

**Big Apple Is Big Success**

Camp Sunshine Day at the Big Apple Circus raises funds and fun for kids of all ages under the Big Top. **Page 2**

**Molly's Story**

From shy camper at our first camp week 25 years ago to inspiring volunteer counselor, Molly is a beacon of hope to campers and families alike. **Page 3**

**Extraordinary Volunteers**

From the start, Camp Sunshine has been blessed with dedicated individuals, some of whom have never missed camp week. **Page 4**

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



**POSTCARDS**

**Camp Sunshine – 25 Years and Growing Strong!**

**T**his summer marks the 25th anniversary of Camp Sunshine. That's a quarter-century of friendship bracelets, talent shows, flagpole gatherings, campfire moments and summer fun. Founder Dorothy Jordan, then a pediatric nurse who specialized in caring for children with chronic illnesses, wanted to organize a summer camp week for children with cancer. From a one-week outing for 44 campers to a year-round program touching the lives of more than 850 families, Camp Sunshine radiates. Here, Dorothy Jordan reflects on 25 years and looks forward to continued success for Camp Sunshine.

**Looking back, did you ever imagine you would be celebrating 25 years of Camp Sunshine?**

Not at all! Originally, my idea was just getting together a group of children with cancer and giving them the opportunity to have a summer camp experience as a way to promote normal childhood growth and development. I knew it would be great, but I also knew it would be important to have the appropriate nursing and medical care in place and to convince parents to allow their child to go.

**So how did that first camp week come to be?**

My background is in pediatric nursing, caring for children with chronic illnesses. I was working toward my master's degree at Emory, when I first visited a camp for kids with cystic fibrosis. I was overwhelmed by the experience – it was quite profound. The thought came to me...why aren't we doing this for kids with cancer?



About that same time, I saw a wonderful CBS Sunday Morning News segment with Charles Kuralt about a camp in Denver for kids with cancer. That was it! I spent the next year researching, traveling to the few camps that did exist, meeting with people and learning as much as I could.

**Who helped turn the vision into reality?**

A lot of people worked very hard to help make that first camp happen. One was Dr. Ragab (Abdelsalam Ragab, M.D., a widely known Atlanta pediatric oncologist and founder of CURE Childhood Cancer). Mo Thrash and I met for pizza one day, and in true Mo fashion, he

jumped on the idea and got his whole family involved. And, of course, I wanted Sally Hale to be the camp nurse. Something about the idea touched people from the beginning.

*Continued on Page 8*

**Give a Child a Week of Sunshine**



It costs \$500 to sponsor a child with cancer to attend summer camp at Camp Sunshine. The rewards are priceless. Fill out the enclosed donor envelope and return it with your check today. Or donate on-line at [www.mycampsunshine.com](http://www.mycampsunshine.com).

**Summer Teen Week at Camp Twin Lakes**  
13- to 18-year-olds  
June 17-23

**Summer Junior Week at Camp Twin Lakes**  
7- to 12-year-olds  
June 24-30



DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,

**WOW! A silver anniversary!** Can it really be that we're celebrating 25 years of Camp Sunshine? It seems not so long ago that Dorothy Jordan, my friend and nursing colleague, approached me with her inspired idea of organizing a summer camp for children with cancer. A quarter-century has flown by. I am indebted to Dorothy for sharing her vision and placing her confidence in me those many years ago.

This special 25th anniversary *Postcards* is filled with reflections on the past quarter-century. Dorothy Jordan's interview captures the spirit of the early Camp Sunshine days and considers our future growth. This issue begins a year-long series, profiling faithful volunteers who share their fondest memories of the first Camp Sunshine week and its impact on their lives. Perhaps most moving of all, beloved counselor Molly

recounts her story of hope. Molly was one of our original 44 campers 25 years ago; today, she is an integral part of our volunteer team and a symbol of hope for campers and their families.

On this special anniversary – we acknowledge our incredible donors, many of whom have supported us since the beginning. Recently I came across the original (hand-written!) ledgers from 1983. The first person to write a donation for Camp Sunshine was T.J. (Tim) Connolly. Tim and Carol's daughter Maryann had been diagnosed with leukemia and attended camp a couple of years later. Maryann eventually became a Camp Sunshine counselor; today she is raising a family of her own. Through the years, the Connollys have continued their generous support. So have many others whose names were on that original ledger, and we are deeply grateful to them all.

