In 2016, Camp Sunshine continued its commitment to recruiting families of children with life-threatening illnesses in which one or both parents are serving or have served in the US military. Ignited by a fundraising effort by a group of active duty US Navy SEALs, military families affected by life-threatening illness have found new means of support at Camp Sunshine. Illness proves an additional burden in an already complicated family context — one certainly used to sacrifice, struggle, and unexpectedness. As the father of a young girl with a brain tumor noted, “Certainly as a service member, we’re used to sacrifice — usually it’s us and we like that. But when it’s your kid who’s going through it, it’s hard.” He explained, “I don’t think anything can really prepare you for that diagnosis.” Amidst a sea of uncertainty for him, “Camp Sunshine has made it understandable and put it into perspective.”

MILITARY FAMILIES

In 2016, Camp Sunshine continued its commitment to recruiting families of children with life-threatening illnesses in which one or both parents are serving or have served in the US military. Ignited by a fundraising effort by a group of active duty US Navy SEALs, military families affected by life-threatening illness have found new means of support at Camp Sunshine. Illness proves an additional burden in an already complicated family context — one certainly used to sacrifice, struggle, and unexpectedness. As the father of a young girl with a brain tumor noted, “Certainly as a service member, we’re used to sacrifice — usually it’s us and we like that. But when it’s your kid who’s going through it, it’s hard.” He explained, “I don’t think anything can really prepare you for that diagnosis.” Amidst a sea of uncertainty for him, “Camp Sunshine has made it understandable and put it into perspective.”

WHAT’S INSIDE?

EVEN MORE FAMILIES
Read what Executive Director, Mike Katz has to say about some of Camp Sunshine’s efforts to recruit new families. (page 2)

ART HEALS
Ever wander about the painted ceiling tiles at Camp? Read more about some of our artistic initiatives. (page 3)

GONE FISHING
Learn about a group of dedicated bass fishermen who have been taking Camp Sunshine campers out on the lake since 1988. (page 5)

AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
Since 1984 Camp Sunshine, with the help of many generous donors, thousands of caring volunteers and a dedicated staff of 15 individuals, has had the privilege of serving more than 48,900 family members from across the United States and 27 different countries. Here in the states we have had families travel from as far away as Wahiawa, Hawaii, to right here in our own backyard of Casco, Maine. The Camp Sunshine community continues to grow and connect, from state to state, across borders, and even across oceans.

Camp Sunshine has been fortunate to reach many families who have a child with a life-threatening illness, but our work is not done. We want to do more! Families from across the country and around the world should be made aware that Camp Sunshine exists as a resource for them, a place where they have the opportunity to regroup, re-energize, and restore the fabric of their lives.

As the mission of Camp Sunshine moves forward, our greatest strength and our ability to create the greatest awareness lie within our Camp families, volunteers, and donors who know and support the program. In fact, this year as Camp Sunshine strived to extend its reach and serve a family from every state, there was one state left (Wyoming)... Hearing of this situation, a long-time volunteer decided to pick up the baton (or should I say the telephone) and contacted a friend in Wyoming. In short order, 2016 saw our first family from Wyoming to attend Camp and with that, all 50 states have been reached. What this illustrated to me was that we are all connected; we know of someone or have someone in our family, circle of friends, or lives who has a child affected by a life-threatening illness who could benefit from the Camp Sunshine experience.

As a spokesperson, a light in the darkness, you have the ability to help bring the “Sunshine” into someone’s life. Share the “magic” of Camp Sunshine, spread awareness, and help to lighten the load for a family who may not have heard about Camp otherwise.

No matter where you live, you can help spread the word! Be a voice that can make a difference!

Executive Director

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
FOR UPDATES, PHOTOS, VIDEOS, AND MORE!
There are many ways in which art can serve as an expressive outlet for those living with life-threatening illnesses. Paint, plentiful in the art rooms at Camp Sunshine, is but one of the many ingredients that can allow children to be expressive and creative, affording them a palette on which they can assert control when they are dealing with an otherwise overwhelming medical world. Syringe art is by its very nature a blend of two realities for children: the medical arena in which they are treated and an expressive medium with which they connect from very young ages.

As children grow, they encounter new experiences. Part of the work of childhood is to embrace those new experiences, master the intellectual and emotional content, and move forward to a new stage of competence.

Creating paintings, such as the ceiling tiles found in the Arts and Crafts room and in the Teen room, serves not just as an expressive endeavor, but also gives children and teens the opportunity to control their environment, taking something that could be frightening and making it quite familiar and comfortable.

