

Camp Ronald McDonald For Good Times



Where Healing Happens



M Meet the Blanco Family

Natalia was only 16 months old the day she took a hard fall that caused her parents to rush her to the hospital. Though falls are common for toddlers, Natalia developed an intense fever. At Memorial Hospital in Boyle Heights, doctors drew blood and ran other tests to see why Natalia

speakers, so they were thrilled to hear that Camp had a family camp that addressed their linguistic and cultural needs - Campamento Familiar. Arely said her first time at Camp was the first time in three years that she was able to take a deep breath and begin to feel like herself again.

Arely shared, "Camp changed our lives. We found people who understood what we had just been through. We cried together, laughed together, we lifted each other up." She also shared how much joy it brought her and her husband to see their daughter playing and being a kid—"it was a dream come true."

The Blancos wish they had the resources to give back to Camp. They show their appreciation at every Campamento Familiar by bringing shirts and hats with words of appreciation for the staff and volunteers. They look forward to future camp sessions and the opportunity to continue this journey with their extended camp family.



The Blanco Family embraces dressing up for the family photo.

was having such a strange reaction to her fall. What they found was not something the Blancos could have prepared for. Arely, Natalia's mom, recalls that a team of six doctors stepped into the room and said, "your daughter has Leukemia." Arely shared that in that moment her whole world came crashing down. She doesn't remember much else, but the doctors walking out of the room as she started crying uncontrollably. For her, cancer meant a death sentence for her baby.

The Blancos didn't have time to recover from the shock of diagnosis and treatment began immediately. Natalia spent the next two years of her young life undergoing chemotherapy, radiation, and a bone marrow transplant at City of Hope. Arely recalls that from the beginning Natalia stole the hearts of her medical team. She said it's not generally allowed to have birthday parties at the hospital, but when Natalia turned two the hospital staff and church friends came together to celebrate her birthday. It was these moments of light in a time of darkness that really kept the Blancos going. Arely shared that it truly is a miracle that their daughter is alive today.

By the time Natalia was in remission, the Blancos were a ball of nerves having just endured the most traumatic experience of their lives. Arely says that Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times came into their lives when they needed it most. The Blancos are monolingual Spanish



A program of
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A friendly competition for which
"the true winners will be our
campers and their families!"

Heroes for Healing is a spirited six-week fund raising competition among candidates vying for the title of "Hero of the Year!" These extraordinary people are relentless in their efforts to help children with cancer experience the magic and healing of Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times. Every dollar each candidate raises equals one vote and the person with the most votes will be announced at a celebratory dinner on October 23rd!

Sunday, October 23, 2016 at 5 PM

Sheraton Universal Hotel
333 Universal Hollywood Dr., Universal City, CA 91608

5:00 PM – wine, beer, hors d' oeuvres and silent auction
6:30 PM – Dinner and program

For information please contact Nicole Ring at
nring@rmhsc.org or (310) 268-8488 ext. 183.

www.classy.org/heroesforhealing

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Meet Hero Vincent

Vincent Dominguez is one of the happiest kids you'll ever meet! To know him is to love him. He'll certainly charm you with his whip & nae nae dance, his infectious giggle or big warm hugs! Thankfully that happiness did not diminish during his time battling cancer.



When Vincent was six years old and had just started 1st grade, he developed a cough. His mother Melissa wasn't worried and assumed it was due to back to school germs. The cough persisted, Vincent saw his pediatrician, an x-ray was ordered and sadly a tumor was found pressing against Vincent's lung. At CHLA the tumor was tested and they received the devastating diagnosis of stage 3 neuroblastoma.

Next came surgery to remove the tumor. While it was hard for Vincent's parents and siblings to see him in so much pain from surgery, they felt grateful the doctors removed all of the tumor and he would not have to go through radiation or chemotherapy. Unfortunately, after further testing it was found that Vincent had the worst form of cancer – nodular cancer with a 50% chance the cancer will return in his lifetime.

Two months later, it did return and chemotherapy began. Treatment was every three weeks but Vincent stayed his happy self all the way through, until he had a rare allergic reaction to treatment that caused him to stop breathing and go into anaphylactic shock. Scared and dreading treatments, the family got through it together and Vincent's last chemo treatment finally came. He was declared cancer free in January! He will continue to be monitored and will receive MRI scans every three months for the next three years.



Vincent with Camp Events Manager Nicole Ring (above) and Vincent at Camp (right).

