



With bright decorations, a relaxed atmosphere, and many Camp smiles, the OK Corral doesn't feel like a typical infirmary.

## The Heart of Hole in the Wall

The OK Corral Provides a Significant yet Unobtrusive Medical Presence While Letting Campers Just Be Kids

Since 1988, The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp has provided a hideout for seriously ill children—a place where they can forget their medical challenges and simply enjoy being kids. At the heart of this ability to “let it all go” is a significant yet unobtrusive medical presence that ensures all health needs are tended to in a way that doesn’t interfere with all the Camp fun.

At Camp, you won’t see white coats, scrubs or many of the other hallmarks of typical medical settings. Instead, Hole in the Wall physicians and nurses dress like any other counselor—in shorts and t-shirts—and the infirmary, or OK Corral as it’s known around these parts, is bright and colorful, with hand-painted murals that tell the story of Camp.

This is how Camp’s founding medical director, Dr. Howard “Doc” Pearson (1929 – 2016), envisioned Camp’s medical presence when first shaping the medical program. And though Doc passed away in 2016, his vision remains at the heart of it. “Our highest priority has been to accept children who, because of their disease or because of its complications or because of its treatment can’t go to an ordinary camp,” Doc once said. “Although a credible medical presence was important so that the children’s parents and doctors would let them come to Camp, we have remained unobtrusive. Children may need tests or treatments, but our major goal is that they have fun. I have always

insisted that if you don’t notice us, we’re doing our job.”

The very first summer, Camp almost exclusively served children with cancer and genetic blood disorders like sickle cell disease, thalassemia and hemophilia. But over the years, as the capabilities of the infirmary expanded, so did Camp’s ability to serve children with much more diverse and complicated diagnoses.

At Doc Pearson’s urging, just two years after opening, Camp began offering a special session for children facing vertically transmitted (parent to child) HIV. Understanding that there was minimal risk and that the OK Corral was fully equipped to serve these children, Hole in the Wall became one of the first camps in the country to provide an overnight camp experience for children with HIV.

Today, thanks in large part to the strength of Camp’s infirmary, Hole in the Wall’s medical reach has expanded to serve a wide-ranging population that includes campers with metabolic and mitochondrial disorders, as well as campers with incredibly rare conditions.

And as camper medical needs have increased, the OK Corral has evolved in order to best serve them. In recent years, Camp has added two fulltime nurses to its staff, and during the summers there are typically three to four doctors and 12 – 15 nurses on site per session, providing medications, infusions, chemotherapy and other care to campers. This

summer, there will be day volunteer nurses who staff the infirmary exclusively, allowing the unit nurses to spend more time right in program areas, keeping kids in the fun and out of the infirmary.

Additionally, the OK Corral recently expanded, building a more robust pharmacy and providing overnight care with the addition of the Moose Lodge. The Moose Lodge allows Hole in the Wall to serve high-medical need campers who require overnight care, in a fun atmosphere consistent with Camp.

Campers staying overnight in the Moose Lodge experience a supportive environment filled with Camp magic. Camper dad Gib shared, “Ellie came home from Camp full of stories from her nights and mornings in the Moose Lodge where her extra medical needs were celebrated and not isolating.”

The pharmacy, which doubled in size, provides greater storage and preparation space. Many Hole in the Wall campers arrive at Camp with an entire suitcase filled with medications that require precise measuring and mixing. Because of the expanded infirmary, Hole in the Wall can welcome even more campers with these extensive medication needs at any one time.

