

Hayley's Story of Hope

From camper to counselor,
Hayley's life journey has taken
her many places, but always
Camp Sunshine has been near
to her heart. **Page 3**

Ahoy, Maties! Camp alum
Ronnie Gordon and his father
Dan are two of the bucca-
neers behind the fun and
fundraising of the Pirates of
Lanier Poker Run. **Page 5**

Capturing Camp Memories
Volunteer Rick Dascher
shares his own special camp
stories and records the
favorite recollections of
others. **Page 8**

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



POSTCARDS

Camp's Warming Rays Reach Families across the State

Camp Sunshine offers regional activities throughout the state so families can meet other families experiencing similar challenges in their own communities.

Camp Sunshine's Regional Programs

ATHENS –
2 programs a year

CENTRAL GEORGIA/MACON –
1 program a year

COLUMBUS/LAGRANGE –
2 programs a year

GREATER SOUTH GEORGIA –
1 program a year

NORTHEAST GEORGIA –
2 programs a year

NORTHWEST GEORGIA –
2 programs a year

SAVANNAH –
3 programs a year

For More Information
www.mycampsunshine.com
or call 404-325-7979 or
toll-free 866-786-2267

Programs are varied and include recreational activities, sporting events, trips to local amusement parks, cultural events and more. The Wakenigg family lives in Cataula, Georgia, just north of Columbus. While their story is unique, it tells of the importance of our regional programs for children with cancer and their families wherever they live in Georgia.

BROOKE'S STORY Brooke Wakenigg is a competitive athlete who likes to play hard, especially at her favorite sport, softball. So in late summer of 2009 when a bump appeared on her leg, the first thought was a softball injury. When it didn't go away, the family was referred to a solid tumor specialist at Emory who surgically removed the mass. Pathology reports brought difficult news: osteosarcoma, a type of bone cancer. The family was referred to the Aflac Cancer Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston.

Brooke's mother Laura remembers the 100-mile drive from Cataula to Atlanta to begin her daughter's cancer treatment as if it were yesterday: "It was January and it was a snow day. Nobody could make it to work; but we made it to the hospital. There must have been angels in the car with us." When they got to Brooke's room, a Camp Sunshine representative, also undaunted by the snow,

stopped by to introduce Brooke and her family to the numerous camp programs and activities available to them.

From January to May, Brooke was in treatment. On the many trips to Atlanta, the family stayed at the Ronald McDonald House. "Always we would find the Camp Sunshine calendar and take part in whatever programs we could – Spa Sydell nights, game nights," Laura recalled. "There we were – afraid of the unknown, full of uncertainty. But at Camp Sunshine, it was a very positive experience for us."

Mostly the family appreciated "passing time with

others in the same predicament," Laura said. "The Camp Sunshine House is so warm and welcoming, and everyone greets you with a smile on their face."

During this time camp representatives also started telling Brooke about summer camp and encouraging her to participate. Brooke, then age 10, attended Junior Week that first year. "I was really excited," she said. "I thought it

would be fun and that I'd never have a chance to be bored – and I was right!"

Her mother liked it, too, when they arrived at the camp and saw Brooke's oncologist there, along with her nurses and several friends Brooke had met along the way.



Brooke (right) with her brother and sister

Continued on Page 4



DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,

Childhood cancer respects no geographic boundaries. That is why Camp Sunshine offers programs throughout the state. From the coastal low country to the north Georgia mountains and many points in between, Camp Sunshine provides opportunities for children with cancer and their families to connect with others facing similar challenges. A day at the ballpark or a cultural outing gives families a chance to relax, make friends, rediscover one another and have fun.

This *Postcards* illustrates how camp's warming rays reach many parts of Georgia. We are grateful to the Wakenigg family of Cataula for sharing Brooke's story and describing why Camp Sunshine programs are important to them. Brooke was diagnosed in 2009 with osteosarcoma. When they made the first of many 100-mile journeys to Atlanta for treatment, a Camp Sunshine representative was one of the first people they met at the hospital. Throughout Brooke's treatment, the Camp Sunshine House was a refuge for the family. At home the family still enjoys camp programs, participating in events and activities with other families in the Columbus region.

