

**Nurturing Nature**

A camper 30 years ago,  
Katherine is now a horticulturist in St. Simons Island.

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**28 Years and Counting**

Infirmary nurse Colleen Austin  
is an invaluable member of  
the Camp Sunshine family.

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**Gold Medal Year**

Keencheefoonee Road Race  
sets record pace for camp.

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



# POSTCARDS



## Looking Back on 30 Years of Sunshine: Part 2

*For Camp Sunshine's 30th anniversary, founder Dorothy Jordan and executive director Sally Hale recorded their reminiscences at WABE 90.1 in Atlanta for StoryCorps, a nationwide oral history project. Each issue of Postcards in 2012 features edited excerpts.*

**S:** Dorothy, at that first camp, do you remember Molly, who is now one of our wonderful volunteers, but do you remember her as a camper learning how to swim?

**D:** Oh, yes, I remember...

**S:** She had been a very athletic young girl until she lost her leg (to cancer). She didn't think she could participate in sports. She was 13 at the time. But at camp she learned it was OK to leave her (prosthetic) leg at the dock and just swim. And do you remember the campfire at the end of the week? You had written a camp song...

**D:** Yes, it was a little silly, but we loved it.

**S:** I remember the kids made up a second verse...  
*Dorothy, don't ever take Camp Sunshine away.*

**D:** I remember that clearly. And I remember I was sobbing, I was just so overcome by emotion. I look back and realize that the mission was to give children with cancer the opportunity to have a normal childhood experience. But I don't think that any of us had any idea of the impact it would have. I knew it would be therapeutic. But I didn't know how deep it would go or how far it would take these campers into their future.

We continued to hear back from parents throughout the year, "Thank you for giving my child back their confidence. Now they are back in school; now they are trying something new; now they are reaching out to other kids at the clinic."

I also remember another camper from that first year...Karla. She was so sick and in so much pain, and her cancer was advanced. But she was so determined to stay at camp, and we were determined for her to be there and to make it the best possible experience for her. It has always been our philosophy that if there is something – anything – a child can do...if a camper can enjoy themselves in some way and can be part of the Camp Sunshine community in some way...then it is our duty to do everything we can to make it a great experience for that child. We worked really hard to do that, and I think Karla had a great time that year.

Children and teens in any stage of treatment should be able to come and participate. So our focus was to have active summer camp activities, but also opportunities to be less active and still have fun – arts and crafts, story time, having a staff member play the guitar and sing with the children.

Of course, it also took a talented, professional staff to deal with the medical and nursing issues the children were facing. I could rely on you, Sally, to put those pieces together. Do you remember your title

*Continued on Page 4*



**DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,**

October 7th will be special, as we mark our 30th anniversary reunion for alumni and volunteers at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge. Camp Sunshine has touched many, many lives with its warming rays. Like camp itself, the reunion will be a time of fun and friendship – an opportunity to reminisce and to look forward.

To celebrate, Founder Dorothy Jordan and I participated in the national oral history project, StoryCorps. This *Postcards* picks up where we left off last issue. We've enjoyed hearing from campers, families and supporters who've told us how much they like learning about camp's humble beginnings and charting how far we've come. As Dorothy says, "...the mission was to give children with cancer the opportunity to have a normal childhood experience. But I don't think that any of us had any idea of the impact it would have."

As the reunion approaches, we are happy to share Katherine's story with you. When Katherine was diagnosed with ALL at age 6, there was no Camp Sunshine. In fact, Katherine's family sought medical treatment outside of Georgia because of limited resources here. Several years later,

Katherine and her family were among the first Camp Sunshine families. For them, camp has been a family affair; we are deeply grateful for their decades of dedication.

Our Volunteer Spotlight features a friend whose commitment dates back to camp's young years. Colleen Austin had just started as a pediatric hematology-oncology nurse when she answered a call for camp volunteers. That first camp, she said, invigorated her. So much so that she has returned every year since.

We also recap this year's record-setting Keencheefoonee Road Race, now Camp Sunshine's largest annual fundraising event. And we introduce the Circle of Sunshine for those donors who have chosen to make a planned gift to Camp Sunshine.

Finally, we congratulate Camp Twin Lakes on its 20th year. We are indeed a proud partner of Camp Twin Lakes. Here's to many more years of together serving the needs of children.

– Sally Hale, *Executive Director*

**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.

## Join the Circle of Sunshine

*For our 30th anniversary, Camp Sunshine has established the Circle of Sunshine for those donors who have designated a planned gift to Camp Sunshine, continuing a legacy of hope and caring for many years to come.*

Planned gifts can take many forms, including naming Camp Sunshine as a beneficiary in your will, IRA or life insurance policy. Your bequest can be a specific financial gift, a particular asset or a percentage of your estate. Your attorney or planned giving specialist can help you decide the best giving method for you.