From day one, Hole in the Wall has been committed to serving those children who would not otherwise be able to have a camp experience due to medical needs. Thanks to the OK Corral, Camp will continue to do just that for many years to come.



a seriousfun camp

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# What's New at Camp

## From the CEO

As we approach Hole in the Wall's 30th summer, I read these pages in awe of the longstanding commitment to "a different kind of healing" shared by our Camp community. In this issue, you will read about a dedicated athlete who has run eight marathons for Hole in the Wall, a nurse who has volunteered for 15 summers, and a champion of our fundraising events for more than a decade. Their stories are different, but their commitment is the same—to bring joy to the lives of seriously ill children, to embrace their families in the playful spirit of our Founder and remind them all that they are not alone. This Gazette only provides a glimpse of our remarkable Hole in the Wall family and the steadfast support that has fueled Camp's mission for three decades. As we also recognize the 2016 volunteers and FUNraisers willing to do whatever it takes, whenever possible, to extend the healing hand of friendship to more children and families, I want to thank you for helping make Paul Newman's dream a beautiful reality for 30 years—and growing. On behalf of the "hole" gang, we are deeply grateful.

*"I want to thank you for helping make Paul Newman's dream a beautiful reality for 30 years—and growing."*

Jimmy Canton, CEO



Above: Jimmy joins campers Giana and Lucio at the Travelers Championship Media Day.

Right: Camp fun isn't just for kids. Parents and caregivers now have even more ways to find friendship and laughter.

We've got high "ropes" for fun this summer ... with the launch of Henry's High Hopes Course and Audrey's Air Lines. Thanks to a generous gift from Mike and Eileen Kolakowski in honor of Mike's parents, the brand-new course features a tiered progression of challenges culminating in a side-by-side tower climb, four new high ropes elements, a cargo net and not one, but TWO zip-lines. Camp's new and improved high ropes experience promises excitement for our three oldest units – no matter their abilities. Construction is well underway, and we can't wait for our campers to climb and play away this summer.

But the fun is not only for campers—parents can also experience something new this summer, as our Change of Pace Experience, or COPE, which brings Camp connections to camper parents, continues to grow. Building on the regional one-day COPEs launched last year, Hole in the Wall will now be offering COPE regional dinners for any parent who has already had a COPE experience. The dinners will help our families connect with other Camp families in their region and further build their network of support.

Family weekends are also bringing some new activities, with programming just for parents. All weekend long, parents are encouraged to build connections with each other through parent-only games, interactive experiences like launching their worries into Pearson Pond with a catapult, or relaxing with each other during the

evening at a Caregiver Campfire.

Speaking of family weekends, Camp also has some exciting new partnerships to help bring together specific communities for increased support amongst those who are walking a similar path. These partners include the Histiocytosis Association, the Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Association, and the New England Hemophilia Association.

FUNraisers is also offering some new opportunities for Camp supporters. This year's Camp Challenge event, which takes place September 16 at Camp, will offer a 30-mile bike ride as well as a new two-and-a-half-mile Grit 'n Wit course with both physical obstacles and mental challenges. More information can be found at <http://getinvolved.holeinthewallgang.org/campchallenge17>.

And for those unafraid to get a little dirty, Hole in the Wall is partnering with Tri State Tough Mudder for the first time. This mud- and obstacle-filled race takes place October 7 and 8 in New Jersey, providing our friends from the area with an opportunity to support Camp and receive a VIP event experience like no other. Laundry detergent not included! Learn more at <http://getinvolved.holeinthewallgang.org/toughmudder17>.



## Family Weekends



This year, Hole in the Wall will offer 12 family weekends through the spring and fall, extending the magic of Camp beyond the summer months with fun activities for the entire family. Parents find the opportunity to connect with other parents, and everyone gets the change to relax and recharge.





# Thanks to Our 2016 Volunteers!

We celebrate the hundreds of volunteers who helped make 2016 an outstanding year for Camp and our campers. Our volunteers support Camp during our various on-and off-site programs, as physicians and nurses, by helping prepare our facilities for summer and weekend programs, at special events, and in our administrative offices. For more info on volunteering, contact [volunteers@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:volunteers@holeinthewallgang.org).



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# Thanks to Our 2016 FUNraisers!

Our thanks go out to our 2016 FUNraiser athletes. To become a FUNraiser, contact [FUNraiser@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:FUNraiser@holeinthewallgang.org).

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# Hospital Outreach<sup>®</sup> on the GO

Highlights from our exciting year-round program that brings the joy of Camp to seriously ill children in locations across the Northeast.

