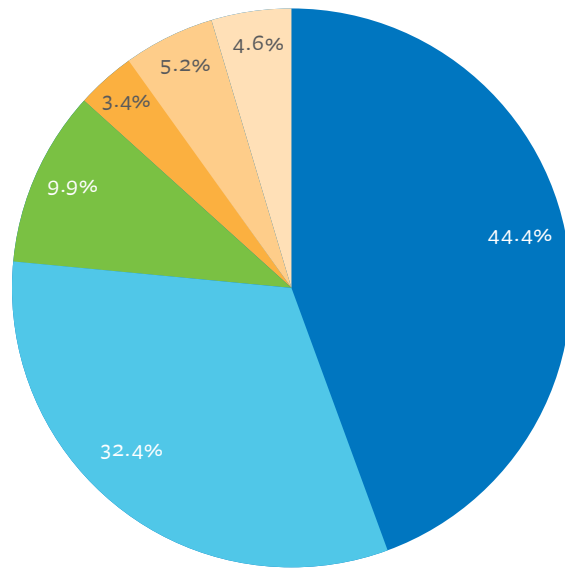
Campers	Directors
286	24
Counselors	Medical
307*	22
Media	
13	

\*Represents unique counselors. 39 volunteers attended multiple programs in 2015.

Received 267 applications on January 1 (93% of all spots) 92% of all campers from 2014 applied in 2015

# Our expenses

## Direct program expenses\*



<b>Housing</b>	<b>\$153,349.40</b>
<b>Food</b>	<b>\$111,953.10</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>\$34,370.60</b>
<b>Supplies</b>	<b>\$11,732.10</b>
<b>Programming</b>	<b>\$18,041.83</b>
<b>Apparel</b>	<b>\$15,844.09</b>
<b>Direct programming cost total</b>	<b>\$345,291.12</b>

## Organization expenses\*

<b>2015 Camp PALS Expenses</b>	<b>\$345,291.12</b>
<b>Adventures Costs</b>	<b>\$40,030.48</b>
<b>Leader Trainings &amp; Travel</b>	<b>\$29,647.49</b>
<b>PALS Picnic Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,749.26</b>
<b>Congratulations Shipping and Supplies</b>	<b>\$3,713.29</b>
<b>Accounting</b>	<b>\$3,090.00</b>
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>\$9809.25</b>
<b>Office Expenses</b>	<b>\$16,634.77</b>
<b>Employee Compensation</b>	<b>\$107,506.60</b>
<b>Taxes and Licenses</b>	<b>\$48,484.89</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$607,957.15</b>

\*PALS fiscal year runs from September 1, 2014 - August 31, 2015. The details above are based off of the complete budget year.

# Our revenue

## Organization revenue

<b>Tuition Received</b>	<b>\$379,427.85</b>
<b>Funds Raised</b>	<b>\$340,925.44</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>– (\$3,039.91)</b>
<b>Sales (Apparel)</b>	<b>\$2,132.15</b>
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$719,445.53</b>

“Tuition Received” includes calculations for financial aid provided. In 2015, PALS met 100% of all financial aid requests, providing over \$69,000 to approximately 105 families. PALS also works alongside families who identify outside sources that will provide tuition assistance.

## Top donors for 2014-2015

<b>Georgetown University</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Selz Foundation</b>	<b>\$27,000</b>
<b>Moxie Foundation</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Manuel Gordon Foundation</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Snider Foundation</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Foraker Family</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Wawa, Inc</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>

**Mark & Marisa Goldstein**  
Beach Trip (Philadelphia, Princeton)

**Elmhurst College**  
Discount on housing & meals (Chicago)

**University of Scranton**  
Discount on housing & facilities (Poconos)

**Google, Inc**  
Day trip to Google Headquarters (San Francisco)

**Chicago Yacht Club**  
Private sailing tour (Chicago)

Our volunteer counselors continue to fundraise annually to support the growth of PALS. This past year they raised approximately \$62,000 (not including matching gifts).

We estimate that approximately \$42,000 of value was contributed for in-kind gifts and discounts to this year’s budget.

## Final budget for 2014-15 fiscal year

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>\$719,445.53</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$607,957.15</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$111,488.38</b>

# *Join us*

**Our sponsors**

**22**

**Our future**

**23**

# Our sponsors

As we grow to new locations and work to ensure the PALS experience exists year-round, we need your help. We're looking for companies, individuals and organizations to match the enthusiasm and passion that our counselors, campers and families have for PALS programs.

Donations can be made at [palsprograms.org](https://palsprograms.org) or checks can be made out to PALS Programs and mailed to:

**PALS Programs**  
**4965 Grundy Way**  
**Doylestown, PA 18902**

PALS is a 501(c)(3) registered in Pennsylvania. All donations are tax-deductible. Our EIN is 352334489.

**\$500**

**Contribution to support PALS:**

This donation supports our mission and growth and will be recognized online.

**\$1,400**

**Contribution to support a camper:**

This donation will pay the tuition of a camper to attend Camp PALS. The gift can be recognized online, or by the camper sponsored.

**\$5,000**

**Adventure Sponsor:**

This donation can cover the cost of an Adventure during our off-season or a trip at one of our camps. The gift can be recognized online and media can be developed to commemorate the experience.

