

Then and Now Former
camper and now counselor
Jeremy Johnson has always
put Camp Sunshine first.
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**A Champion for Camp
Sunshine** Leigh Bleecker has
been volunteering and raising
money for Camp Sunshine
since 2001. **Page 4**

A Night of Hockey
Savannah Sports Council
and the Savannah Civic
Center provide a night of
fun for families. **Page 5**

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



POSTCARDS

Spreading Sunshine in Savannah

In 2015, Heather Schraeder and her family attended a Harlem Globetrotters game, participated in an adventure weekend in Valdosta, saw an Irish Festival at the Civic Center, and took part in Savannah's world famous St. Patrick's Day Parade.

"That's a lot of activities for people who usually don't go anywhere," Heather says.

All of these activities were organized by Stephanie Irwin, Camp Sunshine's Savannah Program Coordinator. The program is designed to extend Camp Sunshine's reach to families of children with cancer into the southeastern area of the state.

"We want to reach out to these children and families in Southeast Georgia and connect them with the greater Camp Sunshine Community," says Stephanie, a Certified Child Life Specialist who joined Camp Sunshine in December 2014. "Programs in the Savannah area allow these families to attend events closer to home."

For the Schraeder family, Camp Sunshine activities have been a way to get them out of the house doing social things and meeting other families.

Heather's youngest child, L'Ili, was diagnosed with B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia in September 2014, at

age five. Now seven, she is still in treatment, receiving chemotherapy every four weeks. Heather met Stephanie at the hospital shortly after L'Ili was diagnosed.



The Schraeder family

"Camp Sunshine is a companionship of love, support, and sunshine for campers, families, and even staff. It's a community of support that will last forever. Once you sign up for Camp Sunshine, you are in the Camp Sunshine family, and it is like a warm, loving hug."

– Stephanie Irwin, Savannah Program Coordinator

Heather, who has three older boys, credits Camp Sunshine for giving them some much needed family time – as well as a distraction from L'Ili's cancer. "When you have a sick child, you are gone from home a lot, away from the other children," Heather says.

"With these activities, all the children can come and it's nice to be together. It gives you a reason to go out and just be normal."

Stephanie conducts "Sunshine2U" once a month at The Children's Hospital at Memorial Health University

Medical Center, where she brings Camp Sunshine activities to the children receiving cancer treatment there.

"The purpose is to bring a little sunshine to the children and their families while they are going through



DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,

Savannah, Georgia, is famous for many things and people, one of them being Johnny Mercer. Known as "the bard of Savannah," Mercer wrote song lyrics that often carry you to a place and stay with you, even after the song is over.

Like those Mercer lyrics, this issue of *Postcards* takes us to Savannah. Camp Sunshine has long had a

presence in Georgia's oldest city; today, we offer 15 programs that connect 140 families to the Camp Sunshine experience, and that number continues to grow. Stephanie Irwin,

who organizes these programs, is one reason they've been so successful.

We visit with another Savannah resident, Jeremy Johnson, in the "Then and Now" feature. I've had the pleasure of knowing Jeremy since he was a boy and have watched him grow up. He was a camper from age 10 to 18, and we're very proud to have had him as a counselor since 2006.

Another volunteer we're fortunate to have is Leigh Bleecker. Every summer, Leigh makes the trip from her North Carolina home to Camp Sunshine to share her time and energy. Leigh is also a top fundraiser for the Keencheefoonee Road Race and has been a fantastic ambassador for us outside of Georgia. Her story tells of her deep commitment.

We are also spotlighting the people that host our families at the Savannah Tire Hockey Classic. Each January, the Savannah Sports Council gives Camp Sunshine tickets to the hockey game, and the Savannah



Civic Center provides a room for families to enjoy a pizza party. We are grateful for organizations like these who provide opportunities for our families to have a fun night out together.

Finally, we have new evidence of Camp Sunshine's impact to report – and 2015 was a very good year. Our programs were up (by 7 percent), and they attracted more than 7,000 participants (a 9 percent increase). We nearly doubled our outreach to children in hospitals, and we grew our regional program outreach as well, by 28 percent.