## Kelly Watt reflects on her summer staff and HOP experiences.

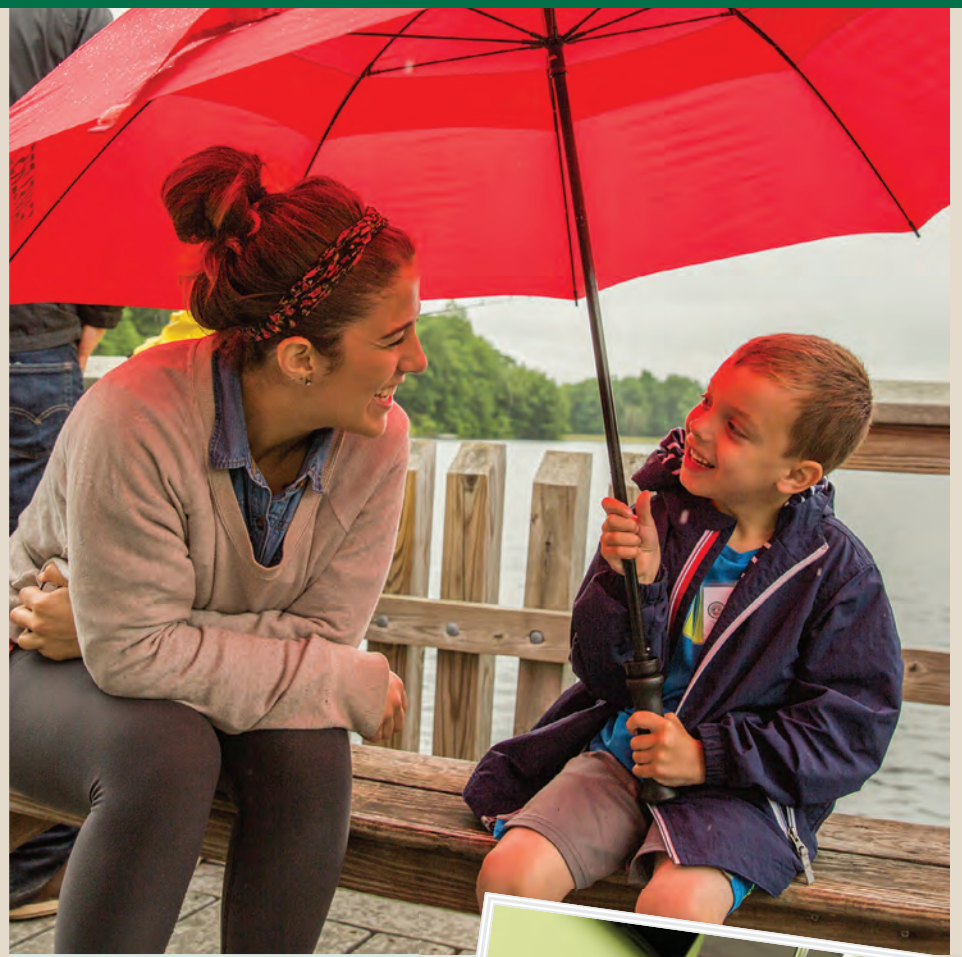
In late 2016, I joined The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp's Boston Hospital Outreach Program (HOP). Like every new HOP specialist, I faced the opportunity to define what it means, for me, to take on this role. Coming straight from summers at Camp, I knew that I would have to redefine myself—to find a balance between my responsibilities in this new position and building on all that I had learned while a cabin counselor on summer staff. This transition reminded me of my first summer at Camp, as I watched everyone else on staff in their groove and knowing that I had to find my own style. Entering HOP, I felt as though I was in the same boat. With the heavy responsibility of bringing Camp to the hospitals, what would I offer that could positively impact the kids?

