

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



POSTCARDS

For Teen Campers, Outdoor Adventure Is Inwardly Transformative

From July 14-20, eight teen campers and two adult supervisors experienced the adventure of a lifetime at the Colorado Outward Bound School. They camped, climbed, hiked and accomplished physical feats they didn't believe they could. More importantly, they grew — in self-confidence, respect for one another and inner strength. Camp Sunshine is grateful to our many friends who support this annual outdoor adventure program and to the fine instructors of the Colorado Outward Bound School.

COLE'S STORY

Eighteen-year-old Cole Grisham's favorite Outward Bound memory is rock climbing up the side of a mountain — and making it. "Not only was the mountain side almost a completely vertical surface, but there were limited cracks and bumps to use as finger grips." Not to mention that Cole, a brain tumor survivor, sometimes experiences muscular weakness on his right side.

"About half-way up the mountain, all my muscle strength was gone. My knees were bleeding, and I'm thinking I'm not too sure about this." His friends below were thinking differently. "They were shouting you can do



this, Cole. You're not going to give up."

Cole was just out of kindergarten when he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Cole recovered, but in 2007 while in sixth grade, he was diagnosed with another brain tumor. "I couldn't walk or talk for awhile and needed a lot of therapy. Finally I got to where I could walk for maybe 15 minutes, but I'd use up all my energy and not be able to walk again for three days." During this time, Cole and his family discovered Camp Sunshine.

Cole attended Summer Camp for several years. When he got a call this past summer inviting him on Camp Sunshine's outdoor adventure at the Colorado Outward Bound

School, he jumped at the chance. "Five days outdoors doing something different each day — it sounded awesome," he recalled. "But it turned out to be even more than I expected. It was a profound experience that I'll carry with me for the rest of my life."

He knew some of his fellow campers better than others, and one camper (Adria Williamson) not at all. By week's end he had made friends for life. "At night we would sit in a circle and talk about what we saw each other accomplish that day. For example, Adria was admittedly afraid of heights, but we saw her accomplish so much that week."

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DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,

Our teen campers' experience at the Colorado Outward Bound School touches a personal chord in me. Twenty-four years ago, I had the privilege of accompanying our first group on this journey. It left an indelible mark on me, as I'm sure it has on campers, instructors and adult volunteers through the years. The experience instills a tremendous amount of self-confidence in these young people. It builds leadership. In fact, many of our staunchest supporters, including one of this year's volunteer chaperones Kenneth Kretschmar, participated in this Camp Sunshine Teen Leadership Challenge as teen campers. I am deeply grateful to everyone – including supporters, volunteers, staff and Outward Bound instructors – who make this yearly journey possible.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

Especially at this time of year, I am awed by the number of ways people give to Camp Sunshine. This *Postcards* is full of examples. Volunteer Jeff Dunahoo building a photography website so parents can catch glimpses of their children enjoying summer camp. Our volunteer chaperones accompanying our teen adventurers on their outdoor adventure. Teen campers helping a fellow camper, admittedly afraid of heights, to climb a mountain. Generous sponsors enabling Camp Sunshine to present a charitable fundraising performance of "Shrek: The Musical." Eric, featured in our *Then & Now*, sharing his story of survivorship and pursuit of his dreams.

To all of our supporters and friends, we thank you for your marvelously diverse gifts of time, talent and treasure at this holiday time and throughout the year. Finally, all of us at Camp Sunshine extend to you and your family the very warmest holiday wishes. May the New Year be a healthy one filled with days of sunshine.

Sally Hale
Executive Director

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.

Spread a Little Sunshine This Holiday Season

Make your holiday giving count with these creative ideas from Camp Sunshine

Tuck a ticket in a child's stocking. Children of all ages will delight in "Shrek: The Musical," Camp Sunshine's signature fundraiser for 2014 at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre on Sunday, February 23 at 1:00PM and 3:30PM.

