Bringing Camp to the Community with CampOut

Faster than a New York City taxi. More enjoyable than a dino nugget. Able to leap tall speed bumps in a single bound. Look, out on the road! It’s a truck…it’s a van…it’s CampOut!

This past September, The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp hit the road with a new program providing campers, families and caregivers something they can never get enough of…more Camp! CampOut, a mobile Camp experience, brings all sorts of fun activities right to camper hometowns via home visits and community events. A tricked-out Camp van, resplendent with scenes from Camp, is available to accompany our CampOut specialists, but certainly isn’t necessary for Campy fun to be had, and visits are frequently arranged without it.

“When the Hospital Outreach Program began taking the fun and friendship of Hole in the Wall into clinical settings 12 years ago, we learned that the magic of Camp was portable,” said Sarah Eio Smithson, director of outreach programs at Camp. “Now, we are excited to offer families a brand new program with its own dedicated staff who are bringing ‘a different kind of healing’ to camper communities and homes.”

Most recently, CampOut brought Camp fun to Manchester, Conn., where crafts were the order of the day. After a delicious lunch of camper-created pepperoni pizza, bins and bins of Camp-style activities were brought inside. Then, two very excited girls had some very big decisions to make. With just about every project imaginable at their fingertips, would it be duct tape crafts, painting or something completely different like a science project, marble race track or an epic game of cards?

It didn’t take long to settle on a few choice activities, and the girls set to work screen-printing T-shirts, building and painting a dartboard, and making bracelets. Even the family dog was caught “raising a little hell” with some parent-approved pizza crust scraps. With crafts completed and materials provided for future projects, it was time to relax around a living room campfire, roast s’mores and share in a Cabin Chat before the van left to head back to Camp.

Sound fun? Camper families can schedule a home visit with or without the van by emailing the CampOut team at campout@holeinthewallgang.org or giving them a shout at (860) 429-3444. And the CampOut specialists don’t just make home visits. CampOut hosts fun-filled events open to all current and recent campers and their families throughout the Northeast. The family friendly happenings, which do require a parent or guardian to accompany campers, provide a wonderful opportunity for local Camp families to meet, mingle and bond with each other. With career days, pottery-painting parties and more, there’s an event to suit everyone!

Keep an eye on the roads for a van covered in Camp scenes and a driver sporting a clown nose, and give us a wave. Bonus points if you can spot Kong! You can find out where we’ll be at www.holeinthewallgang.org/campout.
What’s New at Camp

Raise high the pirate flag! Those of you who visited Camp over the past year may have noticed that our beloved tree house was closed, its signature flag of rebelliousness lowered. With the safety of our campers always at the forefront of everything we do, the time had come to shore up the supports and the accessibility ramp. Today, the updates are complete, and the tree house will once again welcome campers with the Jolly Roger waving in the summer wind.

Speaking of renovations, camper cabins are also being refreshed. Starting with the Yellow Unit, which will be renovated before the summer season, the cabins will have updated bathrooms and increased energy efficiency, among other enhancements. Both campers and counselors will appreciate the benefits, which include an additional camper shower and more closet space for counselors. Heating and cooling units in the sleeping quarters will make the cabins even more comfortable and usable into the chillier days of late fall and early spring.

There have been some significant changes in our New Haven office as well. As our organization continues to grow, we moved upstairs to a more spacious location on the 11th floor. The amazing new office feels an awful lot like “Camp,” complete with a beautiful mural by Sherry “Momma” Tally and Amber Alexander! This year also marked a change in how we annually celebrate our amazing founder, Paul Newman, as we took our Founder’s Day celebration online. Camp friends and family shared stories at www.holeinthewallgang.org/newmanandthegang, and posted their favorite stories about Paul and Camp to Facebook and Twitter. The celebration will continue year round, so check out the site and share your stories with #newmanandthegang.

