All the Difference
By Sharon Space, MD

I first came to Camp as a counselor in 1989 when I was in medical school. After two years in the classroom, I was ready to get out and just play with kids. Little did I know that a summer at Camp would transform my view of health care. Books and lectures taught me about the importance of medicines, tests and surgeries in curing disease. Living with our campers with serious illness, however, sharing their laughter, hearing their stories and watching their accomplishments, taught me the healing power of Camp.

I was amazed by all that these children could do at Camp. They came to us on crutches and in wheelchairs. Before long, they were dancing at meals, skipping down trails, horseback riding, boating and fishing. It was a testament to how radically transformative Camp can be. Where some might see the work of Camp as a nice interlude, I quickly understood Camp to be a pivotal experience in the lives of our campers.

One typical Camp day with azure skies, billowing clouds and a cool breeze, I remember being in the infirmary watching helplessly as one of my campers, Nya, went into a sickle cell crisis. The medical team acted quickly to relieve her pain. As the medication entered Nya’s body, she relaxed and fell asleep. By evening, she was back in the Camp program, singing and dancing with her cabinmates on stage.

After completing my fellowship in pediatric hematology/oncology, I came back to Camp as an infirmary volunteer. It was there that I met Katy, age 7. Her hair was just starting to grow back following treatment for her leukemia diagnosis one year earlier. She came to the infirmary with a temperature of 102.5 F. In the outside world, that would have meant a trip to the emergency room with needles, blood draws, IV antibiotics and possible hospital admission. But Katy was at Camp. She didn’t have to go to the emergency room. We could provide all the treatment she needed in Camp’s “OK Corral.” While Katy worked on an arts-and-crafts project with her counselor, we completed her evaluation and treatment. After discussion with her doctors at home, everyone agreed she was safe to stay at Camp. I watched her skip out of the infirmary and up to the dining hall with her counselor.

We call it “the Magic of Camp.” Thanks to Camp’s unobtrusive yet vigilant medical program, our campers get to check their illness at the door and just be kids. And that makes all the difference.

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www.facebook.com/holeinthewallegangcamp
What’s New at Camp

In his business world, Steve Ruchefsky has learned that surprises are usually not a good thing. But in his personal life, he loves surprises. One year, Steve surprised his wife, singer Rondi Charleston, with a birthday trip to Paris — only to surprise her again at the airport by having her entire family join them. Another year, he surprised a dear friend, who happens to be a minister, with a trip to Israel. So moved by the journey, this minister became a dear friend, who happens to be a minister, with a trip to Israel. So moved by the journey, this minister decided to include Rondi’s spirited involvement with Camp as an advocate and performer. Steve delighted at the opportunity to connect so many meaningful dots and mark two milestones by making a gift with transformational impact. His gift will underwrite the construction of a new residential facility for medical and program staff. The new, 4,000 square-foot building will be located near Lulu’s Lodge and will feature five apartments providing 12 additional bedrooms which will answer Camp’s need to accommodate more medical staff to serve our increasing number of children with acute illness.

“Steve’s gift is not only extremely generous but also a profoundly important and meaningful next step in the unfolding story between Camp and the Ruchefsky family,” said Camp CEO Jimmy Canton. “It is precisely this deep commitment to the precious children in our care that has kept Camp strong and safe all these years. Because of Steve’s generosity, Camp will be able to serve a growing number of acutely ill children.”

A New Name for the Association of Hole in the Wall Camps

On April 2, the Association of Hole in the Wall Camps officially changed its name to SeriousFun Children’s Network. The announcement was made at the Association’s gala “A Celebration of Paul Newman’s Dream” held at Avery Fisher Hall in New York City. This rebranding intends to advance the wonderful work of our sister camps around the world — today totaling 14 fully operational camps and 10 global programs. All of us at Camp are proud to see the expansion of our founder’s original dream and hope that this new name brings with it greater awareness and support for all camps and affiliated programs around the world.

