

THE JOURNEY

A PUBLICATION FROM
FLYING HORSE FARMS

FALL 2023



FROM THE

Big Red Barn



At camp, we can find a reason to make any moment celebration worthy.

From greeting campers and families on arrival day with glitter flowing and music playing, to taking a "beat" at archery for a bullseye dance to recognizing big and small milestones. Milestones like this summer having the 10,000th camper experience!

"Camp is...." often is a simple way to gain insight to how someone defines their personal camp experience. For me, "camp is" amongst many things, the opportunity to experience joy glimmers. These are unplanned moments of happiness. They can last mere seconds from a twinkle in an eye because of a giggle or span the entire session. They are felt when we pause and absorb the time unfolding before us, knowing a win – or a milestone moment – doesn't have to be life altering to be empowering. In fact, most often big life-changing moments are a series of small victories, the accumulation of experiences.

Watching a camper conquer the ropes course for the first time and embrace their confidence, witnessing another perform at campfire without fear, seeing another brave the water without hesitation – these are personal camper milestones that remind us of what resiliency in action looks like. While each of these transformational achievements matter, it's just as important to see the successes in the small moments – those moments in between. The walks hand in hand down the center path between two campers who have struggled to make friends, the meals shared between campers who experience dietary restrictions, the eruptive laughter from a camper who outside of camp avoids social gatherings. Saving space to honor the millions of in-between sparks is as monumental as any significant milestone.

This year, the camp community was determined to "celebrate the journey" – meaning every journey – every individual who finds themselves connected to camp has an experience that matters. As we wind down 2023, this is what I've learned to be true: the session at camp is often only the beginning. For every camp experience there is a ripple that happens beyond the Hole in the Wall. The journey continues when a camper uses a camp song to feel brave when walking the halls of the hospital to get to their MRI. It multiplies in the camp friends who call each other weekly to hold on to the connection of a cabin chat.

As someone who embraces the philosophy that every day can be a parade (and always keeps confetti in my fanny pack), next time you find yourself at camp, I invite you to stand still and soak in the joy glimmers. I guarantee if you do, you will find yourself immersed in impromptu celebration (and perhaps even a mini parade).

You bring the curiosity, I'll bring the confetti!

Nichole E. Dunn
President & CEO, Flying Horse Farms

Flying Horse Farms is governed by an elected board of outstanding business and community leaders from across the state of Ohio.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Samir Dahman, Chair – Partner in Charge, Columbus, Kohrman Jackson Krantz LLP

Bill D'Onofrio, Vice Chair & Treasurer – Vice President, Finance, Greif, Inc

Ola Snow, Secretary – Chief Human Resources Officer, Cardinal Health, Inc.

Tara Aschenbrand, Vice President and Associate General Counsel, OhioHealth Corporation

Jenni Belford, Founder

Michael Bonadies, Community Advocate

Connie Gallaher, President, Ohio Dominican University

Kevin Hake, Retired, SVP Finance and Business Development, M/I Homes, Inc.

Scott Hauptman, Senior Vice President, Claims, Grange Insurance

Kara Lewis, Managing Partner, AB Bernstein

Matt "Monty" Montgomery, Community Volunteer

Nicholas Pavlik, VP, SBA Business Development Officer, Sr., Huntington Bank

Patricia Raimer, MD, Pediatric Intensivist, Akron Children's Hospital

Mike Repasky, CEO, KW Greater Metropolitan

Renee Romano, Professor of History, Oberlin College

Joseph Ross, MD, Pediatric Cardiologist, Dayton Children's Hospital

John Roush, CEO, Express Wash Concepts

Todd Swenson, VP, Technology & GRC, CoverMyMeds

Joseph Vandermark, Principal, Advisory Services, Ernst & Young

Steve Weis, Vice President of Development & Operating Partner, Cameron Mitchell Restaurants

Kim Zavislak, Managing Partner, Columbus KPMG

BOARD EMERITUS

David Belford, Founder

Charles Fowler, Retired

MEDICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Patricia Raimer, MD – Chair, Akron Children's Hospital

Joseph Ross, MD – Past Chair, Dayton Children's Hospital

Gerard Boyle, MD, Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital

Courtney Gushue, DO, Nationwide Children's Hospital

Valerie Kalinowski, MD, MHA, Rush University Children's Hospital

Sandra Kim, MD, Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital

Heather Minto, MD, Akron Children's Hospital

Daniel Rieck, PharmD, Nationwide Children's Hospital

Sharon Ross, RN, Dayton Children's Hospital

Megan Schaefer, PhD, Nationwide Children's Hospital

Justin Schreiber, DO, MPH, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

Jordee Wells, MD, MPH, Nationwide Children's Hospital

Flying Horse Farms is a proud member of SeriousFun Children's Network, a global community of camps and programs serving children with serious illnesses and their families, always at no cost. Founded by Paul Newman, SeriousFun has provided more than 1 million camp experiences for children and families. Each member camp is an independent, not-for-profit organization dependent upon private funding.

Flying Horse Farms is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. All our operating costs are underwritten by the generosity of grants, foundations, and community partners.

seriousfun children's network
founded by paul newman



Celebration IN SEASON

A SUMMER OF CAMP MAGIC AND MILESTONES

At camp, magic is always in season.

Camp magic transcends intentional programming, expert on-site medical care, and the loving community behind the scenes. Camp magic is the unprompted moments between planned activities that deliver goosebumps, happy tears, and smiles from ear-to-ear.

