

## WINTER 2015

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A Publication for Families and Friends of Camp Sunshine – A Ray of Hope for Children with Cancer

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# C A M P S U N S H I N E



# POSTCARDS

## 2015 Scholarship Recipients

**T**his year's 19 Camp Sunshine scholarship winners have one thing in common: they have been inspired by their cancer journey – and those who took care of them along the way – to help others. From healthcare to sports to fundraising, these future leaders want to give back.

The scholarships, established in 1992, are available to former campers now attending a college, university or technical school. This is a way for Camp Sunshine to continue to support them on their journey, and a wonderful way to stay connected to them as they move forward in life.

Each applicant must submit an essay describing his or her cancer journey. Here are some excerpts from some of this year's exceptional scholarship recipients.

It seemed as though one minute I was playing with Power Rangers and Matchbox cars, and the next minute I was hearing words like acute lymphoblastic leukemia, lumbar puncture, and methotrexate. And so began my immersion into the world of pediatric cancer. During my three years of treatment, I experienced many challenges, but ultimately learned to view my cancer as a source of inspiration to help others.

Throughout my treatment, each trip to the hospital brought a myriad of emotions: sadness, anxiety, confusion, and fear. The procedures and side effects were difficult and frightening. Despite these experiences, however, I was filled with hope and gratitude. I was very aware of how hard the medical professionals worked to take care of me and was thankful for their compassion. For this reason, my goal is to become a pediatric oncologist or medical researcher someday. I hope to contribute to find better treatments with fewer side effects and late effects and ultimately a cure for all childhood cancers.

The campers and the counselors at Camp Sunshine have also inspired me. I plan to become a counselor and help the kids who attend Camp Sunshine. I hope it will bring them as much joy and inspiration as it has brought me.

*– Andrew Appert – University of Notre Dame*



Camp Sunshine is my home away from home. When I am at camp or camp events, I feel like I can be myself and I never have to try to impress anyone for them to like me. I will major in nursing. After I graduate, I plan to work at Scottish Rite as a pediatric oncology nurse.

*– Kyle Cruce – University of Southern Mississippi*



This experience (brain tumor) is the biggest struggle I have ever had. I'm still standing and I'm still striving. I went through almost eight years of treatment and minor and major operations; if I could go through that I could do and accomplish anything.

*– Ahmed Mohamed – Georgia Gwinnett College*



## DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,

The greatest form of pride is not when we accomplish something ourselves, but when we share in the triumph of others.

This version of pride has great power at Camp Sunshine. Our community's gifts of time and money are investments in people; when we see those people grow and develop, the reward is immense. We burst with pride.

In this issue, we're reporting back on one of our own. Stephanie Lewis Gibson, a survivor of childhood cancer, is a Camp Sunshine volunteer. I met Stephanie when she was 8 years old and attending her first camp.

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Camp Sunshine enriches the lives of Georgia's children with cancer and their families through recreational, educational and support programs.

Ten years ago, we presented Stephanie with a Camp Sunshine Scholarship to attend the college of her choice. She chose Mercer University, where she continued on to medical school. Despite a demanding residency, Stephanie has made time to return to Camp Sunshine to help others.

We award these scholarships each summer because we see the potential of our former campers to make their mark on the world. This summer was no exception: The generosity of Camp Sunshine supporters provided 19 deserving applicants with added funds to pay for college or technical school. We could not be more proud of them and are pleased to share their stories.

This issue also brings news of a treasured community partner, Rock by the Sea. The group stages music festivals throughout the year for the sole purpose of helping a select group of charities, and Camp Sunshine is fortunate to be one of them. Rock by the Sea has helped us introduce our work to a whole new audience, and we are grateful for their support.

Speaking of audiences: We expect hundreds of Camp Sunshine campers and their families, along with our supporters, to attend a performance of "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" on March 20 at the Alliance Theatre. Camp Sunshine has teamed with our Presenting Sponsor, The Coca-Cola Company, as well as other sponsors to make this special performance possible.

Every gift to Camp Sunshine is a vote of confidence in our mission to enrich the lives of Georgia's children with cancer. We're thankful for yours, and we wish all of you a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year.

