

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

Celebrating 20 Years
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C A M P S U N S H I N E



POSTCARDS

Leaders in Training Learn Skills for Life

LAURA'S STORY

For 19-year-old Laura, being an LIT this summer strengthened her desire to one day be a child life specialist. "I knew being an LIT would be fun," she said. "But it was much more than that. I learned what it means to be a counselor. I learned about being a leader in life. It helped me grow as a person. And it definitely affirmed my college and career plans."

Laura is not only a leader, she is a fighter. At age 15, she was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, an aggressive bone cancer. A strong athlete and student, Laura was training for cross country in the summer of 2007 when she began experiencing leg pain. At first doctors thought it might be torn cartilage, but the pain grew worse. Many tests and doctor's visits followed. In September, at the start of her sophomore year, Laura received the difficult news.

She began chemotherapy immediately and in November 2007 had a limb salvage surgery in which her knee and lower femur (where

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Leaders aren't born, they are made. Camp Sunshine offers leadership training to young adults who want to be camp counselors and leaders in life. Longtime volunteer Kappi Dobie has led Leaders in Training (LIT) for many years. The program is for graduated campers or other young adults, ages 19-21, who have or had cancer.

"It used to be called Counselors in Training," Kappi said. Several years ago, the name was changed. "For many reasons, including college plans, job commitments, family obligations and such, some LITs do not necessarily go on to be camp counselors. But everyone can take the lessons they've learned as an LIT and apply them in life."

Held during Junior Week of Summer Camp, the program helps young adults grow from being campers to taking on increased responsibility as counselors and leaders. "At camp, LITs are basically expected to do what counselors do but with assistance, guidance and leadership from the counselors, volunteers and staff who act as mentors," Kappi noted.

LITs are assigned a cabin or a specific camp activity and go through daily activities with campers just like regular counselors. "Sitting down to a meal

with 7-year-olds can be eye-opening," she said, laughing. "Sometimes the LITs are so busy they forget to eat!"

LITs meet each day for special training sessions, engaging in Group Initiatives that form bonds and promote teamwork. "Through experiences, observation and discussion, important lessons are taught," added Camp Director Amy Moosbrugger.

Since the program began in 1987, approximately 260 people have completed the training. "Currently more than 30 percent of our volunteers are former

campers who trained as LITs," Amy noted. "Several now help train our new LITs by mentoring them. It's awesome!"

LITs provide a special presence to campers, Kappi said: "They understand where the campers are. They've been there. It makes them strong and

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LITs Evette, Lanie and Laura



CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS



DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,

Leadership is as essential to Camp Sunshine as sunshine is to children. It lifts our spirits, lights our path and enables us to thrive. This *Postcards* is largely about leadership. Many factors make Camp Sunshine special. Strong leadership is among the most important.

At camp, we cultivate leadership. Our popular Leaders in Training (LIT) program is for young adult campers who are interested in being camp counselors one day and/or leaders in life. Under the volunteer leadership of Kappi Dobie, this program benefits camp by providing compassionate, caring, well-trained leaders who have our campers' best interest at heart. Since

1987, some 260 people have completed the training. More than 30 percent of our current volunteers are former campers who trained as LITs. All can take the skills they learn here – responsibility, patience, teamwork and more – and apply them to everyday life.

We are grateful to three young leaders – Ansley, Hayes and Laura – for sharing their individual stories with us. Their journeys are uniquely their own, yet equally inspiring. All knew even as young teenagers that they wanted to be LITs one day and give back to a place which has meant so much to them. That kind of mature thinking is the mark of a true leader.

We are also thankful for the many business leaders and community partners who step up year after year to support Camp Sunshine – often in unforgettable ways. For almost 20

years, Bill Blohm and American Family Day have brought the magic of carnival to Summer Camp. Bill first visited camp at the urging of longtime volunteer leader Will Strother. Two decades later, Bill remains an invaluable and generous friend.