Members of the Circle of Sunshine will be listed in our yearbook and annual report, and will receive an invitation to

a member luncheon honoring your commitment to Camp Sunshine. Your planned gift will help children with cancer throughout Georgia, and will ensure the growth and continuity of Camp Sunshine's programs for many years to come. For more information or to let us know that you have included Camp Sunshine in your will or estate planning, please contact Mary Kyle, Development Director, at 404-325-7979.★



## THEN &amp; NOW



## Katherine's Story

**Katherine has a knack for nurturing. Even as a young camper, she valued friendships and made them last. As a counselor in training, she made lifelong connections with her cabin campers. Now as a professional horticulturist, she spends her workdays nurturing her clients' landscape dreams.**

Thirty years ago, when Camp Sunshine began, Katherine, then 15, was one of the original campers. She was six years old when she was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia. "It was early winter when I started getting really sick," she recalled. "At first, my doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong; I had absolutely no energy."

A blood test confirmed the diagnosis. In those days, pediatric oncology services were limited in Atlanta, and her doctors recommended St. Jude's Children's Hospital in Memphis, TN. "It was just before Christmas and I was able to spend Christmas at home," she said. "But right afterwards, we had to fly to Memphis."

For three and a half years, Katherine and her parents drove to Memphis and flew back and forth for treatment. She went off therapy in mid-1978 but relapsed a year later. Three more years of treatment followed. At the end of that time, her doctors recommended yet another round of chemo due to breakthroughs in treatment protocols. She was released from treatment in 1985 – 11 years after her initial diagnosis.

Throughout her treatment the family, including her parents Duncan and Kappi and younger sister Ashley, were involved in fundraising and volunteer work for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. When



Dorothy Jordan started a camp for children with cancer, they were among the first families she contacted. "I didn't want to go," Katherine said. "Having cancer, I didn't want to go away from my family at all."

Her parents, however, encouraged the idea. "Once I got to camp I fell in love with everything," she said. "Just to be able to do things I never thought I would be able to do again – I cannot describe that feeling. I loved horseback riding the best, and the pool. They just made everything so much fun, and we never slowed down."

At that first camp, her father, an accomplished photographer, was allowed to

visit to take photographs. That also started a lifelong volunteer commitment on the part of the entire family. When Katherine graduated from camp after her senior year in high school, she became a counselor-in-training and served for several years as a cabin counselor. "My first year as a counselor, two of my girls had brain tumors," she recalled. "I wasn't sure I had the confidence to do this. But by the end of the second day I had just so connected with those campers. And to this day I am still in touch with them."

After high school, Katherine worked in retail for many years. In the late 1990s, she was staying with her grandmother in Helen, when she decided on a career path more in keeping with her nurturing nature. She received a degree in horticulture from North Georgia Technical College and completed an internship at The Cloister on Sea Island. She eventually moved to St. Simons Island and started her own landscaping business, Plantings by Katherine. In her spare time she enjoys working in her own garden, painting and swimming.

When Camp Sunshine celebrates its 30th anniversary reunion on October 7 at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge, Katherine and her family will be there. "I wouldn't miss it," she said. "Mostly I'm looking forward to seeing people I haven't seen in a long time and visiting with old friends." ✨







## Looking Back on 30 Years of Sunshine,

Continued from page 1

then? Assistant medical director! And do you remember our infirmary?

**S:** Yes, our infirmary was a cabin where you and Hamilton (Dorothy's late husband) stayed.

**D:** We had our bunks in the infirmary and we hauled in other bunks for the children who were not well. And we hauled in cabinets to store our medical supplies. Do you remember we even had to get rid of a few mice?

**S:** Yes, yes, we were really in primitive quarters! How we knew what to be prepared for, what to take into camp that first year, I do not even know.

**D:** I was thinking hematology-oncology supplies, but we also had all the other pieces of being at camp. We were in the mountains at a lake with active kids! Bee stings, bug bites, sprained ankles!

**S:** Probably being a little naïve was good.

**D:** We might not have been brave enough had we known.

**S:** We just took it as it came, and whatever came, we would take care of it. That continues today in terms of trying to provide for campers who may be quite sick but are really determined to be there.

**D:** Our campers may have very complicated medical and nursing needs while at camp. I am so proud of our volunteer staff – our pediatric nurse practitioners, our hematologist-oncologists, our lab techs who do our campers' blood work. We have grown and we have come such a long way.

