

Then and Now Former camper Clint Perry is grateful for the impact Camp Sunshine has had on him for the last 20 years – both as a camper and as a volunteer. **Page 3**

Building Hope Community Partner Hope Laugh Play is a nonprofit that brings joy – and Legos – to children in the hospital. **Page 4**

Keencefoonee Road Race It was another successful year in terms of fundraising for this annual 5K run/2K walk. **Page 8**

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



POSTCARDS

The Place Where Everyone Belongs

This year marks 35 years of Camp Sunshine's profound impact on young people

Here's What Parents Tell Us

- ☀ "Camp Sunshine was the best therapy my child could have received."
- ☀ "It really gave my son something to relate to in a time in his life when he was not sure what was going on. I love this camp. I hope that all children get the chance to experience what my child has experienced."
- ☀ "Camp Sunshine has been a life-altering experience for both my son and me. It's given him empathy, safety and confidence to share his cancer experiences and memories."
- ☀ "We realized that while we were focused on healing her body, Camp Sunshine was focused on healing her spirit and giving her hope."



"Transformative." "Life Changing." "Unforgettable."

Those are just some of the words former campers use to describe Camp Sunshine. And they are powerful.

Like many summer camps, Camp Sunshine is about friendship bracelets, T-shirts, camp songs, activities and lots of fun and laughter. But there's one major difference: The impact of Camp Sunshine lasts way beyond the week in June when everyone comes together.

This impact is evident through the stories and letters shared over the decades.

For Matt, a former camper who now volunteers every summer, it instilled a desire to give back, so that he could help make Camp Sunshine as special for kids today as the counselors and volunteers did for him when he was a camper.

Justice, who started attending summer camp in 2013, cherished being around other kids who didn't have any hair or who didn't think it odd he couldn't be out in the sun. They made him feel "normal" and gave him a shot of confidence.

The care and compassion shown to campers is paid forward: They in turn become empathetic and considerate towards others. Doing things they never thought they'd be able to do and watching fellow campers accomplish goals gives them courage and independence. Seeing others with no hair or missing a limb helps them realize they're not alone and provides a sense of normalcy.

"Camp Sunshine is a place where no one is looked



down upon and where everyone is treated the same, no matter their condition," says Victoria, who attended Teen Week this year. "Going to camp has made me happier, more compassionate, loving and caring."

Former campers carry lessons learned at camp into their adult lives.

"My brotherhood within Cabin 14 helped me understand what true friendship is all about and how important Camp Sunshine really is to kids fighting cancer," says Derek, a former camper and now volunteer. "I take great pride in carrying on the Cabin 14 legacy by coaching baseball and mentoring young men today because of how much the camp impacted my life. Many of the life lessons I use today mentoring young boys are a reflection of my memories and personal experiences I shared as a camper."

For some, the Camp Sunshine experience has influenced career paths. In their scholarship applications, college-bound students often report a desire to serve

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**DEAR CAMP SUNSHINE FRIENDS,**

Summer 2017 might well be remembered as the summer of "Wonder Woman," the blockbuster movie hit of the season. It dominated the box office.

But though the film's success was impressive (as is Wonder Woman herself!), the real superheroes of the summer could be found at Camp Sunshine.

That was the theme of our 2017 camp – "Superheroes" – and for good reason. The kids who attend our camp show

incredible strength and valor as they wage battle against cancer. The volunteers who step up to help run the camp show superhuman skill in the actions they take and the obstacles they move aside.

It's true: When you bring together a community of people like our campers and volunteers, what results

is something extraordinary. That result – the collective impact of Camp Sunshine – is the centerpiece of this issue of *Postcards*.

We see this impact in the letters parents write us; I have a file full of them, and I'm deeply touched by the gratitude they convey on behalf of their children. You witness it in the campers themselves, when they reach a goal, make a new friend, and realize they are not alone in the fight against cancer.

And you hear the impact in the words of our incredible volunteers, who talk about what this camp means to them, and why they're motivated to give so much of their time and energy year after year.

Clint Perry is one such volunteer. He's been coming to Camp Sunshine for 20 years – first as a camper, then as a volunteer. Now married with a son of his own, Clint brings his wife, Liz, to volunteer with him. His story is our "Then and Now" this month.

This issue also features a young nonprofit, Hope Laugh Play. As you might guess by the name, they're in the business of bringing joy to children, specifically those coping with health and life challenges. Their flagship program provides Lego kits to children in the hospital, an experience that never fails to deliver hope, laughter and play. We are proud and fortunate to have them as a community partner these past three years.