And last, but certainly not least, we’d like to welcome Dr. Gary Kupfer to our Board of Directors. After four years volunteering during the summer program and serving on Camp’s Medical Committee, Dr. Kupfer joins the board as Chairman of the Medical Committee. He brings 30 years of experience combining cancer research with pediatric oncology, and currently runs the pediatric cancer program at Yale. He’ll continue volunteering at the OK Corral this summer, so stop by and give him a shout.

From the CEO

“Never stop climbing.”

These are the inspirational words shared by former camper Ross Gipson at our Bandits in the Big Apple 25th Anniversary Celebration last fall to describe a lasting lesson that he learned at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. It was advice his counselors gave him back in the 1990s when, as a camper, he made his way to the top of the climbing tower. It is also an enduring lesson that still motivates him all these years later and has taken him to exciting new heights – and even law school.

Ross’ words resonate with me even now. As we prepare for our 27th summer, all of us at Hole in the Wall Gang Camp family want to thank our extraordinary Camp community for helping us reach such exciting heights and allowing us to embrace all the possibilities that the future holds. Together, we can continue to fill this Hole in the Wall with fun, friendship and joy for many more years to come.

Top photo: Jimmy and a camper clown around at the New York Circus.
Above photo: Ross gives his now legendary speech at the Bandits in the Big Apple 25th Anniversary Celebration.

Creative Zone

MY BODY
By Luciano Duffy, Grade 6, 1/3/13

My pain is prickly like a cactus
On a hot day.
I feel it morning, noon, and night.
My body shudders
Like a bedbug at night.
I am angry
Like a hungry bear.
I would like to bite into bravery.
I feel hardened like a bunch of people
Stepping on sidewalk pavement.
I want to speak to God in heaven.
To know more about the afterlife.
I want to give love and care to my family.
I want to transform my pain into a meal
And I eat it.
Thanks to Our 2013 Volunteers!

Our heartfelt thanks to all our dedicated and loyal volunteers who make Camp such a special experience for our campers. Your generosity of spirit provides a life-changing opportunity for children in need. We are deeply grateful for your commitment and support.

Thank you for helping to make this a wonderful year!

Volunteers

Our thanks to all the volunteers at CCLC. Your time, energy, and dedication are invaluable.

Thank you to our volunteers at the Operations Center.

We appreciate all the work of our volunteers at the Work Projects.

Special thanks to our Volunteer Nurses.

Thank you for your continued support of the CCLC mission.

Volunteer Nurse Coordinator: Diane Amantea, LPN

Volunteers

Thanks to Our 2013 Team Members

Our team members are the backbone of Camp and make it possible for us to provide a quality experience for our campers. Their hard work and dedication are deeply appreciated.

Thank you to our team members who helped us to make 2013 a successful year.

Volunteers

Our thanks to all the volunteers who helped to make this a wonderful year!
Hospital Outreach 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.

Despite the cold and snow of this past winter, children and families in Philadelphia got to feel Camp’s comforting warmth thanks to an expansion of the Hospital Outreach Program. Since last fall, HOP has been bringing Camp love to the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) Main Campus, CHOP Specialty Care and Ambulatory Center in Voorhees, CHOP Specialty Care Center in King of Prussia and St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children.

While the Hospital Outreach Program may be new to the region, the specialists are not. Michelle “Gill” McKenna, Kyle Smith and Frankie Martin are all local to the Philly area and all attended Camp as children. Indeed, these long-time Camp volunteers share a special insight into the experience Camp provides: “I feel like my two worlds have collided,” said Regional Manager McKenna. “I get to bring the most magical place I know to kids in a city I love. It’s awe-inspiring to see how easily a hospital room in Philadelphia can become the porch of arts and crafts at Camp, complete with a fabulous creation and all the laughter and smiles too.”

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia has been so impressed with those smiles and the laughter echoing up and down its halls that they’ve asked the Hole in the Wall to take over coordination of a long-standing event – Camp Week at CHOP. This summer, the hospital outreach specialists will transform CHOP’s main campus into “Downtown Camp,” complete with arts and crafts, woodshop, fishing and archery. From the opening “campfire” to the closing singing of “Stars in the Sky” and everything in between (including unit cheers and even carnivals), CHOP will see what it’s like to “raise a little hell” Camp style.