Sally Hale, *Executive Director*



## Spread a Little Sunshine This Holiday Season

**Make your holiday giving count with these creative ideas to benefit Camp Sunshine.**

**Tuck a ticket in a child's stocking.** Children of all ages will delight in "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe," Camp Sunshine's signature fundraising event for 2016 at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre on Sunday, March 20 at 1:00PM and 3:30PM.

**Buy a brick.** Honor a friend or loved one whose life has been touched by camp by purchasing an engraved brick or paver for our brick walkway at the Camp Sunshine House. Brick options range from \$100 to \$500.

**Send a special message.** Honor friends, family and business associates with a donation to Camp Sunshine. Along with your financial gift, send us the names and addresses of those you are honoring, and we'll send them a personalized card designed by one of our campers.

**For more information on the many ways you can give to Camp Sunshine at holiday time or any time of the year, contact Mary Kyle, Development Director, at 404-325-7979 or [mary@mycampsunshine.com](mailto:mary@mycampsunshine.com).**





## 2015 Scholarship Recipients, Continued from page 1



At Camp Sunshine, I was like everyone else. The warmth and acceptance of camp is something I wish I could share with everyone.

Having cancer at such a young age meant growing up faster than the typical kid. I watched some of my friends die of the very disease I had survived. Life is not fair, but I

look at life as a gift. If someone asked me if I could change my past and not have had cancer, my response would be no. I would not be the person I am today without cancer. Because of cancer, I have a burning passion to go into the healthcare field. I dream to one day truly find the cure for cancer if not simply make the treatments more bearable. I won my battle with cancer. I choose to live my life to the fullest even with my disabilities for those who cannot. The faces of my friends that lost their battles with cancer are forever imprinted on my heart. I dream of when all of society will know about childhood cancer and be as loving and embracing as Camp Sunshine was to me.

– Jessika Douglas – University of Georgia

One thing that I have definitely learned, especially after all of these years in school, is that my life is different from the average student's. It is constantly impacted through doctors' appointments and MRI sessions and thrice daily medications, but I thrive through these tasks daily using willpower alone.

My identity as a cancer survivor has also had a big role in helping me to decide what I want to do in college. I am determined to help others who might feel 'lesser than' and have other similar emotions. This is what made me want to major in psychology. My story may have started out sad, but I am always ready to end it with the fact that I have overcome the woes of my three-year-old self. I live with day to day struggles, such as a visual impairment and chronic headaches, but they just make me more resilient. Each and every day, I face what could have torn me down and I get better at making sure that it does not.

– Danielle Francis – New York University



Camp Sunshine is my favorite place in the world. I went to my first Camp Sunshine event, Family Camp, during my treatment for Ewing's Sarcoma. There I met Carter, who was diagnosed with Ewing's on the same day in the same leg. We became best friends there. We both finished chemo at the end of 2003, but Carter

relapsed in January 2004. Summer camp would be my first and Carter's last. Carter passed away that September, but he lives in my memory, especially when I return to Camp Sunshine.

It has been my dream to attend the University of Michigan since I was little. I have been accepted into the Kinesiology School there and will major in Sport/Business Management. My future plans are to work for a professional sports franchise either in professional or collegiate athletics. I have been lucky to have been involved with many childhood cancer fundraising events tied to sports. A career in sports would give me an opportunity to continue supporting these types of events and stay involved raising awareness and funds for childhood cancer.

– Will Hennessy – University of Michigan

My battle with cancer has shaped me as a person and helped me to decide my future career: working for a non-profit organization to fund-raise and event plan for children with cancer. I want to support their families, give back to the hospitals that save lives, and give the patients fun events to help them take their minds off of their treatment.

My cancer became a blessing in disguise with Camp Sunshine. Attending camp every year is such a humbling experience, because some of these kids have it far worse than I ever did. At camp, there is no judgement. We are all like a big family, because we understand each other on a different level. Many times, members of our family do not make it through this horrible trial. I have known countless people to die from cancer, and that is a difficult burden to bear, because that could have been any one of us. Although it has been a difficult journey, I have learned through this experience that sometimes life ends abruptly and unexpectedly, so I try to value each day and constantly push towards my goals.