It's about 30 miles from Lake Lanier to the Camp Sunshine House, though the Pirates of Lanier might measure the distance in nautical miles. Either way, this rollicking group keeps Camp Sunshine close to their hearts at the annual Pirates of Lanier Poker Run. Camp alum Ronnie Gordon, his father Dan, the Lanier Partners Board of Directors and the

entire Lake Lanier community back this day of fun and fundraising for Camp Sunshine. We tip our tricorned hats to these kindhearted buccaneers.

In *Then & Now*, we profile Hayley whose life journey has taken her to many parts of Georgia and to Miami, Florida. Wherever she has been, Hayley has kept Camp Sunshine at the top of her priority list. We are grateful for her years of dedication; she is truly an ambassador for camp. Her story – from camper to counselor – offers hope to others. We'll miss her this summer as she assumes a new role of first-time mom.

Close to home, Rick Dascher is in our Volunteer Spotlight for his many years with camp. Through the years, Rick has given generously of his time and talent as a dedicated cabin counselor. Outside of camp, he works for Turner Broadcasting and has brought his professional talents to bear, making a video of camp's 30th Anniversary Reunion. I am always amazed at the creative ways our volunteers come up with to support camp.

Speaking of imagination, we extend a special thank you to our corporate sponsors and many supporters who made possible the delightful benefit performance of *Charlotte's Web* at the Alliance Theatre on February 24. Finally, to our campers and families throughout the state, remember that Summer Camp is just around the corner. Teen Week is June 16-21 and Junior Week is June 23-28. Start packing!

– Sally Hale, Executive Director

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

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.

Light Up the Night – Sponsor Camp Fireworks!

Summer camp is right around the corner. Your gift to Camp Sunshine can help a child with cancer experience an unforgettable week, including a dazzling fireworks display!

Provide arts & craft supplies for a cabin.....	\$ 50
Provide snacks for one day	\$ 100
Provide cabin welcome gifts – T-shirts, water bottles & more	\$ 250
Provide an evening program.....	\$ 500
Sponsor a camper for a week.....	\$ 800
Sponsor one camper EACH week.....	\$ 1,600
Provide bus rides to camp for 200 campers	\$ 2,500
Sponsor fireworks display	\$ 3,500
Sponsor a full cabin of campers!.....	\$ 5,000

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. ✨

**Summer Camp
2013**
Start planning now!

**Teen Week at
Camp Twin Lakes –
Rutledge**
June 16-21

**Junior Week at
Camp Twin Lakes –
Rutledge**
June 23-28

Register online at
www.mycampsunshine.com





THEN & NOW

Hayley's Story



"I was talking recently to the mother of a child with Wilms tumor and telling her about the benefits of camp. I was telling her about my Camp Sunshine friends. I might not talk to them for two or three weeks or even months. But when we do talk, it's like we never left each other. We can relate on a level that not everyone else can. There is an unspoken bond. As I told the mom, camp will do more for your child than you can imagine."

– Hayley

Because she was only three years old when she was diagnosed, Hayley remembers only bits and pieces of the hospitalizations, clinic visits and treatment protocol of her early childhood. But she clearly remembers seeing one of her nurses wearing a Camp Sunshine friendship bracelet. "That might have been the first time I heard about camp," she said. Thirty years later camp is still an integral part of her life.

Growing up in Kathleen, GA, Hayley was on her way to ballet class when she started getting sick. Her mother felt Hayley's stomach; it was quite hard. "She called my grandmother, who was an ER nurse," Hayley said. "They knew something wasn't right." Hayley's pediatrician confirmed their worries. She was taken to Egleston Children's Hospital (now Children's Healthcare of Atlanta) where she began 15 months of chemotherapy and radiation for Wilms tumor. Hayley was off therapy for six months when she had a recurrence. Fifteen more months of chemo and radiation followed.

As difficult as that journey was, Hayley has been off-therapy and cancer-free for 26 years. She started first grade on time: "I didn't have any hair. I wore a wig. I took it off in front of everybody because it was getting hot. I don't know what they thought of that!" In addition to her buoyant spirit, Hayley had another advantage in winning back her childhood – Camp Sunshine.

Hayley participated in her first Summer Camp in 1990. From camper to

Counselor in Training (CIT) to cabin counselor to invaluable volunteer, she has hardly missed a year since. She has a favorite memory from that first camp experience: "I remember going into the gym for my nametag and Bubbles (a long-time Camp Sunshine volunteer) was behind the table, and I thought she seemed a little mean. I'm not sure why I thought that... I was so wrong. Seventeen years later she was the 'flower girl' in my wedding. I love her; she is one of my closest friends."