At Camp Sunshine, we value precious memories. Yet we're equally appreciative of the many good things that are happening today for the children and families we serve. Our third annual Camp Sunshine Day at Big Apple Circus was a tremendous success. None of this would be possible without our generous sponsors.

I hope you take time to reflect on a quarter-century of Camp Sunshine. But don't take too much time...our 26th summer camp is right around the corner! Better start packing – the best is yet to come!

– Sally Hale, Executive Director

**MOVING?**

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

**Big Thanks to Big Apple Sponsors**

The Big Apple Circus came to town and helped raise more than \$100,000 for Camp Sunshine programs. With more than 1,500 people in attendance, including 174 Camp Sunshine families, the circus also has become one of Camp Sunshine's largest fundraising events. We gratefully acknowledge our many sponsors.

**Big Top Sponsor**

The Coca-Cola Company

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AFLAC

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Special thanks to our many High Wire Sponsors who made it possible to share this special event with Camp Sunshine kids and families.



## THEN &amp; NOW



## Molly's Story

**"My message for parents is let your kids be kids! I can only imagine how hard it must be to have a sick child and let them go off for a week without you. But Camp Sunshine is incredible. It changed my life."**

Molly attended the very first week of Camp Sunshine in 1983 as a timid 16-year-old, away from home for the first time and fighting a disease which had claimed her leg. Today, Molly is a faithful volunteer who seldom misses camp week and is a symbol of hope to young campers and their families.

"When the kids realize that I'm a cancer survivor, they might be surprised or shocked at first," Molly said. "But they are delighted to see that I can walk, and they are always curious about my prosthetic leg. They want to know, *Can you swim? Can you canoe? Can you do this or that?* My goal is to encourage them every chance I get."

Molly drew on this same positive attitude in the early 1980s when she was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma. "I was very athletic as a young girl. I had been at softball practice and I developed a sore leg," she recalled. The pain persisted. A biopsy revealed a cancerous tumor behind the knee.

At age 13, Molly began the battle of a lifetime. Her doctors recommended amputating the leg, but when further tests showed the cancer had metastasized to her breastbone and lungs, the family decided against amputation at that time. Molly began an intensive, two-year treatment protocol, which included chemotherapy and radiation. The combination worked, and although amputation eventually became inevitable, Molly beat the disease.

About that time, one of Molly's care providers – a pediatric oncology nurse named Sally Hale – approached the family about a new idea. A summer camp was

being formed for children with cancer. Did Molly want to go? The family took a leap of faith, and Molly set off for the first Camp Sunshine held that inaugural year at Camp High Harbor. "The whole thing was absolutely awesome," Molly recalled. "It was hard for me to get around – my prosthetic leg was new and I didn't wear it much then. My hair had just grown back, and I was puffy from prednisone. But everybody was great – it was an unforgettable experience."



Molly was greeted by Camp Sunshine founder Dorothy Jordan. "She sat me down and gave me a job to do – handing out information to people as they came in," Molly said. "I immediately felt at home." The feeling has lasted a quarter of a century.

Her fondest memory of that first camp? "Mo Thrash (see Volunteer Spotlight) got me back in the water," Molly said. "I had been a swimmer before the amputation, and Mo told me I was going to swim again." Not only did she swim again,

but eventually she returned to participate on her high school swim team.

As a young adult, Molly became a volunteer counselor. At age 30 she had to take time off to fight another cancer diagnosis – this time cancer of the jaw. With that cancer in remission, Molly returned again to volunteer at Camp Sunshine. Today, she is an activities staff volunteer during Junior Camp Week.

"I love getting to spend time with all of the kids," Molly commented. "For the kids and the families, I believe it's a positive thing just knowing there is a survivor my age. I have experienced many of the things they have. If they are an amputee, I encourage them to wear their prosthesis, to try new things, to push themselves."

Molly credits her family with nurturing her strong spirit. "My parents never tried to fool me or give me false information," she said. "They didn't talk around me – they talked to me. I wasn't allowed to stay home from school more than was necessary, and I was encouraged to keep my life as normal as possible. Camp Sunshine became an important part for me, because there I could be just a regular kid."

Molly earned her undergraduate degree from Shorter College and has worked for many years in human resources at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta. She enjoys traveling and being the best aunt she can be to her seven nieces and nephew. Her life goals include earning a master's degree and visiting Ireland. Ask anyone whose life she's touched at Camp Sunshine...*Molly can make her dreams come true.* ✨



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## 25 Years of Commitment – and Counting!

