

# 2019 NATIONAL RESULTS

A Program Evaluation of Hope and Positive Youth Development  
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a program of  
ALLIANCE for  
**HOPE**  
INTERNATIONAL



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*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA - TULSA*

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# CAMP HOPE AMERICA 2019 NATIONAL DATA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the evaluation results for the 2019 Camp HOPE America impact on children's Hope, Resilience, and Character Development. Data for this evaluation is based upon Camp HOPE America programs from Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.

- In order to assess changes in hope, resilience, and character development, a matched pre-camp, post-camp, and follow-up assessment design was used.
- A total of 1,127 campers provided responses to the self-report survey. Of these 1,127 campers, 1,078 provided complete data at the pre-camp assessment, 1,069 provided complete data on the final day of camp assessment, and 840 provided complete data at the 30-day follow-up assessment.
- Matched comparisons were available for 782 campers across all three-assessment periods. Comparisons were made on child self-report of Hope and Resilience.
- The average age of campers was 11.12 years (SD = 2.35) with ages ranging from 6 to 18 years. Of the participating campers 51.7% identified as female.
- Camp counselors provided observational assessments on 1,063 campers on the first and last day of camp. Matched observational comparisons were made for Hope and Character Development in the areas of Zest, Grit, Optimism, Self-Control, Gratitude, Curiosity, and Social Intelligence.

## Camper Self-Assessment Results

- Increases in Hope were statistically significant.
- Increases in believing in self, believing in others, and believing in dreams (Camp HOPE America Resilience) were statistically significant.

## Camp Counselor Observation

**Increases in child positive character behaviors were statistically significant in the following areas:**

- Ability to create pathways and dedicate energy toward goals (Hope).
- Excitement and energy toward goals (Zest).
- Perseverance for goals (Grit).
- Capacity to control thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when in conflict (Self-Control).
- Positive future expectation (Optimism).
- Appreciation for the kindness received by others (Gratitude).
- Awareness of the feelings and motivations of others (Social Intelligence).
- Desire to learn and seek out new information (Curiosity).

The Verizon Foundation has supported the development of Camp HOPE America, along with many local funders and donors, across the United States.

# INTRODUCTION

## Child Exposure to Domestic Violence

As many as ten million children and adolescents in the United States bear witness to domestic violence each year (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2019). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines domestic violence or intimate partner violence as “physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse” (Centers for Disease Control, 2018). Meta-analytic studies consistently find that children exposed to domestic violence are at a higher risk for emotional, social, and behavioral difficulties both in the short- and long-term (Evans, Davies, & DiLillo, 2008; Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, & Kenny, 2003; Wolfe, Crooks, Lee, McIntyre-Smith, & Jaffe, 2003). Children exposed to domestic violence experience additional stresses associated with the trauma of repeated separations, child custody battles, and isolation from extended family supports. Children exposed to domestic violence are also at a significantly higher risk for abuse and neglect (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999).

While the research on children exposed to domestic violence is emerging, studies show these children are at an increased risk for anxiety and depression, social isolation, increased physical and psychological aggression, and propensity to perpetuate the cycle of domestic violence (Carlson, 1990; Lichter & McClosky, 2004; Litrownik, Newton, & Hunter, 2003). Given the prevalence of children exposed to domestic violence in the US and the negative consequences on their futures, an effective system-level intervention is needed to provide children the opportunity to develop positive coping mechanisms that will allow them to thrive in difficult environments. One such intervention, with the potential for system level influence, is Camp HOPE America. Recently, Hellman and Gwinn (2017) published the first evaluation of Camp HOPE America showing significant increases in hope in a pre-test, post-test design among campers from several California Family Justice Centers and other multi-agency models.



## Camp HOPE America

Camp HOPE America ([www.camphopeamerica.com](http://www.camphopeamerica.com)) is the first local, state, and national camping and mentoring initiative in the United States to focus on children exposed to domestic violence. The vision for Camp HOPE America is to break the generational cycle of family violence by offering healing and hope to children who have witnessed family violence. Camp HOPE America is a program of Alliance for HOPE International ([www.allianceforhope.com](http://www.allianceforhope.com)). Alliance for HOPE International is the umbrella organization for all Family Justice Centers and similar multi-agency models serving victims of domestic violence and their children throughout the United States.

# CAMP HOPE AMERICA PROGRAM

The Camp HOPE America program is a values-based camping and mentoring model with a five or six-day, overnight program with year-round follow-up events. The program focuses on three key elements: 1) "Challenge by Choice" activities, 2) affirmation and praise for developing observed character traits, and 3) themed, small group discussion and activities focused on helping children set goals and then pursue those goals. Challenge by Choice refers to challenging children to set daily achievement goals by pursuing activities with perceived danger or risk (e.g., canoeing, zip line) while allowing them to opt out of those activities if the challenge creates unmanageable stress or fear. Campers are positively encouraged to engage in the personal challenges presented, however, no camper is coerced, negatively pressured, or unconstructively persuaded to take part in any activities. Campers are encouraged to support and cheer for each other in their personal Challenge by Choice whether they determine to undertake a particular activity or not. All activities are designed to



promote creative thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, teamwork and mutual support, reasoning, self-esteem, competency, self-management, group trust, organization, and goal setting. Even if campers do not participate in challenging activities, they are expected to participate in other daily camp activities and to follow all safety and group protocols. For safety reasons, campers are not allowed to leave the group setting or be alone at any time (the exception includes toileting or showering).

Trained camp staff members, from a traditional summer camp not focused on children exposed to family violence, supervised all recreational activities. Camp HOPE America staff members employed by Alliance for HOPE International managed

specialized program activities and other therapeutic components. Using a trauma-informed camper/counselor approach, Camp HOPE America focuses on providing affirmation and encouragement including nightly campfires where campers received Character Trait Awards each day from their college-aged counselors. Camp HOPE America activities are site specific, but have included rafting, tubing, high and low ropes challenge courses (age specific), horseback riding, arts and crafts, kayaking and canoeing, recreational hiking and field games, skits and camp songs, nightly campfires, and journaling. Campers also experience KBAR (kick back and relax) time in the cabins/tents each day with counselors and campers, campfire group discussions each night (where children are asked the question, "Where did you see hope today?"), three family-style meals each day (eating with their own cabin group), and other relationship-oriented times. Each day at Camp HOPE America, there is a positive statement, called a Truth Statement, for the day. California used a new curriculum while national partners used the previous summer's pilot-tested curriculum. Some of the statements included: "I have a hope story," "I am valuable," "Today is my

second chance," "Healing takes time," "I am seen," "Healing is a team sport," and "My pain can fuel my purpose." By having a Truth Statement for each day, children had the opportunity to internalize their own uniqueness, personal progress, need for others, future-oriented focus, and perseverance. Children did not have "free time" at Camp HOPE America and were never without an adult mentor or college-aged counselor (with the exception of toilet/showering needs). All electronics including cell phones, laptops, and other devices were collected and turned off when children arrived at camp. Electronic items were then returned after the conclusion of the camp.

One of the key elements of Camp HOPE America was the use of a de-centralized programming model. In this particular model, each cabin was paired with another cabin of a similar age. Older campers (ages 11-17) were paired with a cabin of the opposite sex. Younger campers (ages 7-11) were paired with similarly aged campers of the same sex. The two combined cabins were referred to as a HOPE Circle. Throughout the week, each HOPE Circle participated in the various camp activities together and built relationships within the smaller group instead of simply participating in all activities in a large group.



Hope refers to the positive expectation children have toward the attainment of a future oriented goal. Snyder (2000) described hope as a cognitive-based motivational theory in which children learn to create strategies as a means to attain their desired goals. Hope theory has two fundamental cognitive processes termed "pathways" and "agency". Pathway thought processes are the mental strategies or road maps toward goal attainment. In this process, children consider various pathways to their goals. Once viable pathways are formed, the hopeful child is able to conceive of potential barriers and develop strategies to overcome the barriers or choose an alternative pathway. Agency thinking refers to the mental energy or willpower the child can direct and sustain toward their goal pursuits. Hopeful children are able to exert mental energy to their pathways and persevere by self-regulating their thoughts, emotions and behaviors toward their desirable goal.

The role of hope in a child's capacity to flourish is well established. Hopeful thinking among children is positively associated with perceived competence and self-worth (Kwon, 2000) as well as lower rates of depression and anxiety (Ong, Edwards, & Bergeman, 2006). Children with higher hope are more optimistic about the future, have stronger problem-solving skills, and develop more life goals. Hopeful children are less likely to have behavior problems or experience psychological distress. These children also report better interpersonal relationships and higher school achievement success in the areas of attendance, grades, graduation rates, and college going rates (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2008). Moreover, hope has been shown to serve as a resilience factor when facing stressful life events among children (Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2006). Finally, hope was shown to be positively associated with emotional well-being in a six-year longitudinal study investigating hope and positive youth development (Ciarrochi, Parker, Kashdan, Heaven & Barkus, 2015).



# METHODS

## Assessment Procedure

One thousand one hundred and twenty-seven surveys were administered to the youth participants of Camp HOPE America programs in Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. A pre-camp/at-camp/30-day follow-up survey design was utilized. Children received the pre-test survey several days prior to camp. At-camp surveys were collected during the week of camp, and follow-up surveys were collected approximately 30 days after camp had ended. Individual Family Justice Centers were responsible for recruiting, selecting, consenting children and caregivers, and data collection.

Completed surveys were then provided by the individual Family Justice Centers to Alliance for HOPE International to ensure data were de-identified, organized by state, and sent to the University of Oklahoma research team.