Buy a brick. Honor a friend or loved one whose life has been touched by camp by purchasing an engraved brick or paver for our brick walkway at the Camp Sunshine House. Brick options range from \$100 to \$500.

Send a special message. Honor friends, family and business associates with a donation to Camp Sunshine. Along with your financial gift, send us the names and addresses of those you are honoring, and we'll send them a personalized card designed by one of our campers.



For more information on the many ways you can give to Camp Sunshine at holiday time or any time of the year, contact Mary Kyle, Development Director, at 404-325-7979 or mary@mycampsunshine.com.

THEN & NOW

Eric's Story

For Eric, Camp Sunshine was not only a life-changing experience; it also set the course for his life's passion and career choices.

Eric is a recreational therapist dedicated to helping people with disabilities to accomplish challenging sports. In 2012, he founded Catalyst Sports, an Atlanta-based nonprofit that introduces the world of adventurous sports to the disabled community. His journey to Catalyst has taken many turns, but it started with Camp Sunshine.

Eric was 10 years old in 1991 – “a typical kid, going to school, playing soccer, no worries in the world” – when he was accidentally kicked in the eye with a soccer ball. Standard treatments didn't help; the eye continued to swell. “Call it mother's intuition, but my mom insisted we see a specialist.” Eric was diagnosed with cancer in the orbit of his right eye. His treatment included surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. It was during this extraordinarily challenging time, that Eric and his family were introduced to Camp Sunshine.

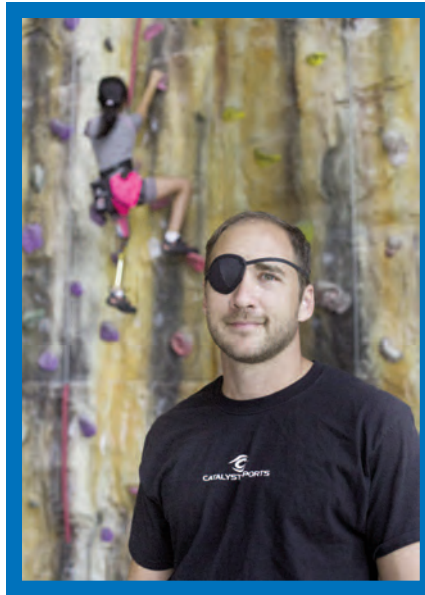
“Our first Camp Sunshine experience was Family Camp in fall of 1992,” he recalled. “It was a good time for bonding with

the family. It was a chance for us to smile, laugh and have fun – definitely a kind of retreat.” When Junior Week rolled around in summer of 1993, Eric was there. He never missed a camp week as a camper and

continued for two more years as a counselor in training.

“When I went to Camp Sunshine, I would come home and think now what? My parents thought I was just tired from camp, but I think I was depressed! What do you do after being at such an amazing place?” he said.

His cancer caused him to have severe dry eye; his eye was extremely red, his eyelid would not close all the way, and his eyebrow was misshapen. After multiple surgeries, Eric eventually had the eye removed in 2011 and now wears an eye patch. “At camp, just because you look different, people don't care,” he said. “No one ever asked questions, and everyone understood. Camp allowed me to be me and to try things I had never tried before.”



In the trying and doing he discovered his path. “I started to think about what I wanted to do that could change people's lives. I knew I didn't want a desk job.” At first he thought about being a river guide, but his mother encouraged more practical thinking. Eric met with Dan Mathews, Director of Camping Services at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge, who suggested recreational therapy. Eric went on to graduate from the University of Georgia in 2004 with a degree in recreational therapy. From there he accepted an internship in Park City, Utah which turned into a three-year stay, leading groups of disabled persons on outdoor adventures including skiing, snowboarding, horseback riding and canoeing.

He returned to Georgia in 2007, accepting a position at the VA Hospital in Augusta, where he worked not only with veterans but also with an active duty rehab unit. During his tenure, Eric helped have a climbing wall built at the hospital. “Climbing gives people such a sense of accomplishment,” he said.

