

# GAZETTE



Sammy, Samantha and Leslie with a photo of Cassandra at the Bereavement Weekend

## HEALING THROUGH COMMUNITY

**Camp's new Bereavement program offers families support through connection with other families who understand.**

While Hole in the Wall has long offered a Day of Remembrance for our bereaved families, it became clear that there was more we could do to support those families coping with a child lost to serious illness. To answer that need, this year, Camp piloted a new Bereavement program, which spans three weekends over 12 months, providing families with Camp activities, group sessions facilitated by a trained bereavement specialist and most importantly, a community of others who have had shared experiences.

"When we heard about the program, I was really interested because we had not as a family attended any bereavement programs together, so I thought it was a great opportunity for us," shared Leslie, who attended the first weekend with her husband Sammy and daughter Samantha. "When you go through something like losing a child, you can be surrounded by many people, but you feel like no one truly understands what you're going through. Meeting other families who have experienced loss, hearing their stories, experiences and what they do to cope and keep their child's memory alive was something we needed. I'm so thankful for the invitation and can't wait to see everyone again! It was such a welcoming environment."

The first weekend of the program took place this past April and included nine families, some who were new to Camp and others who were already members of the Hole in the Wall community. The weekend was structured to provide time for families to enjoy

activities like archery, arts & crafts and more together, while also offering opportunities for moms, dads and siblings to gather with their peers to help facilitate connection and to share about their experiences in a safe space. Each day concluded by honoring and remembering their loved ones.

"Since Cassandra's passing, I do everything to keep her legacy and her name alive; running marathons, putting on light shows, that was how I was grieving," said Sammy. "But this was my first time speaking out loud about my feelings. I never talked to anyone, not even my wife, about how I was feeling. I broke down when I walked in and heard other dads were having similar feelings to what I was going through. It felt like this only happened to us, but it can happen to anyone."

In October, the same families gathered again at Camp for the second weekend. It was an opportunity to reunite with those they had built such a close relationship with over a short period of time. And in the spring of 2024, they will all gather together one last time, solidifying those relationships and once again honoring their children.

"I look forward to reuniting with the families," Sammy said. "Even though we just met a few times, we are so comfortable, and I feel like if I need anything, I can call them. That's the feeling, when you mention about the community. It feels good to relate to others."

**To learn more about Camp's programming, visit [www.holeinthewallgang.org/programs](http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/programs).**



a serious fun camp

### IN THIS ISSUE

- From the CEO ..... 2
- Maryland Kicks off Renovations ..... 2
- HOP On the Go ..... 3
- Finding Growth Through Champions Journey..... 3
- Summer 2023 ..... 4-5
- Pardner Profile ..... 6
- Inclusive New Playground Opens ..... 6
- Family Flats ..... 6
- Trailblazer ..... 7
- Sheriff's Spotlight ..... 7
- Benefit Events ..... 8



# FROM THE CEO

For 35 years, Camp has always followed our Founder’s dream of doing all that we can to bring “a different kind of healing” to as many children and family members as possible - and this year was no different. In the spring, Camp launched a new residential Bereavement program, which was followed up by a second weekend this past fall, where families who have lost a child to a serious illness could find a community of support while honoring the memory of their child. In the summer, we returned to our traditional seven-day summer sessions, with a twist. This year, siblings attended alongside their diagnosed brother or sister creating shared memories as they enjoyed all the hope and healing Camp has to offer. And we rounded out our summer with a groundbreaking on renovations for the new location on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. With inclusivity at the heart of all that is happening, we’ll be updating the buildings and grounds to create a space that our families will immediately feel at home in when they begin attending programming in 2025. None of this would be possible without the support of our incredible community, and we are so grateful to everyone who is part of the magic of Hole in the Wall. Thank you for your friendship and for helping our brave children and families find a home in Hole in the Wall.



Jimmy and the purple unit, where he spent a week volunteering this summer.

*Jimmy Canton*



James Canton, CEO

# THE HOLE IN THE WALL GANG CAMP - MARYLAND KICKS OFF RENOVATIONS



Jimmy Canton, Camper mom Na-Tasha, Camper Taylor, Padraig Barry and Jeffrey Horstman break ground on renovations at the new location in Maryland.



In late August, 75 Camp friends old and new gathered to celebrate an important milestone – the groundbreaking on renovations at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp – Maryland. This celebratory moment brings Hole in the Wall one step closer to welcoming children and families to the new location and introduced a “hole” new community to the magic of Camp.