## Sample Demographics

Specific demographic variables that were collected included age and gender. The average age of the respondent was 11.12 years (SD = 2.35). Ages ranged from a low of 6 to a high of 18 years. Of the 1,120 who reported their gender, 47.6% marked male and 51.7% female.



**Table 1. Participating Camp HOPE America Sites and Number of Campers Assessed**

Site	Number	Site	Number
Arkansas	43	Ohio	22
California	350	Oklahoma	100
Connecticut	60	Oregon	74
Florida	25	Tennessee	55
Idaho	33	Texas	129
Louisiana	28	Washington	64
New Jersey	23	Wisconsin	61
North Carolina	60		

# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)

## Understanding ACEs

The negative consequences associated with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) across the lifespan are well documented. ACEs cause chronic toxic stress that leads to neurological and biological changes, including changes in brain architecture and function, effects on the immune and hormonal systems, and even alterations to the way DNA is read and transcribed (Harris, 2014). Left untreated, those who have experienced child maltreatment are more likely to experience poor mental health, engage in risky behaviors, and suffer physical diseases related to increased morbidity. Unmitigated ACEs have negative effects on education, employment, and economic outcomes into adulthood. Unmitigated ACEs are also associated with increased delinquency rates and criminal behaviors (Anda et al., 2007; Bellis, Lowey, Leckenby, Hughes & Harrison, 2013; Currie & Wisdom, 2010; Dube et al., 2001a; Dube et al., 2001b; Gwinn, 2015; Hillis, Andra, Felitti & Marchbanks, 2001; Lanier, Kohl, Raghavan, & Auslander, 2015; Reavis, Looman, Franco, & Rojas, 2013; Wilimansion, Thompson, Andra, Dietz & Felitti, 2002).

**Table 2. Prevalence of ACE Reported by Camp HOPE America Children (n=112)**

Ace Score	CDC Findings	Camp HOPE America 2019
0	36.1%	5.4%
1	26.0%	13.4%
2	15.9%	17%
3	9.5%	10.7%
4+	12.5%	53.5%

Data was collected for 302 campers, specifically older campers who participated in the High Adventure camps. The average ACE score for the Camp HOPE children in 2019 was 4.04 (SD = 2.47). At the national level, the average ACE score is 1.61 (Ford, et al., 2014). Comparing Camp HOPE America children to the national average shows a significantly higher prevalence of ACE among the children [ $t(301) = 117.10; p < .001$ ].

Children tend to minimize their trauma and underreport their ACE scores. Therefore, ACE

score results may be reported as lower than they truly are for the population being represented.

## Consequences of High ACE Scores

Over one-half of these Camp HOPE America children (54.6%) had an ACE score of 4 or higher. Studies available through the Center for Disease Control (2016) report significant negative consequences with an ACE score of 4 or higher. For example, with an ACE of 4+:

- 3600% more likely to become an injection drug (heroin) user (4600% at ACE of 6)
- 1200% greater likelihood of attempting suicide as an adult (2900% at ACE of 6)
- 1200% more likely to be a sexual assault victim
- 1000% more likely to inject street drugs
- 700% more likely to become an alcoholic
- 600% more likely to have sex before age 15
- 300% more likely to contract HIV
- 300% more likely to become a domestic violence victim (woman); 150% (men)
- 300% greater likelihood of struggling with chronic depression
- 240% greater risk of hepatitis
- 240% higher risk of a sexually transmitted disease
- 200% more likely to become smokers
- 51% of those with ACE Score of 4 will have behavioral problems in school.

Table 3 below presents the Camp HOPE America children prevalence with each ACE. The top ACEs for the Camp HOPE America children included parental divorce, verbal abuse, parent incarceration, parent substance use/abuse, and emotional neglect.

**Table 3. Prevalence of ACEs by Type**

Abuse:		Dysfunctional Family:	
- Verbal	51.1%	- Witness DV	37.5%
- Physical	39.3%	- Parent Divorce	86.0%
- Sexual	23.8%	- Substance Abuse	44.1%
Neglect:		- Mental Illness	38.0%
- Emotional	49.6%	- Parent Incarceration	42.5%
- Physical	15.4%		

# MEASUREMENT: CHILD HOPE INDEX

## Polyvictimization

Over 80% of the Camp HOPE America children report an ACE score of two or higher and 54.6% have four or more adverse experiences. The average ACE score of 4.04 is significantly higher than the national prevalence rate. Taken as a whole, these findings warrant attention to the polyvictimization needs for children exposed to domestic violence.



## Children's Hope

To assess hope, the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) was utilized to examine the extent to which children believe they can establish pathways to their goals as well as develop and maintain the willpower to follow these pathways. This measure is comprised of six self-report items with a six-point Likert-type response format (1 = none of the time; 6 = all of the time). Possible scores range from a low of six to a high of 36 with higher scores reflecting higher hope. Recent research demonstrated good psychometric properties across age, gender, race, and language translation (Hellman, et al., 2018). Internal consistency reliability analyses indicated a pre-hope  $\alpha = .80$ , post-hope  $\alpha = .83$ , and follow-up-hope  $\alpha = .86$ .

## Children's Resilience

Following the Camp HOPE America theme of believing in yourself, believing in others, and believing in your dreams, OU's Hope Research Center team developed six additional items to assess each child's self-reported resiliency. These individual items were also presented with a six-point Likert-type response (1 = none of the time; 6 = all of the time). The items and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4. Internal consistency reliability analyses indicated pre-test  $\alpha = .80$ , post-test  $\alpha = .82$ , and follow-up  $\alpha = .84$ .

Table 4: Camp HOPE America Child Resiliency Self-Report Descriptive Statistics

Item:	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Follow-Up	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. I have friends that care about me.	4.84	1.41	4.79	1.39	4.96	1.24
2. I'm part of a group that cares about each other.	4.64	1.43	4.70	1.40	4.97	1.23
3. I like to encourage and support others.	4.88	1.26	5.03	1.21	5.06	1.13
4. Others accept me just the way I am.	4.51	1.41	4.43	1.46	4.69	1.29
5. Even when bad things happen, I stay hopeful.	4.43	1.37	4.53	1.39	4.63	1.32
6. I think I will achieve my dreams.	4.91	1.32	5.00	1.36	5.11	1.19

# MEASUREMENT: COUNSELOR OBSERVATIONS

## Hope Index

Counselors were asked to complete the Children’s Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) for each camper in their respective cabin groups. Items were reworded to reflect this approach. For example, the item “I think I am doing pretty well” was reworded to “I think the camper is doing pretty well.” The questionnaires included the same six-item Children’s Hope Scale reworded to fit the observational intent. Internal consistency reliability was adequate for the sample of counselors’ (pre-test  $\alpha = .92$ ; post-test  $\alpha = .93$ ).

and pro-social behaviors, to name a few (Park & Peterson, 2009). These 24 strengths have now been studied in over 190 countries with 2.6 million participants ([www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org)).

Interventions that target positive character development in youth now have a validated measurement application that can be used to promote well-being, especially among those who have experienced stress associated with trauma. The character strengths targeted for this assessment have been consistently shown to serve as a buffer to stress and serve as an important indicator of personal well-being (Park & Peterson, 2009).

## Child Character Strength

In recent years, positive psychology has emerged as the scientific study of the emotions, traits, and relationships that promote the capacity to flourish and serve to buffer the negative effects of difficulties often experienced in life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Furthermore, this work has identified 24 strengths of character that help young people thrive and are associated with socially desired outcomes such as academic achievement, attendance, athletic achievement, goal attainment, leadership, tolerance, kindness

Following the positive psychology foundation that character leads to the capacity to live a fulfilling and meaningful life, we included an assessment of character strengths. Following the Character Counts model, we assessed the child in the area of Zest, Grit, Optimism, Self-Control, Gratitude, Social Intelligence, and Curiosity. Counselors rated each camper in their group at the beginning of camp and the final morning of camp.

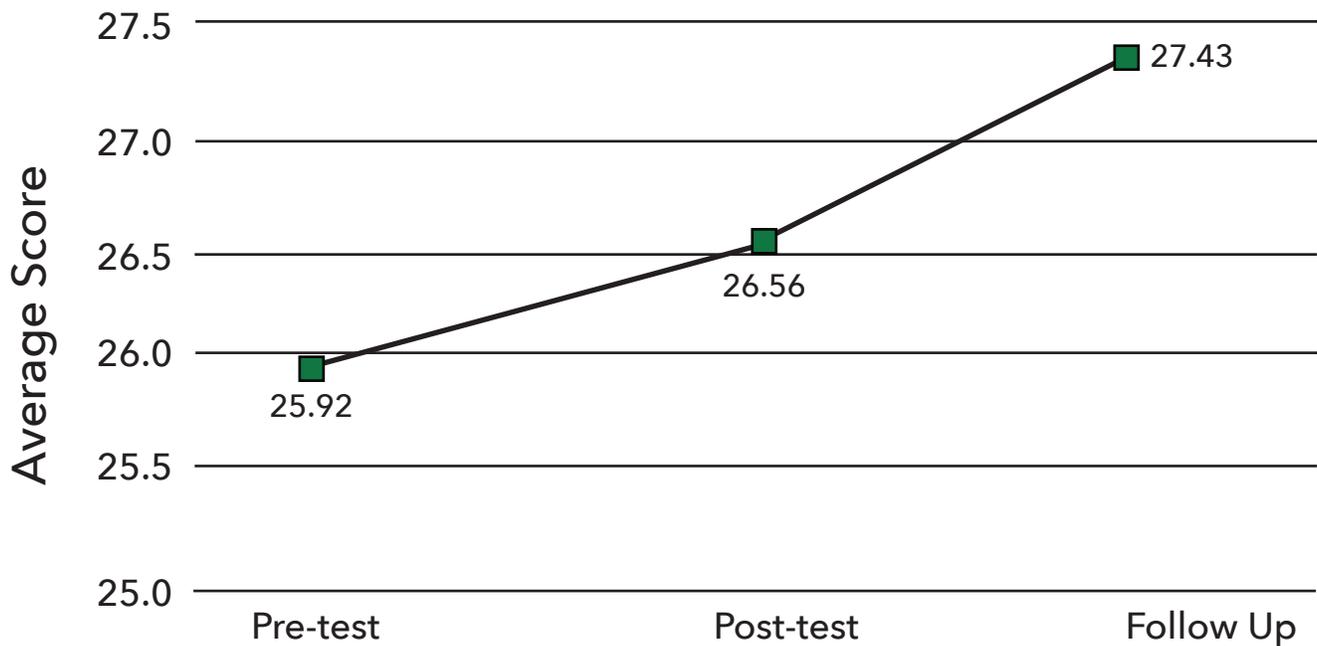
Table 5 below provides the character strength definition.