After five years at the VA hospital, Eric returned to Atlanta to pursue his dream to establish a nonprofit to empower disabled persons to do sports adventures they never thought they could do. He has a Board of Directors and is developing relationships with many of Atlanta's leading organizations that provide programming for disabled persons.

He encourages parents to send their child with cancer to Camp Sunshine. “For me it was life-changing – a place where you could relate with people who understood what you were going through. It's a chance for your kid to be a kid. . . to understand who they are really and who they can become.”*



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations, Jeff!

Long-time volunteer Jeff Dunahoo recently received the Camp Spirit Award from the Children's Oncology Camping Association International (COCA-I) for his remarkable years of service to Camp Sunshine. Words can't express our gratitude for his commitment. Jeff selected just a few of his own camp photos to illustrate this Spotlight – which coincidentally was planned and written before any of us knew Jeff is this year's COCA-I award recipient!



If a picture is worth a thousand words, then Jeff Dunahoo's volunteer work for Camp Sunshine would fill volumes. In 17 years as a loyal and committed camp volunteer, Jeff has filled many roles. Perhaps the one appreciated by the largest number of parents is his work on the photography website for summer camp.

The website is updated daily during summer camp with photos of the day's events and activities. Parents can log on and view the photos, getting a sense of camp's excitement and seeing their child in action. "It is a huge deal for the families," Jeff said. "They love seeing the photos, especially of their own child. It is not unusual for us to get 100,000 views per day. In fact, we'll have 10,000 to 15,000 views before we've even finished posting the pictures."

A physical therapist assistant with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Jeff started volunteering at Camp Sunshine in 1996 at the urging of hospital friends who knew he'd be a natural. The first year he helped with gold panning and fishing during Junior Week. "I remember being there for the first time and there was a lot of activity, a lot of excitement. Even though it looked chaotic, it was structured chaos. Everyone had a job to do and they were doing it."

The next summer Jeff was asked to be a cabin

counselor. He continued in this capacity every year until this past summer, when he was called upon to be camp photographer. Jeff, who runs a photography business in his spare time, was happy to oblige.

Through the years, Jeff has volunteered for Sibling Camp, Family Camp and many other camp activities. He also has started a woodworking activity for Teen Week. In his professional life, Jeff works four 10-hour days but always finds time for Camp Sunshine. "I really appreciate the atmosphere that is created when everyone shows up – the campers, the families, the volunteers, the staff. These kids know they are in a safe place, a fun place, a place where they can be themselves."

Jeff was Camp Sunshine's Volunteer of the Year in 2004 and is never without at least one camp friendship bracelet on his wrist. "The bracelets are made out of fishing swivels, so I get asked a lot if I'm a fisherman. No... but the bracelet is a great way to start telling people about Camp Sunshine. I talk about camp all the time." He especially likes to tell the oncology patients he often works with about Camp Sunshine. "I encourage them to go. They don't want to miss out on camp."*



Outdoor Adventure Is Inwardly Transformative, *Continued from page 1*

A freshman at University of Mississippi, Cole stays in touch with his fellow adventurers and is considering enrolling in Camp Sunshine's Leader in Training (LIT) program one day. "In Colorado we were away from everything – from social pressures and social media – with only the basic necessities. You get to know a lot about each other...and about yourself"

ADRIA'S STORY

Nineteen-year-old Adria Williamson had a fear of heights: "I just didn't realize how bad it was until we got to the mountains." Height phobia wasn't the only challenge she was facing. Diagnosed with AML as a high school senior, Adria had missed the opportunity to participate in Camp Sunshine and didn't know her fellow campers. In fact, she initially turned down the invitation to participate. Her mother talked her into it. "I'm so glad I did it – it was absolutely awesome," Adria said.