The original Hole in the Wall Camps’ name, mission and operations remain unchanged. We continue to be independent, governed by our own board of directors and responsible for raising our own operating funds to ensure that the brave and beautiful children in our care get to simply be kids and, in Paul’s words, “raise a little hell.” As we reach this important milestone, we re dedicate ourselves to Paul’s legacy at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp and look forward to celebrating 25 years of “a different kind of healing.”

“I brought it this far, now you take it from here. Raise a little hell.” It was my first introduction to Camp’s founder, Paul Newman. He raised his glass to all of us gathered in the dining hall at the end of that first summer’s staff orientation. I could never have imagined that the weeks that followed would change my life for the better and beyond.

Camp is approaching its 25th summer in a couple of weeks. What a privilege and indescribable honor it has been to be a part of this Camp community for the past 25 years. We have grown quite a bit since June 6, 1988. That year, we served 288 children. This year, we anticipate serving 20,000 children and family members. In 1988, 250 generous friends supported our $1 million budget. In 2012, we expect more than 25,000 generous friends to support our $10 million operating budget.

To those who are given much, much is expected. All of us who work for Camp’s mission and the dream of its founder know it is a privilege to do whatever we can with whatever resources we have to touch, change, improve and enrich the lives of the brave and beautiful children in our care. From Day One, Camp’s Founder turned to others to invite them to support this dream — joining the crusade and making it part of their own dream. He always knew that this dream needed to grow beyond him; it needed the creativity, imagination, compassion, protection and support of countless others to make it all that it could be.

Today, more than 100,000 people have contributed to his original dream and are making that dream more colorful, more effective, more essential in the lives of more and more seriously ill children. Thank you for being a part of this movement.

To the dream of Paul Newman, to your involvement and to the precious children we serve, Happy 25th Birthday. Here’s to another 25, just as magical and just as wonderful.
Thanks to Our 2011 Volunteers!

We celebrate the hundreds of volunteers who helped to make 2011 an exceptional year for Camp and our campers.

Thanks to Our 2011 Team Members

Our thanks go to our amazing team members who helped us make 2011 a successful year for Team Hole in the Wall.

Please note that this list includes the names of the volunteers and staff members who contributed to the success of the camp in 2011. It is a testament to the dedication and hard work of all involved.

Please join us in recognizing the contributions of these extraordinary people and in supporting the future of the camp.
Sheriff’s Spotlight

The Simon Konover Company

Camp has special meaning for everyone who is touched by it. That sentiment especially holds true for the wonderful folks who built the place.

Rewind the clock back 25 years. What would you find? Dozens of employees and contractors from The Simon Konover Company working tirelessly to build a Wild West-themed town in Connecticut’s Quiet Corner. Battling spring mud, working with innovative design plans and adhering to a firm June 1 deadline set by Butch Cassidy himself, this was one ambitious construction project!

“We were so proud of the commitment of our construction teams that worked tirelessly to build this remarkable facility,” said Jane Coppa, CEO of The Simon Konover Company.

Education and networking are important components of the retreat. Additionally, the Caregivers Retreat allows for hospital staff to meet members of Camp’s medical, program, volunteer and family outreach departments.

“The purpose of the retreat is to provide a day of respite and renewal, while helping hospital staff build appreciation for the Camp and its mission,” said Hospital Outreach Program Director Mary Naumer. “The retreat allows the hospital caregivers to see Camp firsthand and put the work of the Hospital Outreach Specialists into the perspective of the larger organization as a whole. It enables hospital caregivers to get to know our Hospital Outreach team members better, helping to strengthen working relationships among all the people caring for seriously ill children at our partner hospitals and other sites.”

The Hospital Outreach team is grateful for the daily support received from hospital colleagues, and Camp looks forward each year to the opportunity to reciprocate.

Respite and Renewal: Spring Caregivers Retreat

Every spring, the Hospital Outreach Team welcomes hospital caregivers (nurses, social workers, child life specialists, etc.) from all over New England and New York City to experience the joy and comfort of Camp for themselves. The Annual Caregiver’s Retreat consists of a daylong or overnight visit to Camp, complete with Camp activities like arts and crafts, nature walks, tower climb, woodshop, archery, boating and fishing.