**\$10,000**

**Financial Aid Sponsor:**

This donation can cover up to the full financial aid fund of a specific program or region, allowing all campers the ability to attend. This gift can be recognized online as well as in the financial aid announcement shared with each recipient.

**\$25,000**

**Camp PALS Program Sponsor:**

This sizable donation can cover the initial start-up costs of a new camp program, bringing PALS to a new community. This gift can also support the dedication of a camp with additional sponsorship details.

**Other needs:** As an organization, we are always willing to pursue new partnerships in addition to sponsorship opportunities. We are eager to work with organizations, Universities and any company with suggested programming relationships or other in-kind donations.

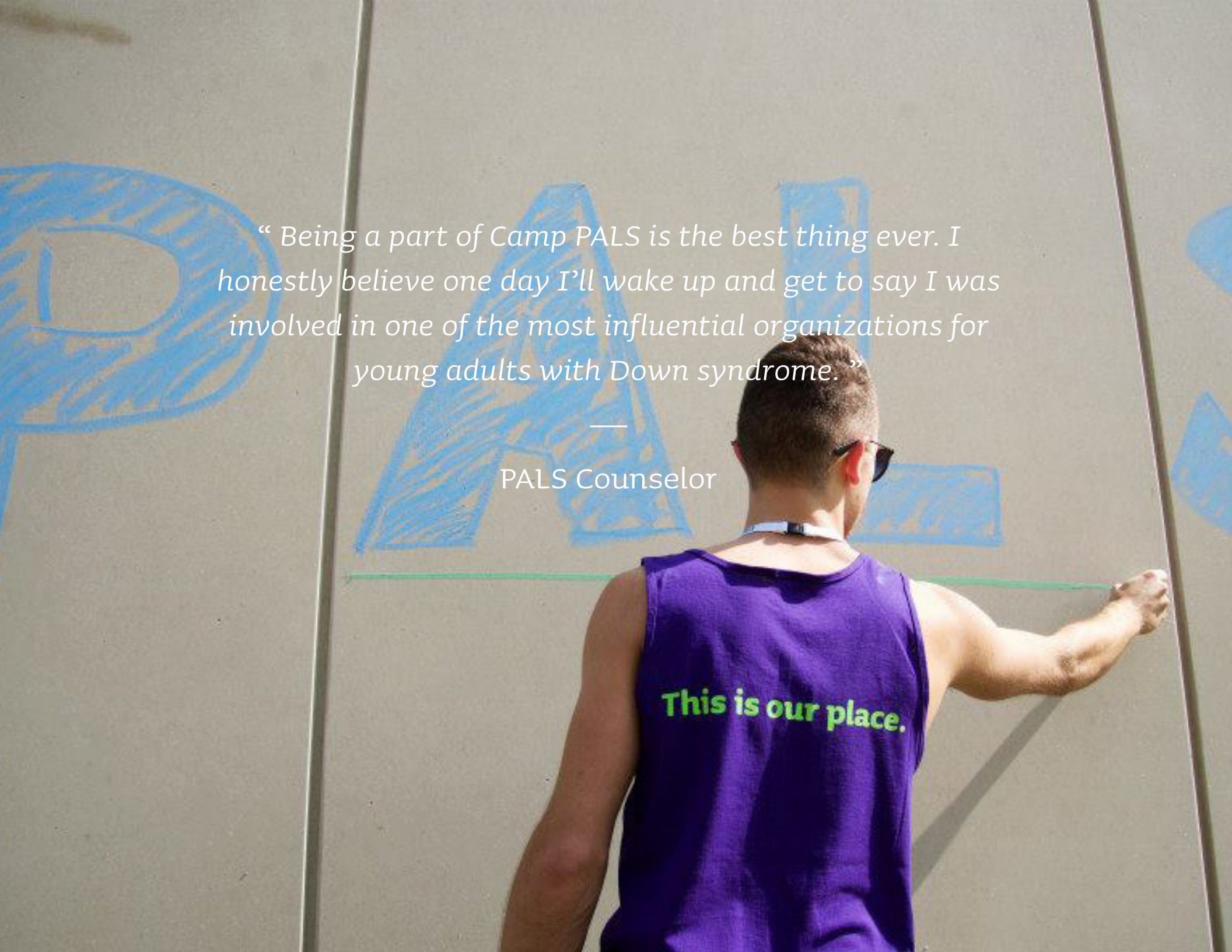
# *Our future*

We seek to build a community of passionate people —of those who step out of their comfort zones, those who take time to reach out to others, and those who celebrate the joy in every moment. Our work is dedicated to the Down syndrome community, but our impact is not. We believe that this place, this family, can challenge others to see their world a little differently.

We promise to keep growing—to find new areas that need our passion and genuine energy, to age with those individuals who have grown up with us, and to give even the youngest members of our community a sense of hope and a feeling of welcome.

**Together, we will build a world where friends count more than chromosomes.**



A man with short brown hair and sunglasses is seen from behind, wearing a purple tank top. He is drawing a horizontal green line on a grey wall. In the background, large blue letters spell out 'PALS'. The man's tank top has the text 'This is our place.' written on the back in green.

*“ Being a part of Camp PALS is the best thing ever. I honestly believe one day I’ll wake up and get to say I was involved in one of the most influential organizations for young adults with Down syndrome. ”*

—  
PALS Counselor

**This is our place.**