Hayley (right) with friends at Camp

Hayley enjoyed outdoor activities like archery and wind surfing. "I don't remember specific activities as much as the overall camaraderie and friendship," she said. Hayley participated in the original Teen Week at summer camp: "What I remember most are the times we would be cutting up in

the cabin before we went to bed and literally giggling ourselves to breathlessness."

After high school, Hayley attended Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville. Her first thought was pre-law: "After I did my CIT training and worked that summer with nine-year-old girls, I thought this is it – this is what I want to do." She switched her major to middle grades education and went on to teach in Kennesaw and Alpharetta. In 2007, she married her husband Ryan. Instead of wedding favors, the couple gave a donation in honor of their guests to the Keencheefoonee Road Race to benefit camp programs.

Ryan's career has taken them to Valdosta and Miami, but Hayley has always found time to volunteer for camp. Now back in the Atlanta area, they live near Lake Lanier. Their two border terriers, Wicket and Opal, have been the center of attention, but that is about to change. Hayley is expecting their first child in June.

While she'll miss camp this year, Hayley never stops advocating for camp. "I was talking recently to the mother of a child with Wilms tumor and telling her about the benefits of camp. I was telling her about my Camp Sunshine friends. I might not talk to them for two or three weeks or even months. But when we do talk, it's like we never left each other. We can relate on a level that not everyone else can. There is an unspoken bond. As I told the mom, camp will do more for your child than you can imagine." ✨



Some Play! Families Enjoy Charlotte's Web

More than 1,100 campers, families, supporters and friends enjoyed getting caught in the enchantment of Charlotte's Web at two benefit performances on Sunday, February 24 at the Atlanta's nationally acclaimed Alliance Theatre. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, including our Presenting Sponsor, The Coca-Cola Company, the event raised more than \$166,000 to help fund Camp Sunshine's year-round programs for children with cancer and their families.



Based on the children's classic by E.B. White, Charlotte's Web is the story of a pig named Wilbur, his spider friend Charlotte and a cast of barnyard characters. The play weaves themes of friendship, support and determination – the same values that define Camp Sunshine! We are grateful to our many Rising Star sponsors, who along with the sponsors listed here, helped bring this unforgettable theatrical event to life for our campers and families.



Presenting Sponsor

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Director's Circle

Georgia Power

Actor's Guild

RaceTrac Petroleum

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Rooms To Go Children's Fund

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Camp's Warming Rays Reach Families across the State, continued from page 1

"With everything these children have been through, it is hard, as their parents, to let them go. But you can breathe easy at Camp Sunshine," Laura said. "Just having the staff they have is a turning point for parents. Brooke was bald and on crutches, but they just put some sunscreen on her and put a cap on her head and let her go!" Last summer, Brooke was old enough to participate in her first Teen Week, and, if possible, liked it even better: "There was even more to do, and the way everybody relates to each other, it just feels a little more mature."

CLOSE TO HOME The Wakeniggs have joined in activities at the Camp

Sunshine House in Decatur and at Camp Twins Lakes-Rutledge. Even more gratifying to the family, including Brooke's parents Laura and Rick, older brother Ryan, older sister Abby and Brooke's twin brother Brady, are the regional programs held close to home. They have taken part in Camp Sunshine outings to the Cottonmouth Hockey games, Fantasy in Lights at Callaway Gardens and the Coca-Cola Space Science Center at Columbus State University.

At each event, six to eight families gather – all living in the same region of the state and all who have a child who is facing, or has faced, cancer. "It's a great way to meet people and have fun at these Camp Sunshine events – and we don't have to

drive a couple of hours to get there!" Brooke said.

Now 14, Brooke is back playing softball and volleyball. Last softball season, though still in middle school, she played on the high school's junior varsity team. She hopes to apply her determination and can-do spirit to being an anesthesiologist one day. In the meantime, Brooke looks forward to more Camp Sunshine. "At camp, there is no drama," she said. "You can just have fun. You can express yourself and be yourself and not try to be someone you're not." In fact, the only thing that would make camp better "would be to have a whole other Camp Sunshine House right here in Columbus."★

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Pirates of Lanier Poker Run Is True Treasure for Camp

Avast, ye Hearties! Buccaneers and landlubbers alike are gearing up for the annual Pirates of Lanier Poker Run, benefiting Camp Sunshine and other organizations for children.

