

At Home at Camp Lauren has discovered something she loves more than being a camper – being a counselor at Summer Camp. Hers is a story of hope. **Page 3**

Cupcakes, Coffee, Caring Starbucks forges a new community partnership with Camp Sunshine. **Page 4**

Big Top Fun Amazing sponsors make possible Camp Sunshine Day at Big Apple Circus for campers and their families. **Page 8**

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



POSTCARDS

Sunshine Brightens Day For Savannah Families



Even though Savannah lies 250 miles from Camp Sunshine's main location in metro Atlanta, Camp Sunshine reaches out to children with cancer and their families in this region several times each year. Camp Sunshine is especially grateful to members of the pediatric hematology-oncology team at Backus Children's Hospital in Savannah for spreading the word about camp to patients and families.

For more than 10 years, the Braver family of Richmond Hill, just south of Savannah, has known Camp Sunshine's warmth. Today, their sons Nicholas, 16, and Tyler, 12, are healthy boys with typical interests – Nicholas in a '66 Mustang; Tyler in his school band. But in February 1998, the family's world turned upside down when Tyler, then 17 months old, was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia, or ALL. Three and a half years of cancer treatment followed. In 2001, after countless clinic visits, hospitalizations, setbacks and triumphs, Tyler was cancer-free and has been ever since.

Tyler's parents, Michael and Dawn, first heard about Camp Sunshine during the early days of Tyler's treatment. "We were invited to go to Family Camp at Ebenezer Retreat (in Rincon)," recalled Tyler's father. "We didn't go that first year, because we were still so overwhelmed. But then in 1999, we made a point to go. We loved it – all of us – and we couldn't wait to go back."

Camp Sunshine, he said, "puts you in touch with others who understand exactly what you are going through. Your friends will try to help you deal with it. But unless you have a child who has gone through this, it is very hard to understand. Camp gives you hope. You see others who have survived

**"Camp Sunshine can
rejuvenate the child – and
the family."**

Annie Hitt, CCLS,
Backus Children's Hospital, Savannah

this and you think, maybe my child will, too. It is an awakening to see these families and campers who are so willing to share with you."

In addition to Family Camp, the Bravers have participated in many fun Camp Sunshine activities offered in the Savannah area, including outings to

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**DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,**

Even in economic uncertainty, some things remain unchanged. For example, children with cancer require programs that offer them love, support, fun and acceptance. They and their families need hope and the knowledge that they do not make this journey alone.

Cancer does not respect a down economy — or an up one. Throughout 26 years of history, our supporters, donors, volunteers and friends have understood this reality. In 26 years, you have never wavered in your giving spirit. You empower Camp to reach out with year-round programs, and for your steadfast generosity, we are deeply grateful. Now more than ever we need your support. We sincerely hope that Camp Sunshine remains at the top of your priority giving again this year, and we ask you to give as you have always given — at a level that is comfortable for you.

The global recession concerns us all, but I assure you that Camp Sunshine is as committed as ever to offering the finest, most comprehensive programs and activities for our campers and their families. Our staff is working hard to broaden our reach and touch the lives of more young people, even as we experience a challenging

time. We are, as we have always been, mindful of and prudent about our fiscal health. We pledge to be good stewards of every dollar entrusted to us to strengthen our programs.

In this issue you can read about our expanded programs for campers and their families in the Savannah region. Camp Sunshine can make a difference in a child's life, and it is vitally important that we reach out to families in every corner of the state. This newsletter also offers stories of loyalty and love. Lauren's "Then & Now" is a profile of hope. We celebrate five years of partnership with the Big Apple Circus and shine a spotlight on our new community partner, Starbucks at North Druid Hills Road at Toco Hills.

We also list some very specific ways you can help spread the sunshine with a financial gift to our Summer Camp program. Every gift, no matter how large or small, is welcome and can enrich the lives of our campers. Take a few moments to decide what level is right for you, and then join with me in the countdown to Summer Camp. It's just around the corner!

— 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.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Camp Sunshine enriches the lives of children with cancer and their families through recreational, educational and support programs allowing them to share similar experiences and to participate in activities that promote normal childhood development as they cope with the challenges of childhood cancer.