It's when two campers who have never met find themselves in the same cabin and discover they not only live in the same school district, have the same rare diagnosis and unique symptoms, both have limited social skills, but instantly bond as friends.

It's during Family Camp when parents take a quiet moment to sit by the fire and reconnect because they haven't been

on a date in years – it's too complex to leave their child with a babysitter.

It's the camper who arrives at camp managing an overwhelming amount of anxiety and by the end of the week is armed with the courage to take center stage and belt the lyrics to their favorite song in front of everyone.

It's the twin boys who hit a bullseye at archery at the exact same time, celebrating accomplishment – and a bullseye dance – together.

Camp magic happens in the moments in between: during cabin chats, dining hall sing-alongs, laughing through campfire skits, and during trips down the center path. Every session, camp is rooted in the wonder, joy and life changing experiences felt when the environment and community are equally safe and vibrant. It's the moment a camper feels they belong and can be their full selves. When the weight and complexity of their illness is lifted, and sense of joy and adventure take over.

These are the moments that build resiliency, and that make it possible for campers to thrive at camp – and in their lives and communities back home. Following a camp experience, campers are equipped with skills, memories, friendships, and newfound independence to take on life's greatest challenges, taking a little camp magic with them when they leave.



50

GALLONS OF PAINT POURED INTO COLOR OLYMPICS GAMES



25

CONFETTI CANNONS TO CREATE MORE CELEBRATORY JOY



8,400+

MEDICATIONS PASSED TO CAMPERS



5

TUBA SIGHTINGS



100

STONES THOUGHTFULLY TOSSED ON MEMORY WALKS



1,000+

BREAKFAST TACOS DELIGHTFULLY DEVoured



750

CAMPER CANNON BALLS IN THE POOL



150

SKITS WERE ENJOYED DURING CAMPFIRES

With countless dance breaks along the way!

Special thanks to camp friends and photographers: Sharon Ross, Kelly Koolhaven, and Autumn Theodore.

MILESTONE MOMENTS

Marking
150
SESSIONS AT CAMP



Reaching the milestone of 150 camp sessions comes from countless moments in-between experienced at camp. It's 9,000 hours of healing and joy felt across 90 family camps and 60 residential camps. It's the result of careful planning and dedication across our program, operating, and medical teams to ensure camper safety and amplify possibilities for all campers.

150 sessions required the commitment of more than 18,000 volunteers investing 1,110,000 hours to make a lasting impact. It's an additional 1,000 medical volunteers giving of their time and expertise. Across these sessions, 80,000+ medications have been distributed to meet camper needs and offer the opportunity to embrace new experiences knowing each camper's unique health needs were met. Ultimately, it's a feat made possible by the investment of over 20,000 supporters believing in the power of camp.

150 sessions is felt through the nearly 500 nights campers spent away from home (often for the first time). The feeling cascades beyond the 4,832 times campers danced before and after meals. The transformation is within the 28,500 wish sticks ignited and as sweet as the over 50,000 s'mores consumed.

Every smile, every laugh, and every journey down the center path has threaded together a tapestry of camp that connects us all. And, with all the sessions still to come, the journey will continue with memories yet to be made and more camp magic to spread.

Watch highlights from the 150th session here:



10,000 CAMPERS!



This summer, FHF welcomed the 10,000th camper, a celebratory milestone years in the making. As we recognized the impact of serving this incredible culmination of campers and their families, we look ahead to all the transformational opportunities yet to come.

Every camper was welcomed as a milestone camper during the 10,000th camper session. At arrival, with confetti cannons ready and excitement on blast, campers dipped their hands in paint and high fived a special milestone sign. Acknowledging that every journey

to 10,000 is unique and powerful, throughout the session campers could write over the collage of handprints sharing the significance of camp for them. **Scan the QR code below to watch milestone magic in action as we get ready for the next 10,000 campers and beyond.**

Watch milestone magic from our 10,000th camper week:



CAMPER JOURNEY

MEET VIVIAN

Within 30 seconds of meeting Vivian, you will be smiling. Her wide grin and genuine excitement pull you in and remind you of the main task at hand: have fun.

When Vivian's family first learned about camp, the notion of it all seemed out of reach, especially because the idea of a sleepover was impossible. However, after experiencing family camp and closely connecting with the medical team and volunteers, Vivian was ready to attend Heart Camp with a new title: residential camper.

The empathy that Vivian's mother, Margaret, found at camp was the welcomed reprieve from the pity that has often unintentionally become a part of making new connections throughout Vivian's life. At camp, they could just be a family without having to worry about other's opinions of their unique needs. Vivian could be a camper who was just as ecstatic to be away from home and her little sisters as she was to spend hours in arts and crafts or the fairy garden. For the entire family, it meant being met where they are by a community that understands and embraces them.

When at FHF, Margaret watches all three of her daughters thrive. "Something that surprised me about camp is the dedication of not only meeting the medical, physical and emotional needs of Vivian, but the whole family. My other children often feel left out, and camp offers them the same dedication, providing fun while meeting their emotional needs. And, there was even a focus on allowing parents and caregivers to connect with each other. This journey

can sometimes be isolating and lonely – none of us ever feel that way while at camp."

Fostering connection is a camp side effect. Many countdown the days to the next camp session from hospital rooms or between never-ending doctor's appointments knowing camp is an opportunity to flourish and connect with others navigating similar obstacles in the world.