**Table 5: Character strengths assessed at Camp HOPE America**

Character Strength:	Definition
Zest:	An approach to life filled with anticipation, excitement, and energy.
Grit:	Perseverance and passion for long-term goals.
Optimism:	The expectation that the future holds positive possibilities and likelihoods.
Self-Control:	Capacity to regulate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when they conflict with interpersonal goals.
Gratitude:	Appreciation for the benefits received from others and a desire to reciprocate with positive actions.
Curiosity:	Search for information for its own sake. Exploring a wide range of information when solving problems.
Social Intelligence:	Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people.

# RESULTS

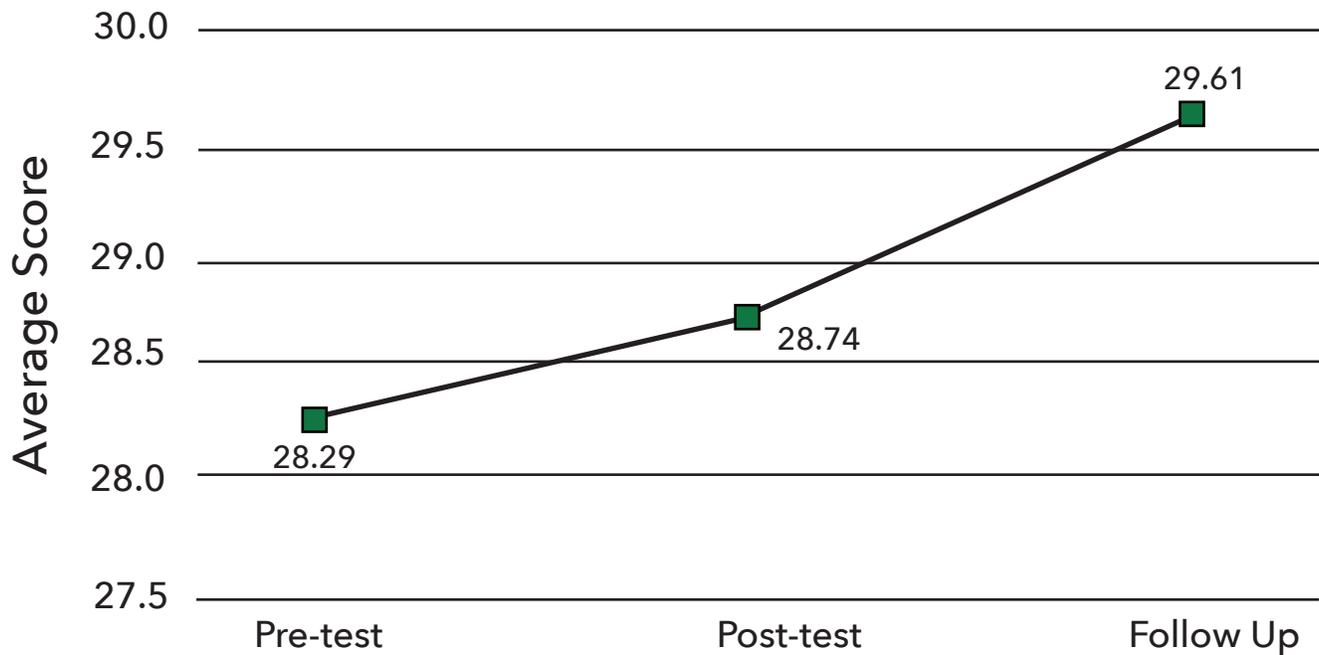
## Graph 1: Children's Hope Index



*Hope reflects the individual's capacity to develop pathways and dedicate agency toward desirable goals.*

This graph illustrates the change in scores for the Children's Hope Scale. As seen in the graph, hope scores increased from pre-camp test to at-camp test and again at the follow-up assessment. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that the increase in children's hope was statistically significant [ $F(2, 781) = 36.80; p < .001$ ]. This means that the individual's level of hope increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

## Graph 2: Children's Resiliency

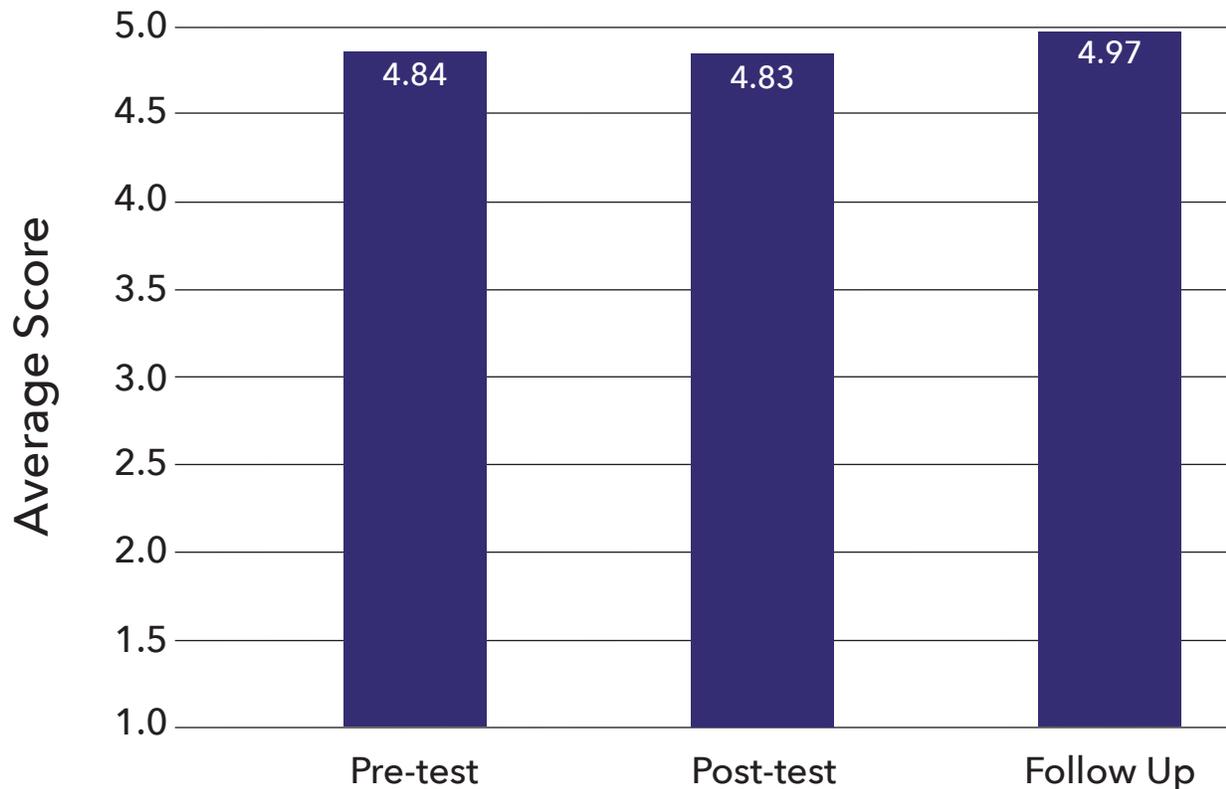


*Camp HOPE America Resiliency is the combination of believing in self, believing in others, and believing in your dreams.*

The graph above illustrates the change in scores for the Camp HOPE America Resiliency Scale. A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, post-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The results of the analyses showed an increase from pre-camp test to at-camp test and an again from at-camp test to follow-up. This increase in children's resiliency was statistically significant [ $F(2, 769) = 26.34; p < .001$ ]. This means that the individual's level of resiliency increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

