

## WINTER 2016

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A Publication for Families and  
Friends of Camp Sunshine – A Ray  
of Hope for Children with Cancer

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



# POSTCARDS

## 2016 Scholarship Recipients

**C**amp Sunshine has awarded college scholarships to 22 very deserving childhood cancer survivors this year.

Established in 1992, these scholarships are awarded to Camp Sunshine Alumni who plan to attend a college, university or technical school. This year's scholarship winners are attending a variety of institutions – both near and far – and many plan to go into the health field because of their cancer experience.

The Board of Directors expanded the scholarship fund in 2014 to assist even more former campers. Thanks to generous donations, Camp Sunshine was able to award three more scholarships this year. Providing these scholarships is a way for Camp Sunshine to continue to support these future leaders on their journey, and a wonderful way to stay connected to them as they move forward in life.

Each applicant must submit an essay when applying for the scholarship. Here are some excerpts from some of this year's exceptional scholarship recipients.

**Michael Waters – Georgia Institute of Technology** I cannot explain in words how much Camp Sunshine has meant to me since I was a little boy. Summer camp was always the highlight of my year. Certainly, I would not have become the person I am today without the support of all of the Camp Sunshine staff and camp counselors. The tremendous financial support that this scholarship provides plays an enormous role in helping me advance through college and follow my dreams. I can only hope that I can have as much of an influence on someone's life as Camp Sunshine has had on mine.



**Alyssa Ansell – Florida State University**

The Camp Sunshine scholarship has helped me by providing me with the opportunity to attend an outstanding University with professors that are of such a high caliber and who encourage learning. The education I am receiving will positively impact my future in many ways. It will help me to one day have a career as a nurse practitioner and help other children fighting illnesses.

**Florence White – Agnes Scott College** I have a wide range of skills, leaving me with a multitude of possibilities for my future. I plan on majoring in visual arts and enhancing my skill in sculpture and ceramics, and am also thinking about a double major in photojournalism or animal behavior. My experience in building my confidence, trying out all kinds of activities, and making friendships at Camp Sunshine are a core reason I can see these things in my future. Joy can be had during hardship, adversity, or personal challenges.

**DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,**

Scientists have learned a lot in recent years about how we feel when we give to others. When people make a gift, such as to a charity, their brains experience a reward similar to having a food craving satisfied. Quite literally, giving feels good.

We know this intuitively at Camp Sunshine – we see so many acts of giving and expressions of generosity throughout the year. The joy our volunteers and donors feel when giving is unmistakable.

This issue of *Postcards* shares examples of the giving spirit in action. Our lead story illustrates the cycle of giving:

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

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

22 students who experienced Camp Sunshine in their past are finding it is part of their future as well. They're receiving college scholarships made possible through donations from our supporters.

I'm touched by the gratitude of these students. It's become harder and harder to pay for college, and they deeply appreciate how those who were there for them in their youth are still by their side today. The love and support our campers receive helps explain why so many of them return later in life to volunteer.

We meet one such young woman in this issue. Ongie Sherman was 10 years old the first time she experienced Camp Sunshine. I remember her as a confident girl who felt right at home at our camp from the very beginning. As an adult, Ongie, who now works as a technology consultant in Washington, D.C., still makes time to come to camp, volunteering as a counselor.

A community partner that has consistently given to Camp Sunshine is the Atlanta Braves organization, which is featured in this issue. The Braves have provided tickets to campers and families since 1998, and the team has been a steadfast sponsor of Childhood Cancer Awareness Day for the last two years. The Atlanta Braves Foundation has also made grants to Camp Sunshine to support an array of initiatives. The relationship began when John Schuerholz, Vice Chairman of the Atlanta Braves, and his wife, Karen, became members of our Board in 1991. John also chaired the crucial fundraising campaign to build Camp Sunshine House. They are now on our Advisory Board.

In this season of thanks, all of us at Camp Sunshine are grateful to those who keep us going. And it feels good to do so! Sally Hale, *Executive Director*



## Spread a Little Sunshine This Holiday Season

**Make your holiday giving count with these creative ideas to benefit Camp Sunshine.**

**Tuck a ticket in a child's stocking.** Children of all ages will delight in "Cinderella and Fella," Camp Sunshine's signature fundraising event for 2017 at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre on Sunday, March 19 at 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

**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](mailto:mary@mycampsunshine.com).**



## THEN &amp; NOW



## Ongie's Story

**Ongeleque "Ongie" Sherman (right) remembers going to Camp Sunshine for the first time just as her hair was starting to grow back. And for the first time, she didn't feel self-conscious.**

"Right away, I had a feeling like I belonged there," remembers Ongie. "The other campers looked like me, had stories like me, and we could relate to each other."