Thanks to foresighted and committed leadership, the Keencheefoonee Road Race continues its successful run as the largest annual fundraiser for Camp Sunshine. With volunteer organizer Gary Palgon at the helm, the event expands each year, attracting more participants and donors, raising more funds, and building greater awareness of camp programs.

Strong leadership characterizes every facet of camp life, including our greatly dedicated board of directors and professional staff. Their standards of excellence define camp. Their leadership ensures program success for years to come.

Finally, to all of our friends, donors and supporters, we thank you for your commitment to our campers. They lead our purpose every day.

– Sally Hale, *Executive Director*

STAFF CHANGES

- ★ We welcome **Mary Kyle** as Development Director. Mary comes to Camp Sunshine with extensive development experience. She has been passionate about Camp Sunshine's mission for many years, having worked as a pediatric oncology social worker prior to entering the development field.
- ★ Join us in welcoming back **Amy Moosbrugger**. Amy served as Program Director at Camp Sunshine from 1998-2004 and was responsible for family and children programs. She returns to Camp Sunshine as Camp Director.
- ★ Join us in wishing all good things to **Brinsley Thigpen** in her new job with Augusta Sports Council and **Terri Sexton** in her new position at Winship Cancer Institute. We thank them both for their years of dedication to Camp Sunshine.

MOVING?

Have you moved recently? Are you about to move? Do we need to change your mailing address, e-mail or phone number? Contact Chanteasea@mycampsunshine.com or call 404-325-7979, ext. 10.



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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



THEN & NOW

Ansley's Story

On July 3rd, Ansley celebrated the 20th anniversary of her successful bone marrow transplant right where she wanted to be: at Camp Sunshine Junior Week being a cabin counselor.

Ansley, her parents Joe and Vicki (a member of Camp Sunshine's board), and younger brother Joseph planned a special trip to the Pacific Northwest after camp. But for 23-year-old Ansley, camp week is, and always has been, nonnegotiable.

"Camp means the world to me," Ansley said. "I don't remember a specific time when I first heard about Camp Sunshine. For me, Camp Sunshine always was a household word. It is something I've known about my whole life."

Ansley was 10 months old when she was diagnosed with acute myelocytic leukemia (AML). As an infant, she underwent a bone marrow transplant in Atlanta using her own harvested cells. Unfortunately, she relapsed; in the meantime, however, her baby brother Joseph had been born and was a perfect donor match. The family traveled to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington for Ansley's second transplant. At the time, Joseph, age 4 months, was the youngest bone marrow donor on record.

Ansley remembers being "immersed" in camp from an early age: "My parents were very active and involved. We would go to Family Camp and other camp activities. It was just such a wonderful place. The people were so nice and everybody was having such a good time — the campers, the counselors, the staff"

Still, when she turned 7 and was able to attend camp on her own for the first time,

"it was a little overwhelming." It was the counselors, she said, who put her at ease: "I thoroughly loved my counselors. They were wonderful. I remember panning for gold, and they had us totally convinced that there were real diamonds and gold in there. So we went every day to pan for gold. We had such a blast."

She also remembers carefree afternoons as a young camper and making her own choices about going to the pool or doing arts & crafts: "It was such a fun sense of freedom," she said. For a child who is facing or has faced cancer, it is a welcome pleasure.

As Ansley grew into her high school years and began attending Teen Week, camp became even more about friendships. "People who I consider to be some of my best friends are from Camp Sunshine," she commented. "You spend 12 Summer Camp weeks in the same cabin with the same friends and you grow very close. Though as a group we were always open to new campers, too. That's the beauty of camp — everyone is very accepting."

Ansley knew from the start that she wanted to be a counselor someday. After graduating from camp at age 18, she worked the next summer for Camp Twin Lakes. At age 20, she enrolled in the Leaders in Training (LIT) program for Camp Sunshine. She spent Junior Week working side-by-side with volunteer counselors and staff, and attending leadership training sessions. Last summer was her first as a full-fledged counselor.