With Melissa and Vincent staying at the LA Ronald McDonald House during his treatments, Camp staff were lucky enough to get to know Vincent and Melissa and introduce them to Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times. While Vincent, was ready to sign right up, mom Melissa needed a bit of convincing. Melissa said "it's scary to think of going camping while your child is in treatment, you ask yourself what if he gets sick, will he get the help he needs?" She joked "What if I see a snake?" Putting her faith in the Camp staff, Melissa decided to go outside

Gifts & GRANTS

Thank you to our recent funders:

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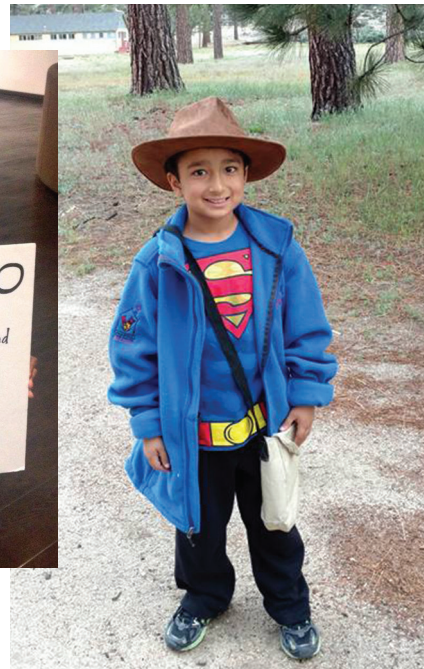
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her comfort zone and along with Vincent, dad Robert and sister Kayla, the family went to a Family Camp session - and had the time of their lives! For Kayla, it was her first time being around other siblings who understood exactly what she's been through watching her little brother being treated for cancer. Friendships were formed, lifelong memories

were created and the Dominguez Family became part of our extended Camp family!

Vincent is now inspiring each of our Heroes for Healing Candidates, serving as a reminder of the hundreds of children and families impacted by cancer who come to Camp every year. Enjoy reading all about our amazing candidates, donate and vote, and help make our Heroes for Healing Campaign a great success!

Meet our 2016 "Heroes for Healing" Candidates

Monica "Sunkist" Sewell has set the tone for this year's "Heroes for Healing" competition. Knowing that she is competing against some of her closest friends, she reminded us in her recent Facebook post that "the true winners will be our campers and their families!"

Monica and fellow candidate **Melody Lomboy-Lowe** met at Camp in the late 1980's when they were both battling leukemia as young girls. Their friendship has spanned nearly three decades now and both women credit Camp for having influenced who they are today. Their life-long dedication to Camp prompted them to sign on for some truly friendly competition in our inaugural "Heroes for Healing" campaign.



Monica & Melody at recent events for Camp.

To read more about Monica and Melody, and to cast your votes, visit their campaign web pages at:

Melody @ www.classy.org/melodylomboylowe
Monica @ www.classy.org/monicasunkist

Two other candidates represent the next generation of Campers - Ruben and Gracin. **Gracin Kerry** (age 12) was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer at just one year old, catapulting her family into a world of surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments. The Kerrys were thrilled to find Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times. It was the first place where they felt they found a community of support that truly understood their new reality. Gracin and her family attended Family Camp for seven years and now Gracin and her brothers (pictured right) attend summer camp.



Ruben Echeverria was 5 years old when he was diagnosed with leukemia and has been undergoing chemotherapy for 3 years now. His mother Yenesen is amazed by her son, "Ruben is so strong, brave and inspiring. He hardly ever complains and just works through his pain." She says Camp has been a blessing to Ruben and her family, giving them a week-

end each year they can all look forward to. Ruben and his family are motivated to give back to others who are also experiencing difficult times. They volunteer at the Ronald McDonald Houses, participate in Walk for Kids, and feed the homeless on a regular basis. Ruben especially likes talking to other sick children his age to give them hope and be an example that miracles can happen.



Ruben Echeverria

To read more about Gracin and Ruben, and to cast your votes, visit their campaign web pages at:

Gracin @ www.classy.org/gracin
Ruben @ www.classy.org/ruben

It is often said that Camp's impact goes beyond the children and families we serve, to the volunteers that come into our family and receive more than they could ever give. Two such volunteers are John and Rose.



John "Judge" Silva began volunteering 21 years ago and has not looked back. His annual week at Camp rejuvenates and inspires him for the rest of the year. "These kids truly make life changing transformations in the week spent at Camp. Whether it's a camper who stepped up and helped their cabin complete the courage course when everyone else lost hope or it's for a camper who started the week feeling shy and

ended the week singing in front of the whole Camp, these kids regain confidence and make life long bonds with each other and their counselors."

Rose Youseffi's passion for Camp has deepened since her first volunteer experience 10 years ago. She told us, "My hope before every camp session I volunteer for, is to be a big sister; a shoulder to lean on, an ear to listen. I want to ensure the campers know they are loved and supported, always."