Syringes, large and small, become the containers, the vehicles that enable a child to get medication to help move toward cure and comfort. Often the syringe is attached to a needle, which creates the access point for the medication to get into a child’s vein or port. “Needle play” utilizes empty syringes as an avenue to allow children to gain mastery and control over medical encounters. By having the syringe without the needle become a dispenser of paint, it allows a child a whole new playful and expressive reality in which to manage the experience of receiving medication.

So, when you look at the ceiling tiles think of them not as interior decorating, but rather as an avenue for children and teenagers to take the tools of the medical trade and turn them into agents of personal empowerment.
Military families know sacrifice and suffering. However, no amount of military service prepares parents for the diagnosis of a child’s life-threatening illness. Both service and illness can bring sleepless nights in the face of the uncertainty, physical and emotional stress, and a unique sense of isolation. Camp Sunshine allows for a reprieve from the unending cycle of diagnoses, deployments, and doctor visits. “After coming to Camp, we weren’t alone,” one parent explained, “we found camaraderie here. It’s not an army unit, but a different cohort, a cohort of families who are going through the same thing.”

“My husband is a Lieutenant Colonel,” the mother of a teen with a brain tumor told us, “so I know how difficult it is to be a military family. When you have a family member who is deployed or engaged in active duty and you’re home alone with healthy children, it’s difficult.” She added, “When you throw a child with an illness into the mix, it just multiplies that burden. I thought that deployment was hard, but that was a piece of cake compared to what we would soon face… Since diagnosis, our daughter has undergone three brain surgeries and four chemotherapy protocols over the course of eight years.”

The complications of living with a childhood illness and having a deployed family member are ongoing. For the SEALs for Sunshine participants to “come forward and do this for families in our situation,” a Camp family explained, “it means a lot and we’re so grateful and appreciative of all that they’re doing.” “At Camp Sunshine,” a mom said, “I’ve been able to expand my family and make some true friends and connect in ways that you don’t usually connect with people. I’ve found a community and a support base.”

Camp Sunshine, amidst the uncertainty of illness and military service, creates a space in which families can find support, reenergize, and regroup. “We came to Camp Sunshine not too long after our daughter’s diagnosis, just a month after her treatment,” another military mom explained, “and I’ve always seen it as a lifeboat. We were just out there on our own flailing around in the water… didn’t know anybody else.” Being so quickly incorporated into the Camp Sunshine family, she explained, “is like the military… now we’re in this together, with all the other families here.”

Support for these military families is provided by endurance events known as SEALs for Sunshine. The event’s founder, Mike W., describes the relationship. “In the military, we train and prepare for hardships. We are equipped and resourced for every contingency, whereas families with sick children do not have these luxuries. Illness doesn’t give advanced warning that a tumor may return, or that a treatment may cause side effects or be ineffective. But Camp Sunshine builds the strength of families together through shared experiences and a network of resources.” Time and time again the SEALs team reiterates that the challenges they face during each event pales in comparison to what Camp Sunshine families go through — therefore they just won’t quit.

As the SEALs for Sunshine initiative grows, so does Camp Sunshine’s commitment to supporting military families. For many of these families, the SEALs’ commitment to helping Camp Sunshine is an affirmation of their own service.

Visit www.sealsforsunshine.org to see highlights and to learn how you can support the SEALs and their efforts for Camp Sunshine.
It's no secret that sometimes the best stories about fishing are not really about fishing at all. Sure it's fun to try your luck at catching that highly sought-after trophy bass, but any fishermen worth their salt will tell you a good fishing trip isn't made by the number of fish that are caught.

“I started fishing Tuesdays with Camp Sunshine in 1988 and some of my very best memories of time on the water are of Campers catching little sunfish or perch. There is something about watching a bobber with someone new to fishing; they’re watching intently and I’m watching intently — trying to will it to move, and then their smile when the fish is brought in for a picture. I found early on that all of the kids had one thing in common. They want to just be kids. I am grateful to have shared an hour or so with so many heroes,” said Bass Fisherman Eric Low.

For 28 years, Camp Sunshine has been organizing bass fishing trips for Campers on Sebago Lake during the spring, summer, and fall. A typical outing usually consists of about 8-10 local fishermen bringing in their boats and taking a few Campers and volunteers out on the lake to several secret spots to take a few casts. In those 28 years, the Eagle Bass Masters have taught over 10,000 children with life-threatening illnesses how to fish.

The benefits of this program are myriad, as the experience is not only enjoyable for Campers; it also builds confidence and offers important lessons in patience. Camp Sunshine’s bass fishing program also provides an important and rewarding intergenerational volunteer opportunity for Maine fishermen.

