

## For These Tutors, EVkids is a Tradition

### *Joe LaRocca follows his father's footsteps and becomes the first second-generation tutor*

EVkids has been part of Joe LaRocca's life for as long as he can remember. The current Williams College junior is the son of EVkids former tutor and camp counselor Lou LaRocca (Harvard '92), and remembers learning how to use a bow and arrow during a visit to EVkids Camp in Vermont. By high school, Joe was attending the annual Expanding Horizons Gala.

Joe has always been inspired by his dad, an entrepreneur and business owner who is currently the president of the EVkids Board. He learned to have a service-focused mindset from both of his parents.

"One of my most important goals is to help make a lasting positive impact on the lives of others," Joe said. So when the opportunity to do virtual Tutoring came up, Joe jumped at the chance.

Since the beginning of this semester, Joe has been paired with high school junior Michael, who Joe describes as having a "relentlessly positive



attitude," despite struggles both at school and at home.

"It's been such a pleasure working with Michael," Joe said. "I can't wait to guide him through the college application process and see all of the amazing things he'll go on to do!"

Always looking for how he can be of service, Joe plans to attend medical school. Between college and med school, he wants to spend a year or two doing more direct service, maybe through Teach for America or the Peace Corps.

### *After 4 years as a tutee, UMass Amherst student Ashna pays it forward*

College freshman Ashna Omar knew when she was in high school that she wanted to be an EVkids tutor. That's because she was an EVkids tutee from 9th grade until she graduated high school in 2020, and knew personally what a relationship with a 1-on-1 mentor can bring to your life.

Ashna graduated from Boston Latin Academy last spring, during the pandemic. In the fall, she started college at Suffolk University in Boston and began tutoring 5th grader Nevaeh virtually. When

Ashna got the opportunity to transfer to her dream school, UMass Amherst, she took it, knowing that she could continue her relationship with her tutee despite being further away.

Ashna's EVkids connections don't end there. As a recent EVkids graduate and current college student, Ashna is a mentee in the College Success Project, still paired with her long-time tutor Liz Moison (Tufts '20). Plus, Ashna has two younger siblings still in EVkids Tutoring.



UMass Amherst student Ashna Omar, herself a recent EVkids graduate, is paying it forward by tutoring 5th-grader Nevaeh.

### **INSIDE**

*Read on for more about how EVkids Camp is adapting for this summer.*

# Looking Forward, Looking Back

In last spring's newsletter, we wrote that Boston Public Schools would be closed until at least May 4, 2020, and local colleges had closed for the remainder of the semester. We all hoped we would be back to normal for summer camp, or at least for the fall semester, or at the very least for the spring semester. As you well know, none of that happened. Boston schools opened, and then closed, and are now slowly reopening again. Here is how EVkids programs have adapted.

## ***March-May 2020***

Some Tutoring pairs transitioned to virtual Tutoring, and staff facilitated closure activities for the rest, ending six weeks earlier than planned. Staff remained in contact with families to help connect them to

school, food, and financial assistance resources.

## ***Summer 2020***

Virtual Camp hosted 22 virtual "campers," including sending a Camp in a Box of specific supplies for activities twice throughout the summer.

## ***Fall 2020***

Virtual Tutoring started, using the "site" model and a schedule that mimicked in-person Tutoring as much as possible. EVkids guaranteed a tutor to every returning tutee in lieu of growing the total number of Tutoring pairs, and provided direct aid to families that needed help with bills thanks to a COVID-19 relief grant from the Highland Street Foundation. Student and family surveys and

interviews confirmed that they are generally "hanging in there," despite distractions and weak WiFi at home, many parents working outside the home as essential workers, and some having lost sources of income.

## ***Spring 2021***

Virtual Tutoring continued, including hosting virtual pair bonding events like the biannual Tutor Tutee Day.

## ***Summer 2021***

Camp will return to Vermont! (details on next page)

## ***Fall 2021***

Tutoring will grow to 130 pairs across 4 sites in Roxbury and Dorchester. Format still to be determined.

## *Surprising Upsides from a Year in a Pandemic*



*Virtual Tutoring means I get to see inside my tutor Ben's house!*

*-Franky, 5th grade tutee*



*At the end of my parental leave, I could go back to work and stay home with my baby at the same time.*

*-Tess Miller, Site Director*



*I've been playing Lebanese backgammon in quarantine. I've improved so much that I lose by 1 instead of 2 points now.*

*-Najwa Aswad, Education Advocate*



*I slowly but surely have begun to be more of a morning person after being an aspirational morning person for a long time.*

*-Scott Pyzik, Tutor Director/Chaplain*

# Camp Gets Ready for Return

After a summer of virtual camp in 2020, EVkids Camp will return to our 9-acre site in the Green Mountains of Vermont this July. Up to a 36 young people ages 10-18 will spend one or two weeks at camp over the course of the summer, leaving behind the city streets that we have all tired of during this long pandemic year.

EVkids Camp will closely follow the recommendations and requirements of the Vermont Dept. of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Camp Association. Here is how we will keep campers, staff, and the community safe and healthy:

- Camp will operate as its own pod, as it often does anyway.
- All staff will be vaccinated prior to arriving at Camp. All Massachusetts residents become eligible for vaccination in mid-April. Camp staff are already eligible for vaccination as essential education employees.
- Students are eligible to be tested for COVID-19 up to weekly while they are in school. Campers will be asked to test and self-quarantine before attending Camp.



## Sponsor a Camper!

You can give Boston kids an escape from city streets and endless Zooms this summer.

**\$500 for a week**  
**or \$75 for a full day**

- Campers and staff will abide by CDC guidelines for swimming and hiking. Other off-campus excursions will be limited.

- Visits during Camp will be limited to EVkids staff and Board members who are fully vaccinated and cleared to travel according to CDC guidelines.

Applications for campers and counselors are available at [www.evkids.org/camp](http://www.evkids.org/camp).

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## I'm here for the good times and the tough times.

Here's my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Check enclosed  
*Payable to EVkids*

Credit card  
*All fields below required*

I would like my donation to be used  Wherever it's needed most  For Tutoring  For Camp  For College Success

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Security code: \_\_\_\_\_



# Spring Virtual Reunions

## NYC

Wed., May 5, 6 p.m. EDT

## D.C./Baltimore

Wed., May 19, 7 p.m. EDT

## West Coast

Wed., May 12, 5:30 p.m. PDT

## College Reunion Years

(Harvard '91, '96, '01, '06, '11, '16, BC '16, Tufts '16)

Wed., May 26, 6 p.m. EDT

### RSVP

[www.evkids.org/reunions](http://www.evkids.org/reunions)

### Join the Event

[www.evkids.org/virtualevents](http://www.evkids.org/virtualevents)

We hope to be back in person for the NYC, DC/Baltimore, and Reunion Year events next year.