We're proud of these numbers. But we're even more proud of the people behind them – the donors, volunteers, advocates and parents who make the Camp Sunshine experience an unforgettable one.

In "I Remember You," Johnny Mercer captured this sentiment perfectly. He wrote: "I remember you / You're the one who made my dreams come true."

For children with cancer and their families, Camp Sunshine is a dream come true – thanks to all of you.

– 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.



THEN & NOW



Jeremy (right) with camper

"I was determined not to miss camp," Jeremy says. "It was always the highlight of my summer."

The surgery was performed to help to alleviate the epileptic seizures he'd been experiencing caused by complications from his treatment of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). And it was successful – he has remained seizure free since that operation in 1999.

Jeremy was diagnosed with ALL in 1990 when he was just five years old. Since there was no pediatric oncology program at the time in Savannah, he and his family had to make the three-hour trip to Augusta for treatment at what was then known as the Medical College of Georgia. He underwent treatment for three years.

Jeremy first came to Camp Sunshine in 1995 at the age of 10, and continued as a camper until he was 18, only missing one year when his sister had chicken pox. He met and formed friendships with many children, particularly the four boys he shared a cabin with every year.

"I have such happy memories of camp," he says. "My counselors, Scott and Al, were so much fun. One summer Al shaved off half his beard because he lost a fishing bet. I still remember that so well."

Jeremy has kept that same dedication in his adult life, returning to Camp Sunshine as a counselor in 2006, when he started in a cabin of 10- to 12-year-old boys during junior week.

He remembers one summer when he took a boy fishing on the dock. The pair had several rods between them, and

Jeremy's Story

Attending Camp Sunshine was so important to Jeremy Johnson that he scheduled his brain surgery around it. In fact, he missed his middle school graduation, leaving school early before summer vacation so that he would be recovered in time to attend camp.

at one point, they all started hopping at the same time.

"This boy was so excited and just as happy as he could be," Jeremy remembers. "It was at that point I realized the impact I had. It was so rewarding to see him so happy."

Jeremy says that being a counselor gives him a whole new perspective. "You see kids with prosthetic legs climbing a wall, and overcoming their fears and achieving things they never thought would be possible. They are not limited because of the hardships in their lives."

He lives in Savannah with his wife and his eight-year-old son, and is an officer with the Savannah Police Department, something he knew he wanted to do since high school. He graduated from Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah with a degree in criminal justice, attended the police academy and has been a police officer since 2010.

"I like that the job is never the same from day to day," he says. "You never know what each day is going to bring."

Jeremy does know what the summer will bring, however – Camp Sunshine. This summer will be his 11th year as a counselor. And to remind him of its importance and what it has meant to him, Jeremy has the Camp Sunshine logo tattooed on his arm, with a saying underneath it that reads: "For what was once my journey is now theirs." ✨



Jeremy (right) with other campers



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Leigh Bleecker: "I had to be a part of Camp Sunshine"



When Leigh Bleecker was doing an administrative residency at Atlanta's Piedmont Hospital during her graduate studies at Georgia State University, she was told one day that she would be listening to a speech by Hamilton Jordan. Leigh, being from North Carolina, had never heard that name, and when she was told he was President Jimmy Carter's Chief of Staff, she

figured that he was going to talk about politics.

That could not have been further from the truth.

Instead, Hamilton Jordan spoke on something he was passionate about: Camp Sunshine, which his wife, Dorothy had founded in 1982. He talked about his own cancer journey and how important it was for kids with cancer to have a place like Camp Sunshine.

From that moment on, Leigh Bleecker was hooked. She went home that night and filled out an application to volunteer at summer camp. A week later she was called for an interview.

"I was more nervous for that interview than any other one I had ever had," Leigh recalls, "including interviews for medical school and other jobs. I was afraid I was going to say or do the wrong thing and not get picked. I wanted it that badly."