Watching Vivian run around fearless at camp is a lesson in how to live. A reminder that Margaret welcomes. "One of the biggest issues that families face is figuring out how to live. This can manifest in different ways such as fear of judgement, fear of unfamiliar situations. The camp environment addresses and eliminates most of the fears the moment you arrive. Everyone is so welcoming and accommodating. No one is intimidated by the medical equipment and medication that you bring. The staff is there to support you as much or as little as you feel comfortable with at the time. At our first family camp, I wanted us all to stay together and do all the same things. Now my children and I are comfortable being off with their sidekicks or eating a meal or at activities with other families. We are just able to be, and it really is like being home...but without the housework!"

Before Vivian was born, her family had a tagline ready for her – *Vive la Vivi!* – and, at camp we're honored to join in their chorus and sing it down the center path together.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

THE JOURNEY TO LAUNCH MENTAL HEALTH CAMP

For campers to experience all camp has to offer, their health and safety needs must be met first. In addition to physical and medical safety, it's a priority at FHF to recognize the role camp plays in a camper's mental health journey.

This year, we executed goals to increase program offerings, elevate therapeutic experiences, and enhance the delivery of psychosocial services overall. This included launching the inaugural Mental Health Camp, made possible in partnership with Syntero.

Mental Health Camp was a weeklong experience welcoming 18 campers with mental health conditions as their primary diagnosis. The most present of diagnosis among campers were

attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (47%), anxiety (38%), and depression (22%).

To ensure the elevated safety and clinical oversight required, the psychosocial team doubled during Mental Health Camp. This was made possible with the integration of mental health clinicians from Syntero, who co-facilitated programming and provided expert care. Using evidence-based practices, like Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and others treatment models were seamlessly woven into the camp experience to build core mindfulness, self-regulation and coping skills, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness. Campers also focused on communication skills, advocacy, and making new friends.

This fall, our partnership with Nationwide Children's Hospital Center for Suicide Prevention & Research forged the way to launch a Mental Health Family Weekend Camp. This program added the touchpoint for campers and their families to experience camp together and foster holistic healing through trauma-informed care while infusing joy, fun, and connection that may have been lost. To amplify more touchpoints for campers to learn how to foster healing within themselves and carry it forward.

Mental health acuity needs for every child – and adult – continues to rise. FHF takes responsibility for our role and will continue to show up prepared to meet these needs.

MENTAL HEALTH CAMP CHAMPIONS

Camp friends dedicated to camp's psychosocial initiatives.

Abercrombie & Fitch Co.	Rhonda and Charlie Fraas
Alexion Pharmaceuticals	Henmick Farm & Brewery
Ashland Community Foundation	Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation
Lisa and David Bishoff	Rite Aid Foundation
The Davis Family: Roberta & Norman Davis, Jill & Murray Davis, Paula Davis & Adam Holland, Rachel Davis Katz	The Schlonsky Family Judi and James Stillwell Anonymous individual donors



Rhonda and Charlie Fraas

AN INTENTIONAL JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

At camp, when we say "welcome home" we are greeting you with the energy of those who have come before, every past camper's excitement and the support of camp champions who make camp a reality. It's in this spirit of community that we invite every visitor through the Hole in the Wall, the doorway to camp off the Big Red Barn, meant to symbolize the space where you begin your journey. It's where past, present, and future meet with a shared commitment for camp's power to change lives.

Friends of camp from the beginning, the Fraas family sign hangs above the entrance to the Hole in the Wall. Rhonda and Charlie Fraas were among the first supporters to bring camp to life. Their journey with camp started with the seeds of possibility and has continued to evolve through the years.

As the first Chair of Flying Horse Farms' Board of Directors, Rhonda helped guide conversations around safety when serving children with serious illnesses, ensuring the well-being of the whole child and family includes holistic health and psychosocial needs in addition to critical medical care.

Camp continuously evaluates and updates processes to ensure that utmost of safety. Charlie shared around their continued support of camp: "the pandemic changed the world and all of us. It is a different world for a lot of families and the work around mental and behavioral health being done at Flying Horse Farms is more important than ever."

Rhonda and Charlie believe that camp's ability to show up for every camper is what continues to make FHF a powerful resource in the mental health and wellness space.

"As times and needs change, the camp adapts to meet those needs. We feel confident that whatever arises in the future, the staff, the leadership, the volunteers, and the Board will meet that need. They have a proven track record."

The Fraas family's giving journey with camp continues to leave a legacy for every family that comes through the Hole in the Wall. Their support is seen in the relief on faces at arrival. It's felt with each camper family that signs up knowing their child will be safe and is a legacy that embraces the transformation found in the healing power of camp.

JILL & MURRAY DAVIS

A JOURNEY OF MINDSET AND BUILDING MORE

For Jill and Murray Davis, camp has always been a place where vision becomes reality. Before a single structure was built at camp their support was given. As longtime advocates for what FHF can make possible in the lives of camper families, they have leaned into our shared value "with trust comes relief."

At the core of their passion for FHF, Jill and Murray recognize that every camp experience is inherently therapeutic. They have been encouraging supporters to get the mission to next as we embrace mental and behavioral health diagnoses.

"Like many families, ours has been touched profoundly by the mental health crisis afflicting many of our young people. We have long believed mental health conditions and the symptoms associated should be a primary diagnosis to address and hopefully help alleviate the conditions and suffering. With COVID and the isolation and anxieties exacerbated from it we are well beyond the crisis point. During the pandemic our regular dialogue with the team at FHF, we saw what a wonderful asset FHF could be in an effort to address this crisis in a meaningful and impactful way. The serenity and relaxed atmosphere at camp naturally provides an ideal setting for young people, counselors, therapists and experts to not only find relief but more importantly to teach them skills and coping mechanisms they could take with back to the normal routines of their daily lives. It also offers them an environment where they can

observe for themselves and be around others who experience similar issues."
– Murray Davis

Aligned in passion, Jill, Murray, and their extended family all decided to commit to help FHF decided to help launch camp's program to directly address to directly address mental health. From inception to execution, they were present during the first session this summer. As Murray shared: "We were fortunate enough to visit one afternoon during session and witnessed the impact this inaugural session was having.

