A Very Special Camper

You would love 10-year old Sofia if you met her. She is smart, funny and endlessly kind . . . in spite of a life that’s been filled with hardships.

Last winter, she fled from her native Venezuela with her mother and younger sister due to deteriorating living conditions and rising crime in her neighborhood.

They are safe now but money is tight. Sofia’s mother used to be a teacher in Venezuela… now she works in a cafeteria. Her father who is still in Venezuela sends money to the family every month, but the Venezuelan dollar is weak so his money doesn’t go far.

In June, Lifting Up Westchester received a letter from Sofia’s teachers. They had raised $190 to send Sofia to camp. They knew it wasn’t enough but they also knew that Sofia’s family couldn’t afford to pay even a small portion of the camp fee - Sofia had sometimes told them that she couldn’t go on field trips because there was no money to pay for them.

Sofia’s teachers wondered if we could help.

Because of the generosity of our donors, Sofia was able to receive a camp scholarship. She spent four weeks playing kickball, swinging from the monkey bars, splashing in the pool and making memories. Camp gave her a brief respite from her troubles at home and allowed her to just have fun.

Sofia doesn’t speak much English but that didn’t stop her from making friends . . . all of the campers liked her. Perhaps it was because she was always smiling.

On the second week of camp, Sofia won the award for Camper of the Week. She burst into tears!

We can’t think of anyone more deserving of the award.