

Camp St. Vincent going strong

By Tom McCarthy Jr.

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Sitting at a picnic table in Baltimore's Patterson Park, 9-year-old Shamar Stewart read aloud from a chapter book while volunteer Keelan Scharbach, 16, listened closely, offering assistance on the tougher words.

Just down the hill, other Camp St. Vincent campers splashed around in Patterson Park's swimming pool. Across Patterson Park Avenue, children worked on arts and crafts projects.

Camp St. Vincent, a free day camp run by St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore, serves 160 homeless children, ages 5-12, for eight weeks during the summer. Monday through Friday, children are transported to and from homeless shelters and transitional housing in Baltimore City and Baltimore County to Patterson Park.

To view a slideshow from the event, navigate the arrows below.

In addition to daily math and reading instruction, and social and emotional development, the camp offers opportunities in theater, through the Creative Alliance; dance, with assistance from Underground Dance Academy; and swimming instruction, from two certified water safety instructors.

"I think the most significant aspect of the camp is just having a stable environment," camp director Vena Carter said. "They build those bonds; they know that this camp is just designed specifically for them. They know that they have a place that's safe; they have someone that's going to watch over them."

The camp concludes Aug. 16.

To see video from last year's camp, click here.

Donate nutritious snacks for the 2014 summer camp here.

Learn how to donate to Camp St. Vincent here.