

**Spread the Sunshine**  
Sign up today for a Camp  
Sunshine license plate.  
**Page 2**

**Greetings from Summer Camp**  
Enjoy photos, messages and  
more from two unforgettable  
weeks. **Page 4-5**

**Bubbling Over** Volunteer  
nanci dubin (no capitals,  
please) has been a part  
of Camp Sunshine since  
1986. **Page 8**

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



# POSTCARDS

## Camp Sunshine Honors Record Number of Graduates

**T**here are no caps and gowns, and the tassels are homemade. But for soaring inspiration and heartfelt emotion, Camp Sunshine's graduation ceremony rivals any in the state. This year 38 campers graduated from our programs. The record number is a testament to survivorship and a cause for celebration. Here we profile four graduates – some longtime campers, others more recently diagnosed. Congratulations to all our graduating campers...and let the future begin!



### Michael Holderman

A senior at Dutchtown High School in Hampton, Michael celebrated two milestones this summer: Camp Sunshine graduation and five years off-therapy. Michael was 13 when his left leg began to swell and cause severe pain. At first, doctors linked it to a skiing accident, but ultimately Michael was diagnosed with a rare sarcoma in his left leg. His treatment included chemotherapy and an innovative surgery wherein the

bone was removed and replaced with a cadaver bone. He will require additional leg surgery in September, but Michael is living cancer-free.

"When I started at Camp Sunshine, I honestly didn't know what I was getting into," he recalled. "By the end of the first week, it was amazing." He never missed a Summer Camp since and participated in many other programs, including Teen Retreats, Lock-ins and the trip to Washington, D.C.

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DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,

Ordinarily, Camp Sunshine is all about sharing stories, not statistics, but at the close of the summer, I want to share an exciting number with you: 38. That's how many campers turned 18 this year and "graduated" from Camp Sunshine programs for children with cancer. Graduation is a milestone for any teenager. For a child with cancer, it is awe-inspiring.

Thirty-eight graduating campers is a record for Camp Sunshine. To put the number in perspective, consider this: when Camp Sunshine was founded 27 years ago, our total attendance figure – including all ages – was about 40! Graduating close to 40 campers in just one year is a strong indication of our growth as an organization. Far more impor-

tantly, it speaks volumes about survivorship, which now stands overall at 77 percent.\* We thank Whitney, Cat, Brian and Michael for sharing their stories, and we congratulate all of our graduating seniors and wish them much success and

\* Curesearch.org, Children's Oncology Group

happiness. Remember, graduates, our Young Adult programs are here for you as you embrace the next phase of your life.

Camp Sunshine served a record 408 campers, ages 7 through 18, at summer camp this year. The fun and lifelong memories were made possible only through the selfless giving of more than 220 volunteer staff and counselors as well as the benevolence of our wonderful donors. There are no words to express my thanks to these generous individuals. As if giving of their time, talent and energy were not enough, our volunteers also raised more than \$130,000 in this year's Keencheefoonee Road Race. We thank our road race participants and all those who financially support the Keencheefoonee Road Race as well.

In addition to our senior salute and our dazzling summer camp photos, this Postcards features our effervescent Bubbles (our dear friend nanci dubin – no capitals, please). Bubbles exemplifies the Camp Sunshine spirit. Without her, Camp would not be the same.

Particularly in these challenging financial times, I marvel at the generosity of donors who keep Camp Sunshine at the top of their priority giving list, and I am thankful for the careful fiscal stewardship of our staff. Moreover, I am deeply grateful for the many individuals who think up innovative ways to raise funds for, and awareness of Camp. The latest? A Camp Sunshine specialty license plate. We need 1,000 committed individuals to make it a reality. Wouldn't it be great to spot Camp Sunshine plates on highways and byways throughout the state? Here's to a safe and splendid autumn.

– Sally Hale, Executive Director

**To Our Readers**  
Have you moved or are you about to move? Contact Chanteasea@mycampsunshine.com or 404-325-7979, ext. 10 so we can change your address. Also, if you prefer to receive future newsletters electronically, please contact Chanteasea. Thanks.