The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp

The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp welcomed 288 children and their families that first summer with the strong scent of fresh timber and wood stain permeating the air. Today, the Simon Konover Company remains heavily committed to the mission of Camp. Every September, the corporation rallies its employees and strategic partners to participate in the Camp Challenge Ride cycling event — an event that has raised more than $700,000 for Camp in just three years. Simon Konover Company employees also participate in the Camp’s Helping Hands Workday initiative designed to engage corporate volunteers to prepare the Camp between sessions. “Our continued involvement with the Camp is as exciting as it was back in 1987. It remains an honor to align our Company and strategic partners with the Camp’s special mission,” Coppa observed.

Former Camper Sarah Laaf

As a patient, camper, LIT and volunteer, Sarah Laaf developed an appreciation for extraordinary individual care and attention, not just in hospitals but at Camp, too. Through further experiences, including a semester spent studying abroad in South Africa, she emerged with a desire to pursue a career in international public health and to extend quality healthcare services on a global scale. Since graduating from Washington University in St. Louis in 2007, Sarah has worked for John Snow, Inc., an international public health research and consulting firm that is committed to improving the health of individuals around the world.

After working in Boston and visiting field sites in Africa, Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, Sarah has been living in Harare, Zimbabwe, since July 2010, when she signed up for a two-year commitment as Projects Administrator for JSI-operated programs there. The programs work with the local government to provide Zimbabwesans with life-saving medicines and other essential health products.

Despite the extensive travel, Sarah has always made time for Camp — whether it is at a fall or spring weekend, or summer session in Ashford, or a Round-Up River Ranch event in Denver.

“Camp holds a special place in my heart,” she said. “Regardless of where I am in the world, I know I am connected with this community that has inspired me personally and professionally.”

Sarah is now applying to graduate school programs in public health management and can’t wait to return to the United States in 2012 to fully reconnect with family, friends and Camp.

Former camper Sarah Laaf and a friend.

“Your staff provided such an energizing array of activities that helped make us a community for the day and allowed us to explore the camp in a wonderful way.”

– Caregiver Retreat Attendee
Our Events

Highlights of our latest benefit events and those to come…

Big screen fun hit Westport, Conn., on January 30, when 400-plus new and longtime Camp friends gathered at Westport Country Playhouse for “Celebrating THE STING & the Gang.” Camp’s Third Annual Founder’s Day event. Honoring our founder and mission lead, The Clarke Corporation, along with Benefit Co-Chairs David and Cindy Eigen, joined nearly 20 sponsors and countless donors in raising more than $175,000 to support Camp programs.

Sponsors enjoyed a pre-screening cocktail reception at the Dressing Room featuring remarks by SenatorChristopher Dodd, a member of Camp’s Council of Advisors. Additional receptions for ticketholders were held in the Playhouse lobbies, where guests snacked on endless movie concession treats.

Video highlights of Camp’s growing services and comments by Board Chair Ray Lamontagne and Camp CEO Jimmy Canton kicked off the festivities in the Playhouse theater. Camp’s Roxie Kubis stole the show, receiving a standing ovation as she reflected on her experiences with Camp’s Hospital Outreach Program.

“The Hospital Outreach counselors became part of my support group,” she recalled. “Even on the days when I wasn’t in the mood for company, they were the exception. It wasn’t just the fun activities like arts and crafts, wood projects, bowling and games that I looked forward to; it was also the meaningful conversations we had while doing the activities that helped me stay optimistic.”

11th Annual Polo for Children Benefit
Greenwich, CT - June 3

Now in its 11th year, this event for children takes place at the Greenwich Polo Club and includes a gourmet luncheon, silent and live auctions featuring celebrity friends, a high-goal polo match, and an all-day picnic and entertainment program for children.

