

Camp Ronald McDonald For Good Times



Special Edition: 2017 Impact Report

2017

Program Milestones & Highlights

2017 was a year for the books - in no small part because it marked Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times' 35th Anniversary! Our 35th Anniversary Celebration BBQ was a huge success, reuniting campers, volunteers and staff – some of whom had not seen each other or been back to visit Camp in decades.

Over the course of the landmark 365 days that transpired in 2017, YOUR SUPPORT helped transform lives, forge friendships, and instill strength and hope among our campers and their families. This year, 1,300 campers joined us over the course of 12 sessions (with an additional 442 campers from our partner orgs—for a grand total of 1,742 campers)! Those same 12 sessions also saw close to 500 volunteers share their time and gifts (our volunteers truly put the "t" in "team!"). Camp's old dining hall kitchen was renovated and transformed into "The Billy Foreman Kids Kitchen and Pizza Pavilion" for camper culinary classes, thanks to generous support from the Billy Foreman Fund. And finally, the following partnerships reminded us (over and over again) of the treasures to be found in working side by side with other community institutions and organizations:

- We continued our partnerships with the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation and the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Las Vegas by hosting their summer camp programs this year, serving an additional 35 campers who benefited from our programming, staff and volunteer support.

- We also partnered with Children's Hospital Los Angeles for the second year in a row to host their Teen Discovery and Adventure Retreat that served 41 teens with Cancer.
- We continued to partner with the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation to host their We CAN Family Camps in both English and Spanish (serving 286 campers).
- Camp started a new partnership with USC Norris Cancer Center to put on a weekend camp for young adults with Cancer. This year, we served 10 adults! The 2017 Camp was a great success and we look forward to repeating it in 2018.
- Students from the Crossroads Performing Arts School in Santa Monica came to Camp and put on the musical 13 for our campers.
- The LA Kings Fan Crew & Chariot team attended all five sessions to teach our campers street hockey.
- Post summer, the Crossroads School hosted our end of summer volunteer appreciation party and is looking forward to hosting other events in the future.
- The Wind & Fire Harley group comprised of retired fire fighters from Southern California and Arizona came up once again for Harley Day to donate their time and funds to the Campers.



W.O.L.P. Kicks Off 2018!



Camp's Wilderness Outdoor Leadership Program (W.O.L.P.) prepares teen campers to effectively navigate adulthood while also inspiring them to give back to their community. This year, 60 dedicated volunteers came together to plan and execute 2018's January 12th - 15th Winter W.O.L.P. session. Themed "Treat Yo' Self," the programming focused on giving youth important tools for practicing self-love and care. An inspiring 113 campers ages 15-21 made the journey to scenic Idyllwild for this weekend of fun, friendship, and reflection!

We are also pleased to report that the newly formed Teen Advisory Committee registered more than 30 fellow WOLPers to the 'WOLP Walk' 2018 fundraising team for this year's Walk for Kids. This year is off to a great start, indeed! You can join the WOLP team or start your own team by going to www.walkforkids.org/camp.

Here's what just a few of them had to say about the experience:

'I realized that when I went back down the mountain I felt so much more empowered and confident. I no longer felt like just another brick in the wall, I felt special. I realized when I was at camp that all the little things that happen down the mountain and the drama, none of it matters. You have to think of the bigger picture, love yourself and "do you." I also learned that I need to take time for myself sometime and treat myself. Step back and look at the bigger picture. Also putting myself first sometimes and not just other people.' –Squeaky

'Best weekend ever with these guys, cancer may have brought us together but we care and love each other no matter what problems we may have. BEST CAMP EVER Winter WOLP 2018.' –Seabass

'Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.' –Leslie

'Family is more than blood. It's the people you feel at home around. The people who make you feel like you. The people who you aren't afraid to be you around. It's the people at Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times.' –Ethan



A Message from Camp's New Executive Director

Dear Friends of Camp,

It's an exciting time to be at Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times! As you may already know, I was promoted to the role of Executive Director in October of 2017, after spending five unforgettable years working side by side with our previous Executive Director Sarah Orth in my role as Camp's Development Director.

I am so very thankful for having had the opportunity to work with and learn from her, as she provided me with such a tremendous example of leadership, as well as the importance of cultivating an abiding love for Camp's mission and those we serve. I share that love for Camp, and am filled with excitement and hope for everything you and I will achieve this year, together.

For starters, we will begin building a new, state-of-the-art Camper Village and amphitheater at our Mountain Center site. Our children and families deserve the very best experience we can possibly offer them, and this much-needed capital project reflects our commitment to serving them. We will also continue growing our programming for teens, who we know are eager and ready to embrace both the challenges and opportunities that come with cancer survivorship and adulthood (you'll read more about what they've been up to in this newsletter!).

My friends, I know that 2018 is going to be a great year. It's my hope to meet many of our stakeholders this year. Whether you join us to see Camp in action during a session, at our Walk for Kids, at our Heroes for Healing gala, or if you'd like to meet with me over coffee—your input and engagement is important to me and our entire community. We thank you for your continued love and support, and I look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely yours,

Fatima Djelmane Rodriguez, Executive Director



Meet Monica "Sunkist" Sewell: Camper Alumni and Dedicated Volunteer

Monica Sewell and Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times go way, way back. On October 1, 1987 (the same day that the Whittier earthquake rocked Southern California), 11 year-old Monica's life was rocked by a diagnosis of leukemia. She states, "The only thing I knew about leukemia is what I had seen on television, so I thought for sure I was going to die."