If you’re interested in participating in the bass fishing program at Camp Sunshine, please email mkatz@campsunshine.org for more information.
After attending Camp sessions as a family since 2004, we felt the need to give back to a place that had done so much for us. A family of musicians, we came up with an idea for a music therapy program. This budding program offers children and adults of all ages the opportunity to relax and self-express through the healing power of music. The program consists of Orff instruments (affectionately referred to as “Orffs”) – xylophones in varying sizes which, when played in an ensemble, create a calming, ethereal sort of music.

Over the course of the week, each age group learns a simple tune to perform in the Celebration Show at the end of the session. Kids who have difficulty with physical aspects of Camp find an activity they can participate in without hindrance, as they perform Orff arrangements of tunes such as “Can You Feel the Love Tonight,” “Hallelujah,” or “Lean on Me.”

Parents who are overwhelmed with the stress and difficulties that come with having a child with an illness find a cathartic and constructive release in the Orff music program. Accessible even to those without any prior musical experience, the Orff program offers Campers a chance to connect with their peers in a new, exciting, and musical way.

Kids who have difficulty with physical aspects of Camp find an activity they can participate in without hindrance, as they perform Orff arrangements of tunes such as “Can You Feel the Love Tonight,” “Hallelujah,” or “Lean on Me.”

Parents who are overwhelmed with the stress and difficulties that come with having a child with an illness find a cathartic and constructive release in the Orff music program. Accessible even to those without any prior musical experience, the Orff program offers Campers a chance to connect with their peers in a new, exciting, and musical way.

Kids Kicking Cancer is an initiative that offers kids fun, healthy social interaction and a chance to become more empowered against their illness. Black-belt instructors, Joe and Cathy Esposito, along with their daughter Jade, and program coordinator Rob Brockman visit various pediatric treatment centers to offer free martial arts coaching during inpatient recovery. Students are able to observe and try various kicks, punches, and blocks. In addition to safe workouts tailored to age and health restrictions, students learn breathing techniques to help manage fear and pain of treatment. Camp Sunshine was pleased to host Kids Kicking Cancer for an oncology session and a brain tumor session this summer. Check out those warrior faces!
FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

Prior to ever attending a session at camp, my family was in a pretty dark place. We felt isolated from family and friends. People didn’t understand us anymore and didn’t know how to act toward us. We had some support online, but that’s a poor substitute for human interaction. The first time we met another family with a child with my daughter’s illness was on the transplant ward during her bone marrow transplant, but it really wasn’t the time or place to build a friendship or a support system.

We came to our first Camp Sunshine session 5 years ago - which was two years post-transplant. For five years our summer schedules have been planned around Camp Sunshine, so saying that Camp has changed our lives is a huge understatement. The workshops have given us hope for the future. The counseling sessions allowed us to share, vent, cry, and bond, but most importantly Camp has given our daughter so much happiness, allowing her to meet kids like herself, to be accepted for who she is and not what she has. She talks about Camp so much that two of her cousins came to volunteer this year.

Camp has totally transformed my daughter. Her eyes became so bright. Her smile could melt the coldest heart. I can never repay this debt. Right now all I can say is thank you to Camp Sunshine, and thank you to the donors who make it all possible.

VOLUNTEER PERSPECTIVES

I first volunteered in 2011 when I came up with Bridgewater State University students and a co-worker. Prior to our visit, I didn’t know what to expect and was anxious that I’d be overcome with sadness. I was 19 when I lost my mother to ovarian cancer and experienced loss and grief early in my life. Upon stepping foot on the beautiful grounds, my anxiety quickly diminished. Amongst the sea of yellow shirts was a resounding feeling of excitement and community. I loved the teens and was overcome by the resilience, positivity, and hope amongst the campers. I cheered on my team through Super Duper Bloopers, danced in my Twinkie costume, and cried during “That’s What Friends Are For.”

In 2012, I encouraged my husband to bring students. He fell in love with Camp and we began volunteering more frequently. There’s nothing like walking through one of those yellow doors to be greeted by our Camp Sunshine family! I’ve been blessed to work with amazing teens, build relationships with wonderful parents and connect with people in the Store, Arts & Crafts and the Kitchen. I’m grateful for ALL that I have learned at Camp. Though there have been moments that have caused me to take pause and reflect on the fragility of life, I always look forward to future visits. During each session, I honor the spirit of my hero and become a better version of myself. I am truly blessed!

Camp is like a parallel universe where the chaos of being a sick child, loving a sick child, (and of life in general) is perfectly silenced. I can’t think of another place in the world quite as full of love and acceptance as Camp Sunshine; you get to take a break from “real life” for a minute, be who you are, and eat what you want (Jon’s focaccia bread, please).