"We left convinced more than ever the limitless impact a program like this could have to help kids not just experience summer camp but to learn skills and gain the confidence they need when they return to their schools and normal routines."

At FHF, when we say with trust comes relief, we are acknowledging the respite that comes from having your child's physical, mental, and emotional needs cared for by the highest quality team possible. We know there is a shift for caregivers when they can step back and see their child is safe, they are embraced with compassion, and seen for their full selves.



Jill & Murray share their passion for camp at May By the Fire event.



THE FOWLER FAMILY

Inspiring and Igniting More Journeys

There are many ways to recognize and celebrate moments at Flying Horse Farms. However, one accolade stands out for its significance and magnitude: The Firestarter Award. This honor is awarded to individuals or organizations who have championed camp – have been a spark in the beginning to make camp possible, or to inspire partnerships, programs, and opportunities to change more lives. The 2023 Firestarter award recognizes a family whose daughter's legacy continues to bring light to countless camper lives: the Fowler Family.

The Char & Chuck Fowler Family Foundation was launched in 2001, with the intention to honor their daughter Angie's legacy. The first grant they made was to help fight against melanoma, and their impact in her memory has been an inspirational force of dedication and love ever since.

Every camper that has made an art piece or crafted a treasure has benefited from the generosity of the Fowler Family. In tribute to Angie's spirit and imagination, the Fowler family envisioned and made Angie's Arts & Crafts a reality at camp. Because of their capital gift, this special space is where campers can express themselves, discover new creative outlets, and explore the arts. As camp friends and supporters they continue to have Angie's legacy live on with a grant for the Trailblazers program. This program fosters skill development and expands camp experiences into adulthood.

Each member of the Fowler family is a legacy builder. As we celebrate what has been generated for camp, daughters Chann and Holley shared the impact their family giving journey has had on them. As catalysts for change, we are grateful for the Fowlers' contributions to FHF through the years. We know their generosity has kept the spark of creativity alive and forged a path to healing for many camp families.

Q: AS YOU THINK OF YOUR JOURNEY WITH CAMP, WHAT STANDS OUT?

When we first visited FHF, we were overwhelmed with all the work that goes into creating a camp. We value a well-run camp and the opportunity

for kids to experience a sleep away camp. Our parents enjoyed volunteering for a week at camp where they met amazing kids fighting cancer. We also attended one of the Fall Family Camps as volunteers. More recently, one of the grandkids worked at camp during the summer.

Q: CAN YOU SHARE WHY HONORING ANGIE THROUGH ANGIE'S ARTS & CRAFTS MATTERED TO YOUR FAMILY?

During that first meeting, while looking at the plans, and the donation opportunities, we discussed that it would be cool to have Angie be "part" of the foundation, almost like her "portion" goes to entities that she enjoyed. When we were in elementary school, we had a section in our basement where we played "school" and had an easel along with art supplies. It was fun to be able to make our own creations in our own time, in a way we wanted. Our mom hung many of our pieces along the wall, and subsequently saved many of them. As kids and adults, we value the outlet and joy-making art provides. Having Angie be a part of camp was important to all of us. It made sense that arts and crafts would be the space to honor her as she enjoyed arts in and out of school!

Q: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR OTHERS TO BE INVOLVED WITH FHF?

Camp couldn't exist without volunteers, facilities and maintenance, and the incredibly competent and dedicated staff. This requires a substantial amount of money annually. Any person that values opportunities for kids, teens, and young adults to "just be" who they are or want to be, should donate what they are able. Equally important are the donations of time and talent.

Camp is a place to experience the new. It is a safe space to try out a different persona, a new you. As kids go through stages of development, there are tweaks they consider making to the way in which they interact with their peers, ways to seek group belonging, ways to break free from their parents yet still rely heavily on their guidance and approval. Camp provides a safe space to try out these things.

For the Fowler family, having a place where you can just be matters. Camp thanks them for the spark they started in Angie's memory that has become a flame ignited in every camper.



Special thanks to Abercrombie & Fitch Co. team for the Angie's Arts & Crafts mural



JOURNEY *with* CAMP

Q&A WITH G

Transformational journeys are not exclusively felt by campers. It is the FHF guarantee that everyone who comes through the gates is provided the opportunity for a transformational experience; and that includes the team.

G Spangler is a camp Social Worker whose energy is infused throughout camp as much as FHF has been part of their story. Below, they share the paths they have found themselves on because of – and ignited by – camp.

Q: WHAT IMPACT HAS CAMP HAD ON YOUR JOURNEY?

Every last-night-of-camp cabin chat or Ranger closing I've been a part of have been some of the most powerful experiences I've ever had at camp. The magic of those moments, for me, lies in being witness to, and immersed in, and part of the facilitation of, the incredible community that can grow after just five days at camp. I can feel the transformation that occurred during that session, the ways that lives have shifted and the future echoes of this magic that are yet to come.