*From the beginning, Camp Sunshine has benefited from dedicated volunteers whose caring and commitment seem to have no bounds. In honor of our 25th anniversary, we will profile individuals throughout the year who have not missed a year at Camp Sunshine. This is the first in a series.*

### Jane and Mo Thrash

For the Thrash family of Atlanta, Camp Sunshine is a family affair. Shortly after losing their young son Callaway to cancer, they were approached by Dorothy Jordan with an idea for a summer camp for children with cancer. Mo, a political consultant who was then President of Cure Childhood Cancer, and his wife Jane needed little persuasion.

Although they had no idea just how wonderful camp would be, the Thrashes had every reason to believe in Camp Sunshine. They were friends with Dorothy Jordan and her

husband Hamilton – Mo and Hamilton had known each other since high school days. Moreover, the camp's head nurse was a young woman named Sally Hale, who had been Callaway's nurse and of whom they had grown quite fond.

"Knowing these individuals, we knew camp was going to be something wonderful for the children, something we had to carry on to honor Callaway's memory," Mo said. "Now it is an essential part of our life. We can't do enough for Camp Sunshine."

Jane describes that first camp week as a learning experience for one and all. "There we were with about 40 campers, and they were bringing in all the medical supplies and equipment for the kids. It was a little overwhelming. And the food that first year was terrible...for a vegetable, we had applesauce at every meal," she laughed.

"But camp was a howling success. When you saw the faces of those children...to give them the opportunity to be with other children who knew, who understood what they were going through ...to give them a time not to be singled out, not to be different...it was all worthwhile."

From the start, Jane and Mo brought their own daughters Brinsley and Mary Katherine to camp, and through the years, they, too, have stayed closely involved as volunteers. Recently, Brinsley stepped up her commitment, accepting a staff position as Program Director. The Thrashes'

influence has been far-reaching – from helping organize Camp Sunshine's Board of Directors; to supporting the founding of Camp Twin Lakes, Camp Sunshine's present-



day site; to advocating for legislation, known as Callaway's Law, which obliges insurance companies to pay for clinical trials for a child with cancer.

The family has a quarter-century's worth of fond memories of karate

demonstrations, swimming classes, arts and crafts, and panning for gold. But the way Camp Sunshine works in a child's life has left the most indelible impressions. "Camp gives a child self-confidence. I remember one young girl who came to camp who hadn't slept in her own bed since she was diagnosed," Jane recalled. "One week at Camp Sunshine, and she grew up...she blossomed, she grew unafraid."

Jane credits the camaraderie among the counselors and the steadfast dedication of Dorothy Jordan, the staff and volunteers for giving Camp Sunshine a solid foundation. She also tips her Camp Sunshine cap to Dorothy's husband: "Hamilton kept the campers and counselors in stitches with his wonderful humor throughout the early camp weeks and the talent shows."

For Mo, a perfect day at Camp Sunshine is the same today as it was 25 years ago. "It consists of just waking up and being around these children," he said. "At Camp Sunshine, you don't have to do a thing, just be."

"For 25 years it's been this way. Camp Sunshine has given campers the will to live and given families hope. It is just what the name implies...sunshine in the lives of children with cancer and their families." ✨



Celebrating 25 Years



CAMP SUNSHINE



1983

First summer camp is held at Camp High Harbor; about 44 campers attend.

1987

First Family Camp is held; first Teen Trip to Washington, D.C. takes place.

1989

First excursion to Outward Bound is held.

1993

First year Camp Twin Lakes opens and Camp Sunshine is held at new camp in Rutledge.

1993

First Steve Doak Scholarship is awarded.

1995

First Teen Retreat Weekend takes place.

1996

First Sibling Camp takes place.

1997

First programs for preschool children are offered.

1997

First Savannah Family Camp Weekend is held at New Ebenezer Retreat Center.

1999

First Hit a Home Run event is held.

2001

Inaugural Keencheefoonee Road Race takes off.

2001

Camp Sunshine kicks off Campaign to build Camp Sunshine House.

2003

Camp Sunshine House opens, providing year-round programming. Teen Group and Family Night begin.

2004

First "Remember the Sunshine" weekend is held.

2005

First Camp Sunshine Day at Big Apple Circus takes place.

2007

First Young Adult Retreat is offered. Regional programs are expanded throughout the state.



**ONGOING PROGRAMS**

**FAMILY NIGHT**

1st and 3rd Tuesday each month  
 5:30-6:30 PM Dinner  
 6:30-7:30 PM Group Meeting  
 Call to RSVP

Meet and share dinner with others in similar situations. Then participate in professionally facilitated groups to discuss pertinent topics. Parents meet together; children meet with other children and childcare is provided for children under age 5.

