

Camp Ronald McDonald For Good Times



Looking Back

On June 3, at an intimate gathering with some of Camp's most loyal supporters, camp founder Dr. Stuart Siegel and Fran Wiley RN (long-time leader and volunteer) shared their perspective on Camp's beginnings and the impact Camp has had on the pediatric oncology community over the past 35 years. The following excerpts were transcribed from a video of the event which can be accessed on our website at www.rmhcsc.org/camp/page/Camp%20Videos.

Dr. Stuart Siegel on the founding of Camp:

When we established the Los Angeles Ronald McDonald House and put our bylaws together, we were very careful to make sure that we covered not just the Ronald McDonald House, but that we covered any kind of resource that would help kids with cancer that wasn't available from the hospital or from the medical facility. At that time I heard about a Camp in Wisconsin that



Dr. Stuart Siegel with camper, 1983

had rented a facility for kids from Chicago. Having been a camper myself, I remember that as the best time in my childhood. I loved waiting for summer camp and going to summer camp and I thought

this could really be something special.

When I was a kid and I was pretty much a nerd, but I remember that camp was really where I grew up and started to become an adult. We went on hikes and did adventuresome things, took canoes down rivers - and capsized a few times! Those are really the experiences that teach you to trust yourself and have self-confidence and have fun at the same time.

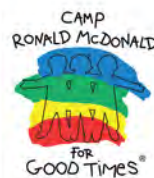
It wasn't a big leap to think about camp for kids with cancer as a place where these kids who were facing terrible problems both in terms of the diseases and the treatment; which really knocked their self-esteem and made them worry about things that kids shouldn't be worried about. Camp could really be a place where kids could get their self-esteem back.

So that was the actual concept in real terms when we first started Camp. Let's do something that will restore their confidence. Let's give them a fun time. Take them out of the terrible hospital environment and let them be as normal as possible. That was the idea, not to have physiological sessions or formal therapy, just give them therapy by being themselves and have them do things they never thought they could do.

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Celebrating 35 Years



Dr. Stuart Siegel on Camp's first session:

At our first camp session we had 60 kids. We selected kids that weren't too ill; they were on therapy, but oral therapy most of them, not very intensive therapy because we wanted to walk before we ran. We had a group of volunteer counselors and we all went up there not knowing what was going to happen. By the end of the session, I remember this vividly, we were all standing there waiting for the buses to arrive. The session had gone incredibly, it could not have gone better and we were all standing there crying because no one wanted to leave. We had had such an incredible experience, we didn't want it to end. I knew we knew we had something that worked. That's the energy that propelled us forward and kept us going. It was part of the energy that we could muster to get people to support the camp because we could speak truthfully about what we saw and what the benefit was to the campers.

Through the years, the most common question we get asked by parents is "what did you do to our kid!" They went up a scared and frightened young person, and they came back and they had a great time and they were happy. They had their confidence and they wanted to go back to camp. Parents were very apprehensive sending their kids on their own for week up at camp without them. That was something that most of them felt really, really frightened about. The result was the exact opposite. So parents still come up and say, "Wow, what did you do to my kid?" And that's what Camp is all about. That's what it was designed to do and we're so thrilled that it really has done that.



Dr. Stuart Siegel on the healing power of Camp:

One of my favorite transformation stories is of two teenage girls that had tumors in their bladders and had them replaced with an artificial bladder. One of these teenage girls had adapted to this beautifully. She wasn't embarrassed, showed her cabin mates. The other girl, who happened to be a patient of mine, was extremely apprehensive. She didn't want anyone to see this. So of course we put her in the same cabin as the young lady who dealt with it really well. And we didn't do anything else. We didn't have any planned meetings, we just let them be in the cabin together.

HEROES FOR HEALING

Benefiting Camp Ronald McDonald For Good Times

Save the Date!

Our annual fundraising gala is a wonderful evening of celebration! The gala is a culmination of a spirited six-week competition between dynamic individuals fundraising on behalf of the children and families served by Camp. The person who raises the most money will be announced at the gala and win our *2017 Hero for Healing* title! The outstanding achievements of all the candidates will be celebrated at the event.