I always say, “I hate [insert disease here], but I love all the beautiful people it’s led me to.” With every session, that statement proves itself to be more and more true. I come back to Camp again and again for the incredible people, the laughs, the potato chips with hot sauce, and, of course, the 9-12 campout, but above all else, for the full feeling we all drive away from Camp with, this sort of knowing that the human spirit is stronger than any disease and as long as we keep (literally) dancing together, everything might really be all right.

Charity Navigator has again awarded Camp Sunshine its highest 4-star rating, showcasing Camp’s overall financial responsibility, expediency, and transparency.
Are you or do you know a family with a child who has been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness? Please consider referring them to Camp Sunshine. Camp Sunshine currently offers sessions for families with children who have been diagnosed with cancer, hematologic conditions, renal disease, systemic lupus erythematosus, and who have undergone solid organ transplantation. The year-round, illness-specific sessions at Camp Sunshine are all offered completely free-of-charge to all attending families because of the generosity of donors like you. Applications and additional information can be found at www.campsunshine.org.

ADAM SUKOFF GARDEN

If you’ve been on Campus this summer, you’ve likely noticed a beautiful addition to Camp Sunshine’s 24-acre campus. An expansive garden complete with four large raised vegetable beds, a pond with waterfall, four varieties of apple trees, two pear trees, two plum trees, wild Maine low bush blueberries, and an herb garden.

Camp father Jeff Boggs, who lost a child to Fanconi Anemia (pictured left with Founder Anna Gould), built the benches in the garden, as well as the arbors which surround it.

MORE MONEY RAISED= MORE FAMILIES SERVED

Are you or do you know a family with a child who has been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness? Please consider referring them to Camp Sunshine. Camp Sunshine currently offers sessions for families with children who have been diagnosed with cancer, hematologic conditions, renal disease, systemic lupus erythematosus, and who have undergone solid organ transplantation. The year-round, illness-specific sessions at Camp Sunshine are all offered completely free-of-charge to all attending families because of the generosity of donors like you. Applications and additional information can be found at www.campsunshine.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

POINT SEBAGO RESORT • COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND

Last year, Point Sebago’s Monte Carlo Weekend raised more than $55,000 for Camp Sunshine! A big part of this event, and one of the longest standing in Camp’s history, is the two-day auction. Helping with this year’s auction couldn’t be more easy or fun! No need to get out your checkbooks for this challenge — we would like to utilize everyone’s connections in their communities and business world to help us secure items for the auction. With Monte Carlo just around the corner on Columbus Day Weekend, and our goal of having the best year ever, we are reaching out for assistance. Together, we know that we can meet the challenge!

We are looking for sports tickets, memorabilia, time share or vacation property rentals, fine wines, antiques, jewelry, furniture, new children’s toys, autographed items, electronics, or outdoor recreation items.

WWW.CAMPSUNSHINEAUCTION.ORG
RALLY NORTH AMERICA

When Rally North America event organizers Tony Intrieri and Scott Spielman set out to find a charity in 2012 for their northeast rally, they wanted to partner with an organization where they could actually see their donations at work!

That vision became a reality. In 2013, on their way from Ithaca, NY to New Brunswick, Canada more than 80 cars finished stage three at Camp Sunshine. Grown men were literally moved to tears as they read signs posted roadside for more than a mile by children thanking them for their efforts. That particular session was for children with Diamond Blackfan Anemia (DBA).

Fast forward to the planning for the 2016 Big Sky Rally which would take drivers from Billings, MT to Portland, OR. Now all of us at Camp Sunshine understand our outreach, 42 states and 12 countries last year alone, but none of us were prepared for the rally’s ironic twist.

We began searching for a family that could represent this year’s rally; preferably it would be someone in the Northwest. Imagine our surprise when we located a family right in Billings! We called the parents, Brad and Bonnie, to see if they and their daughter Bria would be interested in helping out.

As if this connection wasn’t enough, on July 10 Brad and Bonnie shared their story and appreciation to the group, because their daughter Bria has DBA and had the pleasure of welcoming the drivers to Camp three years earlier.

Bria handed each driver a project made in Arts and Crafts at Camp Sunshine to hang on their rearview mirrors — a reminder throughout their journey of who they are ultimately helping. Bria would go on to start the race the next morning and the drivers would go on to raise nearly $125,000 for Camp Sunshine!