Leigh's wish came true; she started working in activities during Teen Week in the summer of 2001 and she hasn't missed a summer since. For the last 12 years, she has been a cabin counselor. Less than one year later, she moved back to North Carolina, where she took a job with Duke University Health System. Despite the fact she doesn't live in Georgia, or that she has a very high-powered stressful job now as Chief Financial Officer of Duke Raleigh Hospital, she makes Teen Week her priority.

"I even brought it up when I was interviewing for the CFO job," she says. "I told them for one week in the summer, I needed to be able to take that week off to volunteer, and if that didn't work, then maybe it wasn't the job for me. Luckily, they agreed."

Leigh says she has many special memories of camp over the years, but one that stands out is Club Bling Bling. "A group of girls in my cabin loved to dance,"

Leigh explains, "so they created a dance party called Club Bling Bling. All the other girls at the camp would come over to our cabin and just dance. We turned the lights out and had a disco ball and everything. It was a blast." Leigh said that tradition lasted about four years until the girls graduated.

To Leigh, something like Club Bling Bling is an example of what she calls the "amazing transformation" that happens to campers over the course of a week. "You see kids who are shy, timid and scared on the first day, and by the end of the week, they are laughing and being silly, and doing things they never imagined they could do," she says. "It is so great to see them thrive and prosper in that environment!"



Aside from giving her time, Leigh has become a top fundraiser for the Keencheefoonee Road Race, held every year during each camp week. Each year, she writes a letter to co-workers, friends and family, and tells the story of one camper she is dedicating the race to that year. She receives hundreds of donations, ranging from \$5 to \$1,000.

"The amazing thing is that it is mostly people from North Carolina," Leigh says. "They know what a great organization it is and how much it means to me."

Her unwavering dedication came from a speech she heard 16 years ago, telling her of an organization she felt the need to get involved in, and she has never looked back.

"Camp Sunshine is such a special place," Leigh says, "and it makes such a huge, positive impact on these children's lives. It's transformational for them, and I want to be a part of an organization that can do that." ✨



COMMUNITY PARTNER

Savannah Civic Center and Savannah Sports Council Provide Families with a Night of Fun

One weekend in January four collegiate club Hockey teams come together at the Savannah Civic Center for two days of competitive hockey. And every year since 2009, a group of Camp Sunshine families from the Savannah area have been there to share in the excitement.

The Savannah Sports Council created the Savannah Tire Hockey Classic in 1999 as a way to bring something different to the Civic Center and to bring hockey to Savannah once a year. Club teams from the University of Georgia, Georgia Institute of Technology, Florida State and the University of Florida play in a round robin tournament over the course of two days. This year the University of Florida emerged the winner for the second consecutive year.

The Savannah Sports Council donates 75 tickets to Camp Sunshine for the Friday night games every year, and the Civic Center provides a room free of charge for the families to enjoy a pizza party between the two games.

“Providing tickets to Camp Sunshine is one of the ways we give back to the community, and we can help give them a night of fun as well as an opportunity to get together with other families who are going through the same thing.” says Ben Wilder, director of the Savannah Sports Council, which organizes the annual hockey tournament.

“It is such a fun relaxed atmosphere,” says Stephanie Irwin, Camp Sunshine’s Savannah Program Coordinator. “The folks from The Savannah Sports Council and The Savannah Civic Center really make sure our Camp Sunshine families have a good time.”

Giving back is also the philosophy of the Civic Center, which not only provides a room, but offers tickets for other events to the Camp Sunshine group in Savannah from time to time, including the Country Concert and the Harlem Globetrotters Game.

“We think of Camp Sunshine anytime we have the opportunity to give tickets away,” says Deborah Kicklighter, event planner at the Civic Center. “We are happy to support this organization and the families.” ✨

Give the Gift of Summer Camp

Your gift to Camp Sunshine can help a child with cancer experience an unforgettable week at camp. 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 online at mycampsunshine.com.