The day kicked off with a short presentation in the Great Room of the Inn featuring Camp CEO Jimmy Canton, Camp Board Member Jeffrey Horstman and camper family Taylor and Na-Tasha, followed by a ceremonial “groundbreaking” in the courtyard outside. The air was festive, and the excitement was palpable as guests learned more about the history of the property and plans for the future.

“Today, we celebrate another moment when our Founder Paul Newman’s dream of ‘a different kind of healing’ is elevated to a higher level,” said Camp CEO Jimmy Canton. “All the magic, all the joy, all the friendship, all the support that we experience onsite in Connecticut will be replicated at this second Hole in the Wall location in Maryland. Thousands of lives will be changed, and that’s not only the children and families Camp will serve, but the thousands of volunteers, employees, donors and community members who will be reminded of what is most important in life – that we do everything we can to bring hope and love and healing to those who are in need.”

Following the presentation, attendees were treated to lunch in the River House, which will serve as the primary program space following phase one of the renovation. And tours were available to provide a sneak peek of all that is to come. Initial planned renovations will transform the Inn, River House and outdoor spaces into an inclusive and thoughtfully designed facility with peaceful and inviting spaces to support children, and their parents, caregivers and siblings. Renovations will include a family space with a board game wall; a parent relaxation room where caregivers can enjoy rest and repose privately; a heated and accessible pool; a theater with low-lying carpet to designate the “stage area” so there are no potentially limiting stairs; temperature-controlled and fully accessible residential rooms; and more.

Construction will soon be under way with plans to start welcoming families in 2025 for Family Weekend programming. Phase two renovations will include a dining hall, makerspace creative arts area, expanded infirmary, camper cabins, high ropes course, indoor pool and splash pad, greenhouse and more, with plans to start camper independent and concurrent parent and camper programming once the full site is complete.





# HOP ON THE GO



It was a summer of hospital-wide events for Camp's Hospital Outreach Program, signaling a return to fully traditional programming for the team. For the first time since the start of COVID three years ago, the sounds of laughter rung through play spaces, cafeterias and other gathering spaces of hospitals throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

In Boston, Washington D.C., New York/New Jersey and Central New England children experienced Hole in the Wall magic at Camp Days that brought Camp activities right to their hospitals. Children hit Pearson Pond with a raingutter regatta, participated in carnival games at Carnivarty and even crafted and raced wooden cars while hooked up to IVs, in between treatments and while recovering from illness. It was a little bit of normalcy in a world that is often anything but.

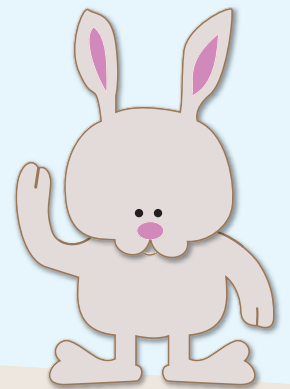
And in Philadelphia, Camp Week @ CHOP was back to its full expression, taking over the entire Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for a full week of Camp activities. This year's event took us through decades of fun with themed days focused on the 50s through today. Unit banners covered the walls and Camp cheers could be heard echoing through the hallways as campers participated in activities like opening campfire, WoodCHOP 500 and Carnivarty throughout the week. A very special Slime Day mid-week even welcomed "Double Dare" host Marc Summers, who shared a video with children to get them pumped for the day of gooey fun. In all, there were 2,080 healing interactions at Camp Week.

With fall in full swing, even more events are in store, bringing "a different kind of healing" at a time when it is needed most.

**For more information about Camps Hospital Outreach program visit [www.holeinthewallgang.org/hospitaloutreach](http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/hospitaloutreach)**



**CAMP DAYS FUN FILLED HOSPITALS FROM BOSTON DOWN TO WASHINGTON D.C. THIS SUMMER.**



# FINDING GROWTH THROUGH CHAMPION'S JOURNEY

For years, Camp has provided 16 and 17 year-olds a unique opportunity for growth and self-discovery in the Hero's Journey® program. For seven days, participants would live in a yurt, bathe in a stream, cook over a campfire and take on challenges to help them learn self-reliance, positive communication and teamwork. But a week in the woods is not for everyone, so this year, Camp added the Champion's Journey program to make these opportunities more accessible to our community.

"Last summer, I was supposed to do the Hero's Journey program, but I wasn't able to because I hurt my knee really bad, and I wouldn't have been able to do the hiking," said Champion's Journey Participant Abby. "I decided to do Champion's Journey this year for similar reasons. I had knee surgery a couple of months ago and the walking would be too hard for me to do with my disease."

With a home-base in the Young Adult Lodge on Camp, Champion's Journey provides campers who may not want or be able to participate in the Hero's Journey program the opportunity to participate in complementary programming that builds off of the camper experience. Using the lore and imagery of astronomy, the program guides participants from a stellar nebula to a neutron star, where they achieve self-discovery.