"After 12 years of being a camper, it was a big transition to become a counselor," Ansley said. LIT training helped her build confidence and take on greater responsibilities — life skills she can use beyond the camp environment.



Ansley (top, left) with friends

Ansley graduated from Sewanee, The University of the South, with a bachelor's degree in psychology and starts nursing school at Emory University this fall with an eye toward pediatric oncology nursing. She is an emerging leader at camp. When a call went out for Keencheefoonee Road Race participants to share fundraising tips, Ansley was among the first to respond with many practical suggestions.

"At first I wanted to be a counselor so I wouldn't have to stop going to camp," she reflected. "But being an LIT and a counselor has meant so much to me. It is incredibly rewarding to give back to an organization that has had such a positive impact on my life." ✨



Leaders in Training Learn Skills for Life,

continued from page 1

empathetic. The training program builds on that, focusing on good decision-making, taking responsibility and working as a team. As LITs, they shift from an inward focus of *me*, to an outward focus of thinking about others."

For Kappi, her husband Duncan and their family, Camp Sunshine has been a family affair for almost 30 years. Their older daughter Katherine is a childhood leukemia survivor and today is a landscape designer on St. Simon's Island. Through the years, Kappi has had many campers thank her for leading the training. "Kids think nothing can top being a camper," she noted. "But then they become an LIT and find it was every bit as rewarding – and more." ✱

LAURA'S STORY, continued from page 1

the tumor was) were replaced with titanium implants. Months of chemotherapy and physical therapy followed, and in April 2008, she was cancer-free.

For 18 months, Laura moved on with her life. She participated in Camp Sunshine summer camp in



2008 and enjoyed many other camp activities as well. In August 2009 during a routine scan, doctors found a tumor in her lung, which required surgery. After this relapse, things returned to what Laura called her "new normal." In January 2010, however, during a spin class, she felt severe pain in her chest. A scan showed 21 tumors on her lungs. This time, her protocol included not only surgery and chemotherapy, but also a chemo wash.

Despite many obstacles, Laura

managed to keep up with her school work and in May 2010 graduated with her high school class. "I was sick; I could barely walk; and I had to be in a wheelchair," she said. "But I did manage to walk across the stage to get my diploma."

Laura began college studies in spring 2011 at Kennesaw State University, majoring in psychology. Pneumonia in May led to additional lung surgery in June. Undaunted, Laura reported for leadership training less than a month after her most recent surgery. She was assigned to 11-year-old girls in Cabin #11 and loved it: "They are precious. I just loved seeing them have fun and be carefree."

A leader in high school, Laura is now sharpening these skills in college, helping to organize KSU against Cancer, raising awareness of and participation in Relay for Life. "I knew early on I wanted to be a LIT. I wanted to give back to Camp Sunshine for all the things that were given to me," she said. "When you're a teenager with cancer, you feel so alone. At camp, I met so many people who had been through what I was going through, and the love that was poured over us there was incredible. I met some of the best people in the world at camp." ✱



HAYES' STORY

Hayes was 8 when he was diagnosed with peripheral primitive neuroectodermal tumor: "My mom discovered a small tumor near my right shoulder blade while she was scratching my back." One doctor dismissed it, but a second opinion led to a biopsy. A year of intense chemotherapy followed.

Hayes and his family learned about Camp Sunshine during a hospital stay: "That summer I was on the bus headed to my first year of camp having no idea that my life was about to change forever!"

Like many first-year campers on treatment, Hayes was "reserved, tired, introverted, and somewhat hesitant. I immediately felt welcome though. From the moment I got off the bus, I felt like the staff was so happy that I came. The facilities were incredible, my counselors were awesome, and the activities were things I would never have dreamed of doing."

Years of Camp Sunshine activities followed. As Hayes grew older and realized that his camper years would end after senior year, his thoughts turned toward leadership training: "Becoming an LIT was the next stepping stone to creating an eternal camp experience."