Adria was diagnosed in the second semester of her senior year. She remembers being tired and not feeling well, and being told she might have mono. Tests showed an abnormally high white blood count. At Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, more testing confirmed a cancer diagnosis. "I remember bursting into tears and calling my two best friends and thinking this really can't be

happening," she said. "One of the first questions I asked my doctors was if I was going to lose my hair." The answer was yes. "For awhile I had a real pity party. But then my mom said, Adria, would you rather lose your hair or lose your life? That put it in perspective."

July 7, 2013 marked Adria's one-year remission. A week later she left for the Colorado Outward Bound School. Adria calls it "the trip of a lifetime." For one thing, it helped her confront her fear of heights. "I wouldn't say I conquered my fear, but I did the ropes course and climbed a peak, and for me that was pretty amazing!"

More importantly, Adria accomplished another goal: making friends with her fellow campers and adult supervisors on the journey. "Everyone was so welcoming and accepting of me," she said. Even as she grappled with her phobia, the others stood by her side: "I felt so much compassion from people I never even knew before."

Adria is studying at West Georgia Technical College and would like to one day be a pediatric oncology nurse. Like Cole, she is thinking about becoming an LIT. "Sometimes I find it hard to explain the experience I had in Colorado," she said. "I was so proud of myself for what I accomplished. I figure if I can do this, I can do anything!"*

"These Kids Are Amazing"

Karen Winkel, an oncology nurse at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, has been a summer camp volunteer at Junior Week for the past four years. She loves the outdoors and enjoys backpacking and rock climbing. When asked to be an adult volunteer for Camp Sunshine's teen adventure week at the Colorado Outward Bound School, she readily accepted.

"I loved it and would definitely do it again," she said. "These kids are amazing. I have never met young adults who have so much compassion for one another and are always there for one another."

Along with former camper and longtime volunteer Kenneth Kretschmar, Karen accompanied the teens on a rigorous outdoor adventure that would challenge even the most robust individuals. "Some of these campers have physical deficits because of their illness. To see them accomplish things they never thought they could was an incredible experience." She found Cole's rock climb particularly moving. "Watching him tackle a wall that would have been hard for anyone...I'm glad I was wearing sunglasses so he couldn't see me tearing up."

Karen found the adventure physically challenging and was glad to be able to push herself. "But the most important thing I walked away with was getting to know these campers. They are not just cancer survivors; they are thriving young adults who are going to put their cancer experience out there, talk about it, share it with others and learn from it."

From a professional standpoint, too, she found the journey reaffirming: "It refreshed me and renewed in me the whole purpose for doing what I do every day."



**Instructor
takes away life
lessons, too.
Story continues
on back cover.**



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

JANUARY 2014

SPA SYDELL NIGHT At Camp Sunshine House

January 13, March 10 and April 28

6:00-8:00 PM

Call to RSVP

Come have dinner and be pampered by the talented professionals from Spa Sydell.

PRESCHOOL MUSIC CLASS

2nd and 4th Wednesday each month

10:30AM - Music class followed by

lunch at 11:30AM

Call to RSVP

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

REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

We now provide programs in all areas of the state in addition to programs in the Metro Atlanta area. Check out our website www.mycampsunshine.com, the newsletter and your mail for programs coming to your area.

THE NEXT STEPS: OFF TREATMENT WORKSHOP

March 15

Camp Sunshine House

Call to RSVP

Topics addressed at this educational program will include:

- Medical Follow-up
- Cognitive Late Effects
- Family Life After Treatment
- Helping Your Child Transition

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 Office Closed	2 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	3	4
5	6	7 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Eglston	8 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR Pre-School Music Class	9	10	11
12	13 Spa Sydell Night	14	15	16	17 Savannah Regional Program Teen Lock In and Winter Dance	18
19	20 Office Closed	21	22 Pre-School Music Class	23	24 Sibling Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY 2014

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Eglston	5 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR	6 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	7	8
9	10	11	12 Pre-School Music Class	13	14	15
16	17	18 Seasonal Sunshine	19	20	21	22
23 Shrek: The Musical	24	25	26 Pre-School Music Class	27	28 Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes	



Connect with Camp Sunshine online to stay up to date on the latest news and happenings! Join us at www.facebook.com/campsunshine and on Twitter @mycampsunshine.