"As a camper, I was still learning about Camp and connecting with the Camp as a whole, but as a Champion this year, I think I connected much more with the people I was with instead," Abby shared. "I was able to truly connect with every single person I was with, along with learning more about myself."

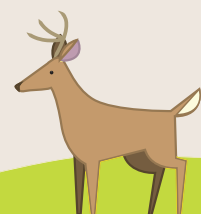
Like the Hero's Journey program, participants in Champion's Journey are guided through a series of challenges designed to help them gain skills that will be instrumental in the transition to adulthood. The week culminates with a ceremony night where participants present what they learned and what they accomplished during the week. The opportunity for self-reflection not only showed how far they came during the week, but that they can continue to grow and succeed.

"I learned not only more about myself, but also so many skills," Abby said. "I learned team building and communication skills, project building skills, and skills about the programs at Camp. It's hard to explain but being at Champion's Journey this year made me feel strong, and connected with the Camp community - like I was truly a Champion to others and to myself."

**If you'd like to learn more about the Adolescent and Young Adult programs at Camp visit [www.holeinthewallgang.org/ayaprograms](http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/ayaprograms).**



**Abby learned more about herself through creative exercises during Champion's Journey.**







# SUMMER

TAKE A PEEK AT  
ALL THE FUN!

It was another incredible summer at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, filled with joy, hope, healing and a 'hole' lot of magic. Our summer program welcomed siblings to join alongside their diagnosed brother or sister for the first time, while our Hospital Outreach program returned to a full slate of hospital-wide events. And Family Outreach welcomed campers and families from all across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic to a wide array of parent, caregiver and family events.







# ER 2023







# PARDNER PROFILE

Charlene Yacovelli may be somewhat new to the Camp family, but she's already made a lasting impact. Since first joining Hole in the Wall as a volunteer at a Family Weekend this past spring, Charlene has volunteered more than a dozen times, at weekends, during the summer, in CampOut events and most recently, at the Fandango Benefit Gala!

She was first introduced to Hole in the Wall by her son, Joe, who is also an avid volunteer and was on the summer staff team this year. After his experiences at Camp, he knew it was the place for his mom, and he wouldn't stop talking about it.

"I went so he would stop talking to me about it," Charlene said. "I went for a Family Weekend, and I couldn't believe what the Camp was. The second time I went, I was so excited that I clapped by myself in my car when I left."

From there, Charlene started volunteering whenever she could. She was amazed by the transformation that she saw in the children at Camp in such a short time – how they became more open to people and experiences. And she was blown away by the staff that she encountered. But she was most surprised by the impact Hole in the Wall had on her personally.

"It makes you feel in a way that you never felt before," Charlene said. "I physically feel different. You hear about people having this feeling that their heart grows bigger, and I have that feeling when I leave Camp. The kids teach you to do new things, and that teaches me that life is meant to be lived and experiences are meant to be experienced. I almost feel selfish coming to Camp because I get so much out of it."

**If you'd like to learn more about volunteering at Hole in the Wall, please contact our volunteer team at [volunteers@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:volunteers@holeinthewallgang.org) or visit [www.holeinthewallgang.org/volunteeropportunities](http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/volunteeropportunities).**



**Charlene cheers on the Blue Unit while volunteering in the cabins this summer.**

## NEW INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND OPENS



On September 30, just before the Gala celebrations kicked off, a group of excited Camp friends gathered to commemorate the opening of the new inclusive playground at Hole in the Wall! Located on the field adjacent to archery, and near where the treehouse used to be situated, the new playground brings whimsy, fun and just a tiny bit of mischief into days at Camp.

The ceremonial ribbon cutting recognized the amazing contributors who supported the playground installation including Sherry Malone and David Shavor and Eileen Murphy, John Zink and former camper Cristin Murphy-Zink of The Lennox Foundation and unveiled a plaque recognizing their incredible gift to Camp. Gratitude flowed in remarks from Camp CEO Jimmy Canton, Camp director Alan "Pendo" Pender

and camper mom Nicole, who shared how excited her daughter is to climb and play in the space. With a ceremonial raising of the pirate flag by Sherry Malone, David Shavor and Lissy Newman in a tribute to the flag Lissy's father flew over the treehouse, the playground was officially complete, and families swarmed on.

Able to accommodate campers and family members of differing ages and physical abilities, the playground features monkey bars, swings, a seesaw, merry-go-round and more. All the equipment can be reached via a rubber matting that ensures both safety and accessibility for those who may have mobility challenges. It has become a very popular feature during fall Family Weekends, and we are excited for many years of camper joy and laughter ahead.

