

For Immediate Release
May 2, 2006

Contact: Matthew M. Hoidal, Esq.
Executive Director
Camp Sunshine
(207) 655-3800

News Release

Camp Sunshine Announces \$14.5 Million Endowment Campaign

*Family-oriented organization for sick children to
expand its year-round program*

Casco, MAINE – Camp Sunshine, the nationally known Maine camp that serves families with sick children, announced today that it has embarked upon a \$14.5 million endowment campaign to help expand its unique program year-round. The camp is also offering satellite programs at resort campgrounds in Tucson, Arizona, and Warrens Wisconsin this summer and fall.

Camp Sunshine is the only camp in the nation whose sole focus is to serve the entire family, not just the child who is ill. Since opening in 1984, Camp Sunshine has hosted families from 44 states and 15 countries, and provided a camp experience for more than 20,500 family members.

The week-long camp programs are offered free of charge to the families and include 24-hour onsite medical and psycho-social support. Bereavement groups are also offered for families who have lost a child to an illness.

“By offering the opportunity to meet others who know exactly what it’s like to have a child who is ill, the camp creates a unique sense of community and connectedness that they can take a way with them when they leave, helping them to feel less isolated and giving them the strength to face their uncertain futures with hope,” said Matthew M. Hoidal, executive director of Camp Sunshine.

To serve more families throughout the year, and to secure the future of the program, Camp Sunshine’s board of directors decided to embark upon an endowment campaign – called Let the Sun Shine All Year – to build a \$14.5 million endowment. To help kick-off the campaign, Camp Sunshine founders and the owners of Point Sebago Resort, Anna and Larry Gould, have included a challenge where they will match gifts of \$250,000 and more, up to a total of \$2 million.

To date, four commitments towards the match have been made. These and other commitments bring the total raised so far to \$4.5 million.

Hoidal says the need for the program expansion is great.

“When a child faces a life-threatening illness, the family’s needs are not limited to one or two seasons in the year,” said Hoidal. “We want to provide our services to families throughout the course of the illness. Pilot programs have been tested, and we have established the capability of the program in a traditional Maine winter environment. We have all the ingredients for a successful year-round program, except for one very important part, and that is the funding. “

According to Nancy Cincotta, M.S.W., Camp Sunshine’s Psychosocial Director, “a childhood illness, such as cancer, has an impact on every member of the family. When a child is hospitalized, the balance of life changes, often separating family members as they struggle to meet the medical needs of their child. Frequently one parent stays at the hospital with the ill child, while the other parent maintains the rest of the family. Camp Sunshine serves to bring the family back together by focusing on the needs of the entire family: the sick child, the siblings, mothers, fathers, and grandparents.”

Dealing with emotional responses to an illness in a “safe” environment in the natural beauty of Maine, away from the stressful environment of the child’s treatment center, allows the entire family an invaluable therapeutic opportunity, Cincotta added.

“Many new families who arrive at Camp have never been in a support group,” she said. “By the end of the week at Camp Sunshine, parents say they have talked more intimately with other parents than they have at any other time in their lives. Fathers find themselves in a group session just for men, often acknowledging that it is the first time they have ever had that experience.”

Hoidal said the goal is for the campaign to secure an additional \$5 million in commitments this year and the remaining \$5 million by the end of 2007. The funds will be permanently invested, with investment income used each year to support the expansion of the program.

“We invite any and all businesses and individuals in Maine and throughout the U.S. to help us expand our program,” said Hoidal. “We are grateful to the Goulds for leading this campaign and hope their dedication will inspire others to give.”

For more information about Camp Sunshine’s programs and to learn more about volunteering or making a donation, visit the camp’s website at www.campsunshine.org, or call (207) 655-3800.

#