I have noticed the frustrations of children when their nurses or doctors have to adjust tubes, provide medicine, or tell them that they cannot shower when they want to. It seems as though they aren't being heard, and I can see the frustration that grows when children feel as though they don't have any say. It became one of my goals to provide kids the opportunity to feel heard and make their own choices just as they do in the summer program. In doing so, I will strive to build genuine

relationships and try my best to amplify whatever it is that makes children light up when they speak.

Reflecting over the past few months, one interaction truly solidified the importance of this goal. Entering the room of a 13-year-old girl with one of my colleagues, we soon learned she was from Saudi Arabia. When we asked what city she lived closest to, she was excited to share stories of her home with us, and when we offered to draw the skyline of her city for her to color in and keep in her room, she quickly agreed. She was thrilled to look at pictures of the city that held many memories of her family and her life at home. The more the skyline picture came together, the more excited she grew, eventually exclaiming "My city! My city!" Her happiness was so evident throughout the project. I felt successful in discovering a project that created a space for her to talk about her own joys and connect with her home in a way she might not have otherwise been able to throughout her time in the hospital.

As I continue in my role at Hole in the Wall, I will strive to provide similar opportunities to share joy with every child and family I encounter. I look forward to fostering more positive experiences and will carry this project in my heart along the way!



Above: Kelly draws on her experience as a cabin counselor to enhance the activities she brings to children in the hospital. Right: Super Hero Day at CT Children's brought super-sized smiles.



## What's New at HOP

- ★ The New York and New Jersey HOP teams have merged to form a single NY/NJ team.
- ★ Across all regions, the team has been focusing on providing richer experiences through audience-specific programming including young adults, parents and siblings such as teen night and caregiver crafts.

# Family Flats

Stories from current and former camper families.

Isaac Cruz is committed to providing his family with a better life than he had growing up on the south end of Hartford. But when his son, Nas, was dealt a dual diagnosis of hemophilia and autism, it was a rough transition for the family. At Hole in the Wall, the Cruzes found a community of support, an open and free environment where everyone is on equal ground.

"Medically, we have learned to make accommodations for Nas, but what we didn't account for were the effects that the condition that he has would have on him socially," Isaac said. "We found that he could not be as physically active as we would like him to be. While all the other kids were playing soccer, basketball or playing catch, we knew that one hit to the head was a trip to the ER. That is a difficult way to grow up as a child, and people, especially kids, are really keen in pointing that out."

Because Nas is also on the autism spectrum, he has additional difficulties communicating and understanding social norms. This makes everyday interactions even more challenging, as Nas is immediately pegged as different. But at Camp, Nas can just be Nas.

"It's amazing to be able to experience your child before and after Camp and literally notice that this is a new and better person because of this experience," said Isaac. "It heals from a root, core, base, whatever you want to call it; it makes a change to the person



The Cruz family enjoys an afternoon on Camp.

that experiences it. And it's not just the kids but the whole family. Camp has had the most immediate impact and yielded the most amazing results for our family both mentally and emotionally."

Nas's sister Brianna has participated in sibling week, and the entire family has attended family weekends together. Isaac and his wife have also attended a COPE weekend. The family treasures these times at Hole in the Wall.

"When you first come to Camp and you communicate your concerns with other adults in an open and free environment without the 'looks' of sadness from other parents, it is a game changer," Isaac said. "Parents can talk to other parents and way more importantly, kids can talk to other kids. Everyone has a thing, and it's OK because you are all here, and it's the best place to be right now."

# Sheriff's Spotlight

A shout-out to our dedicated corporate partners.

It's always exciting when we get to tip our hat and say "Howdy" to a new partner, especially when they come on board and immediately become fully connected with Hole in the Wall—bringing not just financial support but also extensive employee engagement and genuine excitement about Camp's programming. Such was the case with SeriousFun Children's Network and Hole in the Wall partner Shire, which fully immersed itself in Camp in its first year of support.

In early 2016, Shire, a leading global biotechnology company, marked the company's 30th anniversary by announcing a new initiative designed to positively affect the lives of children with rare diseases—committing an annual gift of \$1 million for three years (\$3 million total) in support of SeriousFun, the network of camps and programs for seriously ill children and their families, of which Hole in the Wall is a part. Camp was one of the beneficiaries, and the gift helped to fund a metabolic family weekend, as well as numerous summer camperships.

