

Empowher Camp - Class of 2022 Impact Report

Group photo of Young Leaders at the World War II Memorial.

Fast Facts

Publicity: After a year of working on their inclusive emergency preparedness projects 6 of our Young Leaders were showcased for their projects and achievements, in blogs, local news articles, published magazine articles, and podcasts.

Future Leaders: Leadership skills reportedly shown the most growth among our Young Leaders. They also reported experiencing growth in communication, public speaking, and independent living skills.

Mentors Matter: EmpowHer camp has not only been life changing for our Young Leaders, but also for our mentors. Mentors have reported growth in patience, communication skills, leadership, and confidence.

Quick Recap

Our EmpowHer Camp Class of 2022 began their journey in August 2021 when nine young women with disabilities from across the country came together to camp with nine successful disabled women mentors for one week in the Adirondacks. While camping, we learned survival, independent living, and leadership skills, and our Young Leaders went home paired with a mentor. Over the next year our Young Leaders worked on their community impact projects with help from their mentors, which they completed by June of 2022.

In July, the EmpowHer Camp Class of 2022 reunited in Washington D.C. for a week of learning, networking, and fun. Our Young Leaders participated in workshops on job interviews, resume writing, and even led Congressional visits! We had incredible guest speakers who

shared their wisdom with us. Our Young Leaders shared about their community impact projects on Presentation Night to leaders and allies in the Disability Community, and later that week they also shared their projects with their Senators. It was not all work though; we also enjoyed visits to the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, the International Spy Museum, several monuments, and the hotel's rooftop pool! At the end of the trip, our Young Leaders graduated from EmpowHer Camp, but not before revisiting the personal goals we set during our Adirondack camping trip and setting long term goals for the next 1, 3, 5, and 10 years.

Image: Young Leader, Lily, talks with Anjali Forber-Pratt.

Image: Young Leaders, Opal and Maddie in the pool smiling and hugging.

EmpowHer camp is more than just a year long program - it's a connection for life!

"EmpowHer Camp was a gratifyingly wild ride. I'm so so glad I did it & I really hope I get to continue this journey with my girls. There were plenty of ups & downs but I wouldn't trade a thing for the end result of getting to see them rock the world." - Mentor Jill

"I'm so excited to continue my project independently, and I know I have a whole group of people who can support me and help me reach my goals. My mentor is incredible— I've gained my "person" for life!" - Young Leader Anja

What Comes Next?

While all of our participants graduated EmpowHer Camp, they continue to stay in touch with their mentors and friends, and are all members of the Disability EmpowHer Network.

As members, they are connected with past and present participants, mentors, and Disability EmpowHer Network connections. Our whole network supports each other in growing and reaching goals. Disability EmpowHer Network offers information and referrals for internships, employment, and higher education opportunities. We support our graduates for at least six years or following their graduation or until they are employed (whichever is later).

What People Are Saying

Participants: "My participation in EmpowHer camp has helped me become a more flexible, more independent, more confident person. My experience in Washington D.C. definitely helped me gain some independence and figure out what assistive technology works best for me."

Mentors: "My mentee was a completely different person in DC. Last year I watched her really struggle with communication or finding her connection with other people. This year, I watched her become a core part of the group. Her communication was awesome, she was funny, she was engaged and proud- she took control of situations and acted like a leader."

Parents: "My daughter has much more confidence in herself. She is able to advocate for herself and for what she needs. She was nervous to fly by herself but she knew what to do in the airport and if

something went wrong on the plane. She talked with the flight attendants and with the people who sat with her."