– Caroline Redd – Elon University





## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## A Doctor in the House

*Stephanie Gibson was around doctors and hospitals so much as a young girl that she says it's only natural that she would want to go into medicine herself.*

Diagnosed at 18 months with a Wilms tumor, Stephanie, now a third year resident at Palmetto Health/University of South Carolina School of Medicine, had her right kidney and right ureter removed, and underwent 15 months of chemotherapy. Because there wasn't a children's hospital where she lived in Savannah, her family had to drive two and a half hours each way to Augusta once a week for her treatment, and then periodically for the next three years for regular ultrasounds to track her progress. She has been in remission since her final treatment.

In 1995, when she was eight years old, she attended Camp Sunshine for the first time. She enjoyed it so much, she returned every year until she was a senior in high school, and was a Leader-in-Training (LIT) after her freshman year of college.

"I loved everything about camp," Stephanie says. "One of my favorite memories was on the last night, we would gather in a circle, hold hands and sing 'We Are the World.'" She said she made a friend there who had his left kidney removed also due to a Wilms tumor. "We joked that we made a complete person," Stephanie remembers.

When she was preparing to go to college, Stephanie applied for and received a scholarship from Camp Sunshine in 2005. "One of the reasons I applied was because I viewed Camp Sunshine as a family, and I wanted to continue to be a part of that family," she says. "They supported me throughout my childhood, so it made sense that they would support me going forward."

She enrolled in Mercer University in Macon, and stayed

there for medical school. She knew right from the beginning that she wanted to be a pediatrician, inspired by the doctors who had treated her.

Stephanie says her cancer experience helps her relate better to children and their parents. "I know intimately what it's like to be in a hospital, around a lot of doctors, and how scary that can be," she says. "I try to talk to kids on a level they understand and make it easy for them to ask questions. I also try to put parents at ease."

With medical school behind her, Stephanie has found time even as a busy resident to come back to camp, reconnecting in 2014 as a counselor in the summer and volunteering at family and sibling camps throughout the year. The minute she sees the camp calendar, she requests the time off. "I have a little flexibility," she says of her resident schedule, "but I have to plan in advance."

Stephanie, who married her husband, Kyle, in 2012, will finish her residency next June, and is in the process of interviewing for jobs. She says she'd like to go into either newborn care or general pediatrics. No matter where

she's working, she says she will always try to return to volunteer at Camp Sunshine.

"Camp Sunshine has had a huge impact on who I am as a person," she says. "Volunteering there is an opportunity for me to give back to all the awesome leaders and counselors I had growing up. Hopefully, I can be that kind of figure to campers now."\*



**"I know intimately what it's like to be in a hospital, around a lot of doctors, and how scary that can be. I try to talk to kids on a level they understand and make it easy for them to ask questions. I also try to put parents at ease."**

## “The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe” to Benefit Camp

Campers, families and friends are invited to attend a spectacular afternoon of theatre on March 20, as Camp Sunshine Presents “The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe,” at the Alliance Theatre. Performances will be held at 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. The Coca-Cola Company is once again the Presenting Sponsor of these two exclusive private benefit performances.

Based on the beloved novel by C.S. Lewis, this magical production portrays the adventures of four siblings through the wardrobe and into the land of Narnia. The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe will transport the audience away from the stresses of everyday life – something Camp Sunshine embraces in our efforts to enrich the lives of children with cancer and their families.

We are grateful for the generous support of our corporate sponsors and many donors that have made the Alliance Theatre production the annual signature fundraising event for Camp Sunshine. Proceeds support the year-round programs that Camp Sunshine provides for children with cancer and their families. Last year, Camp Sunshine provided 134 programs over 153 days, offering a strong community of hope and support for campers and their families. For more information about sponsoring or participating in this event, contact Lindsey Acciarito at 404-325-7979 or [Lindsey@mycampsunshine.com](mailto:Lindsey@mycampsunshine.com). ✨

### 2015 Scholarship Recipients, Continued from page 3



As I look back at what I have been through in life, I think about all of the people that did everything in their power to make me well. With the help of this scholarship I can once again pursue my dream, and give back to all who helped me in my time of need. I will do everything in my power to preserve the love

for my friends, family, and country so that it endures forever.