**S:** Giving them chemotherapy in the infirmary, you plan it around their schedule. You ask them when they want to have their chemotherapy. And if they are getting chemotherapy, they have three or four of their buddies there with them playing games. Dorothy, you are a mom. How would it feel from a parent's point of view knowing you are sending your really fragile child off and trusting them to a stranger for a week?

**D:** Camp is a gift they are giving to their child, and it is a gift they are giving to us to allow their child to spend that precious time with us. The parents are so brave and so selfless. It takes a lot of trust in the people who are wrapping their arms around your child for that week. It's mind-boggling when you think about that trust.

**NEXT: On community, journeys and 30 years of growth. ✱**

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

# 28 Camps and Counting for Colleen Austin

One of Colleen Austin's most precious pieces of jewelry is a small bracelet made with tiny fishing lures and multi-colored beads. It is her first Camp Sunshine bracelet, given to her in 1985 by a young camper with acute myeloid leukemia. "I remember this little boy – he fell from the top bunk and got a black eye," Colleen recalled. Because he went airborne, another camper called him Superman.

Colleen had just begun as a nurse on the hematology-oncology floor at Egleston Children's Hospital (now Children's Healthcare of Atlanta) when she first heard about Camp Sunshine. She answered a call for volunteers, at first participating as a cabin counselor for young girls. Seeing her patients at camp invigorated her: "I worked with these kids every day in the hospital. It was evident that they were very sick. Also, in those days the cure rate wasn't what it is today. So to be at camp with these kids and rather than focusing on the illness...to see them being kids again and doing what kids do...it was an incredible opportunity."

After a few years, Colleen switched from cabin counselor to her present-day role as camp infirmary nurse. In addition to taking care of patients, she is responsible for coordinating the nursing and medical teams for camp, making sure all the necessary medical supplies and equipment are at camp, double-checking that all camper medical forms are completed and reviewing each individual child's case. Not only is the infirmary equipped with the usual first aid supplies for cuts, bruises, sprained ankles and bee stings, the medical team also must be ready to administer chemotherapy, specialized treatments and necessary medical attention.

Mother of two and grandmother of six,



Colleen has empathy for parents who may hesitate at first to let their child participate in summer camp. "For many parents, the presence of the medical staff makes a huge difference and is the deciding factor to let their child go to camp," she said. "After all, they have already entrusted their child to our care at the hospital and clinic. This can make it easier to transition to camp."

One of Colleen's favorite things about camp actually takes place after camp – hearing from parents about the difference camp has made in their child's life. "We hear it all the time from parents – that their child became much more independent. Children with cancer can struggle with depression, anger and sometimes a why me attitude. But at camp, once they are with a group of kids who are struggling with the same issues, they realize that they are not singled out, that they are not alone." Most rewarding is when former campers come back as adult volunteers or visitors and tell her what a difference camp made in their lives.

Colleen had planned to retire after 25 years. Instead this year, just as she has done for the past 27 years, Colleen put on her camp bracelets and wore them proudly. "The bracelets open up conversation," she said. If those conversations open up a child or parent to the warmth of Camp Sunshine, that makes them priceless. ✱



# SUMMER CAMP 2012

## Treasured Tradition: The Friendship Bracelet



*To celebrate Camp Sunshine's 30th anniversary, we take a look at treasured traditions. Here is the story of the friendship bracelet.*

The only place and time that anyone can get a friendship bracelet is at summer camp. You can't buy a friendship bracelet or make one for yourself. A friendship bracelet must be given to you – a gift from someone else at camp. It must be placed on your wrist by the camper, volunteer or staff member who is giving you the bracelet, and the giving is always followed by a warm Camp Sunshine hug.

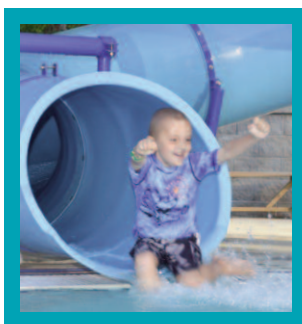
**History** In preparation for the first Camp Sunshine summer camp, founder Dorothy Jordan visited several cancer camps. One camp, Camp One Step at a Time in Chicago, shared their tradition of the friendship bracelet with Dorothy. Since our first camp in 1983, the friendship bracelet has been an important part of our tradition as well.

