

**Growing Up with Camp**  
Stephen and his mother  
reflect on a journey that  
started 17 years ago.  
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**What's Green and Ogreish?**  
"Shrek: the Musical"  
enchants campers and  
families. **Page 5**

**Littlest Campers Touch Her  
Heart** Susan Willoughby-  
Evans says inspiration from  
young campers keeps her  
going – and grateful. **Page 8**

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



# POSTCARDS

## Preschool Programs Introduce Youngest Campers To Sunshine's Embrace

*Children with cancer who are under 7 years old may be too young to participate in Summer Camp, but they are never too young to experience Camp Sunshine's warmth. Children ages 6 and under and their families are invited to participate in a number of programs and events, including day trips, picnics and outings. Here families share how their young campers are already benefiting from the fun and support of camp programs.*

### Gabby's Story



In October 2010 Gabby was just shy of 4 years old, when her parents Ana and David noticed her left eyelid had started to droop. When they lifted her eyelid, they saw an unsettling mass. They wasted no time getting Gabby to a pediatric ophthalmologist. Tests revealed a rhabdomyosarcoma in the orbit of her left eye. "I remember the doctor calling us

and saying *I am so sorry to tell you this over the phone, but it is cancerous,*" Ana recalled. "At that moment everything in your world comes crashing down."

At Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Scottish Rite, Gabby immediately began chemotherapy to shrink the tumor. Fortunately, her rhabdomyosarcoma was a treatable type and her prognosis was encouraging. "Still, I heard the words *pediatric cancer,* and I had no clue what that meant," Ana said. Rhabdomyosarcomas can grow rapidly, and it seemed that Gabby's was growing by the day. "But as soon as they started her on chemotherapy, we could see the mass go down," David recalled. By Thanksgiving, Gabby underwent surgery to have the mass removed. Her surgery and chemo were successful, and she required no radiation. Gabby finished her treatment in September 2011; her periodic scans have been clear ever since.

The family learned about Camp Sunshine during Gabby's first hospital

stay, when a camp representative paid them a visit. "At first we were not sure we wanted to do this," David said. "We weren't sure we were ready to be with other families going through this." They decided to try Preschool Music Class, which meets on second and fourth Wednesdays at the Camp Sunshine House. "Gabby loved it," Ana said. "We felt such a warm

welcome, and everyone was so sweet to us. Gabby was laughing and having such a good time, and her little brother Alex (three years younger than Gabby) could go, too."

Since then, the family has participated in many camp programs, including Family Camp, Hillcrest Apple Orchard outings, Holiday Open House events and Fall Festivals. They delighted in "Shrek: The Musical." Through camp, they met another family whose child also was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma and lives only 15 minutes away. They have become friends and a source of support for one another.

This summer will be Gabby's first trip to Summer Camp. "I will miss her," Ana said, "but Gabby can't wait to go!" Camp, her parents believe, will be a strong and positive step for Gabby. "We are grateful that she will have this opportunity," Ana said. "She will

meet other kids battling cancer, and she'll see them laughing and having fun and making friends. I am also hoping Gabby's experiences with camp will cultivate empathy and a desire in her to do service, to give back as she grows older."



**"You get to meet these wonderful, amazing people. I can't say enough good things about Camp Sunshine. They make you feel at ease, the children have a great time and you are with other families who understand what you are going through."**

– Gabby's mother Ana



DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,

Cancer respects no age limitation. That is why Camp Sunshine offers a variety of programs for even the youngest children with cancer and their families. Summer Camp is for campers age 7 and up, but younger campers and their families can experience the fun, support and warm embrace of Camp Sunshine now. This Postcards highlights our preschool programs and campers and their families who have experienced camp's glow from a very young age.

Our cover story profiles campers Gabby and Robert, who are counting down the days for their first Summer Camp. Both already have participated in enough preschool and family programs to feel right at home at camp. Robert's mother says he and his older brother Christian check out the Camp Sunshine calendar together and circle the events they want to attend. Gabby's mother says her daughter cannot wait to take off for her next camp adventure.

Ordinarily Then & Now tells of a camper's cancer journey in his or her own words. This time Then & Now has a slightly

different twist. Stephen was so young that he cannot recall much about his treatment for ALL, so his mother Jackie has provided the "Then." He does, however, remember his earliest camp experience at the Pumpkin Patch. It was the start of his life-long connection to camp, which brings us right up to Stephen's "Now."

Our Volunteer Spotlight salutes Susan Willoughby-Evans' dedication to camp and her especially tender spot for our youngest campers and their families. We also acknowledge our many corporate sponsors who made possible the Camp Sunshine benefit performances of "Shrek: The Musical" at the Alliance Theatre. You make believers of us all, young and old alike!