Completing leadership training was even better than he thought it would be. "From learning about camp from the 'other side' to participating in the group LIT activities, everything was well designed and fun," he said. His favorite part was the Group Initiative session led by Dan Mathews. "I have always loved GI and as an LIT, this was no exception."

Hayes is on the Camp Twin Lakes staff this summer. About to begin his senior year at the University of Georgia, he is studying nutrition science and hopes to attend dental school: "My ultimate goal is to become an oral surgeon and help trauma patients, kids with facial disorders, and even cancer patients." Chemotherapy, he noted, can take a toll on dental health.

A leader outside of camp as well, Hayes plays club lacrosse at UGA and is on the university's executive board for Relay for Life. He is a personal adviser to entering freshmen and is Vice President of Community Service for the UGA chapter of Sigma Alpha Lambda. As an LIT, he has learned "to be open-minded and not to sweat the small stuff." LIT training also helps put things in perspective: "Your problems are nothing compared to some of the campers – and they still smile!" ✱

COMMUNITY PARTNER

American Family Day Hosts Annual Carnival of Delights

It's hard to say who has more fun at Camp Sunshine's annual carnival during Junior Week: the campers, the staffers, the volunteers, or the man who, for 20 years, has pulled it all together – Bill Blohm, President and Owner of American Family Day.

Truly a night of magic and wonderment, the carnival has been a Camp Sunshine tradition since 1992. It began when Bill met Camp Sunshine advocate Will Strother at a trade show. "There were many vendors there that day, but Bill stood out with his genuineness and passion for what he does," Will recalled.

Initially, Will and Bill worked out a business arrangement for American Family Day to create a carnival event for camp; but when Bill experienced camp for himself, the carnival quickly became a gift to Camp Sunshine. "I was just amazed by the children and the volunteers," Bill said. "There is so much good going on at Camp Sunshine, I figured the carnival is the least I can do."

The event is usually held on Monday for the junior campers. "We like to hold it early in the week, so those kids who are new to camp and might be a little homesick are suddenly having so much fun they aren't missing home any more," Bill said.

Often Bill hosts a cookout, featuring grilled chicken, hot dogs, hamburgers and lots of sides, for the teens during Senior Week. Many times, he has held a carnival for the teen



campers as well. "Bill always stays to enjoy in the fun and get to know the kids," Will commented. "That is where his true enjoyment comes from."

Held in the gym, the carnival lasts about two hours. "Campers have a choice of playing midway games of skill and luck where they can win festive, stuffed prizes to take home," Will said, "and, yes, the counselors end up carrying all the stuff around all night!" Many counselors also end up getting soaked in the dunk tank. Cotton candy, snow cones, popcorn and soft drinks keep campers happy. Airbrush tattoos and floppy hats add to the fun. A favorite activity is a giant, inflatable slide which reaches to the top of the ceiling. Carnival music, colorful balloons and streamers set the mood.

"I love children and the children at Camp Sunshine are very special to me," Bill said. "But I have to say a word about the volunteers, too. We do a lot of events in a year, and nobody works harder than those volunteers. They are unbelievably dedicated."

The same can be said of Bill. "The true testament of a man is not what he takes from this world but how much he gives back," Will reflected. "I'd like to say thank you, Bill, for making a difference in the lives of the children who attend Camp Sunshine, and in my life." ✨

Earlier this year, the American Camp Association in conjunction with the Association of Independent Camps launched a public service announcement campaign called Because of Camp.® Here's how several Camp Sunshine campers, volunteers and staff filled in the blank.

Because of Camp....

"I have friends for a lifetime who understand me like no others."

– Tenise

"I have learned that not only can children survive cancer, they can thrive after it."

– Russell

"I can do anything if I put my mind to it and enjoy helping others just like when others helped me."