## Show Your Support with a Camp Sunshine License Plate

Georgia drivers can support Camp Sunshine by signing up today for a Camp Sunshine Specialty Tag. We are working to collect 1,000 pre-orders to make the license plates a reality. Once the tags are manufactured, Camp Sunshine will receive a portion of the proceeds from annual tag fees. The license plate features the bright yellow Camp Sunshine logo and the tagline "Programs for Children with Cancer."

"This is a wonderful, easy and inexpensive way to raise awareness of Camp Sunshine and its year-round programs, and raise funds at the same time," said Board Member Mo Thrash. The tags will be created only when 1,000 orders are received, **so don't wait!** Order your tag today. Simply visit the Camp Sunshine website and click on the license plate icon. This will take you to a printable order form. For more information call Lindsey at 404-325-7979 or e-mail her at Lindsey@mycampsunshine.com. Complete the form and mail it with a check or money order for \$25 (made payable to Camp Sunshine) to: **Camp Sunshine, 1850 Clairmont Road, Decatur, GA 30033, Attn: Lindsey Monroe. ✨**



Camp Sunshine Honors Record Number of Graduates, continued from page 3

"My first year at camp, I was in a wheelchair and I liked archery because it was something I could do," he said. Through the years, Michael would list cabin time as his favorite: "I like just spending time with my cabin mates, getting to know them better, telling stories."

Michael enjoyed this year's senior activities. "But at the end of the week, watching the Power Point with all the pictures, it catches up to you that this is the last year – I started to tear up," he said. He wants to volunteer at camp in the future. In the meantime, he is focusing on his senior year and college plans.

Michael wants to study biomedical engineering, preferably at Ohio State or Mercer University. His goal is to create a better prosthetic leg. "If I had to have my leg amputated when I was going through treatment, the chances of my getting a prosthetic leg were slim; there would have been nothing to attach it to," he said. "I want to make a prosthetic leg that works in cases like that – I am passionate about it."



Michael Holderman

pole. The best memory of all might be being named Prom King: "I got to dance with a very beautiful girl."

Camp jump-started Brian's confidence. On a beach trip with his church group, he put on a life vest and swam in the ocean. On a Make-a-Wish cruise, he snorkeled with stingrays (even kissing one) and climbed up Dunn's River Falls in Jamaica. This super young man has a plan: return to school full-time this fall and then go on to college and study music production.

**Cat Sanders**

Cat is short for Catherine, but that's too much name for a girl with Cat's spunk. "Camp Sunshine is WOW!" she commented. "I hate that I had cancer, but I'm glad I had camp."

Cat was diagnosed at age 3 with acute lymphocytic leukemia and was in treatment for two and a half years. She has lived cancer-free and remembers few details from those early years. "I do remember some things," she commented. "I remember going to Camp Sunshine for the very first time, and I remember meeting Alison, who's still my best friend to this day."

In 12 years, Cat has never missed summer camp and has participated in many other Camp Sunshine programs. She loved the teen trips to Washington, D.C. and the Dude Ranch. Cat's favorite camp activities included biking, horseback riding and, more recently, fishing: "That's another great thing about camp – I'm always trying something new." Her all-time favorite activity was Drumming Dimensions with Camp Sunshine volunteer Scott Besaw. "I love Scott," she said. "He takes music to a different level."

A resident of Athens, Cat graduated in May from Prince Avenue Christian School and will attend Toccoa Falls College, where she will major in early childhood education and minor in Spanish. In addition to teaching, she dreams of one day owning her own ranch. "I love horses and I love the feel of a ranch," she said.

The night before camp graduation, Cat was sitting around the campfire with friends. "It hit me...I'm graduating and the world feels upside down," she said. "I know I'll be OK, but still I cried and cried."

She plans to continue with Camp Sunshine's Young Adult programs and as a volunteer. "The thing about camp is you can be yourself. You never have to worry about someone judging you. You can be totally insane, and it's fine," she laughed, "because at camp, insane is normal."