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

MARCH 2014

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1 Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes
2 →	3	4 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Eglston	5 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/SR	6 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	7	8
9	10 Spa Sydell Night	11	12 Pre-School Music Class	13	14	15 Next Steps:Off Treatment Workshop School Age Overnight
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Pre-School Music Class	27	28 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	29 →
30 →	31					

SPECIAL EVENT

**Camp Sunshine Presents
"Shrek: The Musical"
Sunday, February 23, 2014
1:00 PM and 3:30 PM**

Join Camp Sunshine for one of two special performances of "Shrek: The Musical" at the Alliance Theatre! Tickets and sponsorships are on sale now through the Camp Sunshine website for this fabulous family spectacle. Call 404-325-7979 for additional information.

SAVE THESE DATES

**May 17, 2014
Staff Orientation**

**June 22-27, 2014
Summer Camp – Teen Week**

**June 29-July 4, 2014
Summer Camp – Junior Week**

**August 15-17, 2014
Sibling Camp**

APRIL 2014

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	4 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	5 →
6 → Remember the Sunshine Day at Camp Twin Lakes	7	8	9 Pre-School Music Class	10	11	12 Spring Fling for Preschool Families
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 Pre-School Music Class	24	25	26
27	28 Spa Sydell Night	29	30 Washington DC Trip for Teens	→		



1850 Clairmont Road
Decatur, GA 30033
404-325-7979
Toll-Free 866-786-2267
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

“Shrek: The Musical” To Delight Campers of All Ages

What’s green and ogreish, has a best friend Donkey and a musical score that will make a believer out of anyone?

It’s “Shrek: The Musical” and the special presentation on Sunday, February 23 at 1:00PM and 3:30PM at the Alliance Theatre is Camp Sunshine’s signature fundraiser for 2014.

Join the world’s most lovable ogre Shrek, his beloved Princess Fiona, his best friend Donkey and a cast of unforgettable characters for this fun private charity event for our camper families. Again this year, Camp Sunshine is delighted to team up with The Coca-Cola Company, our Presenting Sponsor, and Atlanta’s nationally acclaimed Alliance Theatre to offer an exclusive afternoon of unforgettable, family entertainment. Proceeds will benefit Camp Sunshine’s year-round programs for children with cancer and their families.

Based on the much-loved Dreamworks film character and William Steig’s book, “Shrek: the Musical” tells of an ogre who leaves his home and sets out to rescue the beautiful Princess Fiona. The story reminds us that outside appearances don’t matter – what lies in the heart matters most. Valuing each other and forming friendships are qualities practiced every day at Camp Sunshine. Don’t miss this amazing day at the theatre with our campers and their families! Tickets and sponsorship information are available at www.mycampsunshine.com or contact Lindsey Acciarito at 404-325-7979.*

Continued from page 5

Instructor Takes Away Life Lessons, Too

An Outward Bound instructor for six years, Monica Reuning was eager to give Camp Sunshine’s teen group an outdoor experience that would be “new, exciting and fun.” What she didn’t anticipate was the impact the teens would have on her: “These kids were some of the most inspiring people I have ever met.”

Originally the adventure was to include a peak climb by the light of a full moon, but the weather didn’t cooperate. Instead the group participated the next morning in a unique initiative. Instructors hiked the group out from the campsite. Some individuals were blindfolded and others were not allowed to speak. By using their wits and leaning on each other, they made their way back to camp. “They did it brilliantly,” Monica said.

She was impressed not only with the group’s ability to rise to physical challenges, but also with their obvious compassion and caring for one another. “I was blown away,” Monica said. “All of them have had these profound experiences in their lives and are willing to share this with each other and to help one another. I would tell them: you have fought cancer; you have done huge, hard things in your life; you can do this, too. And every one of them did.”