

**“Camp Galaxy 2022 – Mission to Mars
‘The Power of Group to Reach the Unthinkable’”**



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On July 19th 2022, The American Group Psychotherapy Association returned in person to offer Camp Galaxy to the military children of the 106th Rescue Squad, Westhampton Beach. This year we had the opportunity to work with 53 children and Junior Counselors as well as military staff who shadowed and supported our leaders.

Our leaders were an amazing group consisting of Recent Graduates in Psychology from St. Joseph’s College, Brentwood NY, Graduate students finishing their Masters in Counseling from Molloy College, Rockville Center, a PsyD student from LIU, CW Post, The Project Director -a Master Teacher and three STEM Teachers who have been a part of Camp Galaxy for years.

Spurred on by the landing of the Rover on Mars on February 18, 2021, this year our theme was Mission to Mars and with that same theme each group was named after a NASA Mission. The day lasted from 8 AM to 3:45PM with children ready and waiting when we arrived at 7AM!

After an overall orientation to all and a description of our theme of Mission to Mars, the six groups headed to their group table where they were given the name and story behind their NASA mission – Mercury, Gemini, Apollo 11, Voyager, Pioneer, Artemis etc. They were invited to identify with that mission and use the name and the theme for their group. Accordingly they made remarkable flags representing themselves and the Mission that they carried throughout the day. Members of each Mission were also given a lanyard with a matching space charm that further invited the group bonding. What was particularly impressive about the leaders is that they “led from behind” – They invited ideas and patiently let the group build on each other’s ideas. No one just took over. They really allowed a process to unfold. If you had observed the first 10 minutes, it might have looked like nothing was being done – but the power of their process emerged wonderfully as they created really remarkable flags with rationale and stories behind them.



Once the flags were ready, the groups headed into seven other activities with a morning snack and lunch break- Team Space Concentration; Making, Launching and Measuring the Distance of Personal Rockets; Building Individual Mars Landscapes and Land Rovers; Space Ga-Ga Ball; Remote Control Trucks and Rocket Building Challenge, Tangrams and Scratch Pad Art; Creation of a Martian Creature; and Relay Races.

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A final large group activity involved each individual group's presentation of their Mission Flag and their Martian Creature, with a description of its qualities, to the whole group. (They love speaking into that microphone).

Camp Galaxy ended with snacks and evaluations by everyone and parent pick-up. It was a long awaited and very special day!

Some of the Camper's Evaluation Quotes:

- :“Ga Ga ball was the best thing ever 😊”
- “Rockets were amazing” 🚀
- “Best day of summer”
- “Best day of my life!”

Every year that The American Group Psychotherapy Association has the opportunity to offer Camp Galaxy- the power of group to bond, restore and build resilience in both adults and children becomes very clear. We look forward to expanding it to other situations of need.

Special Thanks to Our Generous Donor-Heartfelt Wings Foundation, A Remarkable Volunteer Team, The Members of the 106th Family Readiness Center and the back-up of AGPA. We took another step toward building positive memories and connections for military children.

Suzanne B. Phillips PsyD, ABPP, CGP, AGPA-DF Co-chair Community Outreach