**Designs** The first Camp Sunshine friendship bracelet had no beads; it consisted of just fishing swivels. Every year since then, each friendship bracelet has a different combination of bead types and colors. The bracelets used to be made by camp volunteers prior to the campers arriving; but now they are made by a number of volunteer organizations due to the large number of bracelets required for camp. ✨



*Before camp I felt so alone, like no one knew what I was going through. Now I have over 100 people I can turn to...two of them even have matching scars!*

– Meredith



*This place has changed my life and I love coming here. It's literally my favorite place in the world.* – Erin



*I cannot even explain in words how happy camp makes me feel or how awesome it is. Everywhere you go you see the biggest smiles on every face.* – Aloï



# CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

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

## SPA SYDELL NIGHT AT CAMP SUNSHINE

September 10 and November 12

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 12: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Camp Sunshine House

**Featured Speaker:** Dave Graves, Senior Associate Director of Admissions, Operations & Evaluation, 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](http://www.mycampsunshine.com), the newsletter and your mail for programs coming to your area.



Connect with Camp Sunshine online to stay up to date on the latest news and happenings! Join us at [www.facebook.com/campsunshine](https://www.facebook.com/campsunshine) and on Twitter @mycampsunshine.

## S E P T E M B E R 2 0 1 2

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3 Labor Day Holiday (Office Closed)	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 Preschool Apple Orchard Program
9	10 Spa SydeLL Night	11	12 Pre-School Music Class Planning for College	13	14	15 Wild Adventures in Valdosta
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Pre-School Music Class	27	28 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	29
30						

## O C T O B E R 2 0 1 2

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	5 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	6
7 30th Anniversary for Alumni and Volunteers at Camp Twin Lakes	8	9	10 Pre-School Music Class	11	12 Remember the Sunshine Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 NE Georgia Regional Program	22	23	24 Pre-School Music Class	25	26	27
28 Fall Festival	29	30	31			





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

## NOVEMBER 2012

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

### 30TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION FOR ALUMNI AND VOLUNTEERS

**Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge**

**October 7, 2012**

**2:00-6:00 PM**

All alumni, volunteers and board members and their families are invited to join us at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge. Plan to join us for an afternoon of fun and friendship. Call 404-325-7979 to RSVP and for details.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9: Atlanta Dream Game with Camp Sunshine**

Join Camp Sunshine as the Atlanta Dream takes on the Washington Mystics at 3pm on Sunday, September 9th, at Phillips Arena! Tickets in Camp Sunshine's special section are just \$15 with \$5 of each ticket being donated to Camp Sunshine.

**SEPTEMBER 22-23: 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.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13: Atlanta Parent Magazine Family Block Party**

Camp Sunshine is honored to have been selected as a beneficiary of this year's Family Block Party! Join us Saturday, October 13, for this exciting event on the Atlanta campus of Mercer University. Families will enjoy more than 50 activities, storytelling, moonwalks, train rides, live entertainment and much more!

**OCTOBER 20-21: 7th Annual Spin for Kids**

Join the Camp Sunshine Team at the 7th annual Spin for Kids fundraising bike ride weekend. By joining or sponsoring the Camp Sunshine Team, your donation will go towards Camp Sunshine's 2013 summer camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge. Details at [www.spinforkids.org](http://www.spinforkids.org).

## DECEMBER 2012

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						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 Holiday Party at Camp Sunshine House	10	11	12 Pre-School Music Class	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Young Adult Holiday Party	20	21	22
23	24 Office Closed	25 Office Closed	26	27	28	29
30	31					



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## 2012 Road Race Is Faster, Higher and Stronger

The 12th Annual Keencheefoonee Road Race set an unprecedented pace this year, raising more than \$227,000 for camp programs. The race took its cue from the Olympic motto: faster in reaching – and surpassing—the financial goal even before camp was over; higher in total funds raised; and stronger in numbers of participants and new donors.

A record 101 participants registered online for the

Keencheefoonee, named for the road that leads to Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge where Camp Sunshine is held. They drew support from 1,530 donors, 750 of whom were new donors to Camp Sunshine. "The number of donors, the total amount raised and the average gift amount have all increased steadily over the last three years," said Gary Palgon, race chairman and member of Camp Sunshine's Board of Directors. Since its inception, the event has raised

more than \$1.6 million, making it the largest annual fundraiser for Camp Sunshine.

Social media, including Facebook, contributes to the success, Palgon said: "Friends see friends donating, and they want to do the same." A case in point (and race highlight) was this year's hair-raising effort by volunteer counselor Chris Kappy, who offered to shave his beard and cut his long hair if an additional \$2,500 could be raised during camp week. "We did it," Palgon said, "and then Chris reached out to all his Facebook friends asking them to match it, even though he had already raised \$10,000 from them." Not only did Kappy's haircut net an additional \$5,000 for camp programs, but he also donated his shorn locks to Locks of Love, a nonprofit organization providing hairpieces for children who have experienced medical hair loss. \*