I've also come to understand that camp is truly therapeutic. I've worked with campers (and volunteers, and staff!) who share that camp is the place they most feel at home, and most able to fully be themselves. I've heard folks talk about how camp has shaped their lives, how the power and light they get from a camp session helps carry them through the really hard parts of the rest of the year, how some of the skills and connections

built at camp become part of their coping toolbelt or self-care repertoire back home. I've been so fortunate to see some of that healing and growth occur in campers and volunteers over the course of years.

Q: HOW HAS CAMP CHANGED YOUR PATH?

I've been involved with FHF for nearly a third of my existence on this planet, which is just wild to think about, and have sort of seen myself grow up and transform through my time at camp. Since my first summer here, I've just wanted to be around camp however I could, in whatever capacity made sense for me and the organization. In 2019, I made the choice to pursue working in the kitchen in order to be part of a team and a place that creates some of the most challenging and indispensable kind of magic at camp. I have nothing but love, respect, and admiration for the K-Crew, and send endless gratitude to Chef Wes for showing me how to be Chef G.

I've made a lot of very, very good friends through camp, too. My BFF Rob and I are in a band, and without us meeting at camp, there is no Funflower! Making music is one of my primary coping skills when I'm feeling stressed or overwhelmed, and my time at camp has celebrated that form of self-care. From leading a song at Opening Campfire to trying out every function of the new Spotlight Studio in 2021 to creating a little audio ambience during seasonal staff closing, playing music at camp feels so right to me.

Q: HOW HAS YOUR PATH OUTSIDE CAMP MERGED WITH YOUR PATH IN CAMP?

When I first came through the gates as a Cabin Counselor in 2015, I knew I wanted to work with people but thought environmental sustainability was the only way for me to accomplish that. Camp seemed like a fun thing I could justify doing for just one more summer at the time. As the years rolled on and I got to fill different roles (Ranger Counselor, Spotlight Specialist, Lifeguard, Sous Chef), I started to understand how important and legitimate camp work is and how good it feels to be in the physical environment of camp.

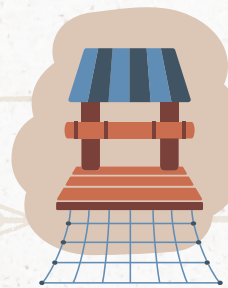


The onset of the pandemic shook up my planned path dramatically, as it did for so many of us. I had many (many!) conversations with trusted friends and helping professionals, folks I met at camp and beyond, which helped clarify that social work was the route for me. Now, part of my professional obligation is to amplify the voices, needs, wants, and ideas of the most marginalized members of our community, which is essential to making camp a home for ALL.

Q: WHY DOES EVERY CAMP STORY MATTER?

A single camp story matters because no one story will resonate with every camper, or every volunteer or donor or whoever. Camp magic is present everywhere, not just in the goofy loudness and skits and confetti cannons. So many campers feel inspired by that energy, and so many others might need a gentle, compassionate space to exist within instead. That lower-stimulus, quiet, peaceful, sitting-in-the-Meadow-together kind of vibe is another super special kind of camp magic that allows so many people to just be.

We always, ALWAYS must be working to meet every member of our community where they are creating the safest- and bravest-possible space for them to inhabit while they're within the gates. That never looks just one way; every individual has their own story(ies) of how that space happens for them. Every camper's experience is different in a million nuanced ways, so every story of camp is important. It's the collective experience of people coming together to create camp that is what really matters.



CAMPER JOURNEY: *Through a Mother's* LENS

Written by Elizabeth Hamilton

The journey of our five sleeps at camp began with a movie and a child who has experienced years of hearing adults tell her what she cannot physically do. Amelia, age 11, and I had been watching the original *Parent Trap* as we folded laundry. This movie's storyline centers around twins who are separated at birth and then find each other at camp. It was fresh on Amelia's mind during dinner when she looked at me and said, "I want to go to camp. But I want to go to 'camp camp,' a real one you spend the night at".

Where other parents would pause and look at various programs, locations, budgets, and calendars, these pieces did not cross my mind. Instead, I thought about all the struggles that our daughter faces with daily life and the seemingly impossible challenge before us.

Amelia was five when her health took a turn. Up until that point, she was an active and opinionated child who showed no signs of what was to come. As a licensed social worker, I spent almost two decades advocating for the needs of others. I never would have imagined that I would find myself



needing to advocate similarly for my child. It took three and a half years, six genetics doctors in five cities and three states to find our answer. Amelia has a degenerative, progressive, and life-shortening disease called Friedrich's ataxia.

When a child becomes chronically ill, the family's journey takes a drastic change. When the idea of camp landed in the middle of our dinner table, I felt concern creep into my mind. That fear was matched by the longing for typical childhood experiences. We knew we needed someplace special for Amelia; we needed a flying horse.

It is a weird shift, going from the person who connects clients with what they need to becoming a client yourself and seeking help from strangers. I had referred families to Flying Horse Farms for years and now needed this camp for our family. From the first email to the follow-ups, our experience with Flying Horse Farms was smooth and reassuring. After years of worrying about what we would do to care for Amelia, we had a week of happily thinking about what Amelia was doing. The tears shed that week were not because we missed her but because we had the normal experience of thinking excitedly about the opportunities our child was being provided.

Amelia's week at camp came and went, leaving a changed child in its wake. Her

first statement to me at pick up was: "Can I come back next year?" followed by, "I am sorry I didn't miss you." She has embraced self-dependence at home and ruminates less on the negative. When given an audience, she will belt out camp songs and perform the dances with a smile. Amelia has proudly shown us photos of her camp experience, including her participation in archery. This has allowed me to see her in a new light. Archery was a sport I competed in during my time in college and was something I never thought she would be able to do.