Sunday, October 15, 2017 at 5 PM

The Globe Theater at Universal Studios
100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, CA 91608

Candidates for *Heroes for Healing* are extraordinary people, sharing a competitive spirit and compassion for others. They are relentless in their efforts to help children with cancer and their families experience the healing of Camp. For information on nominating or becoming a candidate, ticket and sponsorship information, please contact Nicole Ring at nring@rmhcsc.org or (310) 268-8488 ext. 183.

As you might expect this young girl that was afraid had totally turned around and was perfectly happy by the end of the week. Why was that? Because she knew she wasn't the only one.

That's the whole problem; cancer is such a rare disease in kids they don't realize that there are other people that have this. Bringing kids together they discover they're not alone, they have other kids they can talk to. Not surprisingly, these kids have remained friends for a long time afterward because they bonded with people who knew what they were going through. That's really what Camp has meant.

For a physician we take care of kids when they're terribly ill; when they're first diagnosed, when they're outpatients coming in for chemotherapy, hating it and having all of the side effects. We realized what we're doing up at Camp is not in isolation – it's part of the whole treatment, for us as professionals. Treatment isn't just giving the drugs and figuring out what their white counts are or what we have to do if they have a fever, it's also how we deal with them psychologically that ensures when they finish the



treatment that they aren't just cured, which now 85% of them are cured, but that they have a quality of life that is absolutely optimal.

Let me tell you the psychological part of care is incredibly important, because you can be medically fine but if you come out of this a physiological wreck it's a terrible thing. Thankfully Camp has been a major force in that. I'm sure if you talk to campers and families, they would tell you that Camp has been incredibly important to ensuring that the quality of life of their kids will be optimal. They remember Camp forever.

Fran Wiley, RN on Siblings:

Cancer doesn't just happen to a kid, it happens to a family. The siblings are involved, the parents are involved, the grandparents, the next door neighbors, everybody's involved; but the people that have the least ability to cope are usually the siblings. There's not much they can do. They don't have the straight information; they get filtered information from their parents and often feel like they're not told the truth. They're human beings so they can't help but get jealous that the patient is getting all of the attention. It's not unusual to have a sibling say, "I wish I could get cancer" so they can get the attention.

When we started Camp, we thought we should separate the siblings and they should have their own sibling camp. We made a mistake and didn't listen to the families. But when the families said "we want to send them all together," we finally realized it worked better to mix them all up in the cabins. It doesn't matter if you're a patient or a sibling, you're with your age appropriate group and that's where the real physiological healing goes on. You can hear a patient share how it's not all fun and games to be in the hospital and a sibling will say, yeah, well it's not fun to be stuck at home either. Sometimes it's easier to hear this from someone who is not your own brother or sister.

Dr. Siegel on Parents:

Parents have to put everything aside to just focus on the patient. That's why siblings often get missed. Many of them feel like they have to be watching that kid like a hawk. What Camp has done is given them a week to do other things, like be with their spouse and not be so consumed with watching their child. They can spend time with their spouse or their younger children who aren't old enough for Camp. Once we realized that was an issue





President Ronald Reagan visits Camp

that's when we started Family Camp. Family Camp was started for the kids that were too young to come to Camp so that they could come up with their families and once they got to be 9 years old they graduated up to Summer Camp. So all these things we learned. We were the third oncology Camp and only started a year or two after the others and now there are more than 90 camps for kids with cancer around the country.

Help us Celebrate

After 35 years, we celebrate our growth from 1 session serving 60 campers to 12 sessions serving more than 1,800 campers every year - more than 42,000 campers since our inception; volunteer oncologists and nurses from five of our region's leading pediatric hospitals; and a permanent home that continues to evolve to meet the needs of campers and families.

While these milestones are significant, there is much more to be done. When Camp as founded, nearly 85% of children with cancer would not survive their diagnosis. But today, that trend has reversed, and more than 80% will survive into adulthood. So we continue to evolve with...

