



in partnership with TomTod Ideas



presents:



camp What if AKRON

Camp What If: Akron was a series of three, week-long day camps, guiding Akron middle schoolers in immersive exploration of their community and empowering them to develop unique ideas to help their community grow and thrive. These experiences were funded by the City of Akron, implemented in partnership with Akron Public Schools, and facilitated by TomTod Ideas.

Mondays

LAB SESSION 1: CWHAH (COMMUNITY-WIDE-HUMAN-ADVENTURE-HUNT)

A scavenger hunt of a variety of significant sites throughout downtown Akron with a particular focus on arts, business, communications, entrepreneurship. We ended the CWHAH at [Lock 3](#) with a special guest from the [Downtown Akron Partnership](#) and a picnic of tasty local food (check out the Food section on the back for all the amazing local restaurants we had the privilege of trying out throughout our camps. Yummy food is definitely an Akron asset!)

LAB SESSIONS 2 AND 3

Learning Labs were experiential field trips throughout Akron, connecting campers with community leaders and core organizations. We jumped right in on Mondays with labs that included:

- [Shanti Farms](#)
- [South Street Ministries](#)
- [The Well Community Development Corporation](#)
- [Nightlight Cinema](#)
- [Akron Public Library](#)
- [S3 Technologies](#)
- [Summit Lake Community Center](#)

REFLECTIONS & CONNECTIONS

Each day we spent time reflecting and connecting on our experiences, considering the strengths and challenges of the community and imagining what we might create together.

Tuesdays

LAB SESSIONS 4, 5 AND 6

Tuesdays were a full day, with lots of Labs and other fun activities. Tuesday labs included:

- [Akron Rubber Ducks](#)
- [Devil Strip Magazine](#)
- [Northside Marketplace](#)
- [Dirty River Bicycle Works](#)
- [Summit Artspace](#)
- [Akron Recreation & Parks](#)
- [North Akron Community Development Corporation](#)
- [First Glance Student Center](#)
- [Just A Dad From Akron](#)
- [Akron Children's Museum](#)
- [NightLight Cinema](#)

wednesdays

SIP: SPEEDY INTERVIEW PLUNGE

Interviewing community leaders, “speed dating” style! Campers created the questions and then groups rotated in seven minute blasts to fire away! Guests included:

- [Dan Whitaker](#), Summit Education Initiative
- [Byron Delpinal](#), Torchbearers
- [Kemp Boyd](#), Love Akron
- [Ace Epps](#), BOUNCE Innovation Hub
- [Teresa Hogan](#), First Energy
- [Bronlynn Thurman](#), The GAR Foundation
- [Annie Hanson](#), University of Akron
- [Dan Hampu](#), Fontus Blue

wednesdays continued...

SIP PANELISTS CONTINUED:

- [Demetrius Falconer](#), Summit Lake Metro Parks
- [Chris Horne](#), The Devil Strip
- [Megan Kleidon](#), Red Oak Behavioral Health
- [Vish Bhatt](#), United Way of Summit County
- [Sharon Connor](#), Ward 10 Council Member
- [Jessica Holbrook](#), [Abbey Marshall](#), & [H.L. Comeriato](#), The Devil Strip

LAB SESSION 7

For our lab each Wednesday we went as one big group to [Akron City Government](#). There, campers had the chance to meet Akron City Council members and sit in council chambers, converse with members of the Mayor's Cabinet, and meet with a representative of the Akron Police Department.

GAMES, PROCESSING & IDEATING

We spent the remainder of Wednesday afternoons engaging in activities helping us consider what we had learned and also started our first round of ideation. By the end of the day, we had oodles of ideas that we hoped could enhance the common good & we capped the day off with fun games.

Thursdays

PROCESSING & IDEATING

Each Thursday we started with hundreds of ideas and then whittled down to our top 20 - 30 favorites, then our top 3 - 5, taking part in a series of brainstorming activities such as "Yes, and..." With the final ideas each week, we researched and explored what could be before everyone ranked the final pitch groups they wanted to be in. We did all this while getting to explore a new space to us that had been our neighbors all week, the [Reach Opportunity Center at Summit Lake](#).