For more information about Camp’s Hospital Outreach Program, please contact Mary Naumec at mary.naumec@holeinthewallgang.org or (860) 429-3444.

Family Flats

The Duffy Family

When the Duffys first learned about Camp four years ago, they had no idea that the Hole in the Wall would become so meaningful to them. After participating first in a Fall Family Weekend, the family of five has since experienced Camp magic through Hero’s Journey, CampOut and the Summer Program as both a camper and sibling campers. They also have had the honor of being visited by the Hospital Outreach team during camper Luke’s treatments, and mom and dad have plans to attend a COPE session in the future.

The family treasures their Camp experiences and the healing power they all have felt being part of such an amazing community. “I couldn’t believe there could be so much good that came from a cancer diagnosis,” said mom Lisa. “But Camp has given the kids the opportunity to feel secure, comfortable, accepted and happy. The sense of camaraderie and belonging has also provided them the opportunity to impact others and pay it forward.”

The Duffys credit Cabin Chat, the nightly Camp ritual where campers are guided in a discussion of their thoughts, experiences, accomplishments and fears, with much of that feeling of acceptance. They view it as a sanctuary for caring and sharing that is unique to the Camp experience. Though I’m not privy to what exactly has been discussed in our son’s Cabin Chats, since they are sacred and not discussed outside of Camp,” said Lisa, “I do know that it has been very powerful for our family.”

The Hospital Outreach visits have also been tremendously meaningful. “Luke felt so comforted when Bryan came, and they wrote this beautiful poem,” said Lisa. “For a 12-year-old who has experienced so much, it’s very powerful to be able to articulate it. It really helps kids cope in a situation where they could so easily give up.”

You can read Luke’s poem in the new Creative Zone on Page 2.

Below: Camper Luke Duffy (right) and Sibling Campers Trent (left) and Clay (center).

What’s New at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp Hospital Outreach Program

- HOP’s growth will continue this fall with a launch in Northern New Jersey. Keep an eye out in the next Gazette for updates!
- The Central New England HOP team started programming at Blythedale Children’s Hospital in Valhalla, NY; Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital at Westchester Medical Center (NY) and the Springfield, Mass., Ronald McDonald House.
- HOP presented to the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center Hospital Leadership Team about its 12-year history with CT Children’s and recent collaborations, including a patient-driven Katy Perry “Roar” video.
- HOP supported many hospital, clinic and community-based holiday parties and celebrations in December, including the Boston Sickle Cell Association annual party, Mt. Sinai Holiday Celebration and the New Year’s Eve celebrations at Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital.
- Jeremiah Stevenson joined the Boston Team as the newest HOP specialist.
- HOP will host its annual Hospital Caregivers Retreat April 10-11 at Camp.

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A Shout-Out to our dedicated corporate partners.

Sheriff’s Spotlight

Nestlé Waters North America

Water, water everywhere and many drops to drink, thanks to our friends at Nestlé Waters North America, parent company of Poland Spring. The company has generously been quenching Camp thirsts since 2005 by donating Poland Spring 100% Natural Spring Water for use during Camp’s year-round programs and Team Hole in the Wall events. In fact, this past year alone, they provided more than 10,000 bottles to help keep Hole in the Wall campers, counselors and athletes hydrated.

“Hydration is clearly important during the hot days of summer, but who are also facing serious illnesses,” said Ray Shedd, senior development officer at Camp. “We are so grateful for Nestlé Waters’ long-term support and generosity.”

And the organization’s generosity doesn’t end with water: Nestlé Waters has also contributed more than $1.2 million to Camp over the years. And its employees are equally giving. This past year, more than 100 Nestlé employees volunteered onsite through Camp’s Helping Hands workday initiative, making beds and prepping the cabins between summer sessions.

Tim Brown, president and CEO of Nestlé Waters North America, said, “Camp is our neighbor here in Connecticut. We encourage all of our employees to assist during volunteer days while providing campers and staff with Poland Spring, but the reward of giving is all ours.”