BRAVEHEART BIKE RIDE

Thanks to everyone who helped organize, volunteer, and participate at the Team Braveheart Bike Ride and Family Day in scenic Harvard, MA. The event, established in honor of Dylan Connelly, provides enjoyment for riders of all ages and abilities with their choice of a 50-mile, 25-mile, and 2-mile children’s route.

The proceeds of the event are shared between Camp Sunshine and the National Brain Tumor Society. An avid cyclist and outdoor enthusiast, Dylan was known for his extreme physical and mental toughness. The ride offers an opportunity for members of the community to join together and celebrate the power of friends, family and community, stewardship for the environment, a love of outdoor adventure, a reverence for nature, and a desire to help people and their families facing health care crises.

In 2016, over 300 people attended the event, including bicycle riders of all ages, their families, and a host of cheering friends. Thanks to all who participated for making a difference together!

TEXAS ROADHOUSE

Impacted by Camp Sunshine and its mission after their first visit four years ago, representatives of Texas Roadhouse locations from across New England wanted to do more. Since then, the chain holds an annual campaign selling paper “Sunnies” at each location.

This year over 100 of the top fundraising “roadies” came out in May to help get the campus ready and presented Camp Sunshine with a $115,000 check, enough to fully sponsor a July Oncology Session!

During this July session, managing partners from each of their 17 locations in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island, along with Andy the Armadillo welcomed families, prepared a delicious BBQ lunch for families and surf & turf dinner for parents.

“Camp Sunshine gives families an encouraging atmosphere that is hard to find when faced with these adversities. Texas Roadhouse is proud to support such a giving organization.” - Mike Halpern, Market Partner at Texas Roadhouse
You don’t need to have spent a lot of time in the hospitality field to understand the enormous undertaking of Camp Sunshine’s Executive Chef, Jonathan Chaplin. Imagine a restaurant that serves 250 people three meals a day, six days a week, but then gets a completely new staff (in our case a new group of volunteers) every single Sunday. What would be enough to close the doors to most traditional dining establishments is the norm at Camp Sunshine. It is a huge undertaking, yet one that our three full-time kitchen staff manages and oversees each session.

This isn’t a simple buffet line either. Each week the Camp Sunshine “kitchen crew” not only provides fresh, healthy meals (with a sprinkling of camp fun like waffles with ice cream, pizza, and corndogs), but their hard work also includes a gourmet dinner for parents, barbecue lunch served in our outdoor kitchen, a hamburger and hot dog cookout during the kids’ overnight camping experience, and organizing enough ice cream sundaes and S’mores to create a summer’s worth of memories.

To help understand the scope of Camp Sunshine’s food service offerings, we spoke with Kitchen Manager and Executive Chef, Jon. “Each year we are blessed to have a core group of volunteers who are committed to providing these services. It isn’t the most glorious job at Camp, but for those who participate, it is one of the few volunteer opportunities in which they get to interact with every family, volunteer, and staff member at Camp Sunshine.” This is a unique perspective and one that has attracted some amazing volunteers who return year after year.

So how do they make it happen? Each week, camp’s small staff is supplemented by 15 volunteers, who undergo some quick training and together create a recipe of Love, Fun, and Magic, not to mention some truly delicious meals! Special thanks to everyone who has helped prepare, cook, and serve food for our families. Bon Appetite!!
ONE WORD ABOUT CAMP

FAMILIES DESCRIBE THE CAMP SUNSHINE EXPERIENCE

TOGETHERNESS  HOPE  THERAPEUTIC
COMMUNITY  SUPPORT  FOCUS
VALIDATED  MEETING OTHER KIDS
SATURATING  FRIENDSHIP
ACCEPTANCE  EMPOWERING
GREAT  REFRESHING
GROUNDING  INFORMATIVE
ENCOURAGING  STRENGTH
INTRIGUING  REASSURING
LIBERAL  ENCOURAGING
INSPIRING  FAMILY
SUN & WATER
EDUCATIONAL
HELPFUL HOME
EXHILARATING
INSPIRING
IMPACTFUL
CREATIVE GIFT PLANNING CAN BE ONE OF LIFE’S MOST SATISFYING AND REWARDING EXPERIENCES

As we face the future, we know that the generosity of those who support us at Camp Sunshine makes everything we offer our families possible. If you wish to give a gift that can continue to benefit Camp Sunshine for many years, consider some of the planned giving opportunities available to you. Endowment funds and memorial funds are the cornerstones of financial security for nonprofit charities. The gift you give today can support our future tomorrow. For more information about planned giving opportunities, contact the Camp Sunshine office at the number listed below.

WWW.CAMPSUNSHINE.ORG • INFO@CAMPSUNSHINE.ORG
TEL (207) 655-3800 • FAX (207) 655-3825