To read more about John and Rose, and to cast your votes, visit their campaign web pages at:

John @ www.classy.org/johnsilva
Rose @ www.classy.org/roseyouseffi

Camp would not be possible without the 350 volunteers that show up every year to support well-being and healing of the families we serve. Critical to our success, are the doctors and nurses who also volunteer their time – talk about a Hero for Healing! Three of those professionals have accepted the challenge and joined the competition and their words about the role Camp plays in the healing process say it all.

Diane “3D” DiMarco Davis began volunteering with Camp in the late 80’s, not long after Camp was first founded. A nursing student at USC at the time, Diane recalls her mother told her about Camp after seeing Dr. Stuart Siegel (one of Camp’s founders) on the Phil Donahue Show. The chance recommendation soon became a lifelong passion - a passion that she now shares with her husband, John, and her two children, Elisabeth (Elisabear at camp) and Sean who have also joined the Camp family as counselors and staff.



Stephen “Stretch” Speicher has been volunteering for more than a decade and credits Camp with his decision to pursue a career in pediatric oncology. When asked why he accepted the nomination as a candidate, he shared, “I can’t help but think about the real heroes in this whole process: the incredible families that we serve at Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times. Each ‘vote’ or dollar

that I raise is not a vote for me. It’s a vote for the patients who spend countless hours getting chemo or radiation and feeling the effects of the treatments we prescribe. It’s a vote for the parents who spend their nights with the fear of the unknown and their days being champions for their kids. It’s a vote for the brothers and sisters who take the back seat and are often pushed to grow up a little faster than anyone deserves to.”

Mikki Eason brings yet another medical perspective to this campaign. “As a pediatric nurse and volunteer at Camp, I see the whole journey that kids diagnosed with cancer go through. Kids miss out on living the life that they are supposed to while undergoing harsh treatment. At Camp I get to see the other side of the picture, a child



who is fighting or fought cancer live a normal life among others who understand what they have gone through. Camp allows families and kids to have a sense of community, support, bonding, and normalcy in a medically and psychologically safe environment.”

To read more about Diane, Stephen and Mikki, and to cast your votes, visit their campaign web pages at:

Diane @ www.classy.org/3D
 Stephen @ www.classy.org/stretchingpockets4heroes
 Mikki @ www.classy.org/mikkieason

The other Heroes of Camp are the individual community members who generously invest in our mission so that we are able to provide our programs cost-free to the children and families we serve. Two such individuals are using their entrepreneurial spirits to find success in their campaigns.

Alon Shalom was first introduced to Camp by a close friend and client, one of Camp’s board members. Alon, a quintessential salon professional and fashion leader, moved from Tel Aviv, Israel and worked hard to create his own very successful salon on Melrose. He has volunteered his time to beautifully style the hair of children when it has grown back after cancer treatments. Alon has a passion for helping children and is excited to raise funds in support of Camp’s children and families.



Oscar Valdez was born in Guatemala and immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1970. Despite not having much materially, Oscar’s family was rich in love. Oscar’s sense of entrepreneurship began at age 12 with his first paper route and was strengthened by his family’s strong work ethic. Having owned five businesses in his lifetime, Oscar says that every step of his journey required hard work and the support of mentors who he credits for helping make him the successful business man he is today. The love and support he received from family and mentors have also motivated him to do the same for others. It is this sense of gratitude and a passion for contributing to the betterment of others that has inspired Oscar to team up with Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times. Having visited Camp recently, Oscar was moved by the relationships he saw forming between the counselors and campers—relationships that reminded him of people in his life that shaped him.

To read more about Alon and Oscar, and to cast your votes, visit their campaign web pages at:

Alon @ www.classy.org/alonshalom
 Oscar @ www.classy.org/oscarvaldez





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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

Leave a Legacy While Bypassing Capital Gains Tax

Over a lifetime, many of us will invest in securities and build a sizable portfolio. As these investments increase in value, so does the potential capital gains tax bill. But with a charitable remainder trust – one of many planned giving vehicles - families can donate their highly appreciated stock and receive a charitable tax deduction, generate income for their future, and avoid paying high capital gains tax.

Charitable remainder trusts, bequests and other legacy gifts are the best way to make a long term, significant gift to a charity. At Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern California, we have established The Fred and Fran Hill Legacy Society to recognize families who have named one of our programs, such as Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times, in their estate plans. Have you considered including Camp in your long range plans so generations of children can benefit from our healing programs? If you have questions about planned giving, please contact Sarah Orth at sorth@rmhcsc.org or (310) 473-0351.



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