Spread the Sunshine!

Our campers come from every corner of Georgia, probably even from your own community. Your gift counts:

Provide arts & craft supplies for a cabin	\$50
Provide snacks for one day	\$100
Provide welcome gifts for a cabin – T-shirts, water bottles and more . .	\$250
Sponsor a camper for a week	\$500
Sponsor one camper EACH week	\$1,000
Provide bus rides for 200 campers to camp	\$2,500
Sponsor a full cabin of campers!	\$5,000

All gifts of any size are welcome, acknowledged and gratefully received. Simply fill out the enclosed donor envelope and return it with your check today. Or donate on-line at mycampsunshine.com.



THEN & NOW

Lauren's Story

Lauren has discovered something she loves even more than being a Camp Sunshine camper – being a Camp Sunshine counselor for teenage girls who are battling cancer just as she was at their age.



A middle school education major at Piedmont College in Demorest, Lauren is busy finishing college, considering her career path and planning her wedding with her fiancé Brent. She is also counting the days until Summer Camp, when she can return for her second year as counselor to the girls in Cabin #3. "I loved it," she said of her inaugural counselor year. "I loved it more than being a camper. I had all the fun I had as a camper. But it was also so rewarding to finally feel like I was giving back for all that people gave to me."

revealed a cancerous condition known as hypothalamic histiocytosis-X. Lauren underwent chemotherapy for 15 months. This year she is celebrating seven years off-treatment and cancer-free.

She first heard about Camp Sunshine during one of her initial hospital stays. She decided to test the waters with a Teen Retreat weekend in spring of 2001. Ironically, it rained during much of Lauren's first Camp Sunshine weekend. "We had to stay indoors and do inside games and activities," she recalled. "But I met so many friends that weekend who are still my friends today. It was incredible."

Lauren felt at home at camp: "At school, it was always, 'She's the one with cancer.' But at camp, everyone was like family. I guess you would say I felt normal." She seldom missed a teen program or summer camp since.

A highlight of her camper years was the Camp Sunshine teen trip to Washington, DC. "I remember visiting the Capitol, and sitting down and having

lunch with some of the senators, and going through the Holocaust Museum, and seeing all the Washington sights. But I think my favorite part was staying up at night and talking forever with my friends."

Lauren started her college studies at Valdosta State University, but transferred in her sophomore year to Piedmont College. She and Brent met in statistics class and became good friends. When Lauren's father passed away in December 2007 in an all terrain vehicle accident, Brent was there for her. In time, their friendship blossomed, and on New Year's Eve 2008, Brent asked Lauren to marry him. As a couple, they enjoy being outdoors, hiking and four-wheeling, as well as browsing through bookstores and teaching children's Sunday school. They plan to marry on May 22, 2011, on what would have been her parents' 30th wedding anniversary.

While Lauren is happy to share her story with campers, she is sensitive not to force it on them. "If they ask how I became involved with Camp Sunshine, I tell them. And when I tell them, I think it helps," she said. "I tell them, 'You can do it; you can get through this. I had cancer, too, when I was your age.' I believe my story gives them hope."

Ideally, Lauren would like to teach in a hospital setting someday. Her cabin campers would highly recommend her. "As my girls were leaving, they said, 'You are going to be our counselor next year, right?' That made me feel great." ✨



Lauren was 14 years old in November 2000 when she was diagnosed with diabetes insipidus. An MRI determined a brain tumor to be the cause. Lauren underwent brain surgery on December 13, 2000; a biopsy



COMMUNITY PARTNER

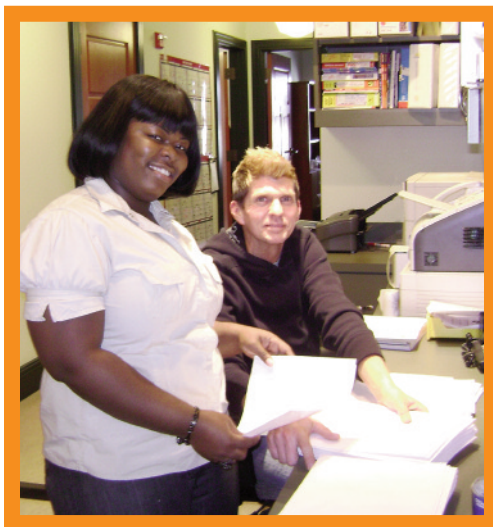
Starbucks Serves Up Cupcakes for Camp Sunshine