- Sally Hale, Executive Director

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Email Chanteasea@mycampsunshine.com or call 404-325-7979, ext. 10.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

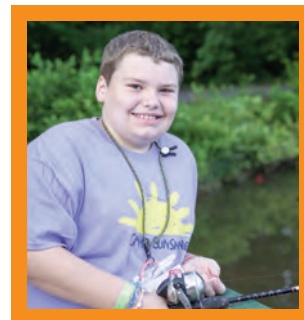
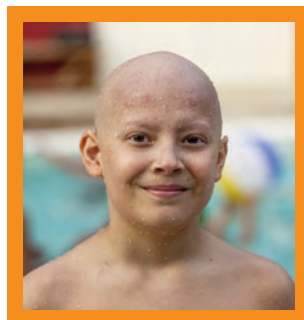
Camp Sunshine enriches the lives of Georgia's children with cancer and their families through recreational, educational and support programs.

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Your gift to Camp Sunshine can help a child with cancer experience an unforgettable week, including a dazzling fireworks display!

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Provide an evening program .....\$ 500
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Start planning now!

Teen Week at Camp Twin Lakes - Rutledge June 22-27

Junior Week at Camp Twin Lakes - Rutledge June 29-July 4

Register online at www.mycampsunshine.com

## THEN &amp; NOW

## Stephen's Story



*Stephen was 4 when he and his family participated in their first Camp Sunshine program 17 years ago. Because he was so young, we asked his mother Jackie to fill in some details. Both agree: participating in Camp Sunshine preschool programs positively made a difference.*

By the time Stephen turned 7 and was old enough to participate in Junior Week at Summer Camp, he was a Camp Sunshine veteran – already familiar with the fun, friendship, support and hope offered through preschool programs. In fact, his mother said, “Stephen remembers everything good about that time and very little of the bad – which is a blessing. He was too young to know what cancer meant. But he knew he was showered with love and caring at the hospital and at Camp Sunshine.”

Stephen's cancer journey began in 1997. He had been sick for some time and back and forth to the pediatrician. Blood test results triggered an urgent phone call from the doctor. “She said, I'm picking you and Stephen up – we've got to get to Egleston now,” Jackie recalled. Stephen's grandfather rushed them there instead. Further tests confirmed acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL). Within six hours, Stephen began chemotherapy. His treatment lasted two years and eight months, including more than 120 days of hospitalization. He never relapsed and has been cancer-free ever since.

**“You have an instant family who understands what you are going through, and more importantly your child has been introduced to an environment where they are surrounded by people who accept them. Whether your child is 3 or 5 or 10 you have to give your child that opportunity.”**

– Jackie, Stephen's mother

“My husband Jimmy and I learned about Camp Sunshine during Stephen's first hospital stay,” Jackie said. “A camp representative dropped off information and explained about preschool programs, Family Camp and such. She told us these programs would bring joy even in these difficult times and opportunities to be with people who understood what we were going through.”



While much about that time remains a blur to Stephen, he clearly recalls going to the Pumpkin Patch with his family on their first Camp Sunshine outing. “I remember it being a happy time for us,” he said. Many preschool programs followed, including Family Camps, Spring Flings and trips to the Hillcrest Apple Orchard.

In addition to offering the family an opportunity for comfort, support and fun, these early childhood programs made it easy for Stephen when he finally was old enough

for week-long Summer Camp. “I never had a problem leaving home,” he said. “I'd heard about Summer Camp for several years and I was so familiar with Camp Sunshine I couldn't wait to go.”

He remembers the fun of Junior Week – harmless pranks (like painting fellow campers' fingernails) and nonstop activities. More importantly, he cherishes the friendships that were formed and continued through Teen Week Summer Camps and now into his young adulthood. A student at University of Georgia who turns 21 in April, Stephen keeps in close contact with about 10 camper friends – all of whom arrange a getaway at least once a year. This past year eight of them ventured to the Blue Ridge Mountains: “They are the best friends I have ever had, and I have known them for 13 years.”

A sophomore majoring in business and a member of Alpha Gamma Rho, Stephen completed camp's Leader in Training program last summer and plans to be a counselor: “I'm looking forward to being on the other side of the camper-counselor relationship.”

For parents of preschool children with cancer, he offers words of support: “Even if it is hard to take the first step, I would encourage them to get involved with Camp Sunshine. They might think they understand, but they don't know exactly what their child is going through. Camp is a place of acceptance. There aren't any questions why a child is bald or physically challenged. Nobody cares – they just accept you for who you are.” ✨



**Preschool Programs Introduce Youngest Campers,** continued from page 1

**Robert's Story**

Three-year-old Robert was attending church with his family on Easter Sunday in 2010 when he stumbled and hit his chest on the pew kneeler. His parents Lori and Richard believe an angel pushed him down to alert them to Robert's health condition.