**Whitney Venzant**

Her own experience has shaped Whitney's dream of

*Continued on Page 4*



Brian Parks

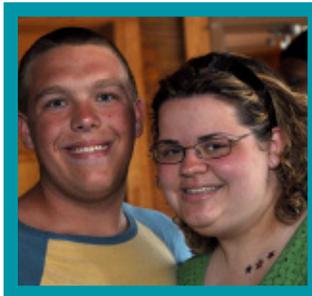
**Brian Parks**

Superman decals dot his leg brace, and a favorite camp counselor made a Superman T-shirt for him. But Superman's got nothing on Brian. One year ago, Brian was preparing for his senior year at South Forsyth High School, where he played varsity quarterback. He was working several jobs to save money for his car. His mother Andrea pulled up one morning to the drive-in window where Brian was working and noticed that her right-handed son was using his left hand. He said his right hand was weak.

At first doctors suspected multiple sclerosis, but weakness was overtaking Brian's right side very rapidly. A biopsy revealed astrocytoma. Brian underwent six weeks of radiation treatment and continues with chemotherapy at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite. He is working hard on his mobility, progressing from using a wheelchair almost exclusively to using a cane to walking independently for periods of time.

His social worker at Scottish Rite first told him about Camp Sunshine. "At first I didn't want to go. (I thought) it's too young," he said. After attending an orientation meeting, Brian changed his mind. "It was the catalyst for a lot of wonderful things," his mother commented.

Brian didn't want to pack his swimming trunks or long pants for horseback riding because of his physical limitations. But his mother insisted. At camp, Brian participated in these activities and so much more. He went fishing with a hook fashioned by counselors especially for him; he zip-lined and climbed the pamp



Cat Sanders (right)



Whitney Venzant (right)

## Camp Sunshine Honors Record Number of Graduates, continued from page 3

becoming a child life specialist. She was diagnosed at age 9 with synovial sarcoma. The growth in her abdomen was the size of a cantaloupe and required nine months of treatment, including chemotherapy and surgery to remove the tumor as well as a kidney.

"Whatever I was going through, the child life specialists had such a positive impact on me," said Whitney, who lives in Buford and graduated from Mill Creek High School in May.

"They explained everything so that I could understand – why I was losing my hair, what was going on with my body."

Child life specialists also introduced Whitney to Camp Sunshine. She attended her first summer camp in 2001 and rarely missed a Camp Sunshine outing since. "Summer camp is the highlight of my summer. I count down the days with the rest of my friends until we can be together," she said.

"One favorite memory will always be the last morning of each summer camp. Everyone is running around sharing numbers and addresses, and hugging and laughing and crying. But no one is saying goodbye; we're saying *see you later*."

For Whitney, graduating from Camp Sunshine is bittersweet.

"It was really fun to go to the prom, the graduation and all the activities," she said. "I know I will be back to volunteer one day, but still it's sad to think about not going back as a camper."

Her mother Lisa called Camp Sunshine "an incredible lifeline" for campers and their families: "Camp allows you to develop new friendships and experience new encounters. The relationships you make, the opportunities you have to grow as a family and learn about yourself – it's really hard to describe."

Whitney will attend Georgia Gwinnett College in the fall. Recently, her mother was looking at pictures of Whitney at camp graduation and from when she was in treatment: "To think...this is where we were and this is where we are now, it is absolutely amazing." ✨

**"I looked at the pictures on the camp website and I just boo-hooed. The cabin decorations...the names in sidewalk chalk. The counselors took the time to do these things. They care so deeply about my child."**