For more information on The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp’s Corporate Partners Program, please contact Ray Shedd at ray.shedd@holeinthewallgang.org or visit www.holeinthewallgang.org.
Our Events
Highlights of our latest benefit events and those to come...

More than 1,000 campers, camper families, staff, volunteers and Camp friends gathered under the big top November 9, 2013, for the 22nd Annual Big Apple Bash – a private performance of the Big Apple Circus at Lincoln Center – where they were treated to clown noses, face painting and campy gift bags.

But the antics didn’t end there. After the show, sponsors and donors were transported to the Hard Rock Café in Times Square where, for the first time ever, we took over the entire venue. The after-party featured a dinner buffet inspired by the circus, complete with a hot dog cart, popcorn and cotton candy machines!

A tango led by Jimmy Canton and event emcee Mandy Lauderdale kicked-off a brief program, which also featured musical performances and a speech by camper Maggie, who shared how the memories of her seven summers at Camp will stay with her forever. The program concluded with a cake-eating contest that pitted Meghan Schottland of American Packaging Corp. against fellow sponsor John LiDestri of LiDestri Food & Beverage. We’ll let you guess who won!

And then, the dancing began. Young and old boogied the night away, while the New York Hospital Outreach Team facilitated arts and crafts. Caricaturists, a balloon artist, airbrush tattoo stations and a photo booth rounded out the evening activities.

Thanks to the support of the “Greatest Sponsors on Earth,” American Packaging Corp. and LiDestri Food & Beverage, as well as hundreds of donors, this year’s Big Apple Bash raised more than $1.1 million to support The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp – a record for the event.

Camp Benefit Events 2014

13th Annual Polo for Children Benefit
Greenwich, Conn. – June 1
Spend a family friendly afternoon with the Camp community on the grounds of the Greenwich Polo Club. This fun-filled day features cocktails and hors d’oeuvres with celebrity chef Lydia Bastianich, as well as a fun-choen, and silent and live auctions. A picnic party boasting a variety of activities is planned for children in attendance. The afternoon concludes with a High-Goal Polo match.

12th Annual “Fore a Very Good Cause” Golf Tournament
Mamaroneck, NY – September 2
Our annual golf tournament is moving one of the country's most presti- gious golf courses - Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, NY. This year's tournament will feature a gourmet brunch followed by a round of 18 holes at the celebrated club, which allows Camp to accommodate more players than in previous years. Participants can also enjoy an evening dinner reception where tournament prizes are awarded and a variety of auction items are up for bid.

24th Annual Fandango Benefit Gala
Ashford, Conn. – September 13
Join us at Camp for a fun-filled af- ternoon featuring a performance by celebrity friends and our amazing Hole in the Wall Gang Campers, cocktails and hors d’oeuvres, and silent and live auctions. All guests are also invited to a post-party featuring a buffet dinner, a live band and dancing.

23rd Annual Big Apple Bash
New York, NY - November
Join The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp family for a private afternoon performance of the Big Apple Circus at Lincoln Center, followed by a circus-inspired evening dinner reception with children's activities, music and dancing at the Hard Rock Café. Thanks to the generosity of our spon- sors, our campers and their families also attend the private circus perfor- mance free of charge.

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

Above left: Event sponsors Peter Schottland and Stefani LiDestri can’t help but smile at the fun-filled event. Above center: Event facilitators Peter Schottland and Stefani LiDestri go head to head in the cake eating contest.

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

For most of us, running a marathon is just another monumental accomplishment unto itself. But for Team Hole in the Wall Member Larry Grogin, a marathon is just another 26.2-mile day in support of Camp.

This April, Grogin will tackle not only the Boston Marathon but will run more than 200 miles from his home in New Jersey to the race start – all to raise money for The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp.

“This amazing run is just the latest in a long line of unbelievable physical feats Larry has undertaken to support Camp,” said Ray Shed, senior development officer. “We are so grateful to him and are thrilled to have him on the Team.”