Next year at Valentine's Day, if a Starbucks barista at 2826 North Druid Hills Road asks if you'd like a cupcake with your cappuccino, think about Camp Sunshine and answer a guilt-free *yes!*

Located near the intersection of North Druid Hills and La Vista Road, the Starbucks is right around the corner from the Camp Sunshine House, and in a most neighborly way, is reaching out to help campers and their families.

Manager Spencer Pierce said the store was looking for a community partner – a nearby nonprofit organization with whom they could volunteer employee hours as well as help out in other creative ways. John McCarthy, Assistant Manager, made the connection with Camp Sunshine. "We were so pleased to find we had such a wonderful organization close-by," Pierce said.

In addition to displaying Camp Sunshine brochures in the store, Starbucks sends employee-volunteers to Camp Sunshine House each week to help with important office and administrative tasks. "It's a tremendous help having the Starbucks volunteers in our office," said Sally Hale, Executive Director, Camp Sunshine. "They arrive with a smile ready to do whatever we need. We look forward to seeing them every week."



In February, the store stepped up its commitment with Cupcakes for Camp Sunshine. "Every year, Starbucks sells cupcakes for Valentine's Day," Pierce said. "This year, we thought it would be a nice idea to see if customers would be interested in purchasing a cupcake for the kids at Camp Sunshine." Customers could choose from double chocolate, vanilla bean and red velvet offerings. Dozens and dozens of cupcakes were delivered to patients participating in Camp Sunshine programs at the Aflac Cancer Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Campers at Music Class, Sibling Bowling Night, Family Night, Spa Sydell Night and other activities also received the yummy treats.

Pierce called the project "extremely successful," and both sides believe it is the start of a robust, well-blended partnership. "We were able to provide information about Camp Sunshine to our customers and I was very pleased with how our customers came together to donate," Pierce noted. "I cannot express enough how happy we are to be working with Camp Sunshine." ✨

Sunshine Brightens Day for Savannah Families, *continued from page 1*

the Savannah Sand Gnats baseball games and local water park adventures. Tyler has made journeys to participate in Camp Sunshine Summer Camp and an overnight stay at Zoo Atlanta, and Nicholas has participated in Sibling Camp. "Sibling camp is great," his dad commented. "It allows the siblings to talk to each other in a very comfortable setting and to get things off their chest that they might not say to others."

Firsthand Knowledge

Martin Johnston, MD, is a pediatric hematologist-oncologist at Backus Children's Hospital. When he tells families about the benefits of camp for kids with cancer and their families, he speaks from personal experience. His son David is a junior in high school – a good student who likes playing video games and hanging out with friends.

On David's third birthday, he was diagnosed with a less common form of leukemia, called T-cell ALL. David was treated on a clinical trial, relapsed and then required even more aggressive treatment. He has been off-treatment and cancer-free since he was six years old.

The family – Dr. Johnston, his wife Annette, David and their older son Greg – were not living in

Savannah during the time of David's cancer battle. They lived in Madison, Wisconsin and then moved to Boise, Idaho. While in Boise, the family was able to participate in Camp Rainbow Gold in Sun Valley. "I love camp," Dr. Johnston said. "As a parent, it is a chance to give your child a normal part of growing up—to let them go to camp and do normal camp activities in an environment that is safe, nurturing and fun with kids they can really relate to."

David's first summer at camp was also the summer the family moved from Madison to Boise. "When school started, my son was the new kid," Dr. Johnston recalled. When the teacher asked him to share something about himself, David talked about cancer camp." He was mobbed with questions

and handled it like a pro, confidently telling his second-grade classmates, "I'll be available for questions later."