Travellers Championship PGA Tournament
Cromwell, CT – June 18-24

The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp is proud to be a beneficiary of this PGA TOUR event generously sponsored by TraveIers Insurance Companies. See www.travelerschampionship.com for more information.

10th Annual “Fore a Very Good Cause” Golf Tournament
Fairfield, CT - September 4

Held at the Country Club of Fairfield, this event features a gourmet brunch followed by 18 holes of golf overlooking the Long Island Sound. When the round is complete, everyone is invited to stay for cocktails, dinner and a live auction featuring a celebrity auctioneer.

22nd Fandango Gala
Ashford, CT - September 16

Enjoy an exciting day featuring a private performance of the Big Apple Circus at Lincoln Center and a private Halloween-themed reception at The Rock Cafe. Campers and their families will attend the circus performance free of charge thanks to sponsors.

Learn more about our Camp-hosted benefit events at www.holeinthewallgang.org/ourevents or contact Director of Special Events Jennifer Weeks at jennifer.weeks@holeinthewallgang.org.

Camper Rosie Kubis with her counselor Jo Senecal (left) and mom Melissa.

Team Benefit Events 2012

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Team Update

What’s new and exciting at Team Hole in the Wall…

It’s official. Tom and Jen Whiffin are roller coaster fanatics. They joined Team Hole in the Wall with the inspired idea of using the Create Your Own Event option (formerly Team Challenge) to raise money while riding as many roller coasters as possible in nine days. What could be better than having fun pursuing your own creative (read whacky) goal and using the experience to raise funds to support seriously ill children? Tom and Jen were troopers. Undeterred by the lines and packed parking lots of amusement-park peak season, they set out on an up-down and sideways adventure to support the mission of The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. It was a grueling challenge, but they selflessly gave it their all. And, in pure Camp style, they had plenty of fun along the way. They visited a whopping nine amusement parks from Virginia to New Jersey, and rode 102 roller coasters in the allotted time.

“We weren’t able to ride one kiddy coaster without a child,” Jen reluctantly admitted. Their inspired efforts, however, will help change the life of a child by sending one to Camp. And, by wearing their Team jerseys throughout their entire roller coaster adventure, Tom and Jen helped raise awareness for Team Hole in the Wall and Camp.

“We had many people ask us about the jerseys,” explained Jen, “and it gave us that opportunity to talk about Camp.”

So, if you thought Team Hole in the Wall was for athletes only, think again. Even those of us who are athletically challenged can be part of the team with the new Create Your Own Event option. From lemonade stands to golf outings, the possibilities are endless. So get on board, and be a part of the

Team Hole in the Wall 2012 Event Calendar

Five Boro Bike Tour
AngelRide
Fairfield Road Race
New York City Triathlon
Ironman US Championship
Camp Challenge Ride
ING New York City Marathon
Create Your Own Event

Team Members (cont. from page 4)

Hal Naiker
Michael Naiker
Cary Hall
Frank Hall
Fred Walsh
Alison Walsh
Sharon Walsh
Brian Walters
Heather Walsh Haney
Kevin Walsh
Frank Walsh
Mary Wallace
Daniel Wall
Camper Roxie Kubis with her counselor Jo Senecal (left) and mom Melissa.

Team that is helping to provide the joy and empowerment of Camp to children battling serious illness.

If you are interested in joining the Team to Create Your Own Event, visit http://info.teambenefitls.org/how-to-create-teambenefitls/ (to find Event How-To Kits that will spark your creativity and get you started. Of course, if you’ve always dreamed of running a marathon or cycling across Connecticut, Team Hole in the Wall accommodates that, too.

Registration is now open for many team events. Please visit www.teambenefitls.org for more information.

flickr
YouTube
LinkedIn
Facebook
Team Hole in the Wall 2012 Calendar

May 6
May 26-27
June 23-24
July 8
August 11
September 8
November 4
Ongoing

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AngelRide
Fairfield Road Race
New York City Triathlon
Ironman US Championship
Camp Challenge Ride
ING New York City Marathon
Create Your Own Event

Team Members (cont. from page 4)

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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.