### Graph 3: Children's Resilience Question One

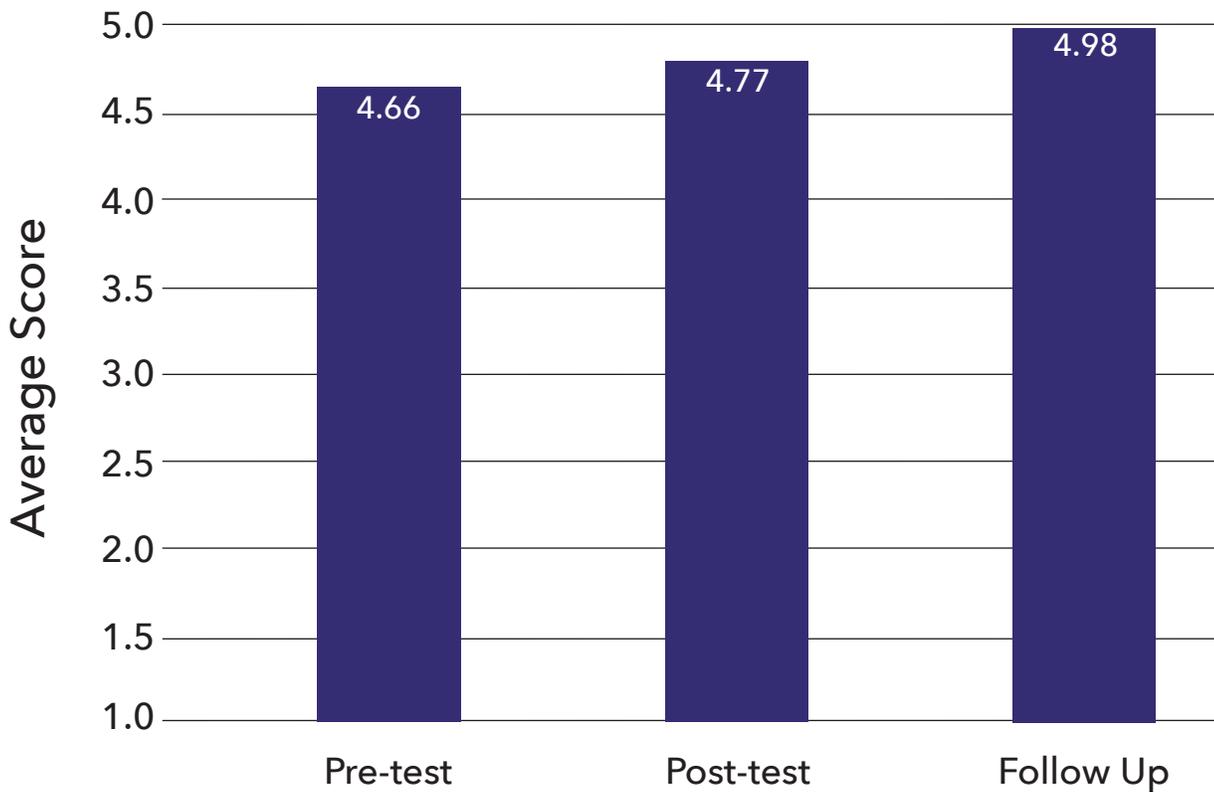
I have friends that really care about me.



The graph above demonstrates the change in mean scores for the statement "I have friends that really care about me." A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, at-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [ $F(2, 796) = 5.23; p < .01$ ] was statistically significant.

## Graph 4: Children's Resilience Question Two

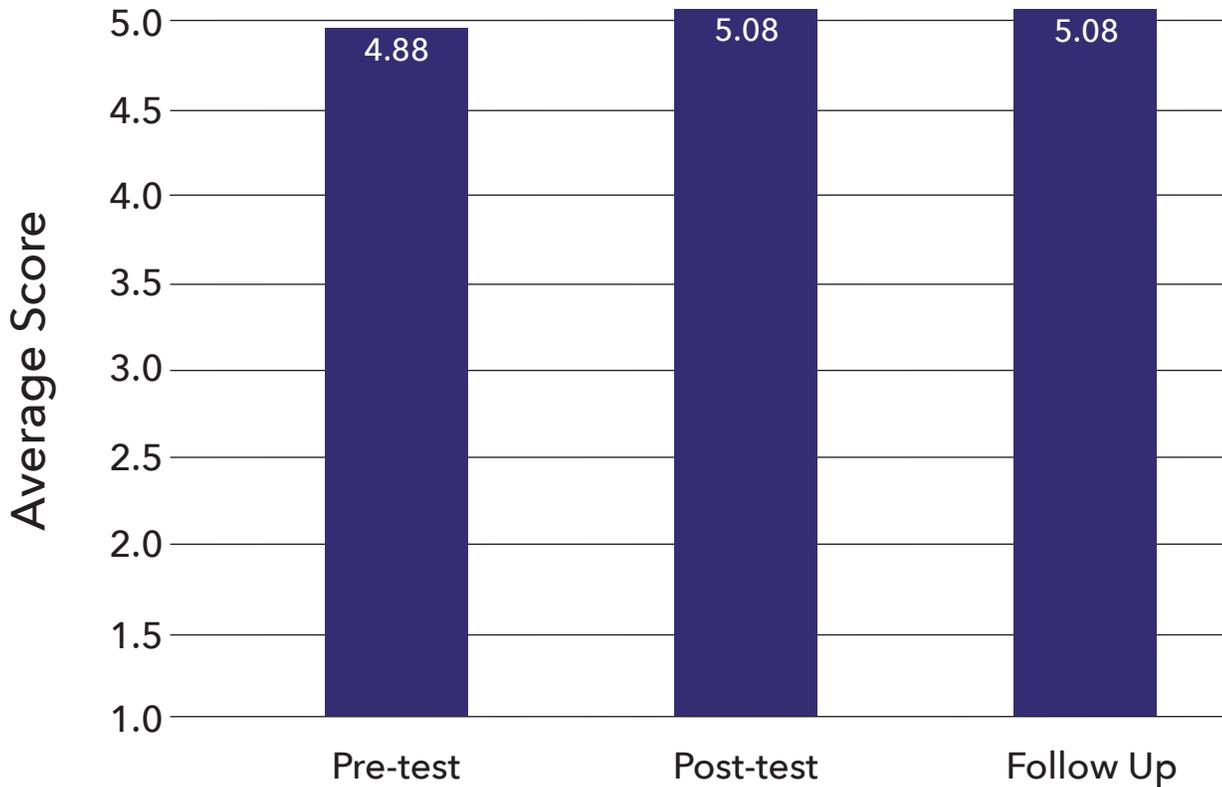
I'm a part of a group of people that care about each other.



This graph illustrates the change in mean scores for the item "I feel like I'm a part of a group of people that care about each other." A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, at-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [ $F(2, 800) = 21.59; p < .001$ ] was statistically significant.

## Graph 5: Children's Resilience Question Three

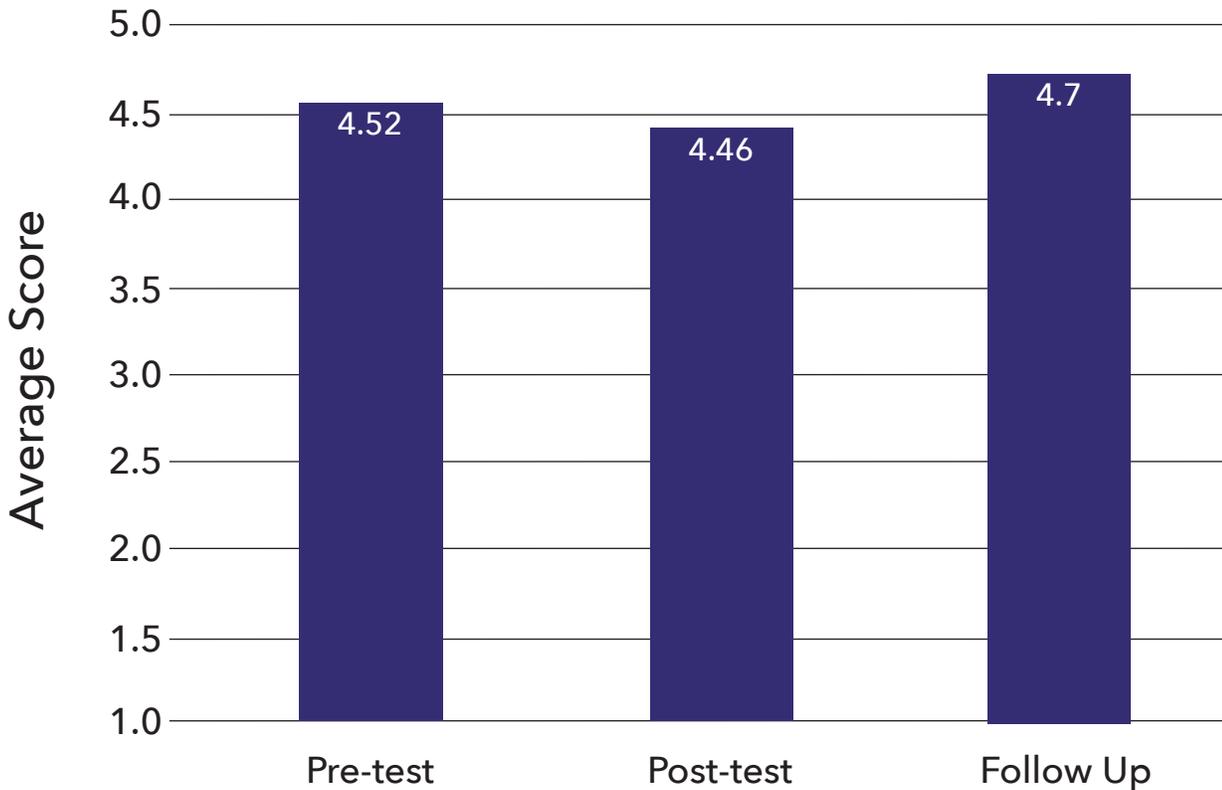
I like to encourage and support others.



The graph above illustrates the change in mean scores for the item, "I like to encourage and support others." A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, at-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [ $F(2, 799) = 14.80; p < .001$ ] was statistically significant.