"We are thrilled to welcome Shire as a new partner," said Ken Alberti, Camp's chief development officer. "Their generosity has been felt by the many families in attendance at the weekend they sponsored and whose children were able to attend a week at Hole in the Wall. And we are so



impressed by how their leadership team and employees immediately embraced our mission and desired to be hands-on with our programs."

Participation from employees across the entire organization has been incredible. In the spring, several executives visited Camp including the company's CEO Flemming Ornskov, MD, himself a pediatrician. Additionally, several Shire employees volunteered in the cabins during the summer program, and Phil Vickers, head of research and development at Shire, joined us at Camp as a family pal during the metabolic family weekend in early October. Later in the month, more than 25 employees came out to Camp for a Helping Hands Work Day as part of Shire's Global Day of Service.

"Shire felt honored to have played a small part at Hole in the Wall," said Vickers. "Our experiences only reinforced our view that the partnership between Shire and SeriousFun Children's Network is a great fit, and we look forward to working together to further build out our efforts."

For more information about Hole in the Wall's Corporate Partners Program, please contact Ken Alberti at [ken.alberti@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:ken.alberti@holeinthewallgang.org) or visit [www.holeinthewallgang.org](http://www.holeinthewallgang.org).



# Our Events

Highlights of our latest benefit events and those to come...

Hole in the Wall celebrated its 25th Annual Big Apple Bash in New York on Saturday, October 29, featuring spooktacular fun for all ages! The event raised a record-breaking \$1.5 million for Camp's growing programs, thanks to the dedicated leadership of spellbinding sponsors American Packaging Corporation and LiDestri Food & Drink.

The afternoon kicked off with "HallowBowl" at Bowlmor, a departure from previous years where a circus performance provided the main attraction. More than 750 guests joined the festivities, sporting emoji, super hero, princess and other fun costumes. Thanks to the generosity of event donors, camper families attended free of charge. Guests were treated to an afternoon of unlimited bowling and arcade games, billiards, face painting, temporary tattoos and a never-ending buffet of tasty snacks. New York Mets mascot, Mr. Met, made an appearance and posed for photos, and even challenged a few guests to a game of air hockey.

Following the excitement of "HallowBowl," donors ventured around the corner to the Hard Rock Café Times Square for a family-friendly reception that included a dinner and dessert buffet, cocktails and mocktails, arts and crafts, caricaturists, Rock Band and more.

Camp CEO Jimmy Canton welcomed supporters, providing programmatic updates and introducing Camp's new Hospital Outreach Program promotional video featuring a narration by Meg Ryan. Camper Braeden then wowed the audience with a story about his summer and the meaningful connections he found at Hole in the Wall. Throughout his piece, Braeden treated the audience to music he wrote himself at Camp. Though Braeden was a tough act to follow, event co-chairs Stefani LiDestri and Peter Schottland took to the stage, thanking attendees and reiterating the importance of the American Packaging Corporation and LiDestri Food & Drink communities to help make Camp's magic possible.

Following the remarks, the line-up of entertainment continued with a costume fashion show emceed by camper Braeden and Camp friend Amir Arison from NBC's hit show *The Blacklist*. Guests then crowded the dance floor in celebration as the DJ spun tunes late into the night.

## UPCOMING 2017 CAMP BENEFIT EVENTS

**16th Annual Polo for Children Benefit • Greenwich, CT – June 4**  
Join us for a family-friendly afternoon at the Greenwich Polo Club. The reimagined event features an interactive lunch experience with robust culinary stations, live music, hors d'oeuvres, an auction, and a program sharing Camp magic. The children's tents will be filled with fun food, amusements, a photo booth and much more. The festivities will end with an exciting high-goal polo match.