– Josh Sage – University of North Georgia



I feel so blessed to have gone through everything that I have and to have met such inspiring individuals along the way. My friends at Camp Sunshine consistently motivate me to be the best version of myself. They are constant reminders to never lose

hope, even during the darkest of times. Ten years ago, I was diagnosed with a Juvenile Pilocytic Astrocytoma. In the years since, I have met a multitude of kindhearted individuals who have voluntarily taken time out of their own lives to better mine. These volunteers have inspired me to follow in their footsteps and live selflessly through leadership and service. Now, as I look toward paving my own career path, I wish to emulate this selflessness, and the best way I know how is to dedicate my work to my passion for public health. Through all of my experiences, I have realized that health is not just an important consideration for each individual, but must also be a way of life for the entire world.

Camp Sunshine is not only a place I call home, but it is also a place that has helped shape me to be the person that I am today. Camp has not only given me the confidence to reach for my dreams, but it has encouraged me to lead by serving others.

– Jaimie Shing – University of Georgia

NAME	HOME CITY	UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE ATTENDING
Abby Allen	Sharpsburg, GA	Kennesaw State University
Alyssa Ansell	Niceville, FL	Florida State University
Andrew Appert	Johns Creek, GA	University of Notre Dame
Montana Brown	Augusta, GA	Georgia Regents University
Kyle Cruce	Winder, GA	University of Southern Mississippi
James Cyran	Norcross, GA	Clemson University
Jessika Douglas	Covington, GA	University of Georgia
Danielle Francis	Ellenwood, GA	New York University
Will Hennessy	Marietta, GA	University of Michigan
Anfernee Keaton	Baconton, GA	Albany Technical College
Ben Marchese	Milton, GA	Georgia Institute of Technology
Ahmed Mohamed	Lilburn, GA	Georgia Gwinnett College
Nancy Obi	Grayson, GA	Columbus State University
Matthew Quintana	Savannah, GA	University of North Georgia
Caroline Redd	Marietta, GA	Elon University
Josh Sage	Dawsonville, GA	University of North Georgia
Jaimie Shing	Johns Creek, GA	University of Georgia
Carrie Turner	Weston, GA	Georgia Southwestern State University
Nathan Wood	Phenix City, AL	Troy State University



# CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

For any House program, we ask that you RSVP to 404-325-7979

## JANUARY 2016

### SPA SYDELL NIGHT At Camp Sunshine House

January 11, March 14 and April 25

6:00-8:00PM

Call to RSVP

Come have dinner and be pampered by the talented professionals from Spa SydeLL.

### PRESCHOOL MUSIC CLASS

2nd and 4th Wednesday each month

10:30AM - 12:30PM

Call to RSVP

Join us for lunch and music class. For campers birth-6 years of age and their preschool siblings.

### REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

We now provide programs in all areas of the state in addition to programs in the Metro Atlanta area. Check out our website [www.mycampsunshine.com](http://www.mycampsunshine.com), the newsletter and your mail for programs coming to your area.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1 Office Closed	2
3	4	5 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	6 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR	7 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	8	9
10	11 Spa SydeLL Night	12	13 Pre-School Music Class	14	15 Savannah Regional Program Teen Lock In and Winter Dance	16 →
17	18 Office Closed	19	20	21	22 Sibling Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	23 →
24 →	25	26	27 Pre-School Music Class	28	29	30
31						

## FEBRUARY 2016

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	3 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR	4 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	5	6
7	8	9	10 Pre-School Music Class	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 Seasonal Sunshine	24 Pre-School Music Class	25	26 Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes	27 →
28 →	29					



Connect with Camp Sunshine online to stay up to date on the latest news and happenings! Join us at [www.facebook.com/campsunshine](http://www.facebook.com/campsunshine), [twitter.com/mycampsunshine](https://twitter.com/mycampsunshine), [Pinterest.com/mycampsunshine](https://www.pinterest.com/mycampsunshine) and [Instagram.com/mycampsunshine](https://www.instagram.com/mycampsunshine)





For any House program, we ask that you RSVP to 404-325-7979

## MARCH 2016

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		<b>1</b> Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	<b>2</b> Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR	<b>3</b> Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> School Age Overnight →
<b>6</b> →	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Pre-School Music Class	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Next Steps: Off Treatment Workshop
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Spa SydeH Night	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Spring Fling for Preschool Families
<b>20</b> The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Pre-School Music Class	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		

### SPECIAL EVENT

**Camp Sunshine Presents  
The Lion, The Witch, and The  
Wardrobe**

**Sunday, March 20, 2016  
1:00 PM and 3:30 PM**

Join Camp Sunshine for one of two special performances of "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe" at the Alliance Theatre! Tickets and sponsorships are on sale now through the Camp Sunshine website for this fabulous family spectacle. Call 404-325-7979 for additional information.