Ryan’s Run

One of our favorite Cabin Chat questions at the end of the day at Camp is, “Who is your favorite Superhero and why?” Among Camp’s favorite Superheroes are the family and friends of Ryan VeriVoxy who hosted an amazing memorial event in his honor to support his love of Camp. Ryan’s Superhero 5K Run/Walk took place in Oxford, Conn., on Saturday, September 17, 2011, and raised more than $11,000 for Camp. Ryan loved Camp and was a person who “gave back” wherever he could, so the event was a very fitting tribute.

Ryan grew up in Oxford where he developed a love of exercise, a commitment to volunteer service and a belief in reaching for the stars. In 2010, he took part in the Team Hole in the Wall Camp Challenge Ride in Ashford, where he rode 62 miles on his mountain bike to benefit The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. He had hoped to volunteer at the Camp for a summer session but unfortunately never had the opportunity. He passed away in a car accident at the age of 23 in December 2010. It was his passion making the Camp and for giving back to the community that inspired this truly amazing tribute event.

Last summer, Ryan’s family and friends visited Camp and had a wonderful time, further inspiring their resolve to make Ryan’s Superhero 5K Run/Walk an outstanding and memorable event for all who participated.

“Ryan once said that the reason he loved the Camp so much was that he was felt safe enough to ‘never have a great childhood,’” recalled Ryan’s friend Amy Hagstrom. “He wanted to help kids whose childhood was challenged due to their illness. When we got up to the Camp and saw firsthand all that we were supporting, we knew we had made the right choice. That visit gave us the absolute certainty that we had done the right thing and that Ryan would definitely have approved.”

Ryan’s family and friends have vowed to make Ryan’s Superhero 5K Run/Walk an annual event in the future. Someday the Camp that Ryan loved. This year’s race will be held on Saturday, September 15, 2012.

Meet Rebecca Allen, LCSW

You could say that Rebecca Allen has Camp in her blood. Becca, as she is known at Camp, recently joined The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp’s leadership team in the newly created position of Chief Program Officer. Before that, however, she was no stranger to Camp, serving as a counselor for four summers starting in 1989, Camp’s second-year of operation. And yes, she is the daughter of Director of Community and Family Outreach Karen Allen.

Becca received an MSW in administration/policy and planning from the University of Connecticut. From there, she went on to distinguish herself in the nonprofit world working within organizations that served people with traumatic brain injuries, children with special health care needs, and older adult issues. Becca also spent some time in state government and served as Regional Director of Rehabilitation Services at the Southwest Connecticut Mental Health System, where she managed the operations of several programs, monitored nonprofit contracts and developed strategies for the implementation of evidence-based programming. For several years, she traveled the country providing training and consultation to assist organizations in developing and monitoring employment programs.

As if that were not enough, Becca takes great pride in being a co-founder of the Chapel on the Green and developing Abraham’s Tent — both programs in New Haven. She is a past recipient of the “Unsung Hero” award bestowed by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill in Dane County, Wisconsin. In 2006, she was awarded the “Manager of the Year” award from the State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services - Southwest Region.

Becca lives in New Haven with her husband Bill, daughter Madison, age 11, and son Owen, age 9. In addition to her family life, for more than two years she’s been doing one activity per month that she’s never done before. Some of the most memorable events have included walking on fire, trapeze, sky diving, curling and flying a glider. In addition, this year she recruited 15 current and former Hole in the Wall staff, campers, and volunteers to run the MORE Magazine/Fitness Magazine Women’s Half Marathon on April 15 in New York City. Becca and the Camp Banditas look forward to this Team Hole in the Wall fitness event that draws participants from all around the East Coast and beyond.

We are thrilled to welcome Becca back to Camp in her new role.

Pardner Profile

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Performer John Lloyd Young gave a spectacular performance at our 2011 New York Circus benefit event for Camp.