**27th Annual Fandango Benefit Gala • Ashford, CT – September 9**  
Join us at Camp for a fun-filled afternoon featuring cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, and silent and live auctions. The fun continues with a star-studded performance by celebrity friends, and the biggest stars of all – our Hole in the Wall campers. A post party featuring a buffet dinner, live band and dancing will close out the exciting evening.

**26th Annual Big Apple Bash • New York, NY – October 21**  
Join The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp family for an evening of Camp fun for all ages! Guests will gather together at the Hard Rock Café in Times Square for an evening reception that includes a dinner buffet, cocktails, kids zone, music, dancing and more!

**To learn more about all of our Camp-hosted benefit events, contact Jennifer Weeks, director, special events, at [jennifer.weeks@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:jennifer.weeks@holeinthewallgang.org) or visit [www.holeinthewallgang.org/ouevents](http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/ouevents).**



There were smiles all around at this year's Big Apple Bash!



## Pardner Profile

A place to shout about a few of the people who make Camp the remarkable place it is.

It's been said by many that the impact of Hole in the Wall is profound. Whether as a camper, family, donor or volunteer, those who come in contact with Camp's mission walk away changed, their perspective altered and their spirits lifted. For long-time volunteer Price Abbott, Hole in the Wall brought a positivity in the face of a significant personal health issue.

Price, who is an original member of the Big Apple Bash committee and a longtime volunteer at the Fandango Benefit Gala, received a diagnosis of liver cancer in 2011. Though she had a very good prognosis, cancer is never an easy diagnosis to hear, and treatment is difficult. For Price, that treatment included a liver transplant

two years ago. But throughout it all, she maintained a positive outlook sparked by her Hole in the Wall experiences—something her doctors attribute to how well her recovery has gone.

"Right after I was diagnosed, I remember talking to a camper who was sharing all the things he was going through," Price said. "It made me realize, I could do this too. If these kids can surmount these huge obstacles, then what I am going through is a piece of cake."

As an active member of our Camp family for more than 25 years, Price has seen countless campers get well and continue their journeys. She has also seen how far treatments have come.

"I know that the reason I've been so positive is because of my experiences at Camp," said Price.



Price (left), who has been on the Big Apple Bash committee from the start, found a positivity through Camp that helped her conquer her own health challenges. Pictured with fellow committee member, Jessica Stark.

"Seeing these kids, you know you can get better and you can persevere, and things are going to be good."

After her liver transplant, one of Price's first post-surgery activities was volunteering at the Fandango Benefit Gala. Though she wasn't able to take

on heavy lifting, being on Camp and surrounded by campers and her Hole in the Wall family was the best kind of healing. Today, she remains positive, in good health and excited to continue to volunteer at Hole in the Wall.



# Saddle Up for Camp

*Camp is at the epicenter of a caring community. Our gratitude goes out to all who host and organize fundraising events in support of Camp's mission.*

Camp is blessed by a community of supporters whose friendship continues year after year. It is always especially meaningful when that support begins to span generations, and children who have known Camp their entire lives begin to understand why their parents are so involved—and become involved themselves.

It's been 15 years since Jenny Schwab first walked through Camp's gates as a volunteer, and she has been a fixture in the OK Corral every summer since. Today, you can also find her husband down in cabin circle each summer, volunteering as a counselor. And Jenny continues to find even more ways to be involved, participating in our Peer-to-Peer FUNraiser program. She has run both the Boston and New York marathons to raise money to support Hole in the Wall, combining a lifelong goal of

completing a marathon with her love of Camp.

"Camp is so transformative," said Jenny. "It's the most important part of our summer, so we try to be super flexible and do whatever session we are needed."

Jenny's children, Matthew, Patrick and Margaret, have become active FUNraisers for Hole in the Wall as well, hosting the Schwab Summer of Fun. Working through Hole in the Wall's Kids for Camp program, the kids created a fundraiser where they asked friends and family to make donations to Camp instead of giving them birthday gifts. As the summer continued, so did the children's efforts as they handed out information about Camp at their community block party and collected donations. Patrick and Matthew even continued their fundraising into the school year, hosting dress down days



*Jenny Schwab's volunteering and FUNraising for Camp is an inspiration to her family, who are following in her amazing footsteps.*

and pajama days at their schools. In all, the three children raised \$2,500—enough money to send a child to Camp for a week.

