

# GAZETTE



a serious fun camp

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE HOSPITAL OUTREACH PROGRAM

**HOP marks two decades of programming and growth with plans to expand even further**

When Paul Newman founded The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in 1988, he created a summertime hideout where children with serious illnesses could just be kids and, in his words, “raise a little hell.” Soon, Hole in the Wall realized it could bring more joy and hope to these brave children and their families through year-round programming. And as these programs grew, so did Camp’s desire to provide “a different kind of healing®” to as many children as possible—wherever possible, whenever possible. So, in 2002, one charismatic Camp counselor traveled to two regional hospitals with a bag of art supplies, and the Hospital Outreach Program (HOP)<sup>SM</sup> was born. Two decades later, a full-time team of more than 30 specialists delivers Camp fun and friendship to dozens of hospital locations across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic

“We started out just in the Hematology/Oncology units at Connecticut Children’s and Floating Hospital in Boston, but we soon realized that more seriously ill children in the region needed HOP, so we expanded in Boston and Connecticut, and then New York and Philadelphia,” said Kevin Rice, Regional Manager for Boston HOP who was Camp’s first Hospital Outreach Specialist. “From day one, we have been trying to bring a better quality of life to children and families in the hospitals and give them a break from the day in, day out medical questions, social work questions and child life questions. We’re there just for them and to remind them that there’s still life outside of the hospital.”



**In 2002, one charismatic Camp counselor traveled to two regional hospitals with a bag of art supplies, and the Hospital Outreach Program (HOP)<sup>SM</sup> was born.**

Through Camp-style games, activities and events, HOP provides helpful distractions, makes enduring connections and brings the magic of Hole in the Wall where it is needed most. This happens at children’s bedsides, in playgroup activities and during hospital-wide events. Over the last 20 years, HOP has served thousands of children and families through partnerships with dozens of hospitals and clinics.

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**Celebrating 20 Years of Hospital Outreach! (cont.)**

“HOP gets the power of play and the importance of that for children,” said Jennifer Sciolla, Senior Director of Child Life and Family Services at Nemours Children’s Health, Delaware Valley. “There are patients here whose HOP memories will last a lifetime. For them, HOP are the people who made them smile, the person who cared. It’s really transformative.”

As Hole in the Wall celebrates 20 years of HOP, the program is continuing to expand with the launch of a new regional office in the DC Metro Area. This brand-new team of HOP specialists will provide programming to additional locations in the Mid-Atlantic region while also complementing the on-site Camp programming provided by Hole in the Wall’s recently announced second location on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

**“I remember a parent once sharing with me that our Hospital Outreach Program brings joy to a joyless place, and that comment really stuck with me,”**

said Camp CEO Jimmy Canton. “The fact is that despite so many kind and caring hospital staff members, hospitals still can be very scary places for children with serious illnesses, filling them with feelings of fear, isolation and uncertainty. So, while the doctors, nurses and other hospital staff focus on expertly treating the patients and their illnesses, Camp’s Hospital Outreach team is there to playfully pitch in and make sure that the children and their spirits get lifted up whenever possible.”

Just like all other Hole in the Wall programs, HOP is provided to parents, caregivers and siblings so that the whole family can get in on the fun. And neither the hospitals nor families are charged for HOP programming, which is made possible thanks to the generosity of Camp’s community of donors who allow all programs to be provided completely free of charge.

**FROM THE CEO**



**The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp’s 35th summer gave us many reasons to celebrate.**

First, we saw the much-anticipated return of our traditional summer program for children with serious illnesses and siblings. During the fourth session, I volunteered in Yellow 4—the same cabin where I was a counselor during Camp’s first summer in 1988. I can personally attest that the magic of Hole in the Wall—the joy, the healing and the mischief—is just as strong today as 35 years ago. In addition to hosting seven sessions for our campers, we also held two Family Camps so that families could get in on the summer fun. And the Camp magic extended far beyond our gates thanks to our Hospital Outreach and Family Outreach teams. Hole in the Wall’s annual Camp Week takeover of Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia filled the halls with a “hole” lot of fun, and we hosted a restorative Parent & Caregiver Retreat in Connecticut along with many more regional events and other activities.

But not all the reasons to celebrate were happy ones—some were bittersweet. After more than 30 years of faithful service to Hole in the Wall’s mission, our beloved CFO Kevin Magee announced his plans to retire at the end of 2022. We are deeply grateful for Kevin’s endless devotion to Camp’s children and families and delighted that he will remain a fixture at the Boathouse as a dedicated volunteer. Kevin is a reminder of how blessed we are by the exceptional people who become part of our Camp family and make it even stronger than when they first found it. Thank you for being one of these people and making Hole in the Wall a Camp—and community—worth celebrating.