**— Brian's mother Andrea**

### For Graduates, Special Senior Moments

**Camp Sunshine showers graduating seniors with special activities.**

- ✨ **Senior Breakfast:** Seniors are recognized in front of all campers and share a bit about themselves.
- ✨ **Senior Service Project:** Seniors help spruce up "Steve's Garden," a special, quiet place that was named in memory of one of Camp Sunshine's first campers, Steve Davol. Even campers with mobility issues can help with the garden cleanup.
- ✨ **Senior Lunch:** Seniors sit at a special table decorated just for them and are served by Camp Sunshine staff and volunteers. In addition to lunch, they also enjoy treats like Cokes and chocolates.
- ✨ **Closing Camp Fire:** Seniors lead a few songs at this special gathering.
- ✨ **Prom Night:** Prom is held the last night of camp. All seniors are part of the Prom Court. The King and Queen, always graduating campers, are voted on by all campers at Teen Camp.
- ✨ **Graduation:** The ceremony typically includes a brief speech or two by camp organizers, assuring graduates they will always be part of the Camp Sunshine family. Each graduate's name is called, and all graduates receive a handmade tassel to pin to their Camp Sunshine hat, a diploma and a senior class photograph.





I think camp  
Is awesome.  
camp sun  
shine



**"It's a great place  
where no one judges and  
everyone can be normal"**  
- Michael



# Summer Camp 2009 at Camp Twin Lakes



**"This is the best  
camp in the  
world. I love to  
rock climb."**  
- Trevor

**"I am having  
the BEST time  
of my life."**  
- Crayton



**"Camp is a wonderful  
place where everyone  
knows what you are  
going through."**  
- Nicole





# CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

## ONGOING PROGRAMS

### FAMILY NIGHT

1st Tuesday and 3rd Sunday of each month.

5:30 – 6:20 Dinner

6:30 – 7:20 Groups meetings

Call to RSVP

Meet and share dinner with other families affected by pediatric cancer. Following dinner, groups will meet to share, encourage, support and learn from others in similar situations. Parents will meet, teens will gather and school age children will get together. Childcare is available for those under 5.

### TEEN GROUPS

**TEEN GROUP NORTH** meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month in Johns Creek from 6:00 – 7:30 PM

**TEEN GROUP** meets the 4th Thursday of each month at Camp Sunshine House from 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Call to RSVP

For 13 – 18 year olds who are currently on treatment or were diagnosed as a teen. Meet, hang out and get support from other teens who have or have had cancer. Dinner is served at all groups.

## SPA SYDELL NIGHT AT CAMP SUNSHINE

2nd Monday each month

6:00 – 8:00 PM

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

## PRESCHOOL MUSIC CLASS

2nd and 4th Wednesday each month

12:15 PM – 1:45 PM

Join us for lunch, music class and a fun activity! For campers birth – 6 years of age and their preschool age siblings.

## REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

Camp Sunshine continues to provide 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.

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

## SEPTEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 Family Night	2 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	3 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	4	5
6	7 Labor Day Holiday (Office Closed)	8 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	9 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group North	10	11	12 Preschool Apple Orchard Program Wild Adventures: South GA Families
13	14 Spa Sydell Night	15	16	17	18	19
20 Family Night	21	22	23 Pre-School Music Class Planning for College	24 Teen Group	25	26 NE GA Regional Program
27	28	29	30			

## OCTOBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	2 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	3
4	5	6 Family Night	7	8	9 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	10
11	12 Spa Sydell Night	13	14 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group North	15	16 Remember the Sunshine Weekend at Camp Twin Lakes	17
18 Family Night	19	20	21	22 Teen Group	23	24
25 Fall Festival	26	27	28 Pre-School Music Class	29	30 Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes	31



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

## NOVEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 →	2	3 Seasonal Sunshine Family Night	4 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	5 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	6	7
8	9 Spa SydeII Night	10 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	11 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group North	12	13	14
15 Family Portraits Family Night	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving (Office Closed) →	27	28
29 →	30					

## DECEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 Columbus Regional Program Family Night	2 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	3 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	4	5
6	7 Spa SydeII Night	8 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	9 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group North	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Family Night	21	22	23	24 Office Closed →	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### SPECIAL EVENTS

#### OliviaMorgan Antiques Seasonal Shop benefitting Camp Sunshine

OliviaMorgan Antiques in East Cobb is working on getting its amazing seasonal shop open in early August. The shop will include gifts and decorative items for Halloween, Fall, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Hanukah. Mention Camp Sunshine at the register and 20% of your purchase will be donated to Camp Sunshine for our year-round programs! OliviaMorgan Antiques is located at 4936 Lower Roswell Rd. in Marietta. [www.oliviamorgan.com](http://www.oliviamorgan.com)

#### SEPTEMBER 19-20: HD Marine and Wendy's Fishing Tournament

The Wendy's/HD Marine Fishing Tournament, benefitting Camp Sunshine, will take place on September 19 and 20. Visit [www.hd-marine.com](http://www.hd-marine.com) for details!