"It's very humbling for our family to see how these kids struggle and see the blessings in our own lives," said Jenny. "My children have become so understanding of folks with physical and

emotional challenges. I hope that as they grow up, they continue to see the magic of Camp and the importance of giving back."

To learn more about hosting or joining an event, contact Andrea Keefe, manager, peer-to-peer programs, at [andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org) or <http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/get-involved/#fundraiser>.

*"It's very humbling for our family to see how these kids struggle and see the blessings in our own lives. I hope that as they grow up, they continue to see the magic of Camp and the importance of giving back."*

## Trail Blazers

*Amazing athletes wrangle friends and family to support Camp*

It takes an especially motivated person to take on a marathon as a means of "making a healthy change." And then, only the most committed decide to tackle another seven marathons over the next 10 years. Still fewer do so not just for themselves but for the benefit of others. Camp is blessed to have found a friend in one such amazing individual, Daisy Kosack.

Daisy found Camp 10 years ago after searching for a charity partner to support while running the TSC New York City Marathon. With fond memories of her own camp experiences, she hoped to support a children's organization. So when she discovered Hole in the Wall, it was the perfect fit.

"When I realized I didn't get into the marathon, I was so upset, so I called my mom," Daisy said. "She saw it as an opportunity for me—a chance to do some good and raise some money for something worthwhile.

And when I found Camp, it was love at first sight."

That was only the first of seven New York Marathons and a Philadelphia Marathon that Daisy has run to support Camp. Each year, she revels in the marathon experience, the early morning ride to the start line, the quiet of New York City in the pre-race dark, the hard work of training and fundraising, and the camaraderie with her fellow FUNraisers.

"The race is wonderful; you feel inspiration everywhere," said Daisy. "But after 10 years, it's not about the race any more, it's all about what the money I raise does for the families. Thank God I have a company that matches and people who have been donating to me year after year."

Because of her unwavering commitment, Daisy is consistently a top fundraiser for the event. Over the years, she has raised more than \$100,000, and strives to do more each



*With eight marathons under her belt, Daisy is the perfect supporter for all of our runners!*

year. Most recently, she has also started volunteering in the cheer zone at the Camp Challenge Ride, to help lift the spirits of the runners and cyclists and encourage them to keep going.

"It's all about the kids, so you can't stop; you can't quit," Daisy said. "It's been a journey that I hope I can keep doing. It's made me such a better

*"It's been a journey that I hope I can keep doing. It's made me such a better person and makes me feel like I've made a difference in the world."*

person and makes me feel like I've made a difference in the world."

To learn more about getting active for Camp and becoming a FUNraiser, contact Andrea Keefe, manager, peer-to-peer programs, at [andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org) or <http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/get-involved/#fundraiser>



Founded in 1988 by Paul Newman, The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp is a community dedicated to providing "a different kind of healing" to seriously ill children and their families through a variety of year-round programs. The Camp delivers fun, friendship and a healthy dose of mischief through its signature summer program and weekend sessions at the Camp facility in Ashford, Conn. as well as outreach to hospitals, clinics and communities across the Northeast. All services are free of charge.

The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp never sells or shares its donor names and addresses. This policy reflects our commitment as a charity to maintain the highest integrity in order to protect and ensure privacy, while building a personal relationship with each donor.

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Ray Lamontagne, *Chair, Board of Directors*  
James H. Canton, *Chief Executive Officer*





Camp friend and actor Amir Arison from NBC's hit show The Blacklist and camper Braeden show their silly side at the Big Apple Bash.



a seriousfun camp

Look inside to see  
how fun takes  
center stage at  
camp thanks to  
a significant  
yet unobtrusive  
medical presence

a seriousfun camp



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