- 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 a full cabin of campers!\$5,000



**Summer Camp
2016**
Start planning now!

**Teen Week at
Camp Twin Lakes –
Rutledge
June 19-24**

**Junior Week at
Camp Twin Lakes –
Rutledge
June 26-July 1**

Register online at
www.mycampsunshine.com



CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Roopville Ramble
May 21, 2016

www.roopvilleramble.org

The Roopville Ramble is a century ride in beautiful rolling West Georgia, benefiting Camp Sunshine. Distances of 15, 37, 50, 67 (Metric Century), and 104 miles are offered. Registration information can be found online.

Keencheefoonee Road Race
June 21 and June 28, 2016
campsunshine.kintera.org/roadrace2016

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.

Shag Atlanta Golf Tournament
June 26, 2016

www.shagatlanta.com/golf.html

First annual Shag Atlanta Open benefiting Camp Sunshine at Providence Club Golf Course in Monroe, GA. Details can be found on the events website.

Pirates of Lanier Poker Run
July 14-16, 2016

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.

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.mycamp-sunshine.com, the newsletter and your mail for programs coming to your area.



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

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

M A Y 2 0 1 6

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

J U N E 2 0 1 6

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

CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS



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

SAVE THESE DATES

JULY 2016

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1 Junior Summer Camp at Camp Twin Lakes - Rutledge	2
3	4 Office Closed	5 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	6 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Preschool Music Class	14	15	16 Teen Leadership Challenge →
17	18	19	20	21 →	22	23
24	25	26	27 Preschool Music Class Sunshine 2 U - at The Children's Hospital at Memorial Health - Savannah	28	29	30
31						

September 7, 2016
Bereavement Workshop with Alan Wolfelt
 7:00-9:00pm for Camp Sunshine Community and Professionals

September 8, 2016
 9:00-3:30pm for Professionals and Camp Sunshine Volunteers

September 10, 2016
 Preschool Apple Orchard Excursion
 Hillcrest Orchards, Elijay, GA

September 12, 2016
 Spa Sydell Night at Camp Sunshine House

September 10, 2016
 Wild Adventures for South Georgia families

September 10, 2016
 Childhood Cancer Awareness Day at Turner Field

October 7-9, 2016
 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes - Rutledge

October 14-16, 2016
 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes - Rutledge

October 21-23, 2016
 Remember the Sunshine Weekend at Camp Twin Lakes - Rutledge

October 23, 2016
 Fall Festival at Camp Sunshine House

November 10, 2016
 Seasonal Sunshine Thanksgiving Dinner at Camp Sunshine House

November 18-20, 2016
 Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes - Rutledge

December 11, 2016
 Holiday Party

AUGUST 2016

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

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.



CAMP SUNSHINE[®]

A ray of hope for children with cancer.[™]

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404-325-7979 * Toll-Free 866-786-2267
www.mycampsunshine.com

Is Your Info Up to Date?

Email Chanteasea@mycampsunshine.com
Or call 404-325-7979, ext. 21
Or go to www.mycampsunshine.com

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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

Spreading Sunshine in Savannah, continued from page 1



L'illi Schraeder

treatment in the hospital or the outpatient oncology clinic," Stephanie says, adding that she has anywhere from five to thirteen campers for Sunshine2U on any given day. Monthly activities range from decorating mason jar candleholders to painting canvases to playing camp games.

She also visits the hospital at least one to two days a week, meeting newly diagnosed children with cancer, as well as spending time with the current campers and their families. It is there that she tells them about upcoming local programs, as well as Camp Sunshine's family, sibling, and summer camps. Last year she made 359 contacts with children being treated.

"It is so wonderful to have Stephanie here," Heather says. "I view it as the support I need. She makes connections for us by arranging these activities. It builds that bridge, if you are ready to reach out and to be with other families."

Last year, Stephanie organized 15 programs that reached 140 families, and she continues to plan fun family-oriented activities for 2016.

"Camp Sunshine is a companionship of love, support, and sunshine for campers, families, and even staff," Stephanie says. "It's a community of support that will last forever. Once you sign up for Camp Sunshine, you are in the Camp Sunshine family, and it is like a warm, loving hug!" *