She had a great medical team, however, and after months of therapy, her doctor recommended Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times to Monica's mother. Once at Camp, Monica experienced an immediate connection with the 9 other girls in her cabin on her first trip. She is still friends with those cabin mates today!

Monica continued to attend Camp every summer until she turned 18. She became a counselor at Camp in 1996, because she felt such a strong desire to provide the same sense of support and encouragement to other kids that she had once received. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2013, 26 years after her leukemia diagnosis, her Camp family rallied around her and provided her with the support she needed to soldier through her surgeries and chemotherapy.

Each time Monica heads back up the mountain, she knows that life-changing experiences await her. When asked to share one of her favorite memories as a volunteer, she relays the story of a cabin of 13 year-old girls she worked with one summer. Camp's 50-foot climbing tower had a giant swing at that time, and each cabin was presented with the opportunity to either climb the tower or ride the swing. Although the majority of the girls in Monica's cabin wanted to climb the tower, one lone girl (a leg amputee) expressed that she wanted to ride the swing instead. She was afraid she wouldn't be able to make it, and so out of respect for her feelings, the rest of the girls voted to ride the swing with her. Such examples of care and concern for another person's feelings, Monica says, are the norm, and not the exception, at Camp.



Fatima and Monica

Ready, Set... Walk for Kids™!

Join us on Sunday, April 8th, 2018 at Exposition Park in Los Angeles for our annual Walk for Kids™, a fun, family-friendly walk event designed to help raise funds for the services and programs provided by Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern California. The work we do at Camp is so important... not only for the child who is battling cancer or in remission, but also for their siblings and their parents. Camp supports entire families, just like the Montijo family:



Raylan Montijo is much like any other child – spunky, inquisitive, charming, and with a sweet demeanor. What makes Raylan unlike most children is that in January of 2015, at just nine months old, he was diagnosed with Bi-Lateral Retinoblastoma, an aggressive (and frequently recurring) cancer in both of his eyes. Raylan has had his left eye removed, and has

undergone chemo treatments to remove 12 tumors in his right eye. Raylan's parents were grateful to be connected with the Los Angeles Ronald McDonald House, which made it possible for them to avoid a three hour daily commute from their home in Riverside to Children's Hospital Los Angeles where Raylan was being treated.

While at the Ronald McDonald House, the Montijo family was introduced to Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times and our Family Camp program – a fun-filled weekend for the whole family to bond with each other and families going through similar experiences. For families like the Montijos, a weekend away is a luxury that would not otherwise be possible given the exorbitant expenses associated with cancer treatment.

We need YOU to help us meet this year's goal of raising \$315,000 to keep our camp programs cost-free for families like the Montijos, who continue to navigate Raylan's condition with hope and a sense of courage that comes from knowing they are supported by their Ronald McDonald House and Camp families. If you are unable to attend, you can still form or join a team to raise money as a Virtual Walker and/or make a donation to Camp by visiting www.walkforkids.org/camp. If you need help starting your own team, or have questions about the Walk, please call Nicole Ring at (323) 644-3003.



Register and join Raylan at www.walkforkids.org/camp

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And Now, a Closing Message from Camp's New Board President...



Having served on Camp's board of trustees for five years, I am thrilled to now step into my new role as Board President. I have seen firsthand Camp's transformative impact on the children and families living with childhood cancer that come to Camp year after year. It is this unique and profound impact that inspired me to step into the role of President in my last year on the board.

In addition to the exciting updates you read in the newsletter, our board has been growing along with Camp. Not only have we had nearly a dozen new members from various fields and backgrounds join in the last year and half, but we also have three camper graduates on the board—Ian Anderson, Tom Clobes, and Chris Nehls. We're thrilled that Camp has evolved to the point of now having camper graduates taking on this important leadership role to help guide our program.

On behalf of the entire board of trustees, we thank you for continuing to invest your time, talent and treasure with Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times. Together we are healing the lives of children with cancer and their families.

Sincerely,
Ken Teasdale, Board President

Board Recognition

Our Board of Trustees advocate and raise funds for Camp year round. We could not fulfill our mission without their dedication and expertise. Thank you to **Martin Breidsprecher, Emily Camp, Ed Lodgen, Kristin Calzada and Ravi Sharma** for their years of service on our Board. Welcome to our newest trustees: **Ian Anderson, Semma Arzapalo, Tom Clobes, Scott Cohen, Diana Gonzalez, Carmen Herrera, Emily Horan, Chris Nehls, Sean Mullaney and Anna Saucedo**. Thank you to all of our dedicated Board members for your continued support.

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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 Morgan at mball@rmhcsc.org for details).
- Follow us on **FACEBOOK** and **TWITTER!**

www.rmhcsc.org/camp

Financial Planning Corner

If you own stocks, mutual funds or other securities that have increased in value, and you have owned them for more than one year, it can be wise to use them to make charitable gifts. The new law has retained the special tax benefits that come with making charitable gifts in this way. You may still claim a deduction for their full market value, not just the amount you paid, and you do not have to pay capital gains tax that would be owed if you sold the securities and donated the proceeds.

In the case of the traditional or Roth IRA, people age 70½ and older may make tax-free gifts totaling up to \$100,000 per year directly to RMHCSC for the benefit of Camp.

As a result of reduced estate taxes, it will no longer be necessary for most to set aside funds for payment of taxes on gifts to individuals. This means it may now be more practical to use all or a portion of your tax savings to fund charitable gifts as part of your estate plans, because your heirs will still receive the same amount or more than they would have after paying taxes under the prior law.

For more information on options for making charitable gifts as part of your estate and financial long range plans, please call Development Director Marlene Stang at (323) 644-3008.