### SAVE THESE DATES

**Staff Orientation  
May 21, 2016**

**New Camper Orientation  
June 7, 2016**

**Summer Camp – Teen Week  
June 19-24, 2016**

**Summer Camp – Junior Week  
June 26-July 1, 2016**

**Sibling Camp  
August 12-14, 2016**

## APRIL 2016

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					<b>1</b> Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	<b>2</b> →
<b>3</b> →	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	<b>8</b> Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	<b>9</b> →
<b>10</b> → Remember the Sunshine Day at Camp Twin Lakes	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Pre-School Music Class	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Spa SydeH Night	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Pre-School Music Class	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

### THE NEXT STEPS: OFF TREATMENT WORKSHOP

**March 12  
Camp Sunshine House  
Call to RSVP**

A panel of professionals from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta will address topics at this educational program including:

- Medical Follow-up
- Cognitive Late Effects
- Family Life After Treatment
- Helping Your Child Transition



**CAMP SUNSHINE®**

A ray of hope for children with cancer.™

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[www.mycampsunshine.com](http://www.mycampsunshine.com)

### Is Your Info Up to Date?

Email [Chanteasea@mycampsunshine.com](mailto:Chanteasea@mycampsunshine.com)

Or call 404-325-7979, ext. 21

Or go to [www.mycampsunshine.com](http://www.mycampsunshine.com)

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## C A M P S U N S H I N E P O S T C A R D S

### COMMUNITY PARTNER

## Rock by the Sea – Music for a Cause

Imagine sitting on a beach, listening to the music of multiple bands, and knowing your admission ticket is going to a good cause.

This is Rock by the Sea, a series of three-night music festivals held several times a year, featuring anywhere from 10 to 20 bands, with all the proceeds donated to various charities. Camp Sunshine is privileged to be one of them.

The idea for a series of concerts to raise money came from The Rock Boat, an annual event that features live music on a cruise and Lyrics for Life, a nonprofit started by Sister Hazel front man Ken Block, who lost his brother to childhood leukemia.



"The idea was really inspired through the loss of loved ones from varying kinds of cancer, and feeling the need to give back somehow," says founder and president Beth Gosnell. "I had been on several Rock Boats and got to know members of Sister Hazel and their fans. They are so inspiring and their community's heart is contagious. After several conversations with a couple of friends in November of 2006, we decided to do something and Rock by the Sea was born the next March."

That was in 2007, and the next year, the group became a 501(c)(3). The nonprofit organizes music festivals and events to raise money for select

charities. The musicians are paid small stipends for their performances, but the staff, including Beth, is made up of all volunteers. Since its inception, Rock by the Sea has put on 15 music festivals, six golf tournaments, nine road shows and six Christmas CDs. As a result of their efforts, the organization has donated over \$400,000 to charity, focusing on organizations that provide direct services.

"Ken Block had been a supporter of Camp Sunshine through Lyrics for Life, and it fit with our goal of wanting to focus on kids," Beth says. "But we help other charities as well. Whether it's health organizations, the environment or animals, we always want to help a good cause."

The events, which have been held on St. George's Island, Fla., Panama City Beach and Atlanta, are usually intimate concerts of no more than 400 people, and have attracted music fans from 36 states and Canada, many who return year after year. Musicians include established bands and those who are up and coming. Beth says they try to choose groups with "like minds and hearts."

As the organization heads into its 10th year, Beth says they are all appreciative for all those who support their efforts. "We are so grateful to the community that supports us, the sponsors, and the artists who donate so much of their time and talent to our causes. It's a really good recipe for a great time for a great reason."\*