Set this year for July 18-20, the Poker Run is the brain-child of Lanier Partners of North Georgia. The fun began four years ago when a handful of lake-loving boat owners decided to host a charity event for children's causes and let their imaginations sail. The event has grown from roughly 50 folks raising \$3,000 to more than 300 participating boats with hundreds of mates playing poker hands and raising more than \$100,000 last year for designated organizations.

Camp Sunshine alum Ronnie Gordon and his father Dan are two of the buccaneers behind the event. Ronnie was 3 years old when he was diagnosed with ALL. "It was a very difficult time, but it brought our family closer together," Dan said. "Ronnie was on a seven-year protocol. There were a lot of unknowns. But all of these wonderful organizations stepped up when we didn't even know if we would be able to see our son grow up. You go through something like this with your child, and you've just got to give back."

Today a tech specialist, Ronnie attended Camp Sunshine from 1995-2001. "Camp was the only social interaction I had outside of the hospital and clinic for the longest time," Ronnie said. "For a kid with cancer, camp was something outside of the norm of doctors' visits and clinic visits. It was the most fun, and there was never a slack moment. There was always something going on at camp."

The Gordons have been active and engaged members of the Camp Sunshine family. Ronnie graduated from Buford High School in 2005 and attended Jacksonville State University. He participated in the drum and bugle corps and would bring the group to perform at Junior Camp. His

father drove a tractor-trailer for Domino's Pizza and through the years brought literally hundreds of pizzas to camp events. Realizing that the young patients at the hospital and clinic loved when the clown corps came to visit, Dan became a Shriners' clown.

The Poker Run is the father-son team's latest passion. Similar to the charitable poker runs staged by motorcyclists, participants in "Pirates of Lanier" pay an entry fee for their boats, making stops at various marinas to pick up a playing card for their poker hand. Through the years, Lanier Partners has been successful in attracting corporate sponsors and a strong board; the event has grown to be a time of fun, food and festivities for the entire family. "The local marinas, boat dealers and businesses around Lake Lanier have really stepped up to make this a successful charity event," Dan said.

"Everyone gets into the spirit of the day," Ronnie added. Many of the captains, crew, spectators and mates at the marinas show up in pirate costumes, replete with pirate flags, eye patches and even a parrot or two. "It makes me feel great, when I look on the dock and I see everyone having such a great time," he continued. "Everyone is there for the charities; it's all about the giving. Even the players

with the winning hand give their winnings back to the organizations. I wear my old Camp Sunshine bracelets every year so I can be sure to tell people about camp."★



YOU'RE INVITED!

**Pirates of Lanier Poker Run
Lake Lanier Islands Resort
July 18-21**

Help Lake Lanier Partners reach its goal of \$300,000 for organizations helping children in Georgia. Put on your best pirate garb, and if you or someone you know has a boat, sign up and join in the fun. Kids of all ages will delight in the Saturday evening fireworks display over Sunset Cove.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.lanierpartners.org**



CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

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

M A Y 2 0 1 3

PRESCHOOL MUSIC CLASS

**2nd and 4th Thursday each month
12:15 PM – 1:45 PM**

Call to RSVP

Join us for lunch and music class.
For campers birth–6 years of age
and their preschool age siblings.

REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

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

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 Washington DC Trip For Teens	2 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	3	4
5	6	7 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	8 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	9 Pre-School Music Class	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Staff Orientation for Summer Camp
19	20	21 Seasonal Sunshine at Camp Sunshine House	22	23 Pre-School Music Class	24	25
26	27 Office Closed	28	29	30	31	

J U N E 2 0 1 3

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Roopville Ramble May 18

Join Georgia Power Plant Wansley for this annual biking event! Distances from 15 to 104 miles are offered. Go to www.roopvilleramble.org to register.

Keencheefoonee Road Race June 18 and June 25 at Summer Camp

This volunteer-driven event is Camp Sunshine's largest fundraiser! Visit www.campsunshine.kintera.org/roadrace2013 to learn more.