The impact of camp has moved beyond our day-to-day lives. At an appointment in July, Amelia felt afraid about some of the testing that needed to be completed. What made it more challenging was that neither parent was allowed to go back with her. Dressed in a hospital gown too large for her small frame, she took the hand of the medical assistant to walk past the swinging metal doors.

As I watched her walk away, I heard a now familiar song belting past her lips and watched her free hand go through the dance motions. Facing her fear, she was summoning her memories of camp, and she was singing. In the journey of intimidating treatments, Flying Horse Farms was there reminding Amelia that she is capable of more than she could ever imagine.

Here's to the journey.

Celebrating the Journeys that MAKE CAMP POSSIBLE

Looking to connect? There are many ways you can make an impact! Learn more below and scan the QR code to get connected.



SUPPORT

Your gift fuels the magic that allows campers to experience camp at no cost. Every contribution makes it possible for FHF to provide expert medical care, craft moments of joy, and foster an environment where families experience respite. It allows campers, often for the first time, to focus on just being a kid. Your donation is more than a transaction; it's a profound act that changes lives, making an immediate impact on the journey of each camper.

Give in the future:

Make Flying Horse Farms part of your will or trust, or other planned giving arrangement.

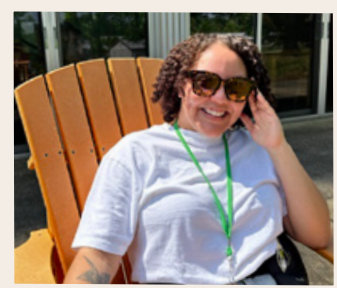


VOLUNTEER

As a volunteer, you become part of something empowering and join a community that cultivates connections, creates more for others, and allows campers and their families to experience true respite and relief.

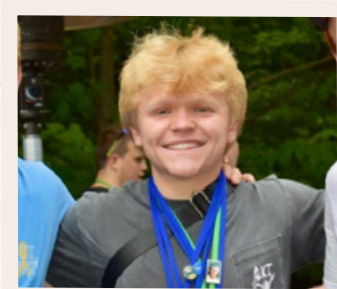
- Volunteers become part of a community of over 18,000 individuals dedicated to creating more for campers. More laughter, more healing, more transformation. You also walk away with the full strength of the camp community at your back – pushing you forward to what comes next in your journey.
- Volunteers directly and holistically impact the camper experience. How you show up reflects to every camper what is possible. Show a shy camper it's okay to be silly. Make memories through sticky s'mores and loud laughs at opening campfire. Underneath the laughter and fun, watch yourself transform. Every interaction builds your skills as you change campers' lives forever.
- Volunteers normalize exploration. From sparking imagination at Angie's Arts & Crafts and HappytimesWoodshop to empowering bravery and perseverance at archery and swimming, your commitment generates more willingness and experiences.

When you let yourself be all in, you get to witness journeys in real time. Watch as openness to new experiences unlocks passion and personality from a camper's arrival day to their departure day.



"Volunteering is such a great way to give back to children with serious illnesses. I was able to experience the impact by volunteering through the A&F Camp Counselor Program. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be part of camp and help children discover joy, confidence and overall happiness."

– DANI O'NEILL | ACTIVITIES VOLUNTEER | A&F CAMP COUNSELOR PROGRAM



"I want to thank Flying Horse Farms for allowing me to volunteer as a cabin counselor. The most impactful part of camp for me was realizing that campers look up to us as role models, and if we did the right thing, campers would follow! I am immensely grateful for the transformative journey inspired by Paul Newman's philanthropic legacy."

– MICHAEL WHEELER | CABIN COUNSELOR VOLUNTEER | UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, PHI KAPPA TAU

SEASONAL TEAM

When it comes to camp programming, seasonal team members are the heart, soul, and magic makers. Seasonal roles range from cabin counselors to activity specialists (HappyTimesWoodshop, Aquatics, Angie's Arts & Crafts, etc.), each bringing a balance of compassion, spirit, and expertise.

Individuals who apply to spend their summer at camp come from all stages of life – on college break, experiencing a career transition later in life, reflecting internally for self-growth. Anyone who spends a summer on staff at FHF comes away with a transformational experience that facilitates self-discovery. While every experience will vary, there are shared experiences and reflections from the seasonal staff team each year.

- **Community** – There is no community like the camp community. You spend so much time with each other that it's almost like you've spent a lifetime together in a few short weeks. The relationships you make at camp with your team last a lifetime.
- **Changing Lives** – One of the top values at Flying Horse Farms is "Campers First." You can see this value embedded deep into the culture and tangibly feel its importance the instant the first camper comes through the gate.
- **Self-Growth** – Servant leadership is another value that is exemplified, because serving others is how we show love at camp (which is also a camp oath everyone takes at the beginning of every session). It's obvious that everyone that works or volunteers at camp comes to serve the campers, but what is truly amazing to see is how so many of the staff and volunteers grow in their leadership capabilities by serving each other in the process.
- **Safety** – Camp provides an environment that is separate from the rest of the world. Camp is a place where you can act silly and be crazy and vulnerable and not have to worry about judgement from the world. This type of safety is something we all look for in life and relationships. Finding that safety at FHF allows us all to try things we never have before or would in a different environment. This leads to self-discovery and ultimately self-confidence.
- **Changed Perspective** – When leaving camp, you have a new outlook. One that is more open to new experiences, more open to closer relationships, more open to serving others, and a lens that changes how one sees leadership.