–Keenan



CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

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

SEPTEMBER 2011

SPA SYDELL NIGHT AT CAMP SUNSHINE

September 12 and November 15

6:00-8:00 PM

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

12:15 PM – 1:45 PM

Call to RSVP

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

WHAT'S NEXT? Planning for College

PROGRAM FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL

September 14: 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 (404) 325-7979

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, the newsletter and your mail for programs coming to your area.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	2	3
4	5 Labor Day Holiday (Office Closed)	6 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	7 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR	8	9	10 Preschool Apple Orchard Program
11	12 Spa Sydell Night	13	14 Pre-School Music Class Planning for College	15	16	17 Wild Adventures in Valdosta
18 Young Adult Outing	19	20	21	22 Teen Group	23	24
25	26	27	28 Pre-School Music Class	29	30 Remember the Sunshine Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	→

OCTOBER 2011

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					Remember the Sunshine Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	1 →
2 →	3	4 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	5 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR	6 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	7	8
9 NE GA Regional Program	10	11	12 Pre-School Music Class	13	14 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	15 →
16 →	17	18	19	20	21 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	22 →
23 →	24	25	26 Pre-School Music Class	27	28	29
30 Fall Festival	31					



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

NOVEMBER 2011

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

SPECIAL EVENTS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 27: Pirates of Lanier Castaways Poker Run

A pirate-themed poker run on the waters of Lake Lanier. Get your crew, decorate your vessel and get ready to win some cash! The event benefits Camp Sunshine.

www.lanierpartners.org/pokerrun

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8: Cocktails for Cancer, 7:00 – 11:00 pm

Join us at Compound for a night of specially created cocktails and delicious food, benefiting Camp Sunshine! Contact lindsey@mycamp-sunshine.com for more details.

SEPTEMBER 9-10: Camp Sunshine Yard Sale

Browse through treasures and see what you can find at Camp Sunshine House! Contact Tenise@mycamp-sunshine.com for details or to donate items.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18: Camp Out Family Fest, 12:00 – 2:30 pm

The Park Tavern becomes the site of a family-friendly concert that includes kid's games, music from four different bands, and lots of fun giveaways! Pre-sale tickets are available through www.ticketalternative.com; \$10/adults, \$6/kids. Proceeds benefit Camp Sunshine.

SEPTEMBER 24-25: HD Marine and Wendy's Bass Fishing Tournament

Fishing tournament and family fun to benefit Camp Sunshine at Laurel Park at Lake Lanier, contact HD Marine at 770-614-4080.

DECEMBER 2011

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	2	3
4	5	6 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston Old World Santa at Rhodes Hall	7 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR	8	9	10
11 Holiday Party at Camp Sunshine House	12	13	14 Pre-School Music Class	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 Office Closed	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 Office Closed	31



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IceBox

Keencheefoonee Road Race Sets Giving Pace

Hard to pronounce but easy to support, the Keencheefoonee Road Race raised more than more than \$200,000 for camp programs this year.

"We had the best turnout to date with probably over 40 runners each week," said Gary Palgon, race organizer and longtime volunteer. "That also means there were just as many people back at camp taking care of the campers!"

This marked the 11th Keencheefoonee, named for the road that leads to Camp Twin Lakes where summer camp is held. Since its inception, the event has raised more than \$1.4 million, making it the largest annual fundraiser for Camp Sunshine.

Originally the race was founded as a way for volunteer staff and counselors to raise money for

camp programs. Last year race organizers opened up the event to camper families, too, who created their own virtual teams to raise funds. "Using social networking for Camp Sunshine fundraising activities works on several levels," Palgon said. "It increases the amount of money we raise because of the broad number of potential donors we can reach. And it also greatly increases the awareness about Camp Sunshine."

This year's race was a "celebration of the race's history," Palgon said: "It all started because Summer Camp fell during 4th of July in 2000 and we ran a short race in honor of the Peachtree Road Race. This year Junior Week again fell during July 4th. This made it very special." ✨