**OCTOBER 17, 2009: Take a Club to Cancer** golf tournament, benefitting Camp Sunshine, at Honey Creek Golf Club in Conyers, GA [www.takeclubtocancer.com](http://www.takeclubtocancer.com)

### WHAT'S NEXT? Planning for College

#### Program for Juniors and Seniors in High School

September 23, 2009 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM  
Camp Sunshine House

**Featured Speaker:** Dave Graves, Senior Assistant Director of Admissions, University of Georgia

#### Topics to Include:

- Navigating Admission Process
- Getting into the College of Your Choice
- Scholarships for Survivors

RSVP required.

Call Terri at (404) 325-7979 or email [Terri@mycampsunshine.com](mailto:Terri@mycampsunshine.com)

### INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Camp Sunshine offers support and counseling for children, teens and young adults, ages 5-23 regarding illness-related issues and concerns. Call Terri Sexton, LMSW, at (404) 325-7979 for details.

Camp Sunshine also offers support and counseling for parents of children teens and young adults regarding illness-related issues and concerns. For more information, please contact Terri Sexton at 404-325-7979 or [Terri@mycampsunshine.com](mailto:Terri@mycampsunshine.com)



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

# Bubbling Over with Love for Camp

**“I don’t know about their tomorrows, but I truly can enrich their today.” — Bubbles**



Bubbles. Go on, try to say it without smiling. Bubbles is a happy, positive word. No wonder Camp Sunshine campers and families know long-time volunteer nanci dubin (she prefers no capitals) as, simply, Bubbles.

Bubbles is called an Ambassador of Camp Sunshine or Chief of Guest Relations, and several campers call her their second mother. For 24 consecutive years, Bubbles has been a creative force and unmistakable presence at camp. “She is,” said Program Director Brinsley Thigpen, “one of the most caring people I’ve ever met.”

Bubbles was introduced to camp in 1986 by a friend who thought the former school teacher would like the chance to work again with kids. “My friend was right to say the least,” she said.

A vivacious child, Bubbles earned her nickname when she was five. Through her teens and young adulthood, the nickname didn’t stick. It was when she arrived at Camp Sunshine and found three other adult volunteers named Nancy that she started using her childhood moniker.

For 18 years, Bubbles was a Cabin Counselor for teen girls, but changed her focus several years ago to be a goodwill ambassador. If you ask her to describe a typical day, she laughs: “There is no such thing. My goal is to talk to as many people in a day as I possibly

can.” She is easy to spot with a big yellow bow in her hair and wearing patched overalls, a tie-dyed T-shirt and buttons from head to toe. She is always on the lookout for a camper in need of TLC or a request to join a special camper at the ropes course or swimming pool.

She used to hold classes in “splattered matter,” hand painting on fabrics. Banners created in class still fly high over the infirmary. Three years ago, her thoughts turned green and she introduced “garbology,” an activity focusing on recycling, renewing and reusing resources.

Bubbles never misses an opportunity to spread the sunshine. At SPROUT, the children’s store where she works, Bubbles is sure to tell customers about her heart’s passion. On Valentine’s Day, she sent 80 e-mails to campers, counselors and families: “It’s great to keep spreading the love.”

As a young girl, she lost her own mother to cancer. “Going to camp was the most healing thing I ever did,” she said. “Now, camp is my family.” She has been the “flower girl” in the weddings of two campers. “Camp is all about heart, all about love,” she said. Bubbles has no plans to retire: “That’s when you get old and sedentary. I get to hug every person who walks into camp and for me, that is a great honor.” ✳



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