Fridays

IDEATION

With our final ideas in mind, Fridays were spent putting meat on the bones. We scheduled meetings and traveled back to various places we had visited earlier in the week to pick the brains of community partners in the know.

Fridays continued...

CLOSING

Campers took all of the information and formed it into final presentations that they shared at a closing [Community Ideation Celebration](#), with parents and community guests listening to and giving feedback to campers.

Thank You's!

FOOD

Throughout the week, we enjoyed meals from a variety of local restaurants:

DA VINCI'S PIZZERIA , DIAMOND DELI, HAMAD'S ON MAIN, NEPALI KITCHEN, SANABEL MIDDLE EAST BAKERY, SPAGHETTI WAREHOUSE, STACHIA'S ALMOST FAMOUS WINGS, AND WALK IN THE PARK CAFE

SPACE

We're incredibly grateful to [the Summit Lake Community Center](#) for letting us take over their multi-use room and gym! We used the space throughout all three weeks as our home base & ideation lab.

FUNDERS

[The City of Akron](#) is proud to offer this camp to middle schoolers in our community, empowering young people as engaged citizens today, tomorrow, and for years to come.

CAMP WHAT IF / TOMTOD TEAM

The team behind Camp What If includes year-round TomTod team members, as well as seasonal teammates. We had a blast as co-learners and co-explorers with our incredible campers and thank parents for the privilege of getting to know their campers over the week and are grateful to the community of Akron for the many ways in which they partnered with us in investing in middle schoolers this week!

Year-round TomTod Team:

Patrick Gerber, Zane Sanders, Sam Slovisky, Kayla DeVitto, Amy Ropp, Joel Daniel Harris

Summer Teammates:

Lee Hubbard, Walker Collins, Kaley Weaver, Kassie Ketchum, Makenzie Yoder, Gabrielle Freeman

IDEA SUMMARIES: We had 12 exciting ideas pitched by campers at Camp What If: Akron:

Positivity Finding App:

An app that sends positive messages and mental health tips based on your need and connects you with local friends, mentors, and mental health resources.

The Hype Canvas

An online platform that allows middle schoolers to design and create social media posts, advertisements, and design swag for local artists and small businesses, specifically local artists and entrepreneurs of color.

Sensory / Mental Health Park

A new Akron park designed for the specific needs of people who are on the autism spectrum and that promotes mental health through games and playground elements that teach appropriate coping skills.

Middle School Children's Museum

A unique space for the Akron Children's Museum that would include stations for middle schoolers to create and places for them to display their creations (like Fashion Station - Sewing Cosplay Costumes, VR Station and 360 video creator, and Anime / Comic Book Creation Station.)

DIY Adventure Park

A park that always changes because it is always rebuilt by its visitors. Parts of the park would include a DIY build-your-own-fort section for nerf battles, a DIY obstacle course creation station, and a DIY splash pad.

Kid Mall

A marketplace for elementary, middle, high schoolers to sell things that they make so they can learn to start a business.

Little Free Homeless Care Lockers

Personalized lockers around town that are stocked with essential supplies and provide people with a safe place to store their possessions.

Health Care Helper App

An app that lets you donate money to your neighbor's medical bills while entering you in a contest to win prizes for donating.

Youth Depression / Suicide Prevention App

An App created by kids for kids that help them with depression and mental health through games, message, and connections to support.

Single-Person Calm Rooms in Schools

A small room that students can go to if they get angry. They will have calm music, relaxing seating, and fidgets. These rooms will also teach kids about mental health and ways to calm down like mediation and yoga.

Middle School Advertising Agency

Middle schoolers will learn marketing skills like logos, social media posts, websites, and YouTube videos and then create advertising for small businesses for free. The goal is to attract small businesses to Akron and help small businesses with no money for advertising.

Lock 3 Redesign - The Ultimate Public Space

Middle Schoolers are creating their vision for Lock 3 in Downtown Akron and other public spaces. The goal is to make a space that is used and enjoyed frequently by adults, families, and kids.