## FAMILY FLATS

When camper Troy's doctor first told his mom Mahogany about The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, she was completely against the idea of him going. But his doctor was persistent, and so was her husband, and so was Troy himself. Their persistence, coupled with the doctor's assurances that there would be excellent medical care on site, convinced Mahogany to let her son attend.

Troy came to Camp for the first time in the summer of 2022, and the family soon joined him at a Family Weekend that fall. Troy came back again this past summer, this time joined by his little sister. And at the end of the summer, the entire family once again made the trip to Hole in the Wall for the Family Camp that closed out the season. At Camp, Troy can escape the reality of his illness for a little bit while surrounded by others who get it.

**“ Just talking to a group of women who won't pity me but will understand me, that was amazing. Camp has been a blessing to our family. ”**

**- Mahogany**

"Troy talks a lot about his counselors and friends; he's even still in touch with some of them," Mahogany said. "it's good for him to have friends who understand what he goes through. We can't really understand his pain and issues. But it means a lot for him to have friends who understand."

Camp hasn't just been good for Troy, but for his entire family. Troy's little sister was able to connect with other siblings who were dealing with similar challenges. And this past summer, Mahogany and her husband were able to attend a Parent and Caregiver Retreat Weekend where they met other parents and learned from their experiences.

"I didn't expect the weekend to be as amazing as it was," Mahogany shared. "I really enjoyed the session with the clown. He gave me great advice on how to relive stress and take a break from reality. And the circle time with the other moms was a weight off of my shoulders. Just

talking to a group of women who won't pity me but will understand me, that was amazing. Camp has been a blessing to our family."

**To learn more about how Camp programs support the entire family, visit [www.holeinthewallgang.org/programs](http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/programs).**



**Troy, Mahogany and Troy's sister Jade enjoy some time at the fishing dock during this summer's Family Camp.**



# TRAILBLAZERS

Missy Sullivan has always dreamed of running the Boston Marathon. She had planned to run in 2020 but could only join in virtually after the marathon was canceled due to COVID 19. So, when the opportunity came up last year to run the New York Marathon in support of Hole in the Wall, she hesitated. She thought she might want to hold out to see if she could get a bib to run Boston the following spring and wasn't sure if she could do both.

"I was a little nervous about being able to fundraise for both races in such a short time, but my friend Korreen, who was a camper, and her husband Billy said they would help, and they did," Missy said. "It felt really good to run for a purpose and for Korreen. Camp holds a special place in her heart, so it holds a special place in my heart."

Missy is no stranger to marathons or to running in support of charities. Over the years, she has run 11 marathons, raising funds for variety of organizations. But when she attended Camp's Gala last fall and saw first hand what she would be running for, she knew Hole in the Wall was who she wanted to support for Boston and New York.

"After running New York in the fall, I could have run for any charity for Boston," Missy shared. "But I didn't want to run for anybody else but Hole in the Wall. It was very rewarding to know that I was able to help so many sick kids go to Camp."

In addition to the support from Korreen and Billy, Missy sold baked goods to raise funds. Because she was fundraising and baking over the holiday season, demand was high, and she raised more than \$20,000 for Hole in the Wall over both races.

"We were delighted to have Missy run both the New York and Boston Marathons for Hole in the Wall," said Jarrod Zwirko, associate director of community partnerships for Camp. "She is such a positive force, and it was inspiring to see her take on two races in such a short time to help our children and families."

**If you'd like to learn more about supporting Hole in the Wall as Camp FUNraiser, contact us at [FUNraiser@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:FUNraiser@holeinthewallgang.org) or visit [www.holeinthewallgang.org/FUNraiser](http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/FUNraiser).**



Missy has conquered not one, but two marathons in support of Hole in the Wall.

“ ... I didn't want to run for anybody else but Camp. It was very rewarding to know that I was able to help so many sick kids go to Camp. ”

- Missy Sullivan

# SHERIFF'S SPOTLIGHT

C&S Wholesale Grocers, LLC (C&S) has consistently supported The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, through C&S Charities, Inc., a nonprofit organization established as the coordinating entity of C&S's charity golf outing Tee Up For Kids™. Over almost two decades, C&S has donated nearly \$2.5 million to Hole in the Wall, providing "a different kind of healing," to thousands of children with serious illness and their families.

This support is a core value for C&S, which is dedicated to making its communities better with a focus on children's health, well-being and eliminating food insecurity. Since 2005, Hole in the Wall has been a grateful recipient from their annual golf tournaments held in New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts. And in 2015,



Camper AJ and Andrea Keefe accept the donation from this year's Tee Up for Camp golf tournament.