Robert, his brother Christian (age 7 at the time) and their parents were scheduled to leave the next day for Walt Disney World. By mid-afternoon Robert's side still hurt, so his parents took him to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. "They thought he might have lacerated his liver," Lori recalled. Blood tests revealed a different diagnosis: acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL).

Robert was admitted to the hospital that evening; his port was inserted the next morning just about the time the family was to leave for their vacation. Even in their shock, the family realized a blessing. "Robert's fall was fortuitous," his father said. "It was not related to the leukemia, but because he fell, his leukemia was discovered at a relatively early stage."

Robert's treatment protocol lasted 1,200 days, ending in June 2013 with "one huge family celebration," Lori said. Master clown Mr. Tone entertained at his off-chemo party. "It was perfect," Lori said. "Robert and Christian both know Mr. Tone from all their Camp Sunshine activities. He is one of their favorites."

During Robert's hospitalization, the family learned about Camp Sunshine. "A touch point was made at the very start," Lori said. "But that was such a time of turmoil for us—trying to get a sense of what the future looked like in terms of family life, work, treatment and so forth. So at first, camp didn't really register." However, about six months into treatment Robert was at the hospital getting a blood transfusion, when a camp representative stopped by and reintroduced the idea of family and preschool programs.

In time the family decided to give Music Class a try. "It worked out great," Richard said. Robert and his dad would go to the Camp Sunshine House on second and fourth Wednesdays for class, have lunch with other preschool campers and their parents, and then go pick up Christian at school. "Robert liked Music Class a lot," Richard said. "It was something he could do that took him back to how things were before his diagnosis."

The family began exploring many other camp programs, not only those specifically for preschoolers but other offerings for siblings and families. Christian has participated in Sibling Camp, and together the family has enjoyed Hillcrest Apple Orchard outings, the Spring Fling, Fall Festival and more. A favorite activity is Spa Sydell night. "Everyone thinks spa nights are for the adults, but the kids just love it," Richard said.



An active first-grader, Robert enjoys basketball, soccer and swimming. This will be his first year to participate in Summer Camp. "Robert has heard so much about Sibling Camp from Christian that he can't wait to go," his mother commented. "For the first 48 hours, I'll probably be on pins and needles. But Robert, he will love it."\*

**Camp Sunshine's preschool programs allow young children with cancer to play and socialize in a safe environment and provide a welcome respite from the rigors of their cancer treatment. Children can interact with other children in a way that is not about cancer, but rather about life, friendship and having fun. Parents, too, can find a safe haven and support from other parents who are fighting similar battles. For more information, contact Ann Baker at 404-325-7979 or email [Ann@mycampsunshine.com](mailto:Ann@mycampsunshine.com).**

**Preschool Programs**

**Music Class:** Held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. Children from birth through 6 years old, their preschool age siblings and their parents are welcome for music class, play time and lunch. Music Class is at 10:30AM, followed by lunch at 11:30AM.

**Spring Fling:** Annual springtime event held at Camp Sunshine House. Activities, entertainment, lunch and an egg hunt are part of the Saturday event for preschoolers, siblings and parents.

**Apple Orchard:** In the fall, preschool families are invited to join other Camp Sunshine families at Hillcrest Apple Orchard in north Georgia. This fun-filled day includes a wagon ride, petting farm animals, a picnic lunch and lots of apples!

**Family Programs:** Preschool campers are invited to participate in all of our Family Programs, including Family Camp Weekend, Spa Sydell Night, Fall Festival, Seasonal Sunshine, regional activities, the Holiday Party, and more. Check the Postcards calendar or [mycampsunshine.com](http://mycampsunshine.com) for a complete listing.

## “Shrek: The Musical” Enchants Camp Families

More than 1,200 campers, families, supporters and friends were green with joy at two sold-out benefit performances of “Shrek: The Musical” on Sunday, February 23 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 \$166,000 to help fund Camp Sunshine’s year-round programs for children with cancer and their families.

Based on the beloved Dreamworks character and William Steig’s book, “Shrek: the Musical” is the story of big, green, lovable ogre who sets out with his best friend Donkey to rescue the beautiful Princess Fiona. The play reminds us that outward appearances matter little – it’s what lies in the heart that counts. We are grateful to our Host Committee and many Rising Star sponsors who helped bring this unforgettable theatrical event to life for our campers and their families, and we give a round of applause to the sponsors listed at left. ✨



**“Thank you for another fun day! We had a great time and it’s always good to see your smiling faces.”**



**“Thank you so much Camp Sunshine, this show was the best ever, the kids had so much fun, even the parents had fun! It was amazing.”**



**“Great show! We all enjoyed it and had such a great time as a family.”**



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# CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

## UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

### Ricky's Run May 3, 2014

<http://ow.ly/u3U0q>

Join Bells Ferry Learning Center in Woodstock, GA for their 5k run/1k walk in memory of camper Ricky James. Registration is just \$25 and partially benefits Camp Sunshine!

