



## A camping program for Illinois families affected by HIV/AIDS

Red Ribbon Trails is a program of



Families' and Children's AIDS Network

### RED RIBBON TRAILS

Red Ribbon Trails is a statewide camping program created specifically for Illinois families affected by HIV/AIDS.

The program offers family members opportunities for recreation, respite and therapy. Horseback riding, arts and crafts, massages, and therapeutic sessions are some of the services offered to participants in a peaceful, wilderness setting.

All summer retreats are held at Timber Pointe Outdoor Center, centrally located on Lake Bloomington in Hudson, Illinois. HIV-affected families with children ages two seventeen are eligible to participate.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Red Ribbon Trails holds two retreats per year – a 4-day/3-night summer camp and a 3-day/2-night retreat held in winter or spring.

Retreats offer family members:

- Social Support
- Information About HIV/AIDS
- Recreation
- Opportunities to Create Long Lasting Family Memories
- Therapeutic Interventions
- Parent Education and Support
- Respite

In addition to therapeutic and educational groups, children and adults participate in typical "camp" activities, such as:

- Swimming
- Arts and Crafts
- Scavenger Hunts
- Storytelling
- Horseback Riding
- Canoeing
- Games

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

The goals of Red Ribbon Trails are as follows:

1. To coordinate model family camp and retreat programs serving HIV-affected children and families living in cities and towns across Illinois.
2. To strengthen HIV-affected families by providing them with recreational, therapeutic, and educational programming in a retreat setting that helps them cope with their life situations.
3. To ease the isolation experienced by HIV-affected families by providing a supportive environment free of stigma in which family members can build peer networks of support.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Participation in Red Ribbon Trails retreats is free of charge to all campers and volunteers.

The response from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Here's what one camper had to say about Red Ribbon Trails:

**“I really liked the camp area. It really gave me a sense of peace and freedom to enjoy the outdoors ... the best thing I enjoyed was seeing children and adults coming together and sharing experiences and leaving their sickness behind them ...”**

## **FCAN & RED RIBBON TRAILS**

Red Ribbon Trails is a program of the Families' and Children's AIDS Network (FCAN).

FCAN is a statewide network of health care, child welfare, HIV/AIDS, social service, legal service, and other community providers who work with women, children, and families living with HIV/AIDS.

The network's mission is to create a coordinated, family-focused continuum of care that addresses the unique needs of this population. For 16 years, FCAN has been instrumental in developing policies and programs that strengthen and support HIV-affected families.

In 1997, Red Ribbon Trails was begun as a collaborative effort among members of FCAN's Downstate Caucus to ease the isolation experienced by HIV-affected families living across the state.

**For information about Red Ribbon Trails and camper and volunteer applications, please contact:**

**FCAN**

**(312) 786-9255**

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