**TEEN GROUP**

2nd and 4th Thursday each month  
 5:30-6:30 PM Dinner  
 6:30-7:30 PM Program  
 Call to RSVP

For 13- to 18-year-olds. Meet, hang out and get support from other teens who also have or had cancer. For those who are on treatment or were diagnosed as a teen. Dinner is followed by discussion or activity.

**YOUNG ADULT GROUP**

3rd Thursday each month  
 5:30-6:30 PM Dinner  
 6:30-7:30 PM Program  
 Call to RSVP

For 18- to 23-year-olds who are currently on treatment. Dinner is followed by discussion or educational topic of interest.

**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 Thursday each month  
 10:30 AM-12:30 PM

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

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

**M A Y 2 0 0 7**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 Family Night	2 Washington DC Trip	3 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group	11 Young Adult Retreat	12
13	14 Spa Sydell Night Family Night in Central Georgia	15 Family Night	16	17 Young Adult Group	18	19 Staff Orientation for Summer Camp
20	21	22 Educational Program: Communication During Crisis	23	24 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group	25	26
27	28	29 Seasonal Sunshine	30	31		

**J U N E 2 0 0 7**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5 Family Night - New Camper Orientation	6	7 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	8	9
10	11 Family Night - Central Georgia	12	13	14 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Teen Summer Camp at Camp Twin Lakes						
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Junior Summer Camp at Camp Twin Lakes						

# CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS



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

## JULY 2007

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	6	7
8	9 Spa Sydell Night Family Night in Central Georgia	10	11	12 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group	13	14
15	16	17 Family Night	18 Dude Ranch	19 Young Adult Workshop	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group	27	28
29	30 Family Program in Savannah – Sand Gnats Game and Picnic	31				

## AUGUST 2007

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	3 Family Program in Northwest Georgia – Rome Braves Game	4 School-Aged Overnight at Camp Sunshine House
5 Young Adult Conference, Montana Starts Sat., August 4	6	7 Family Night – “Sibling Night”	8	9 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group	10	11
12	13 Spa Sydell Night Family Night in Central Georgia	14	15	16 Young Adult Group	17	18
19	20	21 Family Night	22	23 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group	24 Sibling Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	25
26	27	28 Seasonal Sunshine	29	30	31	

### SAVE THESE DATES

October 5-7

October 12-14

Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes

October 19-21

Remember the Sunshine Weekend  
at Camp Twin Lakes

November 16-18

Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes

### THE POWER OF CONNECTION: Tools for Creating and Maintaining Communication and Intimacy in Your Relationship during Crisis.

May 22

6 PM - 8 PM (dinner provided)  
Camp Sunshine House

This educational session for  
couples will focus on the  
following:

- Creating communication that gets your needs met
- Remembering and connecting to the person you fell in love with
- Closing the exits in your relationship
- Using compassion to get what you want
- Turning down the volume on the relationship
- Turning to, rather than on your partner in times of crisis

### INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

This program provides support and counseling for children and teens regarding illness-related issues. Call Missi Hicks, CCLS, LPC, RPT, at 404-325-7979 for details.

### PROGRAM DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED

Watch for summer regional programs in Central Georgia and South Georgia.

# ADD YOUR MESSAGE OF HOPE TO CAMP SUNSHINE'S BRICK WALKWAY

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I am purchasing \_\_\_\_\_ bricks for Camp Sunshine House. Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Brick Options:**

- 4 x 8 Brick Paver = \$100.00       8 x 8 Brick Paver = \$250.00  
 1 to 3 Lines of Text                      1 to 4 Lines of Text
- 12 x 12 Natural Stone Paver = \$500.00       12 x 12 Natural Stone Paver with Camp Sunshine Logo = \$500.00  
 1 to 5 Lines of Text                      1 to 3 Lines of Text

All lines are 16 characters per line including spaces and punctuation.