Finally, we invite our sponsors and supporters of Camp Sunshine Presents to take a bow in this issue. Through their superb generosity, we had our day at the Alliance Theatre in March, enjoying the magnificent "Cinderella and Fella." The event raised \$220,000 for Camp Sunshine. Meaning: our own superheroes did quite well at the box office too!

– Sally Hale, *Executive Director*

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

The lives of children with cancer will be restored and strengthened by the embrace of our Camp Sunshine community.

Help Support Camp Sunshine During Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

During the month of September, you can help us raise awareness for childhood cancer and help Camp Sunshine as well.

If you need a caffeine fix, consider buying a cup of coffee at any RaceTrac location in Georgia during the month of September. All proceeds go to Camp Sunshine! All month long you can add \$1 to your purchase and/or buy a Tierra Nueva – CRUZ Chocolate

bar for \$1 – all to benefit Camp Sunshine. Also during the week of September 17–23 all proceeds from your coffee and donut purchase go to Camp Sunshine. That's three great ways to support Camp Sunshine during September. To find the nearest RaceTrac, visit www.racetrac.com.

On Sunday, September 10, plan to join us for Childhood Cancer Awareness Day at the Atlanta Braves' new SunTrust Park when they take on the Florida Marlins. Game time is 1:35 p.m. In addition to honoring children who are battling or have battled childhood cancer, the Braves are giving all fans an opportunity to support the fight against childhood cancer with a special package ticket price. See the <https://www.mlb.com/braves> soon for details on Childhood Cancer Awareness Day.

Or if you'd just like to make a contribution to Camp Sunshine in recognition of Childhood Cancer Awareness month, please visit www.mycampsunshine.com.*



THEN & NOW

Clint's Story



"The impact of Camp Sunshine can never be overstated. It's the greatest thing that came out of my illness."

– Clint Petty, a former camper and long time volunteer

In January 1997, when he was 13 years old, Clint Petty was diagnosed with a pilocytic astrocytoma, or in layman's terms, a brain tumor. Though it was benign, he spent two and a half months in the hospital recovering from the surgery to remove the tumor. For a month of that he was required to sit up in his hospital bed at a 45-degree angle. He ended up missing four months of school.



As a result of the tumor, he lost sight in his right eye and he still struggles with balance. He was not allowed to play any contact sports, a devastating blow to an active teenager.

"I had a hard time accepting everything," Clint admits. "I felt cheated."

But in all of this, he found a bright light: Camp Sunshine. He'd heard about it in the hospital, and although his mother was a little hesitant to let him go, he went for the first time that June.

It was just what he needed.

"At camp I took up tennis, since it wasn't a contact sport," he says. "It was so great to play a sport again – it made me feel normal. In the real world you don't get to feel normal. No one asked me about my scar. I was able to fit in and be a part of a group. I didn't get that in the real world."

Now in his 20th year, he has only missed two summers since 1997. He went right on from being a camper to a CIT, then a volunteer and is a regular fixture during junior week and at Family and Sibling Camps.

"As a counselor, I try to give kids that same feeling of normalcy that I got," Clint says. "I tell them 'cancer is a part of you, but it doesn't define you.' I try to give kids a positive experience."

Along the way, Clint graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in health and physical education, and he is currently

finishing his master's degree through an online program from Georgia Southern University in special education. He works as a fifth grade special education teacher in Clarke County.

"I think working at Camp Sunshine made me realize how much I enjoy working with children, which helped lead me in the direction of being a teacher," he says. "And working with children outside of camp helps me within camp as well, so it has come full circle."

He is married and has a four-year-old son. His wife, Liz, has embraced Clint's love of Camp Sunshine and volunteers at Family Camps with him.

He believes being involved with Camp Sunshine has positively shaped his life in every way.

"Camp Sunshine made me the person I am today," he says. "I don't think I'd be as good a person as I try to be without that experience. I'm a better dad, a better husband and have a better appreciation of life because of camp."★



COMMUNITY PARTNER

Hoping, Laughing and Playing One Brick at a Time

Wil Ennis's grandmother taught him at an early age the importance of giving back to the community. And somehow he always knew he would find a way to give his time and talents to benefit children.

He just didn't know the path that desire would take.

Now he is the founder and president of Hope Laugh Play (HLP), a nonprofit that brings programs to children who are dealing with illness and other challenges, and he's also a special education paraprofessional at Dunwoody Elementary School.

Everything he does is for the benefit of children.

The idea for HLP came out of Wil's desire to do something for the patients at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Egleston campus. He started bringing Lego kits to the children and helping them build them in hopes of taking their minds off their illness.

"It was just me, a bag of Legos and the kids," he says. "The kids loved it, and I could see the relief on the parents' faces, seeing their children happy."