Pirates of Lanier Poker Run July 18-20

A pirate-themed poker run on the waters of Lake Lanier! Check out www.lanierpartners.org for details.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4 New Camper Orientation at Camp Sunshine House	5	6 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 Pre-School Music Class	14	15
16 Teen Summer Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge	17 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	18 Keencheefoonee Road Race	19	20	21	22
23 Junior Summer Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge	24 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	25 Keencheefoonee Road Race	26	27	28	29
30						

CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS



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

JULY 2013

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 Office Closed	5	6
7	8	9 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	10 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	11 Pre-School Music Class	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Pre-School Music Class	26	27 Savannah Family Camp Day at Ebenezer Retreat
28	29	30	31			

SAVE THESE DATES

September 7, 2013

Preschool Apple Orchard Excursion
Hillcrest Orchards, Eljay, GA

September 9, 2013

Spa SydeII Night at Camp Sunshine
House

September 14, 2013

Wild Adventures for South Georgia
families

September 15, 2013

First Steps Family Dinner

September 27-29, 2013

Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-
Rutledge

October 4-6, 2013

Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-
Rutledge

October 11-13, 2013

Remember the Sunshine Weekend
at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge

October 27, 2013

Fall Festival

November 5, 2013

Seasonal Sunshine Thanksgiving
Dinner at Camp Sunshine House

AUGUST 2013

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	7 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	8 Pre-School Music Class	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 Sibling Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge	17
18 Hit a Home Run	19	20	21	22 Pre-School Music Class	23	24
25	26	27 Seasonal Sunshine at Camp Sunshine House	28	29	30	31



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C A M P S U N S H I N E P O S T C A R D S

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Rick Dascher Records Special Camp Moments

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a commemorative video is priceless. Long-time volunteer Rick Dascher works for Turner Broadcasting by day (and many evenings, too). His volunteer time is dedicated to Camp Sunshine. For camp's 30th Anniversary Reunion on October 7, Rick brought his special talents to bear, interviewing and videotaping attendees about what Camp Sunshine means to them.

"While the reunion raged on, we shot interviews with the attendees who shared with us some of their favorite Camp Sunshine moments through the years," Rick said. "The memories are a testament to all that camp has offered – and continues to offer – to campers and counselors alike."

Rick began volunteering with Camp Sunshine in the early 2000s at the urging of his friends, camp volunteers Tina Rizack and Eric Newberg. "They told me *it's right up your alley*, and they were right," Rick commented.

"My first year at camp, I had no interest being in a cabin. In other words, I was terrified at the prospect of being in a cabin! However, circumstances were such that after maybe 12 hours I found myself in a cabin." His fellow counselors helped calm his first-year jitters. "Moreover, the kids made me



Rick (left) with a friend at Camp

realize that this (being together, hanging out in a cabin) is why we're out at camp in the first place," he said. "These aren't kids with cancer, struggling; these are kids with cancer, living. These are kids being kids first and cancer patients second. I really learned a lot that first year – and every year since."

Through the years Rick has compiled many special memories of camp. "The strongest is one engineered by my cabin co-counselor Dan (Newberg)," he recalled. "On the night of the dance we had crafted an 'improvised' dance party at our cabin, Club 22. What seemed to many to be a makeshift street party was actually a thought-out and well-orchestrated event. Campers and counselors alike all had a spontaneous, great time

– a memory that I hope will stay with them for a long time to come."

The best part of the evening involved the neighboring cabin counselor John Parker and his wife Carlene, who also volunteered at camp. Dan found out that the couple hadn't danced a first dance at their wedding; so he surprised everyone, particularly the Parkers, and played Jim Croce's "Time in a Bottle" especially for them to close out the dance party.

"There under the Georgia pines we all paid tribute to one of camp's longest volunteering couples. As everyone looked on, even campers who had no idea what was going on were nonetheless respectful and even touched by the moment. And that's what camp is."

When not volunteering, Rick spends his time with his wife Julie and their daughters Addison and Avery. They have a dog Norman and two cats, Willie and Lulu. Despite his busy life, his commitment to camp is strong. "The people – campers, counselors, families, staff – keep me going for sure," Rick said. "That's something I often say when recruiting new volunteers for camp. Everyone is a giving, friendly sort who is there to ensure these kids have a safe, fun time. And from there, Camp Sunshine just grows and grows." ✨