*Jimmy Canton*  
James Canton, CEO



Jimmy and Magee at the Boathouse.

**FALL FAMILY WEEKENDS**



**Hole in the Wall hosted nearly 100 families for eight Family Weekends from September through November.**

Parents, caregivers, siblings and campers were absolutely thrilled to be back at Camp for a more traditional experience, which still ensured the safety of all participants.

New this year, Hole in the Wall offered its first-ever Family Weekend for Spanish speakers. It was incredible to see these nine families find kindred spirits and connect in a way that may not have been possible had they not been surrounded by those they could most easily communicate with. We look forward to continuing finding more ways to make Hole in the Wall’s programs as inclusive as possible.





# TRAILBLAZERS

## Coast to Coast for a Cause

For seven weeks this summer, three students studying medicine and dentistry at the University of Connecticut—Dustin Moore, Julia Neri and Brian Legato—rode their bikes 3,000 miles across the country raising money for Hole in the Wall. This is the fourth time a team of students from UConn have taken on this enormous challenge in support of Camp's children and families since "Coast to Coast for a Cause" began 17 years ago.

This year, the cyclists began their journey with their tires in the Pacific on June 6 in Anacortes, WA, leaving just after they finished final exams. Their travels brought them challenges, like crossing the Rocky Mountains, and unexpected moments of celebration, like a surprise family visit in Minnesota and two new friends joining them for several weeks of their adventure. Finally, after nearly two months of riding, they concluded their journey in Madison, Conn., this time, riding their tires into the Atlantic.

**"This was a great opportunity to do something fun while raising money for a great cause," Dustin said. I'd done a lot of cycling and camping before, but not on this scale. It was really cool to do something you thought was out of your ability and to prove yourself wrong."**

The team raised more than \$17,000 this year from friends and family members as well as strangers who heard about their efforts and were inspired to donate. In addition to the financial support, the team also experienced overwhelming generosity from people across the country who opened their doors to them and offered food and housing.

"We are so grateful to Dustin, Julia, Brian and all their amazing supporters who all rode together to help bring joy and hope to Camp's children and families," said Andrea Keefe, director of corporate and community partnerships at Hole in the Wall. "Not only did they raise critical funds for our growing programs, but they helped to raise awareness for our mission with their inspirational cross-country journey. Impressive doesn't even begin to describe their efforts."

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a Hole in the Wall FUNraiser, contact Andrea at 203.772.0522 or [andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org).

Dustin, Julia and Brian celebrate finishing their journey.



**\$17,000+**  
**RAISED THIS YEAR!**



# SHERIFF'S SPOTLIGHT

For 17 years, BlueTriton Brands' Poland Spring Brand has been a stalwart friend to Hole in the Wall, extending its generosity to Camp in a multitude of capacities.

Whether supporting our peer-to-peer program, donating water for programming and events or coming out to Camp to volunteer at Helping Hands Workdays, Poland Spring's friendship is deeply felt across the organization.

"We are so grateful to everyone at Poland Spring and BlueTriton Brands, who have made Camp a priority for so many years, helping to bring hope and 'a different kind of healing' to our children and families," said Andrea Keefe, Camp's director of community and corporate partnerships. "We are thrilled to celebrate this continued partnership and commitment to those we are so privileged to serve."

Since 2005, Poland Spring has provided financial support of more than \$2 million and has donated tens of thousands of bottles of water. And employees have volunteered at numerous events over the years, most recently this past summer when 14 employee volunteers visited to prepare our facility for the arrival of campers. As an organization that puts community first, BlueTriton Brands' long-standing friendship to Camp makes perfect sense.

"We like the partnership with Hole in the Wall because it is aligned with our 'Made Better Commitment,'" said Basak Baysal, brand manager, Poland Spring at BlueTriton Brands. "We want to help our communities flourish and are happy to support such a great mission. We were all so impressed by Camp's attention to detail and passionate staff and look forward to continuing to invest in the organization."

For more information about Hole in the Wall's Corporate Partner Program, please visit [holeinthewallgang.org/get-involved](http://holeinthewallgang.org/get-involved) or contact Andrea at [andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org) or 203.772.0522.



**We want to help our communities flourish and are happy to support such a great mission.**

**—Basak Baysal**







# ESUMM





# WELCOME

## 2022

**Hole in the Wall's 35th summer offered something for everyone—**

with seven sessions for children with serious illnesses and siblings, two Family Camps, a variety of Hospital Outreach programs and plenty of Family Outreach activities—both in person and virtual! Fun, friendship and laughter filled every corner of our Camp community. Here are some of those magical moments!