## Graph 6: Children's Resilience Question Four

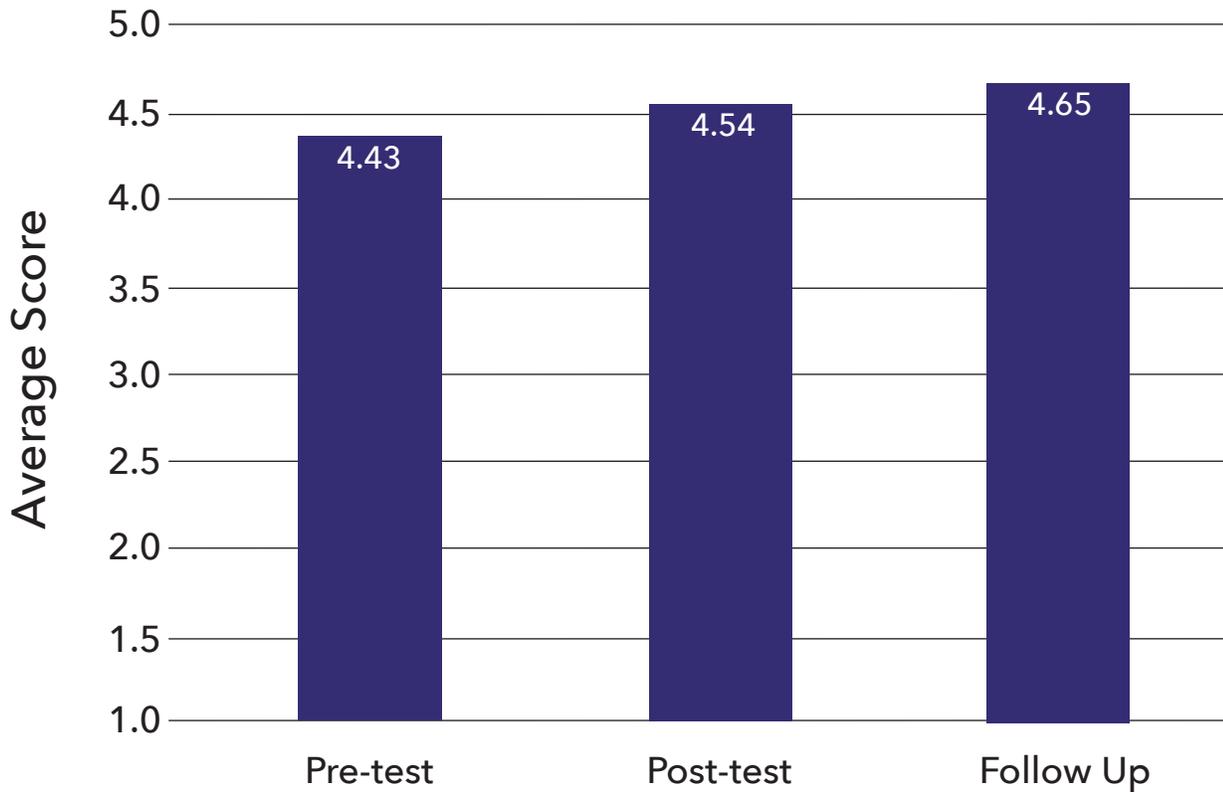
Others accept me just the way I am.



This graph demonstrates the change in mean scores for the item "Others like me just the way I am." A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, at-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [ $F(2, 803) = 13.17; p < .001$ ] was statistically significant.

## Graph 7: Children's Resilience Question Five

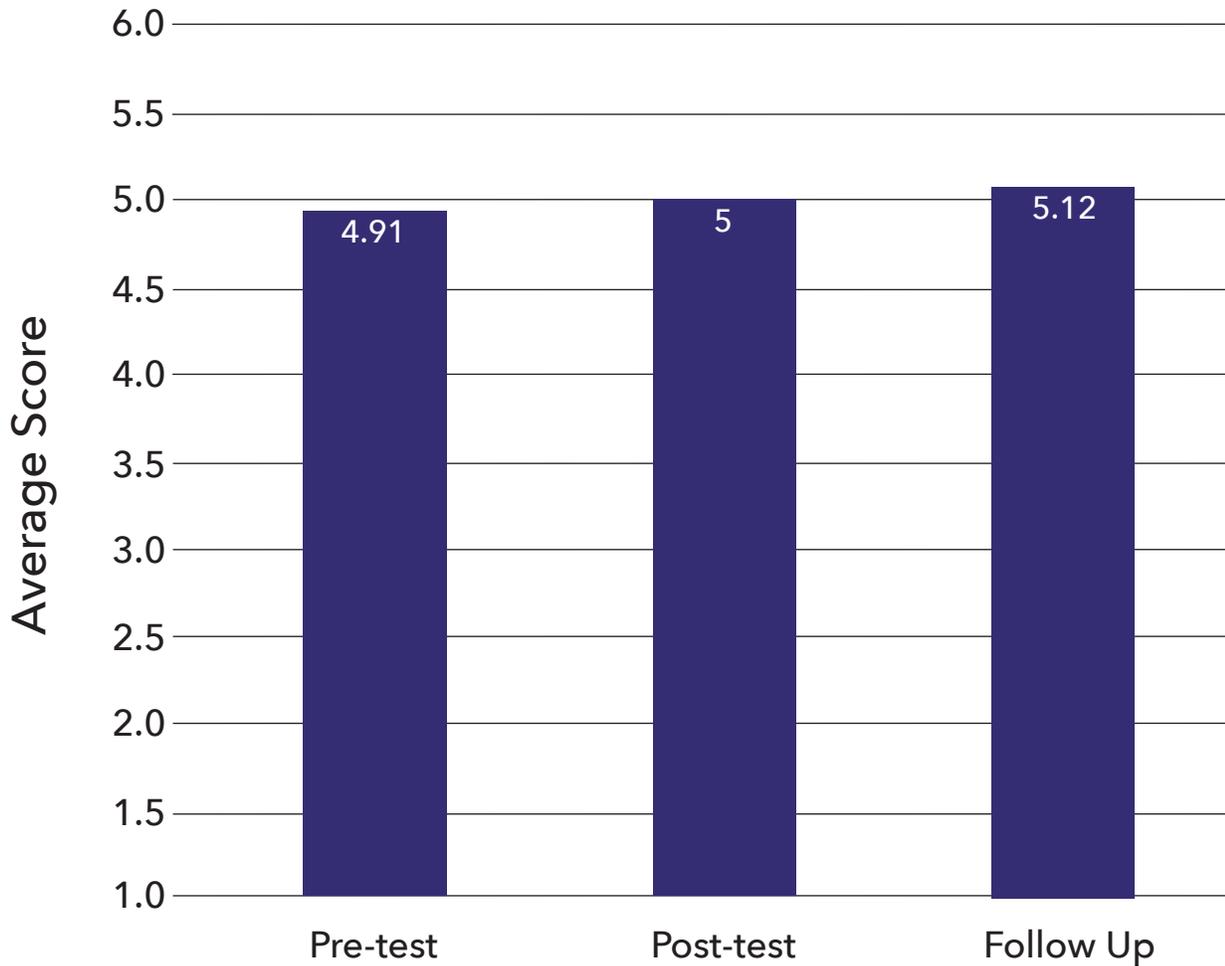
Even when bad things happen to me, I still feel hopeful about the future.



The graph above demonstrates the change in mean scores for the item "Even when bad things happen, I still feel hopeful about the future." A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, at-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [ $F(2, 801) = 10.20; p < .001$ ] was statistically significant.

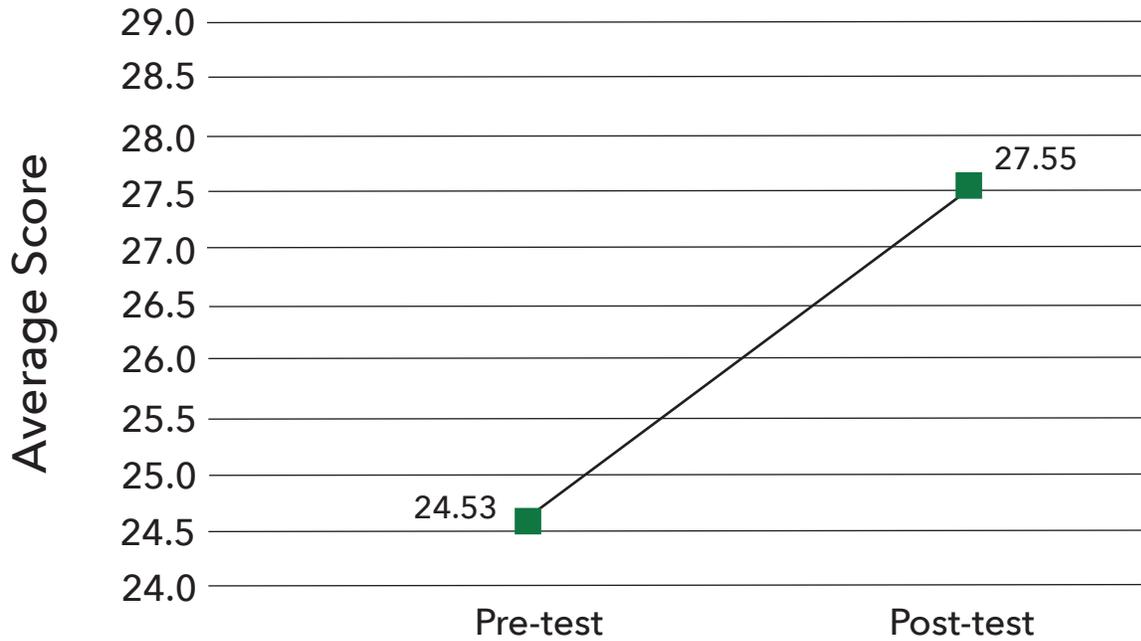
## Graph 8: Children's Resilience Question Six

I think I will achieve my dreams.



This graph demonstrates the change in mean scores for the question "I think I will achieve my dreams." A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, at-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [ $F(2, 801) = 9.58; p < .05$ ] was statistically significant.