JOURNEYS THAT GENERATE *Southeastern Equipment*

"All In" is a camp value that Thor and Jonathon Hess exemplify.

As camp friends and advocates, their generosity through Southeastern Equipment makes it possible to maintain landscaping needs, ongoing construction efforts, and general facility safety for all 200 acres of the camp property.

When Thor, Southeastern Equipment Executive Vice President, learned about camp's mission, he jumped in to give back and literally amplify the facilities team's ways of working. He donated the use of all equipment needed for the year, including an excavator, bulldozer, exterior jobsite lights, a boom lift, and a skid steer. The generosity didn't stop there. When a tornado hit camp in summer 2022, and the damage to the property required additional needs to restore, Southeastern Equipment donated equipment to help expedite camp back up and running in less than a week for the next camp session.

This year, Southeastern Equipment, donated a Stand-on Skid Steer and trailer to assist the facilities team in managing the property. On any given week the facilities team utilizes the equipment for nearly 20 hours to operate and maintain camp. Since connecting with Southeastern, camp has been able to execute on projects ranging from dam work to storm recovery to basic safety and every camp need in-between.

For Thor, his husband, Jonathon, and the team at Southeastern Equipment, their journey with camp has continued to generate more camp potential, allowing FHF to literally grow and build towards a future where more campers are served.

CREATE

Companies that devote time to be Camp Creators join dozens of organizations dedicated to ensuring every camp session's success. As a Camp Creator, your team helps prepare beds, clean cabins, and ensure camp's facilities are ready for the next group of campers. Beyond an act of service, Camp Creator Days serve as an avenue for your team to embrace shared purpose, expanding sense of community and building internal relationships while fostering leadership and giving through collaborative change.

Thank you to our 2023 Camp Creators:

- Abercrombie & Fitch Co.
- AgCredit - Morrow County Office
- American Electric Power
- Bayer Corporation
- Cardinal Health
- Coca-Cola Consolidated Inc.
- Colonel Crawford High School
- Columbus Blue Jackets
- Daimler
- Del-Co Water Company
- Delta Zeta Sorority
- Edward Jones - Mount Gilead Offices
- Express Wash Concepts
- Heartland Promotional Products
- Huntington Bank
- IGS Energy
- JPMorgan Chase
- Kohrman Jackson & Krantz
- Lipesky Family
- Medical Mutual
- Morrow County Chamber of Commerce
- Next Generation 4H Club
- Omega Engineering
- PPG
- Prevention Awareness Support Services
- Red Roof Franchising, LLC
- Safelite Digital
- Safelite Integration
- Shelby City Schools FFA Program
- Singleton Construction
- Tailored Management
- The James Cancer Hospital
- Vizient
- Worthington Industries
- WPG



Abercrombie & Fitch Co.



Coca-Cola Consolidated Inc.



Colonel Crawford High School



Heartland Promotional Products



Del-Co Water Company



Upgraded canvas cabins



Huntington Bank



Morrow County Chamber of Commerce



IGS Energy



JPMorgan Chase



Medical Mutual



Omega Engineering



Shelby City Schools FFA

JOURNEYS THAT ACCELERATE

Outpost Rebuild

In the summer of 2022, the tornado that struck camp left a path of destruction at Outpost—a special place at FHF where older campers can foster independence and strengthen peer connections.

This year, eight members of the Leadership Columbus Signature Program Class of 2023 dedicated their Community Impact Project to rebuilding Outpost. These new friends of camp gave a combined 100 hours of labor and the invaluable support of skilled contractors who provided expertise in-kind to guide a vital reconstruction effort to clear the space of debris, repair the cabin platforms and added additional accessible seating around the firepits.

The transformation of Outpost took eight months of perseverance and passion. Beyond the renovation, the group further researched to replace teepees with four Canvas Cabins and provided an outline for potential future expansion. Their in-kind work ensures FHF can continue to provide campers with a space to grow and be challenged as they embrace new experiences.

The collaborative spirit speaks volumes about the power of community. Leadership Columbus exemplifies "all crew no passengers," bringing the FHF value to life, and through servant leadership enhanced camp facilities.

CAMP RECIPE

BBQ NIGHT!



As a kid living with a dietary restrictions, simply sharing a meal with friends can become a maze of concerns and limitations. For many campers, enjoying a school-provided lunch or engaging in dinner out with family is impossible.

Enter camp! Where the spirit of inclusion and safety is woven in every opportunity and experience. In camp's dining hall, no child is left behind and every meal is an opportunity for connection and joy.

Barbeque night is a camp favorite because it comes with all the crowd favorites: BBQ pork and chicken, mac n' cheese, corn, rolls, and all the fixings! To make it possible, extra planning and strict preparation methods are put in place. So, how does a camper know they will be able to enjoy this meal with no concerns?

- Nut allergy? Have no fear – it's a total nut-free camp! (Except for our goofy cabin counselors of course.)
- Gluten-free? We have you covered with a yummy, ooey gooey gluten free mac n' cheese option.
- Vegetarian? We got you – enjoy freshly made pulled jackfruit.
- Dairy-free? Easy peasy with milk-free mac n'cheese!
- Picky eater? We understand – and we'll be ready with your one-of-a-kind meal.

When campers take their seats, belting out the spirited notes of "Birds in the Wilderness" at the top of their lungs (or whispering notes like a zombie, or singing underwater like a mermaid), the unspoken assurance of safe, delicious meals awaits them.