He and a few friends held regular "Lego Days" at the hospital, volunteering their time and funding the project with their own money.

It wasn't until the librarian at Egleston shared a story with him that he realized the impact of what he was doing.

One boy who had been in the hospital for several months passed away after a long battle with cancer. It is a tradition that a plaster mold of the hand of each child who passes away be made, and this

boy's parents requested that a Lego be placed in his hand. Though he couldn't always participate, he was given a kit in his room and he was at his happiest when putting together Legos.



"I am in awe of what children bring to the world, and I am always inspired by their resilience. They always make me want to leave being a better person."

– Wil Ennis, founder of Hope Laugh Play

"This really hit home to me," Wil says. "That's when we knew what we were doing was important. We were providing a respite from their illness and bringing a little joy to their lives."

It was at that point that Wil and one of his volunteers, John Millier, knew they had to make it official. In 2014, Hope Laugh Play was registered as a nonprofit and the Lego program was named "Little Bricks of Hope."

The program grew to include Children's Healthcare

of Atlanta's Scottish Rite campus, as well other organizations and camps that help children who are ill or facing other challenges. Since its inception, Hope Laugh Play has participated in 20 camps, 200 events and has reached 5,000 children.

One of those camps is Camp Sunshine. Wil heard about Camp Sunshine through a parent, who encouraged him to reach out to the organization. He came to Camp Sunshine's Junior Week and now is a regular participant in Sibling Camp, Junior Week and Sunshine 2U.

"Camp Sunshine is the organization we participate with the most," Wil says.

Aside from Little Bricks of Hope, the organization also has Little Tales for Tots, an interactive story hour aimed at younger children, and is currently creating a program that will provide grants to families who are dealing with a sick child to help pay for the necessities, such as the mortgage, rent, utilities and medication. He and John, who now serves as HLP's Program Director, plan to grow the program outside of Georgia. "We hope to someday have our program in every children's hospital in America," Wil says.

Although he spends his life serving children, he believes he gets more from them than they get from him.

"I am in awe of what children bring to the world," he says, "and I am always inspired by their resilience. They always make me want to leave being a better person." ✨



Families Enjoy “Cinderella and Fella”

Camp Sunshine Presents is Camp Sunshine's annual signature fundraising event at the Alliance Theatre. This year, thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and supporters, more than 340 Camp Sunshine campers and family members were treated to the performance of “Cinderella and Fella” on March 19.

The play is a contemporary musical spin on the classic Cinderella fairytale, and provided an entertaining afternoon for our families facing the challenges of childhood cancer.

Through the generosity of our Sunshine Friends, Host Committee and corporate sponsors, including our Presenting Sponsor, Kids II, Inc. and our Headliner, The Coca-Cola Company, those attending enjoyed a magical day at the theatre. We appreciate the commitment of our event co-chairs, Lee Loughran and Valerie Love, along with the amazing support of many, raising over \$220,000 to support the year-round programs at Camp Sunshine. ✨

SPONSORS

PRESENTING SPONSOR

Kids II, Inc.

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The Coca-Cola Company

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Melanie and Rob Palumbo**

ACTOR'S GUILD

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The Place Where Everyone Belongs, continued from page 1

others by becoming a doctor, nurse, medical researcher or child life specialist. Even if they aren't considering a career in the medical field, they're looking to make their mark on the world.

Perhaps the greatest impact of Camp Sunshine is a sense of belonging.

Those who attend join a special community where everyone is accepted for who they are. And they are encouraged and loved. ✨

Shelley, a longtime volunteer, captured the sentiment perfectly when asked what was special about Camp Sunshine:

“A camper who lost her vision learned how to swim at Camp Sunshine. The camper who might not have been able to go to prom due to treatments, won Prom King or Queen at camp. The camper who feels like no one else knows what he is going through meets 250+ people who not only know what he is going through, but have been through it themselves. The camper who is worried about what others will think about her losing her hair and constantly wears a bandana on her head, leaves camp without the bandana and proudly wears her head bald. Because for 35 years Camp has mattered infinitely.”





CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

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

SEPTEMBER 2017

SPA NIGHT At Camp Sunshine House

September 11 and November 13

6:00 PM-8:00 PM

Call to RSVP

Come have dinner and enjoy a massage or a facial.