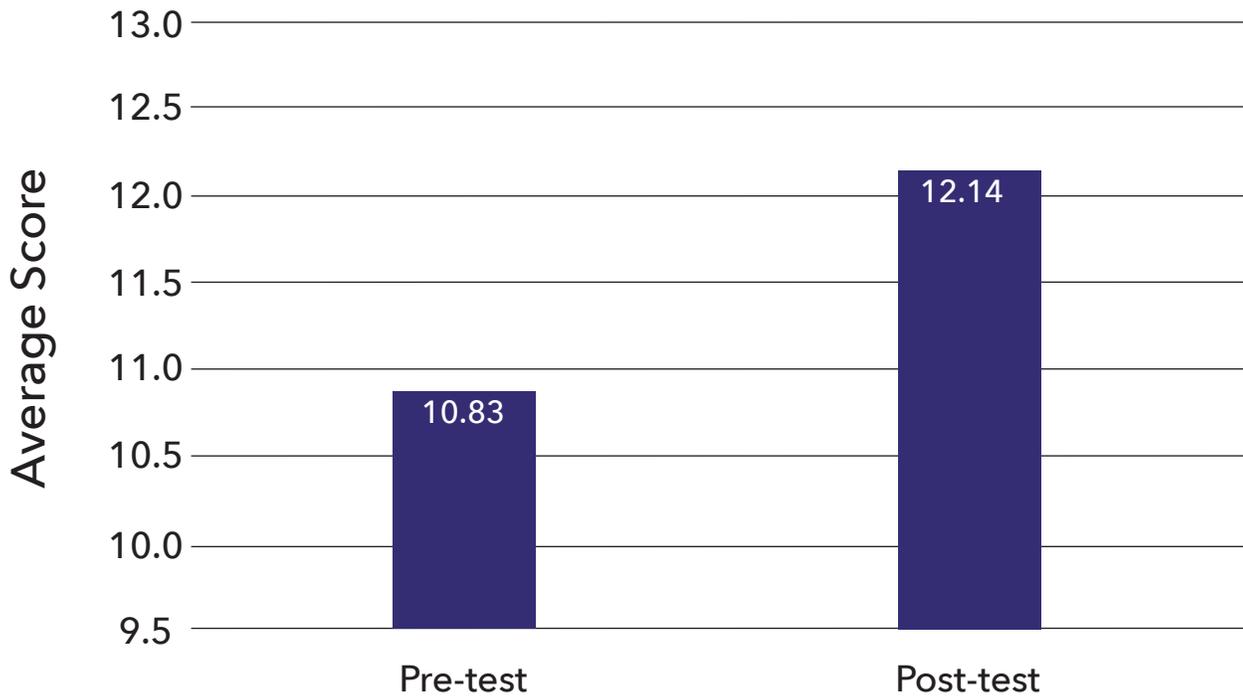
## Graph 9: Counselor Observation of Camper Hope



*Hope reflects the individual's capacity to develop pathways and dedicate agency toward desirable goals.*

This graph demonstrates the change in mean scores for the question "I think I will achieve my dreams." A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, at-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [ $F(2, 801) = 9.58; p < .05$ ] was statistically significant.

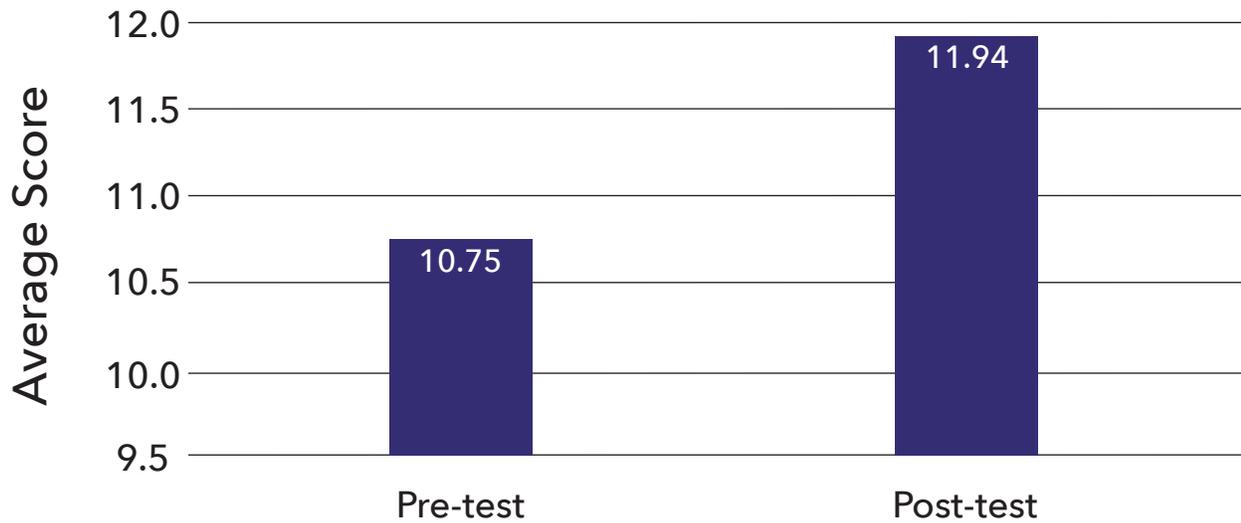
## Graph 10: Counselor Observation of Camper Zest



*Zest is an approach to life filled with excitement and energy.*

This graph demonstrates the change in observed zest by the camp counselors. A paired samples t-test was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp and at-camp test mean scores. Total Zest scores [ $t(1092) = -16.19, p < .001$ ] significantly increased; this means that the individual's levels of observable zest increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

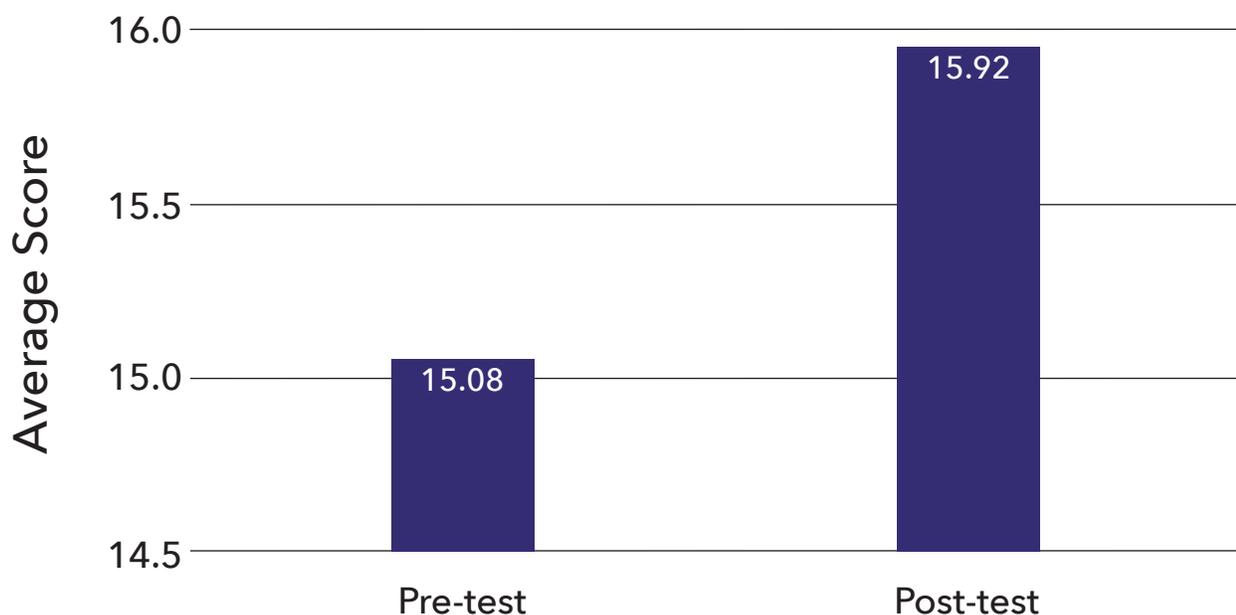
## Graph 11: Counselor Observation of Camper Grit



*Grit reflects the perseverance and passion for long-term goals.*

The graph above demonstrates the change in observed grit by the camp counselors. A paired samples t-test was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp and at-camp test mean scores. Total grit scores [ $t(1089) = -15.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ] significantly increased; this means that the individual's levels of observable grit increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

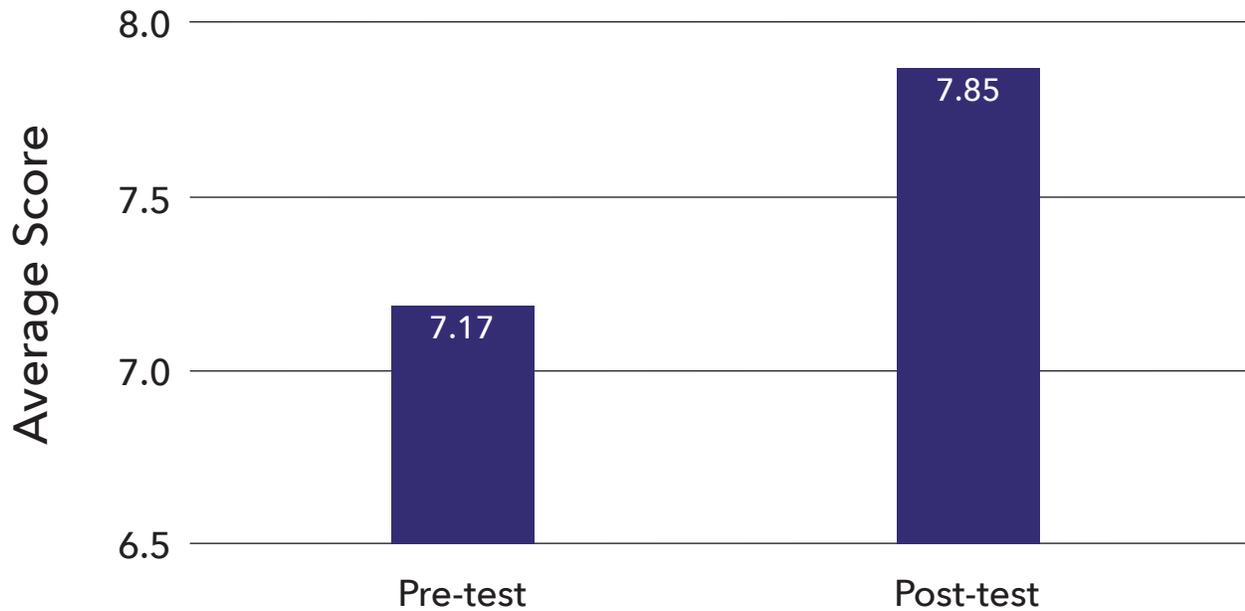
## Graph 12: Counselor Observation of Camper Self-Control



