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Camp Sunshine Hosts First Program of Its Kind in the Nation

Casco, ME – Camp Sunshine today announced the launch of a pilot program focusing on Retinoblastoma. The program, which will run between June 17th – 22nd, will bring together 40 families of children with retinoblastoma who will spend a week away from the daily stress of medical centers, chemotherapy treatments, and the related financial burdens.

Families from 13 different states as far south as Florida, and as far west as California have applied to attend this one-of-a-kind program. Incredibly, this pilot program became completely filled 3 months prior to the session.

Retinoblastoma is a childhood cancer which occurs when tumors form in the retina and can strike from the time a child is in the womb, up to 5 years of age.

As always, Camp Sunshine will offer a range of outdoor and indoor activities for the participating children and their families, and will offer discussion groups for the parents. During these support sessions, families will have the opportunity to share experiences with each other where they can all relate to having children with retinoblastoma.

Why offer a retinoblastoma specific session? Since Camp Sunshine's inception, the Camp has continued to expand the number of overall programs from 4 to 28 in 2007. Simultaneously the programs have become very focused - offering programs to specific diseases types within the oncology family. Over the years, a number of families with a child with retinoblastoma have attended oncology sessions. It was clear that due to the child's blindness, families were dealing with many different issues in their daily lives. Attune to these specific needs, Camp Sunshine set out to develop this one-of-a-kind program.

Nestled alongside the shores of beautiful Sebago Lake, Camp Sunshine offers children with life threatening illnesses and their families a place to relax together for a week, and to take a break from the extraordinary demands placed on them on a daily basis. The year-round program is free of charge and staffed almost entirely by volunteers. It has the distinction of being the only program in the nation whose mission is to address the impact of a life threatening illness on every member of the immediate family—the ill child, the parents, and the siblings. Since its inception, Camp Sunshine has provided a haven for over 23,000 individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition to providing 24-hour onsite medical and psychosocial support the camp offers a variety of daily activities ranging from swimming and boating to archery and soccer and special events such as bonfires and cook-outs.

For a detailed schedule, application and additional information, visit the camp's website at www.campsunshine.org, or call (207) 655-3800.