CAMP GRILL AT A GLANCE

Entrees: barbecue pork, barbecue chicken, barbecue jackfruit

Sides: Mac n' cheese, a vegetable

What it takes to make the meal (per camp session)

- 30lbs pork
- 40lbs chicken
- 20lbs mac n' cheese
- 4lbs gluten-free pasta



CHEESY (BUT TRUE) FACTS!

Over 200 pounds of mac n' cheese were enjoyed by campers, volunteers, and seasonal staff this summer!

Over 2,500 pounds of mac n' cheese have been enjoyed by campers, volunteers, and seasonal staff over the last 150 camp sessions!

DEAR CAMP

Letters from the camp community

Quantifying camp magic is like trying to bottle laughter, while the sensation is undeniably felt how do you contain it much less measure in the moment. After each session, campers and their families fill our mailbox with memories and moments that mattered to them. Read camp's impact straight from campers, camp families, volunteers, and our team.

WHEN MY CAMPER IS AT CAMP, MY FAMILY COULD...

"Just be. Camp is literally the only place that our camper can be away from us that is safe, and we don't worry. We have the utmost confidence that whatever happens, camp staff and volunteers are capable, proactive and prioritize the mental health of our children alongside their physical health."

"We were able to know that he was happy being around other people who would not make fun of him for his disabilities and be able to participate in all activities."

"Redirect some attention to the camper's sibling at home. Attain meaningful respite where we knew she was doing exciting new things, and we could be excited for her. We felt a decreased sense of guilt as she was able to participate in normal childhood activities while at camp."



AT CAMP I LEARNED...

"To breathe when you're scared."

"How to be kind and take care of myself."

"How to be very brave and to help people when needed."

"The dances and how to communicate better with adults better, I also found my true self and got to be a ridiculous kid."

"I learned that despite my own difficulties with my illness, I'm nowhere near alone. It's always easy to think such at home, especially since there are not many others like me, but here it's nice to finally connect and talk to others who share my struggles."

WHEN MY CAMPER CAME HOME, I SAW...

"Her smile! When she talked about her days, she smiled like I've never seen her before. This was huge."

"Nonstop joy of being 'understood' medically, constant stories of friends, classes and conversations that inspired, encouraged and empowered her. The nurse's and counselors' can-do attitude about any regime, procedure or needed support...her empowerment is way up and because of that her enthusiasm of applying to a college special ed program with support was much higher than before camp."

"The smile on my kid's face. I've missed it."

"He is just so happy when he gets home. It is a total refresh for him to be at camp. And he has formed friendships that go beyond camp and he gets to reconnect with those people. Camp has been incredible for his mental health."



CAMP JOURNEYS

Memories made at camp become milestones in life. In their words, campers, caregivers, and volunteers define the impact of camp made on their lives.

"During my fourth year of medical school, I spent two weeks as a camp counselor at Flying Horse Farms, a magical summer camp for children with serious illnesses. I was able to not only tell my camper with an arm amputation that he in fact could participate in the high ropes course but held his hand as he did so. I swam with campers who had heart conditions who were hesitant to be active in the pool. I not only learned what challenges come with heart and hematology/oncology diagnoses, but how these campers live their lives in a joyous way outside of the hospital. This appreciation for the whole person, not just the sick person, reaffirmed the knowledge that kids are resilient, courageous, and hopeful individuals who are not defined by a diagnosis. My ability to connect with kids and meet them at their level inspires my future. I hope to be not only a figure children look to for guidance, but one who supports their lives and dreams outside of a medical scenario. Whether that be through preventative information for parents

or medications needed to participate in school sports, I always aim to look at the child and figure out how I foster their lives both in and out of a medical setting."

"Camp is...my happy place, where I feel the freest, where I go to heal, full of my favorite memories, home. When I go to camp, my diagnosis, treatments, hospital visits, stay at the front gate. In other words, cancer is not allowed at camp. All of the campers have a silent understanding of what each other goes through and that's an amazing feeling. At camp, I don't feel different, I am not the "sick" kid, just the kid in cabin 3. Every time I go to camp, I go home feeling recharged, healed, and happy."
"Being exposed to people with varying health conditions has made him more sensitive to the life experience of others. At camp, my son jumps up in front with counselors to sing and dance and loves being in a leadership role like this. This isn't something he's gotten to do elsewhere and gets so much joy from it."

"I like the way everyone is excited and gets to be themselves. I like it because I feel that is an important part of life, and for camp to emphasize this allows other to embrace their wacky self instead of suppressing it."

"FHF's family camp is an opportunity for us to recenter ourselves amid the chaos of regular life. It has become a sorely needed time to refocus and rejuvenate, and to be energized by the wonderful and loving folks at camp. When we see the fanny packs break out, and the beats drop, we feel rejuvenated already!"

"Camp is the one place that I have where I get to feel not only normal but exceptional. Nothing about my illness is weird or difficult for the people around me, I get to do things I never thought I'd be able to do simply because I am sick. When I was first diagnosed it felt like the whole world was another planet that I, a newly disabled person, had just landed on. When I got to camp for the first time, I felt like I was back home. It felt like I was returning to the life I had before I got sick because everything was built for me."

"Camp is...a place where everyone belongs. I found camp through a mentor who has volunteered there in the past. I had never heard of it before, but the mission excited me. I decided to join seasonal staff, and I fell in love with everything about it. It quickly became a home away from home for me."





a seriousfun camp

5260 State Route 95
Mt. Gilead, Ohio 43338



Printing Courtesy of