At Backus, Dr. Johnston encourages parents to participate in Camp Sunshine programs for themselves and their children: "Camp has so many positive things to offer, and it can truly be life-changing."

Encouraging Connections

Annie Hitt is a Certified Child Life Specialist at Backus, working specifically with children with cancer and their families. Like Dr. Johnston, she is an advocate of Camp Sunshine programs and introduces the concept to families early in diagnosis and treatment. "By taking part in Camp Sunshine programs, they will be able to meet a lot of children and families who are going through the same things they are," she said. "Camp not only brings the family closer together, it also helps the family realize they are not alone."

Hitt is enthusiastic about Camp Sunshine's latest Savannah initiative – the Camp Sunshine Treasure Chest at Backus' pediatric cancer clinic. "After a difficult clinic visit, patients can dig in to the treasure box and pull out a toy," she explained. Camp Sunshine is keeping the chest well stocked with treasures, such as coloring books, crayons and match box cars.

From Bowling Nights to ballgames to Family Camp, Camp Sunshine programs offer Savannah area families a chance for respite and connection, she said: "It is wonderful to see a kid who has a port go up to another kid and say, Hey, you've got a port, too. Suddenly, they aren't alone in this any more. It's also rewarding to see the connection between the families. Once they go to a Camp Sunshine event or program, they keep coming back for more!" ✨



Be sure to check the Camp Sunshine calendar in each issue of Postcards or on the web at www.mycampsunshine.com for a complete listing of events and programs in Savannah and throughout the state.



CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

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

ONGOING PROGRAMS

FAMILY NIGHT

1st Tuesday and 3rd Sunday
each month

5:30-6:20 PM Dinner

6:30-7:20 PM Group Meeting

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 provided for children under 5.

TEEN GROUP

Teen Group North meets 2nd

Wednesday of each month in

Johns Creek from 6:00-7:30 PM

Teen Group meets 4th Thursday of
each month at Camp Sunshine House
from 6:00-7:30 PM

Call to RSVP

For 13- to 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
12:15-1:45 PM

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

M A Y 2 0 0 9

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

J U N E 2 0 0 9

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



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

JULY 2009

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3 Camp Sunshine Office Closed	4
5	6	7 Family Night	8 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group North	9	10	11
12	13 Spa Sydehl Night	14	15	16	17	18
19 Family Night	20	21	22 Pre-School Music Class	23 Teen Group	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

SAVE THESE DATES

September 12

Wild Adventures

October 16-18

Remember the Sunshine
Weekend

October 2-4

Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes

October 9-11

Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes

October 30-November 1

Teen Retreat

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

September 23

Brad Gambrell Golf Tournament

September 19-20

HD Marine and Wendy's Fishing
Tournament

AUGUST 2009

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4 Family Night	5	6 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	7	8
9	10 Spa Sydehl Night	11	12 Pre-School Music Class Teen Group North	13	14	15
16 Hit-A-Home- Run Family Night	17	18	19	20	21 Sibling Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	22
23 →	24	25 Seasonal Sunshine	26 Pre-School Music Class	27 Teen Group	28	29 Teen Lock-In
30	31					

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 will now offer 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.

REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

Camp Sunshine continues to provide regional programming. We will now provide programs in all areas of the state in addition to programs in the Metro Atlanta area. Checkout our website www.mycampsunshine.com, the newsletter and your mail for programs coming to your area.



Families Enjoy Big Top Fun

More than 1,250 people, including 169 Camp Sunshine camper families, Played On! at the fifth annual Camp Sunshine Day at the Big Apple Circus.

Camp Sunshine campers, families, friends and supporters thrilled to the extraordinary circus artistry and jazzy mix of classical, rock and soul music. The theme was drawn from Shakespeare's Twelfth Night (*If music be the food of love, play on!*) and featured John Schuerholz, President of the Atlanta Braves, as Honorary Ringmaster. The event raised more than \$98,000 this year, bringing the five-year total raised for Camp Sunshine programs to more than \$433,000. Camp Sunshine gratefully acknowledges our many sponsors for an unforgettable afternoon of Big Top fun.



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