“ Across the board, every experience we’ve had with Hole in the Wall has been so positive. Camp is like a warm hug. ”

—Camper Mom, Leah

## FAMILY FLATS

In 2021, the Levine family was looking to connect with other families facing similar challenges.

Their seven-year-old daughter, Ellie, was close to completing two years of treatment for acute lymphoblastic lymphoma, and the family was eager to take part in social activities they could safely do. When they learned about Hole in the Wall through the clinic at Boston Children’s Hospital, they applied right away to attend a Family Camp.

“We were blown away when we got to Camp,” mom Leah said. “Everyone was so nice and thoughtful and energetic. It was such a positive experience.”

While at Camp, the family loved having a cabin completely to themselves, enjoyed the amazing food and participated all of the activities.

“The rock wall was my favorite,” said Ellie. “I climbed it seven times and went up every way I could. Then, I got to take the zipline down. It was so fun!”

This summer, Ellie came back to Camp by herself for the summer program. Though a bit nervous, she was eager to go and said bye to her parents at the entrance to Cabin Circle with a cartwheel and a wave. For the next five days, Ellie shot bullseyes, went fishing and performed at Stage Night. When she got home, she couldn’t stop talking about all the fun she had and the friends she made.

“Camp was even better by myself,” Ellie said. “You get to choose what you want to do. Parents don’t choose for you.”

Ellie’s parents, Doug and Leah, got in on the fun too, enjoying a weekend away at a Parent & Caregiver Retreat, where they were able to share with others who understood what they were going through. They felt supported by the host parents who were long-time Camp families and were grateful to learn from presenters about other resources available to them. It was a welcomed relief after years of focusing completely on their daughter’s treatment.

“Being at the parent retreat was a rejuvenating and soul-filling experience,”

Doug said. “The section of the weekend when we circled up as a group of dads was particularly moving as some men courageously had some vulnerable shares with the group. It was empowering to hear others’ stories and to know other parents had shared such similar struggles.”

The family cannot wait to join in on more Camp experiences in the future and come back as many times as they are able.

Ellie and her cabinmates enjoy some songs at the opening campfire this summer.



Ellie and her mom Leah perform at Stage Night.

## CREATIVE COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION



Wow! Construction on the new Creative Complex is ALMOST complete! We cannot wait to welcome our families into this new space during our spring Family Weekends and see all the magic they can create together in Arts & Crafts, Woodshop and the Cooking Zone!

9/29/2022





# PARDNER PROFILE

## Meet Camp's New CFO James Takami

This August, Hole in the Wall welcomed a new face to the Camp family when James Takami joined as our new Chief Financial Officer. He succeeds longtime CFO Kevin Magee who is retiring after 31 years of dedicated service.

With a background in both the for-profit and non-profit worlds, James brings an impressive array of experience and skills to his new role. Most recently, James led the finance and accounting team of a multi-unit restoration services franchisee with locations across the Northeast region. He also held financial leadership positions with an IT managed services provider, a regional chamber of commerce, a music education institution and also had management experience in public accounting and auditing. Additionally, he is an active member of his community, having previously served on the Police and Fire Retirement Board and as a Town Meeting Representative in Fairfield, Conn. and shares a personal passion for Camp's programming.

"I remember the experiences I had growing up going to various camps, which were invaluable," James said. "I am excited to be part of an organization that is providing these types of experiences to those who may not be able to have them otherwise. I look forward to supporting

**"I am excited to be part of an organization that is providing these types of experiences to those who may not be able to have them otherwise."**

**—James**



James and his family enjoy some time together.

the organization's mission and providing financial guidance and stewardship in service of the families that Hole in the Wall serves."

Please join us in welcoming James to the gang!

# ADOLESCENT & YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS GO 2.0

Hole in the Wall's Adolescent & Young Adult programs provide an important bridge of progressive Camp experiences for those who have aged out of our traditional summer program.

Focused on camaraderie, leadership skills and self-discovery, both the Hero's Journey® and Leader in Training (LIT) programs impart essential life skills to those ages 16 to 18 whose lives have been impacted by a serious illness.

Understanding the critical importance of these programs and wanting to do everything possible to ensure that this age group has the most meaningful Camp experiences possible, Hole in the Wall will be expanding and enhancing its Adolescent & Young Adult programming in summer 2023 to ensure even more of our participants have access to these opportunities—especially those with more significant medical challenges and members of the BIPOC community.