### Roopville Ramble May 17, 2014

[www.roopvilleramble.org](http://www.roopvilleramble.org)

The Roopville Ramble is a century ride in beautiful rolling West Georgia, benefiting Camp Sunshine. A variety of distances are offered; registration is just \$35 and can be done online. Register by May 7 to save \$5!

### Pirates of Lanier Poker Run July 17-20

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

Join the Pirates of Lanier for their annual poker run benefiting Camp Sunshine - a wild weekend of pirates and parties! Details and registration can be found on the event's website.

### Keencheefoonee Road Race June 24 & July 1

[campsunshine.kintera.org/roadrace2014](http://campsunshine.kintera.org/roadrace2014)

Camp Sunshine's volunteer-driven annual fundraiser! Support your favorite volunteer or join us as a virtual runner to help send more kids with cancer to Summer Camp.

## PRESCHOOL MUSIC CLASS

2nd and 4th Wednesday each month  
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM  
Call to RSVP

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

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

## MAY 2014

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

## JUNE 2014

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

# CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS



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

## SAVE THESE DATES

### JULY 2014

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

#### September 6, 2014

Preschool Apple Orchard Excursion Hillcrest Orchards, Elijay, GA

#### September 8, 2014

Spa SydeII Night at Camp Sunshine House

#### September 13, 2014

Wild Adventures for South Georgia families

#### October 10-12, 2014

Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge

#### October 17-19, 2014

Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge

#### October 24-26, 2014

Remember the Sunshine Weekend at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge

#### October 26, 2014

Fall Festival

#### November 4, 2014

Seasonal Sunshine Thanksgiving Dinner at Camp Sunshine House

#### November 21-23, 2014

Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge

#### December 14, 2014

Holiday Party

### AUGUST 2014

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	6 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	7 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	8	9
10	11	12	13 Preschool Music Class	14	15 Sibling Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge	16
17 Hit a Home Run	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 Seasonal Sunshine at Camp Sunshine House	27 Preschool Music Class	28	29	30
31						

## 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](http://www.mycampsunshine.com), the newsletter and your mail for programs coming to your area.





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## CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Counselor's Big Heart Touches Littlest Campers

In 11 years as a Camp Sunshine volunteer, Susan Willoughby-Evans has participated in programs for campers of all ages and their families. But whenever she receives a call for preschool program volunteers, she is especially happy to help. "The little ones seem so vulnerable," she said. "But the support their families receive through the preschool programs and the fun these kids have... Camp Sunshine brings light into a dark time, and it is a privilege to be part of that."

The more familiar Susan became with camp, the more she wanted to be involved. Volunteering for Family Night introduced her to even younger campers: "I took care of the little ones while their parents had their time together." In this setting, she got to meet and interact not only with campers, but parents and siblings as well. "It is hard to see the little ones who are really, really sick, but it can be an inspiration, too," Susan said. "Camp offers such wonderful programs for these families. The parents get to know each other, they bond, and you can almost see a sense of relief on their faces when they walk into the (Camp Sunshine) House. And the little ones? When you are 2 or 3 years old and you see someone your same size, well, you are instantly friends. You just want to play – and that's exactly what they do!"

Susan has volunteered for virtually every preschool program from trips to Hillcrest Apple Orchard to the Spring Fling and everything in between. She has participated in Fall Festival and the Sunshine 2U in-hospital programs. She finds it personally fulfilling to meet young campers in preschool programs and then be with them again at Summer Camp when they turn 7. "Because they've participated in preschool programs, some of these campers have already made friends along the way, and they request to be in the same cabin."

A freelance creative director and copywriter, Susan keeps precious items on her desk from campers through the years—hand-made jewelry, art projects and such. One ceramic bowl was made by Stephen, the former camper featured in Then & Now (page 3). "Camp helps keep things in perspective. For example, any work-related crisis is a non-event," she said. She looks forward to 11 more years of service – and then some. "I love that the volunteers always keep coming back. I will, until they tell me I'm too old." ✨



**"Camp makes me grateful for everything I have, including my health and the chance to be part of this wonderful organization. It is the most fulfilling thing I have ever done."**

– Susan Willoughby-Evans

Susan first learned about camp from her friend, longtime volunteer Rick Dascher: "My dad had passed away from cancer, and I wanted to do something to honor his memory." Rick encouraged her to contact camp about volunteer opportunities. Her first job was a counselor for Junior Week Summer Camp for ages 7-12: "I loved it. It was the right age group for me."