Line 1

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Line 2

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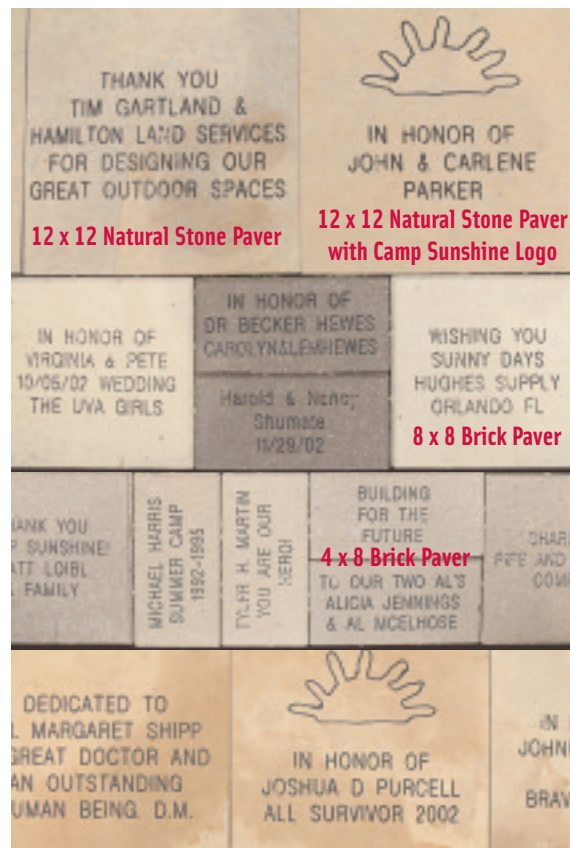
Please make a copy of this form for each brick purchased.



# HONOR MOTHERS, FATHERS, GRADS AND OTHERS

**Spring is a season of special occasions. Show loved ones how much you care with a gift that brings meaning every day. Purchase a brick or stone paver and add your message to our Brick Walkway at Camp Sunshine House.**

Located adjacent to the play area, the walkway and plaza are an important and lasting part of our landscape. Pay tribute to someone whose life has been touched by Camp Sunshine, while supporting our year-round programs. Complete this order form and mail it with your check (payable to Camp Sunshine) to: Camp Sunshine, 1850 Clairmont Road, Decatur, GA 30033.



**"Camp Sunshine – 25 Years and Growing Strong,"** continued from page 1

***What is your fondest memory of that first camp week?***

The camper-counselor football game was unforgettable. It was a chance for the kids to be kind of devilish – cracking eggs on people's heads, using shaving cream, typical stuff kids do at camp. It was a fun and free-spirited attitude, and it's exactly what these children needed.



Jane Thrash, Dr. Ragab, Mo Thrash, Sally Hale, Dorothy Jordan

***Many individuals have been with you from the start.***

That's what makes Camp Sunshine so special...the people.

It's the commitment of people who have grown up with the organization. They get it. They know what it's about, and it's about understanding that children with cancer are normal kids with special needs who want to participate fully in the everyday experiences of growing up.

***Twenty-five years have brought much growth. What are some of the most exciting changes? What hasn't changed?***

The ability to provide year-round programming for children with cancer and their families – this has got to be one of the most exciting and important changes. Today, when a child is diagnosed, the family does not have to wait very long to be connected to a community who can offer support, hope, resources. The opening of Camp Sunshine House in 2003 was a huge milestone, because the House made it possible to provide these critically important educational and support programs in addition to our wonderful recreational programs.

What hasn't changed is Camp Sunshine's great fortune to have strong leadership and a willingness to respond to the needs of the kids and their families. When we started 25 years ago, we did not have a huge strategic plan in place...but we did have a readiness to listen to our campers and their families. Of course, now we do have a strategic plan, but it is not just the Board's plan. It includes the input of all our constituencies – parents, campers, past campers, volunteers, staff.

***What is next for Camp Sunshine?***

It is vitally important that we continue to reach out to children and families in all corners of the state. I feel very strongly about the difference Camp Sunshine can make in a child's life, and I want to be sure we are not missing anyone. As cancer cure rates continue to improve, Camp Sunshine has a role and a responsibility to survivors – we must provide a full range of young adult programs and programs dealing with late effects and survivorship concerns.

***Do you still go to camp each summer?***

Oh, yes. In fact, two years ago, I told Sally (Hale) I wanted to get back in a cabin and be a Cabin Counselor again. I'm a little older than I was 25 years ago and sleeping in a cabin can be a challenge, but that is truly where the rewards are.

***What is your favorite camp activity?***

Waking up and being with everybody who gets it... starting your day in a cabin full of wonderful kids who appreciate you and everyone around them. Being with people you love who surround you with smiles and encouragement. It is a community feeling that is hard to describe and a love that is shared by all. ✨



1850 Clairmont Road  
Decatur, GA 30033  
404-325-7979

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

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