"The expanded programming will allow for increased access, choice and opportunities for all our

campers who age out of our traditional program," said Camp's Chief Program Officer Hilary Axtmayer. "Participants will build off skills and lessons learned from one year to the next all while building confidence, self-esteem, friendships and special Camp memories."

In the year ahead, 16- to 17-year-olds will now have the opportunity to choose their own Journey Year experience, either participating in Camp's traditional Hero's Journey program or the new Champion's Journey, which will be based in the Young Adult Lodge and focus on leadership activities and other Camp experiences designed to push participants out of their comfort zones. Champion's Journey will provide similar growth opportunities as the Hero's Journey program but for those who may not want to spend a week in the woods for whatever reason. And after the summer, participants from both programs will come together in a virtual nine-month program called Journey On,

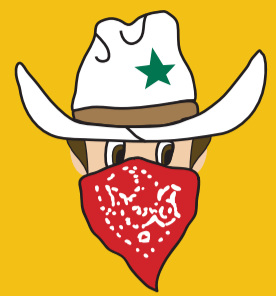
which will build upon the experiences from their in-person programming and solidify skills that will prepare them to embrace the full promise of their futures.

Following the Journey Year, young adults will then be able to apply to become a junior staff member, which will allow them to gain more skills and experiences needed to eventually become a Camp counselor or a volunteer or prepare them for whatever their future holds. Those who join the junior staff program will receive a stipend for their participation and their transportation costs to and from Camp will also be covered. In 2023, Hole in the Wall will offer four, one-week sessions serving 20 young adult participants each week.

And as participants conclude this progression of programming, they will be able to attend Camp's Young Adult Conference, which is open to former campers ages 18 to 25. During this weekend-long program, participants work on mastering important skills such as budgeting, resume writing and taking charge of their medical needs, all while participating in a host of some fun and familiar Camp activities including Stage Night.

This year's LITs join in a leadership training session in Camp's new Young Adult Lodge.

To learn more about these programs, visit [holeinthewallgang.org/ayaprograms](http://holeinthewallgang.org/ayaprograms)



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# OUR EVENTS

**There couldn't have been a more perfect day to be back at Camp for *With a Little Help from Our Friends: A Fandango Benefit Gala Celebration!***

Sunny skies and a cool breeze provided a beautiful backdrop for this year's event, which gathered 250 of our Gala and Beantown Bash community members together under festive tents on September 24—the first time since 2019. In total, generous friends and supporters raised nearly \$1 million at this year's event.

Kicking off the day in an utterly transformed Downtown Camp, guests were treated to delicious treats from a wide variety of food trucks, ranging from lobster rolls to tacos to pizza and more, along with tasty cocktails and passed hors d'oeuvres. Live music and stilt-walker performances delighted, while tours of the new Creative Complex gave a sneak peek of what the building will look like when it is completed in 2023. And the silent auction in the Dining Hall and online gave participants both on-site and at home the opportunity to bid on meaningful items including custom pottery, a handmade quilt, "Campeo" videos from celebrity friends and more!

As the celebration moved to Cabin Circle, guests enjoyed the highlight of the evening—the Fandango performance, where long-standing Camp friends, Christina and John Horner, were recognized with Camp's highest honor, the Most Wanted Award. As the show continued, a host of celebrity friends including Kathryn Allison, Kelli Barrett, Blythe Danner, Dexter Darden, Christopher Jackson, JoJo, Andy Karl, Richard Kind, Bridget Moynahan, Lissy Newman, Orfeh, Sam Waterston and Dar Williams, entertained alongside seven incredibly talented campers—Alex, Andrew, Arianna, Drew, Serenity, Sophia and Taylor. With energetic musical numbers, laugh-out-loud skits, and an inspirational story about the impact of Camp from camper Hadassah, it was a show to remember.

Following the performance, Richard Kind emcee'd a lively auction, with participants bidding on a New York Harbor Cruise with Actor Matthew Rhys, a weekend buyout of the Granville House with dinner from Chef Dan Kluger, a Dodgers Legend Package and more! When it came time for the campership appeal, many generous friends



stepped up, donating a total of 66 camperships that support the cost of a magical week at Hole in the Wall for our campers.

The evening concluded with dinner, music and dancing back in Downtown Camp. JoJo surprised the audience with a stunning song, and some of the camper stars performed an encore for the cheering crowd. And as guests made their way back to their cars, the magic of the day hung in the air. It was so good to be back.

**Look inside—  
we're celebrating  
20 years of HOPI!**

a serious fun camp



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holeinthewallgang.org

THE HOLE IN THE WALL GANG CAMP

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