SUNSHINE & YOGA TIME At Camp Sunshine House

September 14, October 19,
November 9 and December 14

9:30 AM-10:30 AM

Call to RSVP

WHAT'S NEXT? Planning for College

PROGRAM FOR JUNIORS AND
SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL

September TBD

6:00 PM-7:30 PM

Camp Sunshine House

Featured Speaker: Dave Graves,
Senior Associate Director of
Admissions, Operations & Evaluation,
University of Georgia

Topics to Include:

- Navigating Admission Process
- Getting into the College of Your Choice
- Scholarships for Survivors

RSVP required. Call (404) 325-7979

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), 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://pinterest.com/mycampsunshine) and [Instagram.com/mycampsunshine](https://instagram.com/mycampsunshine)

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4 Labor Day Holiday (Office Closed)	5 Sunshine 2U at AFLAC Cancer Center/Egleston	6 Sunshine 2U at AFLAC Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	7 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	8	9 Preschool Apple Orchard Program Wild Adventures in Valdosta
10 Childhood Cancer Awareness Day at Braves Game	11 Spa Night	12	13 Sunshine 2U Savannah	14 Yoga	15	16 School Age Overnight →
17 →	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER 2017

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 Sunshine 2U at AFLAC Cancer Center/Egleston	4 Sunshine 2 U at Aflac Cancer Center/Scottish Rite Sunshine 2U in Savannah	5 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	6 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge	7 →
8 →	9	10	11	12	13 Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge	14 →
15 →	16	17	18	19 Yoga	20 Remembering the Sunshine Family Camp at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge	21 →
22 → Fall Festival	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



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

NOVEMBER 2017

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 Sunshine 2U at AFLAC Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	2 Sunshine 2U at AFLAC Cancer Center/Egleston Remembering the Sunshine Family Night	3	4
5	6	7 Seasonal Sunshine Thanksgiving Family Night	8	9 Yoga	10	11
12	13 Spa Night	14	15 Sunshine 2U Savannah	16	17 Teen Retreat at Camp Twin Lakes-Rutledge	18
19 →	20	21	22	23 Thanksgiving Holiday (Office Closed)	24	25
26 →	27	28	29	30 Columbus Regional Program		

SAVE THESE DATES

January 2018
Winter Dance and Lock In

March 24, 2018
Spring Fling

SPECIAL EVENTS

SEPTEMBER IS CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
#GoGold all month long to create awareness and opportunities to raise donations for Camp Sunshine.

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS DAY AT THE BRAVES

September 10
Camp Sunshine families are invited to the Atlanta Braves vs. Miami Marlins game at 1:35 PM on Sunday, September 10. Registration details to follow on our website.

DECEMBER 2017

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5 Sunshine 2U at AFLAC Cancer Center/Egleston	6 Sunshine 2U at AFLAC Cancer Center/Scottish Rite	7 Remembering the Sunshine Family Night Sunshine 2U – Savannah	8	9
10 Holiday Party and 35th Reunion	11	12	13	14 Yoga Young Adult Holiday Party at Camp SunshineHouse	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Office Closed →	26	27	28	29	30
31						

RACETRAC'S COFFEE FOR A CAUSE FOR CAMP SUNSHINE

Visit any RaceTrac location in Georgia during September and purchase a cup of coffee to benefit Camp Sunshine.

There are three more ways to help:

- Purchase a coffee and donut the week of September 17-23.
- Add \$1.00 to your purchase all month.
- Purchase a chocolate bar all month for \$1.00.



CAMP SUNSHINE®

A ray of hope for children with cancer.™

1850 Clairmont Rd. ✨ Decatur, GA 30033
404-325-7979 ✨ www.mycampsunshine.com

Is Your Info Up to Date?

Email Chanteasea@mycampsunshine.com

Or call 404-325-7979, ext. 121

Or go to www.mycampsunshine.com

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CAMP SUNSHINE POSTCARDS

Volunteers Make Keencheefoonee Road Race Another Great Success

Each Tuesday during the two weeks of summer camp, enthusiastic Camp Sunshine volunteers get up early to either run a 5K or walk a 2K race – while raising thousands of dollars for Camp Sunshine.

This is the Keencheefoonee Road Race, Camp Sunshine's largest annual fundraising event planned and run by volunteer counselors who raise money in the months prior to camp to support Camp Sunshine's year round programs for children with cancer and their families.

Over the past 17 years, our volunteer staff has raised nearly \$3 million by asking friends, families and corporate sponsors to support Camp Sunshine. This year we had 137 volunteers participating in the race, including six teams, 21 Cabin Champs and 11 Virtual Runners. Volunteers brought in contributions from over 1,700 donors, raising over \$280,000 and making the Keencheefoonee Road Race another great success! ✨



Save the Date – 35th Reunion and Holiday Party

Mark your calendars for **December 10, 2017**, at the Westin Atlanta Perimeter North for the Camp Sunshine 35th Reunion and Holiday Party. Current families, alumni, and past and current volunteers are all welcome. We hope to see you there!