*Self-Control refers to the capacity to regulate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when they conflict with interpersonal goals.*

This graph demonstrates the change in observed self-control by the camp counselors. A paired samples t-test was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp and at-camp test mean scores. Total scores [ $t(1077) = -8.03, p < .001$ ] significantly increased; this means that the individual's levels of observable self-control increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

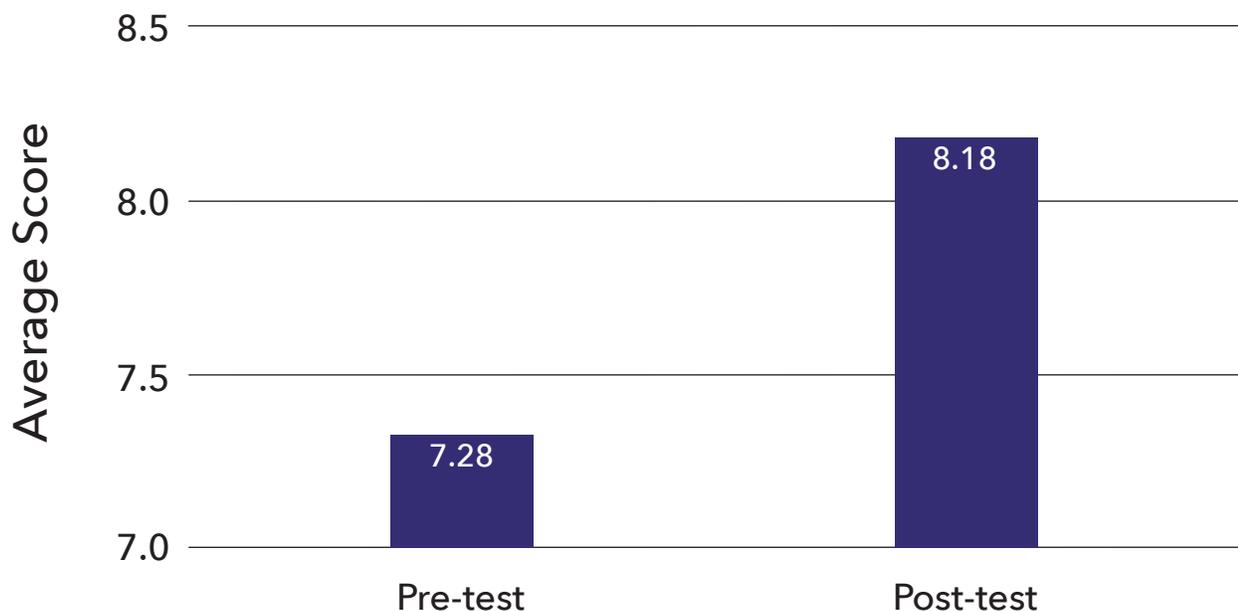
## Graph 13: Counselor Observation of Camper Optimism



*Optimism is the expectation that the future holds positive possibilities and likelihood.*

The above graph demonstrates the change in observed optimism by the camp counselors. A paired samples t-test was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp and at-camp test mean scores. Total scores [ $t(1081) = -12.37, p < .001$ ] significantly increased; this means that the individual's levels of observable optimism increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

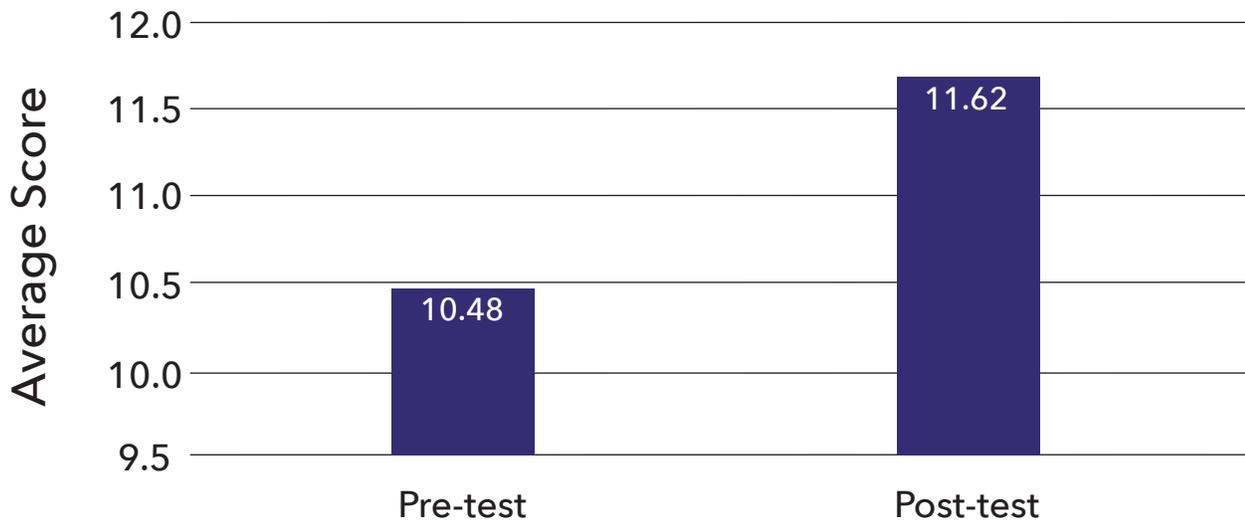
## Graph 14: Counselor Observation of Camper Gratitude



*Gratitude is the appreciation for the benefits received from others with a desire to reciprocate with positive actions.*

This graph demonstrates the change in observed gratitude by the camp counselors. A paired samples t-test was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp and at-camp test mean scores. Total gratitude scores [ $t(1088) = -16.03, p < .001$ ] significantly increased; this means that the individual's levels of observable gratitude increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

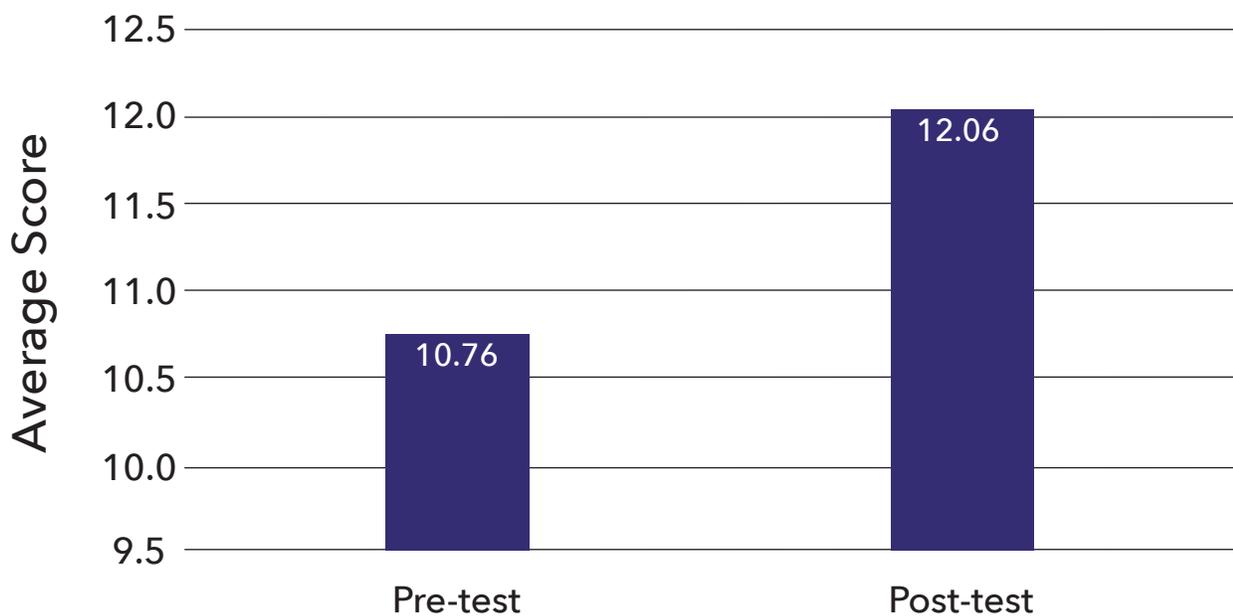
## Graph 15: Counselor Observation of Camper Social Intelligence



*Social Intelligence refers to the awareness of the motives and feelings of other people.*

The graph above demonstrates the change in observed social intelligence by the camp counselors. A paired samples t-test was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp and at-camp test mean scores. Total scores [ $t(1082) = -14.04, p < .001$ ] significantly increased; this means that the individual's levels of observable social intelligence increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