Ongie's cancer journey began in 2001, when she was diagnosed with lymphoma at nine years old. She underwent a year of chemotherapy and had to be home schooled during her treatment. She also had to give up something she loved: dancing.

"I was very sick, and weak," Ongie says. "I couldn't be a normal kid. Chemotherapy drains you, and you lose your hair. I wondered why this was happening to me."

In January 2002, Ongie was in remission and ready to go to camp that summer. She had heard about it in the hospital from some of the other patients.

"I didn't know what to expect," she says, "but I wasn't scared. I was happy to get out of the house, and be away from the hospital."

Ongie loved doing arts and crafts at camp, and participating in the talent shows, where she was able to dance again. Her birthday fell during the week of camp and she was treated like a celebrity with a tiara and a cake. Celebrating her birthday at Camp Sunshine became a yearly tradition as Ongie went every summer until she was 18.

Her favorite memory of camp is a bittersweet one. "Every summer there is a memorial service for those who have passed away over the last year," she says. "One summer we remembered a girl who had been in my cabin for two years. It was a chance to share good memories of her and grieve together. That service is a way to celebrate their lives instead of moping around and feeling sad. I always appreciated that."

After high school, Ongie attended Hampton University in Virginia, where she received a degree in finance with a minor in leadership studies. She graduated in 2014 and moved to Washington D.C., where she now works as a technology consultant for Accenture. That same year, she returned to Camp Sunshine as a counselor.

"I was nervous at first to be a leader," Ongie says. "But I realized that being a camper helped me become a better counselor. I knew how to help the kids fit in and show them how to have fun."

Last year she had a cabin of eight girls, six of whom were brand new to Camp Sunshine. She said they were all very shy at first and didn't talk much. But by the end of the week, they had become best friends.

"It was amazing to see how they grew together in just six days," Ongie says. "At the end of camp, they didn't want to leave. It was so rewarding to me."

Ongie still celebrates her birthday at Camp Sunshine, the place she holds so near and dear to her heart. Volunteering as a counselor is her way of giving back.

"Camp Sunshine is like an oasis for kids diagnosed with this horrible disease who might be ostracized for losing a limb or not having any hair," she says. "It's a place to have fun and learn and grow without being judged. It's heaven on earth for kids with cancer."★





**2016 Scholarship Recipients,** *Continued from page 1*

**Katherine Athanassiades – Emory University** Even though I'm only 18, my life is broken into three distinct parts – before cancer, during and after cancer. When cancer becomes a reality, it begins a journey no one is prepared for, physically, mentally or emotionally. One of the best parts of "after cancer" is the vital role Camp Sunshine has played. Camp Sunshine was there for me during and after my treatment. The friends I've made there will be life-long. Even though my friends at school were supportive, they had no way to understand what I had experienced. Being able to walk around Camp Sunshine events with no hair was my new normal during and post-treatment. Attending teen retreats and teen camps were my salvation.

**Harleigh Sohler – Augusta University**

Camp Sunshine provided a support system for me and for that, I will forever be grateful. Had I not had camp, I do not believe that I would have made it this far in life. The people I met through the many programs I attended have pushed me to be the person I am today. I personally feel that I have persevered through many challenges that life threw my way. After I graduate nursing school, I plan to work with pediatric oncology patients.

**Blake Carpenter – North Georgia Technical College**

Camp Sunshine is close to my heart as it has made a positive impact in my life since attending every year since I was about nine years old. Through Camp Sunshine, I have learned that anything is possible for me. I have grown to love and look up to the many people that have always surrounded me at camp. My experiences at Camp Sunshine have become embedded in my life by instilling in me to strive forward and to always be the best that I can be!

**Samantha Miller – Georgia Southern University**

While I was being treated at CHOA at Egleston, I was blessed enough to have the best Child Life Specialist in the entire hospital. Because of her, I have been inspired to pursue a career in Child Care Specialty. I want nothing more than to be able to give back to the program that gave so much to me.

**Yolanni Lopez – Spelman College**

Having childhood cancer has affected me greatly; it has shown me not every day is promised. You should always be grateful for what you have and where you could be. Not only that but it has also shown me to stay optimistic. I want to be able to go out in the world and help make it a better place.