- *more focus on survivorship and the long-term impact of cancer while preparing campers for the transition to adulthood;*
- *a new focus on building a vibrant alumni program to build on the passion and dedication campers and volunteers have for our program; and*
- *as we look to the next decade, we look forward to the day construction of our permanent facility will be complete.*

As we celebrate Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times' 35th Anniversary, we hope you will use the enclosed envelope to demonstrate your commitment to our next 35 years of service by making a donation to our anniversary campaign. Thank you!

Gifts & GRANTS

Thank you to our recent funders:

Amgen Foundation
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 The Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation
 The Billy Foreman Fund
 Don & Lorraine Freeberg Foundation
 The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation
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A Love Letter to the Camp Family

In December 2012, I began an amazing journey as the Executive Director of Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times. I could not have imagined at that time the hundreds of people that would touch my life and the profound

impact this program would have on me and my family. From the dedicated staff, to our generous donors, the passionate volunteers, and of course the families we serve – each and every one of you has made a lasting impact on me, both personally and professionally.

So, it is with mixed emotions that I step down from my role at the end of July, and take the next step in my career as Chief Executive Officer of the Blind Children's Center, Los Angeles – a position that builds on my commitment to supporting the healthy development of children and families.

I will always be a member of the Camp family – literally – and my kids, Hannah and Nick, will continue on their journey as patient and

sibling campers. I see the impact Camp has had on their confidence, self-esteem and overall character every day, and I am so grateful for the lasting impact Camp has had on them and on me.

I want to thank the Camp staff for trusting and supporting me; the Board for the guidance and leadership; the leadership team of RMHCSC for their mentorship, peer support, and collaboration; the camp volunteers that opened their hearts to me; the donors that share in our vision; and the children and families that are the driving force behind the passion and love that fuels Camp. I am indebted to you all.

With love,

Sarah E. Orth
Executive Director



Left: Sarah at Winter WOLP 2015. Above: Sarah with Camp staffers Brian, Chad, Shannon and David, Summer 2017



A program of
Ronald McDonald
House Charities™ of
Southern California

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Making a positive, long-lasting impact on children with cancer & their families since 1982

Ways You Can Help

Through each session, Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times® is touching the lives of children living with cancer, and their families. Please help us fulfill our mission today.

- Sign up online for **CLUB GOOD TIMES** and make a monthly, quarterly or annual recurring gift.
- Join our major donor **CAMPFIRE CIRCLE** with a donation of \$1,000 or more.
- **HOST A FUNDRAISER** for Camp! Contact Nicole Ring for ideas and support at nring@rmhcsc.org or (310) 268-8488 ext. 183.
- Include Camp in your **ESTATE PLANS** (i.e. bequest, will, life insurance, IRA, etc. Contact Fatima at fdjelmane@rmhcsc.org).
- Become a **VOLUNTEER** (contact David at dgarry@rmhcsc.org for details).
- Follow us on **FACEBOOK** and **TWITTER!**

www.rmhcsc.org/camp

A legacy gift can help you reach your financial goals

While the future may seem uncertain, long-range planning can help you stay on track with your goals. If you are like many people, you are looking for a way to create funds and security for your future. At the same time, you may want to leave a legacy gift to the causes that mean the most to you. There are various charitable plans that can provide you with income and tax benefits.

For example, if you own underperforming CDs or stocks, you can transfer these assets to us in exchange for a charitable gift annuity. A gift annuity provides you with a charitable deduction and fixed payments for you and your spouse's lifetime. And Camp can benefit from any funds that remain.

Another life income option is a charitable remainder trust. When you transfer cash or your assets to fund a charitable remainder trust, you can receive income for life or a number of years. If the assets in the trust grow, there is the potential for increased income over time. You also receive a charitable deduction which provides tax savings in the year you fund your trust. At the same time, you can impact Camp's mission in the future.

Camp has experts available to tell you more about these and other options. Contact Fatima Djelmane Rodriguez at (310) 473-4258 or fdjelmane@rmhcsc.org.