Hole in the Wall recognized this longstanding support with Camp's highest honor, the "Most Wanted Award."

"Our employees are extremely proud to be a part of a company that is focused on giving back," said Julia Owen, president of C&S Charities Inc. and vice president, tax for C&S. "The partnership with Hole in the Wall is incredibly important to us. The Camp's direct impact and support of not only the children but also their families who are fighting alongside them every day is beyond amazing."

Financial donations are only the beginning. C&S actively encourages employees to identify and participate in volunteer opportunities, with their partners and beyond. The Camp looks forward to welcoming the team for a Helping Hands Workday later this year. It is just one more way that C&S works to help support its local communities.

"All of us at Hole in the Wall are humbled by the incredible partnership of C&S Charities," said Andrea Keefe, director of corporate and community partnerships at Hole in the Wall. "Their commitment to supporting families facing pediatric cancer is admirable, and their generosity has been instrumental in the Camp's continued growth over the years. We are grateful for the opportunities their friendship provides."

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



a seriousfun camp

**The Hole in the Wall Gang Fund**  
555 Long Wharf Drive  
New Haven, CT 06511

Tel: 203.772.0522  
Fax: 203.782.1725  
[info@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:info@holeinthewallgang.org)

**The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp – Connecticut**  
565 Ashford Center Road  
Ashford, CT 06278

Tel: 860.429.3444  
Fax: 833.210.8494  
[Ashford@holeinthewallgang.org](mailto:Ashford@holeinthewallgang.org)

**The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp**  
Paul Newman  
Founder

Ray Lamontagne  
Chair, Board of Directors

James H. Canton  
Chief Executive Officer

**Editor:**  
Beth Starkin

**Photography:**  
Marissa Aldieri  
Tom Brennan  
Kris Connor  
T. Charlie Erickson  
Alexander Pretorius  
Heather Raube

The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp Gazette is published by The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp © 2023 The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. All rights reserved.

Printed on recycled paper.





# BENEFIT EVENTS



A little bit of rain didn't wash out the fun at Amp Up for Camp: A 35th Anniversary Fandango Benefit Gala Celebration. On September 30, more than 250 guests gathered at Hole in the Wall to celebrate 35 years of Camp magic raising more than \$1.14 million.

The day kicked off under festive tents, with food truck treats, milkshakes, custards and tasty beverages. As Camp friends enjoyed the epicurean offerings, they were entertained with music from Nine6Teen, captured memories from the event in the photobooth and bid on incredible items in the silent auction including a collection of Camp sketches from a Hole in the Wall camper and a Tippy Scoop ice cream making class.

As the afternoon continued, the festivities moved indoors for the Live Auction in Sports & Rec. Guests were welcomed with a comedy routine by camper James, who later shared how Camp has helped him find friends who understand his challenges. Masterfully emceed'd by journalist and Camp friend Brian Williams, along with professional auctioneer Erin Ward of Star Benefit Auctions, the spirited auction saw participants trying to outbid each other for coveted items, including a Book Club lunch with Lissy Newman featuring personalized copies of her new photobook chronicling her parent's lives, and a buyout of the Granville House in Massachusetts. The auction wrapped up with a moment of pure philanthropy, as supporters pledged to support various Camp programming with their gifts.

Then it was time to head into the Theater for the Fandango Performance. The show opened by recognizing Dean and Marianne Metropoulos with Camp's highest honor – the Most Wanted Award - for their longstanding dedication to our children and families. As the radio-themed performance began, eight inspiring Hole in the Wall campers – Abby, Hannah, Jaidyn, Jackson, Janiyah, Nate, Sky and Tori - took to the stage alongside celebrity friends including Maria Briggs, Dane DeHaan, Claybourne Elder, Linedy Genao, Mykal Kilgore, Kevin Kline, Beth Leavel, Bridget Moynahan, Lissy Newman, Rhonda Ross and Christopher Sieber. The audience was deeply moved by the show, which included a video celebrating our former campers who have remained an integral part of our community and a special segment where Leslie and Sammy spoke about their experiences in Camp's new Bereavement program.

After the show, the celebrations continued well into the night, with guests enjoying a dinner buffet, s'mores bar and Whey Grilled Cheese along with entertainment by Shake, Rattle and Roll Dueling Pianos. It was truly a day to remember.



Fandango Performance in the theater



Live Auction!

Look inside to read how healing comes from community!

ampunfun.org



555 Long Wharf Drive  
New Haven, CT 06511  
holeinthewallgang.org

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 100  
Shelton, CT