**Abby Collins – Dalton State College** My passion to pursue becoming a Child Life Specialist comes from my own personal experience that began in seventh grade. At 12 years old I never expected anything to change my path of having fun, hanging out with friends or going to spend the night parties. In 2009, I was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor that would require chemotherapy. I have had many surgeries over the years and have received chemotherapy three different times. Every time, a Child Life Specialist provided me with the hope and inspiration to keep going. My career vision is to one day work with children and families as a Child Life Specialist at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

**Caitlin Donahue – Georgia College and State University**

Camp Sunshine has been such an essential part of my life, especially in my last four years of attending. Starting camp at seven years old and still attending at seventeen has given me such an amazing experience by getting to talk to other people that have shared experiences I have lived through; they know what it's like to go through hardships. Camp Sunshine is a home to me.

**Madeline Jones – University of West Georgia**

I have battled two different cancers. I have undergone chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery. I attended Camp Sunshine when I was going through treatment and when I was in remission. Those experiences will always play a role in my outlook on life and guide me as I have an opportunity to help others.

## Save the Date: Come See “Cinderella and Fella” March 19

Campers, families and friends are invited to attend a spectacular afternoon of theatre on Sunday, March 19, as Camp Sunshine presents “Cinderella and Fella,” at the Alliance Theatre. Performances will be held at 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

The play is a contemporary musical spin on the classic Cinderella fairytale that is more high-tops than glass slipper and is fueled by the magic of lightning bugs, singing cicadas, and oozing mud. Filled with humor and wonder, this is a world-premiere adaptation by Atlanta's own Janece Shaffer with music by Renee Clark.

We are grateful for the generous support of our corporate sponsors

and many donors that have made the Alliance Theatre production the annual signature fundraising event for Camp Sunshine. Because of these sponsors, our Camp Sunshine families are able to attend at no charge, and proceeds support the year-round programs that Camp Sunshine provides for children with cancer and their families. Last year, Camp Sunshine provided 144 programs over 159 days, offering a strong community of hope and support for campers and their families.

For more information about sponsoring or participating in this event, contact Nancy Burrow at 404-325-7979 or [nancy@mycamp-sunshine.com](mailto:nancy@mycamp-sunshine.com).✱

### 2016 Scholarship Recipients, *Continued from page 4*



#### **Scout Morgan – Georgia State University**

When I was two years old, I was diagnosed with leukemia. The first memories I have are of the hospital. Even though my diagnosis and treatment were horrible and exhausting, there was a silver lining. Camp Sunshine helped me and my family adjust to our new lives and find new meaning to the word “normal” even when I had an IV or a port. Thanks to Camp, I was able to move past my diagnosis of cancer and live my life normally. My dream is to be able to run an organization that provides as much hope, safety, and support that Camp Sunshine provided for me and my family.

NAME	HOME CITY	UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE ATTENDING
Alyssa K. Ansell	Niceville, FL (formerly Dunwoody, GA)	Florida State University
Andrew D. Appert	Johns Creek, GA	University of Norte Dame
Katherine L. Athanassiades	Decatur, GA	Emory University
Ryan Blake Carpenter	Gainesville, GA	North Georgia Technical College
Abby L. Collins	Jasper, GA	Dalton State
Kyle M. Cruce	Dawsonville, GA	University of Southern Mississippi
James A. Cyran	Norcross, GA	Clemson University
Caitlin A. Donahue	Suwanee, GA	Georgia College
Jessika M. Douglas	Covington, GA	University of Georgia
Levi M. Fortner	Hazlehurst, GA	Truett-McConnell University
Madeline Jones	Dallas, GA	University of West Georgia
Lee Lawson	Gainesville, GA	University of North Georgia
Yolanni G. Lopez	Atlanta, GA	Spelman College
Samantha Miller	Peachtree City, GA	Georgia Southern University
Scout C. Morgan	Columbus, GA	Georgia State University
Matthew T. Quintana	Savannah, GA	University of North Georgia
Caroline M. Redd	Marietta, GA	Elon University
Harleigh J. Sohler	Atlanta, GA	Augusta University
Carrie N. Turner	Weston, GA	Georgia Southwestern State University
Lonnie J. Usrey	Warrenton, VA (formerly Gainesville, GA)	University of North Georgia
Michael W. Waters	Powder Springs, GA	Georgia Institute of Technology
Florence E. White	Hartwell, GA	Agnes Scott College



# CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

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

## JANUARY 2017

### SPA SYDELL NIGHT At Camp Sunshine House

January 9, March 13 and April 24

6:00-8:00PM

Call to RSVP

Come have dinner and be pampered with facials and table massages.

### REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

We now provide programming in all areas of the state in addition to programs in the Metro Atlanta area. Check out our website [www.mycampsunshine.com](http://www.mycampsunshine.com), the newsletter and your mail for programs coming to your area.

### THE NEXT STEPS: OFF TREATMENT WORKSHOP

March 18, 2017

Camp Sunshine House

Call to RSVP

A panel of professionals from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta will address topics at this educational program including:

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

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	4 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite and Savannah	5 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	6	7
8	9 Spa Sydel Night	10	11	12	13 Teen Dance and Lock In Savannah Hockey Classic	14 →
15	16 MLK Day Office Closed	17	18	19	20 Sibling Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	21 →
22 →	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## FEBRUARY 2017

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	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 and Savannah	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 Seasonal Sunshine				



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



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

## MARCH 2017

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			<b>1</b> Sunshine 2 U in Savannah	<b>2</b> Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	<b>3</b> Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes	<b>4</b> →
<b>5</b> →	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Egleston	<b>8</b> Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Spa SydeII Night	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Next Steps: Off Treatment Workshop
<b>19</b> Cinderella and Fella	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Spring Fling for Preschool Families
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	→

### SPECIAL EVENT

**Camp Sunshine Presents  
Cinderella and Fella  
Sunday, March 19, 2017**

**1:00 PM and 3:30 PM**

Join Camp Sunshine for one of two special performances of *Cinderella and Fella* 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

**Staff Orientation  
May 13, 2017**

**New Camper Orientation  
June 6, 2017**

**Summer Camp – Teen Week  
June 18-23, 2017**

**Summer Camp – Junior Week  
June 25-30, 2017**

**Sibling Camp  
August 18-20, 2017**

## APRIL 2017

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	<b>1</b> →
<b>2</b> →	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	<b>7</b> Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes	<b>8</b> →
<b>9</b> → Remember the Sunshine Day at Camp Twin Lakes	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Spa SydeII Night	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>						



**CAMP SUNSHINE®**

A ray of hope for children with cancer.™

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

### Is Your Info Up to Date?

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Or call 404-325-7979, ext. 21

Or go to [www.mycampsunshine.com](http://www.mycampsunshine.com)

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## CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

### COMMUNITY PARTNER

## Atlanta Braves Hit a Home Run for Children with Cancer

On a sunny Saturday in September, 200 pediatric cancer survivors were welcomed to Turner Field for Childhood Cancer Awareness Day. The children and their families received free tickets to the game, attended a reception in their honor and participated in pre-game activities on the field. This year, all proceeds from the event – along with the money raised during an online auction – benefited four pediatric cancer organizations including Rally Foundation, CURE Childhood Cancer, Curing Kids Cancer and Camp Sunshine.

"It's a great opportunity for that community to come together for a fun day at the park," says Ericka Newsome-Hill, Director of Community Affairs for the Braves Foundation. "They spend the day

with us, away from the hospital and treatment and hopefully take their minds off what they are going through. It's also a great way to raise awareness."

This is just one way the Atlanta Braves, through its foundation, have supported Camp Sunshine through the years, providing free tickets, financial support and sponsoring special events. John Schuerholz,

former Braves General Manager and now Vice Chairman, and his wife Karen, have been on the Camp Sunshine Board since 1991.

Camp Sunshine's relationship with the Atlanta Braves goes back to 1999, when the first "Hit a Home Run for Camp Sunshine" was held at Turner Field. The event began as a fundraiser, and has evolved into a fun day for Camp Sunshine families. Not only do families receive free tickets to a game, they are treated to lunch beforehand at the stadium's 755 Club restaurant, where they also get a chance to meet some of the Braves players.

The Atlanta Braves Foundation, established in 1994, is the nonprofit arm of the baseball team. It raises funds and redistributes them to organizations that promote health, education and recreation among youth and their families.

"We have been afforded an extraordinary privilege and opportunity to make an impact on our fans in metro Atlanta and throughout the Southeast," Ericka says. "We believe we have a responsibility to do all we can to make a meaningful difference in the community."

Aside from activities on the field, the Braves have supported Camp Sunshine with a Braves Foundation grant the last four years, which allows Camp Sunshine to continue to bring programs to children with cancer and their families. The Braves also made a contribution during the capital campaign to build Camp Sunshine House in 2003.

Ericka says the foundation is happy to support such a worthy organization. "We value our partnership with Camp Sunshine," she says, "and applaud them for their work with pediatric cancer. The work they do is extremely important, and helps makes life better for so many children and their families."\*