Indeed, endurance sports are nothing new for Grogin, who has participated in 26 Ironman Triathlons, hundreds of marathons and the prestigious Norseman Xtreme Triathlon in Norway.

But even for the most exceptional athletes, running 30 miles each day for seven days leading up to a marathon is an amazing accomplishment. Grogin will begin his run April 13 in his hometown of Franklin Lakes, N.J. He will stop in Fort Montgomery, N.Y.; New Canaan, Conn.; Shelton, Conn.; Hartford, Conn.; and at Camp after finishing in Hopkinton, Mass., seven days later, on April 19. Then, on April 21, he’ll join 36,000 runners for the Boston Marathon.

“Every day, Hole in the Wall Campers push past their limitations to accomplish what seems impossible,” said Grogin. “It is this spirit that inspires me to push myself in support of these beautiful families.”

Feeling inspired to join an upcoming Team event or encourage athletes in the cheer zone? Contact Dave MacNiven, director of recruitment and strategy for Team Hole in the Wall, at (203)777-0522 or at david.macniven@holeinthewallgang.org.

Team Hole in the Wall 2014 Event Calendar

Join us as an athlete or in the cheer zone!

Boston Marathon, April 21
TD Five Boro Bike Tour, May 4
Angel Ride, May 24 – 25
Fairfield Road Race Half Marathon & 5K, June 21 – 22
Kayak for Camp – July 12
New York City Triathlon, August 3
Camp Challenge Ride & Bandit 5K, September 6
Hartford Marathon & Half Marathon, October 11
New York City Marathon, November 2

For more information, visit us at www.holeinthewallgang.org/events

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

Above left: Event sponsors Peter Schottland and Stefani LiDestri can’t help but smile at the fun-filled event. Above center: Event facilitators Peter Schottland and Stefani LiDestri go head to head in the cake eating contest.
When 8th grader Mackenzie Page learned about her friend Zoe’s brain cancer diagnosis, she wanted to do something that would help her and other children facing difficult medical challenges. So she created The Great Pumpkin Challenge to inspire her community to get involved and help raise money to support Zoe and others like her. Three years later, she’s raised more than $6,000 for Camp and inspired a new community events program – Kids for Camp.

“I wish that I could take my friend Zoe’s cancer away, but that’s not how it works,” said Mackenzie. “What I can do is support her courage and strength. She inspires me, and I am committed to making a difference in her life through making friends, family, community and benefiting the lives of other kids going through difficult situations.”

The Great Pumpkin Challenge invites the community to bring carved pumpkins to Mackenzie’s home along with a $5 donation. The pumpkins are then displayed for all to see on Halloween. This past year, she collected 172 pumpkins and raised more than $4,500 for Camp. The Great Pumpkin Challenge program encourages young people like Mackenzie to practice active compassion as they raise funds and awareness for the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. The events they organize celebrate the fun, friendship and spirit of childhood while embracing the core Camp principles of safety, respect and love.

“One of the things that defines the magic of Hole in the Wall is the community of kindred spirits that our campers find at Camp and instantly realize that they are not alone,” said Ken Alberti, Camp’s chief development officer. “In Kids for Camp, we see a beautiful reflection of that same spirit as children take initiative to raise funds and awareness that will not only support our campers, but also remind them and their families of a broader community that stands alongside them.”

Other children participating in Kids for Camp have planned events like the Hopkin’s Hop-a-thon, the Litchfield Spelling Bee and the Indian Mountain School “By Kids for Kids” concert and others.

Check out Camp’s online event calendar to see when these and other events are coming to your area at www.holeinthewallgang.org/events/calendar.

Young people and adults interested in starting their own events should contact Andrea Keefe at andrea.keefe@holeinthewallgang.org or (203) 772-0522.

“I wish that I could take my friend Zoe’s cancer away, but that’s not how it works. What I can do is support her courage and strength.”
Laughter is the order of the day during a visit from the Hospital Outreach Program.

Look inside to read how Camp is hitting the road…