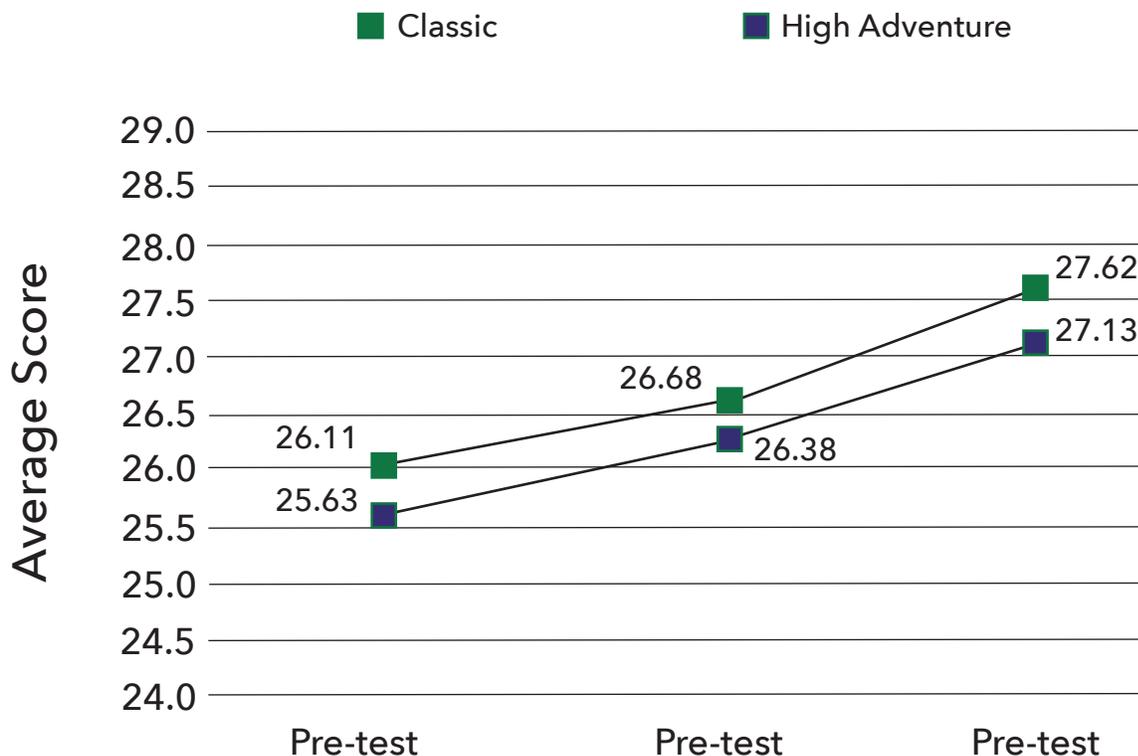
## Graph 16: Counselor Observation of Camper Curiosity



*Curiosity is the search for information for its own sake. Exploring a wide range of information when solving problems.*

This graph demonstrates the change in observed curiosity by the camp counselors. A paired samples t-test was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp and at-camp test mean scores. Total curiosity scores [ $t(1085) = -16.26, p < .001$ ] significantly increased; this means that the individual's levels of observable curiosity increased after participating in Camp HOPE America.

## Mean Hope Scores for Classic and High Adventure Camps



Camp HOPE America offers two types of camps: Classic and High Adventure. Classic camps are geared to younger children ages 7 to 11 and High Adventure camps are for adolescents ages 11 to 17. High Adventure camps include more rigorous activities such as white water rafting and zip lining. The following graph illustrates the mean hope scores for Classic and High Adventure camps.

Two repeated measures ANOVA analyses were computed to examine mean hope scores for Classic and High Adventure Camps. Findings were statistically significant for both the Classic camp [ $F(2, 950) = 20.70$ ;  $p < .001$ ] and High Adventure camp [ $F(2, 610) = 16.83$ ;  $p < .001$ ] indicating change was observed in pre-camp, at-camp, and follow-up mean hope scores. This indicates that scores increased in a statistically significant way after students participated in Camp HOPE America for both camp types.

An additional analysis was computed to determine if the type of camp had an impact on hope scores. Findings from the repeated measures ANOVA indicate that mean hope scores were not statistically significant based on type of camp [ $F(1, 780) = 1.32$ ;  $p > .05$ ]. This means that regardless of whether campers participated in the Classic or High Adventure camp, hope mean scores increased in a similar way.

## RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE MEASURES

Table 6 provides the correlation matrix for camper and counselor measures. A correlation represents the level of relationship between two variables. The interpretation is based upon the strength of the relationship as well as the direction. Strength of a correlation is based upon Cohen's (1990) effect size heuristic. More specifically, a correlation (+ or -) of .10 or higher is considered small; a correlation (+ or -) of .30 is considered moderate, and a correlation (+ or -) of .50 is considered strong. With regards to direction, a positive correlation indicates that higher scores on one variable are associated with higher scores on the other variable. A negative correlation indicates that higher scores on one variable are associated with lower scores on the other variable. Using a correlation matrix is a parsimonious way to present several correlations among multiple variables. Identifying a specific correlation is based upon matching a row to a particular column.

### Examples from Table 6

The first column on the left identifies the order of the correlations. The first item "Hope" is also the next column labeled 1. The first correlation ( $r = .74^*$ ) under the Hope column represents the relationship between hope and resiliency (variable 2). We interpret this correlation as follows: "Participating children who scored higher on hope had higher scores of resiliency reflecting a strong positive correlation." Notice the correlation ( $r = .74^*$ ) has an asterisk indicating the finding was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). As another example, higher scores on child's Resiliency (column 2) were associated with higher scores on the counselor's observation of the child's Grit (row labeled 5;  $r = .14^*$ ) and the strength was small. One more example will look at the correlation between Social Intelligence and Gratitude. Here we look at column 8 (Gratitude) and row 9 (Social Intelligence) and find the correlation is a positive value ( $.78^*$ ). Thus, higher scores on Gratitude are associated with higher scores on Social Intelligence, and the strength is strong.

Table 6: Correlations of Children's Hope and Resilience with Counselor Observed Character Strengths

Item:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
<b>Child Scores</b>										
1. Hope	--									
2. Resiliency	.74*	--								
<b>Counselor Observations</b>										
3. Hope	.18*	.21*	--							
4. Zest	.15*	.17*	.72*	--						
5. Grit	.15*	.14*	.73*	.64*	--					
6. Self-Control	.12*	.14*	.64*	.49	.66*	--				
7. Optimism	.14*	.14*	.75*	.60*	.69*	.66*	--			
8. Gratitude	.12*	.15*	.70*	.70*	.67*	.64*	.69*	--		
9. Social Intelligence	.12*	.15*	.75*	.68*	.70*	.78*	.69*	.78*	--	
10. Curiosity	.09*	.13*	.72*	.67*	.68*	.59*	.64*	.69*	.72*	--

Note: All scores obtained at post-test.  $N = 1038$ .  $*p < .05$

Correlational analysis demonstrated that an increase in children's hope was associated with increases in the observed character strengths. More specifically, higher scores in hope were associated with higher levels of energy (Zest), perseverance toward goals (Grit), ability to regulate thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Self-Control), an expectation that the future holds positive possibilities (Optimism), appreciation toward others (Gratitude), desire to seek out new things (Curiosity), and awareness of the feelings and motivations of others (Social Intelligence).

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report was to present findings from the evaluation of Camp HOPE America 2019. The primary outcome was to change the way children exposed to domestic violence believe in themselves, believe in others, believe in their dreams and find hope for the future. The results of this study provide compelling evidence that Camp HOPE America improves the hope of children in a manner that was self-reported by the children and teens and observed by the camp counselors. Moreover, increases in Hope were associated with the character strengths of Zest, Grit, Self-Control, Optimism, Gratitude, Social Intelligence, and Curiosity.

Hope represents a positive psychological strength that promotes adaptive behaviors, healthy development, and both psychological and social well-being (Snyder, 1995). More specifically, Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib and Finch (2009) found that high levels of hope were related to life satisfaction across the lifespan. Higher hope is associated with better coping, health and health related practices (Chang & DeSimone, 2001; Feldman & Sills, 2013; Kelsey et al., 2011). While hope has been shown to predict various indicators of well-being, it has also been shown to be malleable in intervention studies in the areas of mental health, coping with physical illness,

and intimate partner violence (Berendes, Keefe, Somers, Kothadia, Porter, & Cheavens, 2010; Smith & Randall, 2007). Psychological strengths like hope tend to serve people best in difficult times. The capacity to formulate pathways and dedicate mental energy (agency) is the foundation to successful goal attainment.

Similar to hope, the improved character strengths (e.g., Zest, Grit, Self-Control) assessed in this evaluation have been shown to help prevent or buffer against negative effects of stress and trauma (Park & Peterson, 2009).

Correlational analyses showed that higher scores on hope as reported by the child are associated with higher scores on the character strengths (e.g., Zest, Grit, Gratitude) as observed by the counselor. Similarly, higher scores on the resiliency measure as reported by children are also associated with higher scores on the character strengths as observed by the counselor.

The results of this evaluation support a compelling argument for the power of Camp HOPE America to change the lives of children exposed to domestic violence.



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The Hope Research Center is an interdisciplinary social science unit at the University of Oklahoma, Tulsa Schusterman Center. Collaborating with nonprofit human service organizations, faculty and graduate students lead research projects with a particular focus on sustainable well-being among vulnerable and otherwise at-risk individuals, families, and communities.

Guided by the principle that hope is the theory of change that explains the positive impact program services have on client outcomes, the Center is focused on three ideas.

1. Hope buffers adversity and stress (especially in the context of trauma).
2. Increasing hope leads to positive outcomes.
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