



“From the bottom of my heart” A note of thanks from a camper

Dear people who pull it off:

Thank you from the bottom of my heart, all the way to my last vein. Without you guys there wouldn't be over 100 kids having the time of their lives once a year, for a week. You're the reason why I come back. Even a penny that someone donated will go a long way. I am so thankful, I really am. I haven't told anyone this but I have one of those piggy banks that has three sections (saving, spending, and donations) and I have over \$100 for Special Love. I appreciate it. I can't say thank you enough.

— Ali, 13 (Leukemia)

Guardian Scholarship Recipients Take the Next Joyful Step

Starting college can be scary for teenagers. It can be even scarier for a teen who has battled pediatric cancer.

But Special Love campers possess a unique resilience. With the support of friends and family, they take on tough challenges with hope and courage.

Special Love's new Guardian Scholarship program is part of that support. In its first year, the program awarded \$16,500 in scholarships to eight former campers.

At an inspiring August luncheon, scholarship donors were able to meet the students who earned the scholarships they funded.

The students shared their experiences and ambitions, and the donors cheered on the students.

“This program is very special to me and my family,” says Mark Atherton, a Special Love

board member whose family sponsored The Atherton

(continued on page 2)

At an inspiring luncheon, former campers shared their ambitions with the donors who made their scholarships possible.



Top: Heather Alba (right) and sisters celebrate Heather's Maria Kenny Guardian Scholarship. Bottom: Kevin Hernandez (center) earns The Atherton Family Guardian Scholarship, with Special Love's Dave Smith (left) and benefactor Mark Atherton (right)

Camp Fantastic and BRASS Camp Work Their Magic (Again), Thanks to You!

Many hands join each year to cast the magic called “camp” for children with cancer. Special Love's two weeklong programs – Camp Fantastic for patients and BRASS Camp for siblings – were filled to capacity once again this summer with more than 100 campers each.

At Camp Fantastic, the theme centered around movies at Camp Fantastic Studios; at BRASS, the refrain was “We



Are Family.”

To onlookers, the camps flow smoothly, seamlessly.

And they do ... because working behind the scenes are well-oiled machines, stoked by passionate

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The Magic of Camp *(continued from page 1)*

believers in the therapy of camp, who plan months in advance to make certain these are the best weeks of their lives for our very special campers.

The players? Volunteer camp counselors who share their boundless creativity and energy. A volunteer medical staff that takes time off from work routines to monitor and keep every camper safe and well 24/7. The ever-important donors who give generously to help Special Love squeeze in absolutely as much fun as possible. The social workers and other hospital staff who

first suggest to families that camp may be a wonderful distraction from their cancer battle. The organizations that each year gather their resources to serve food, teach classes, donate materials, or simply lend a hand throughout the week. And the parents and caregivers who prepare their children for a week away from home and then selflessly let them go to camp.

To all these cogs in this magnificent wheel, WE THANK YOU!

You are the magic of camp.



Why We're Privileged to Be Guardian Scholarship Donors

"We are donors to Special Love because we believe it is important to support these special kids in their battle against cancer! They, and in fact the entire family, are fighting an often painful and tiring battle.... We are privileged to support them!"

"We decided to participate in the Guardian Scholarship program as a further means to support and encourage a special young person who has fought this battle. These warriors are our personal heroes. And, as education is a vital part of a successful future, it is our honor to assist Jesse Smith, one of our young heroes, to move past the disease and prepare for a bright future."

*- David and Annette Ingram,
The Caleb Ingram
Guardian Scholarship*

Guardian Scholarships *(continued from page 1)*

Family Guardian Scholarship. Atherton's daughter is a pediatric cancer survivor and former camper. "I truly enjoyed getting to know Kevin at lunch and learning about his goals for the future. This scholarship initiative is an important component of Special Love's community of support."

This year's Guardian Scholarship recipients are:

-Heather Alba, The Maria Kenny Guardian Scholarship
-Sarah Fitchett and Logan Wibe, The Richmond Shag Club Guardian Scholarships
-Kevin Hernandez, The Atherton Family Guardian Scholarship
-Erin Schulte, The Bresch Guardian Scholarship
-Jesse Smith, The Caleb Ingram Guardian Scholarship

-Ambriel Veldkamp, The Peggy and John Lingenfelter Guardian Scholarship
-Serena Wade, The Dennis Chastain Guardian Scholarship

Special Love hopes to grow this program to include more deserving pediatric cancer survivors who are taking the next big step in their lives.

The Guardian Scholarship program is part of the Kay-Moore Scholarship Program. In total, Special Love awarded \$50,000 in post-secondary education scholarships in 2017.

Interested in supporting a young cancer survivor with a scholarship in your name or the name of someone important to you? Contact Special Love at 888.930.2707 for more information.



Top: Camp counselor Serena Wade (right) and mom Lynn visit with scholarship donor Jan Bresch (left). Bottom: Former camper Jesse Smith (center, left) and parents Sharon and Brian chat with Special Love's Dave Smith



Calendar Alert: "Fun"-Raisers

Help us put the "fun" in fundraiser by joining us for one (or more!) of our upcoming events. We promise a great time for participants *and* volunteers. Don't miss the excitement!

March (Date TBD), 2018
| **LAX4ACause Marathon**

Helmets off to the Southwestern Youth Association and the Chantilly Youth

area charities. Last year's event was fantastic, honoring one of our own lacrosse-playing campers, Tatum. Stop by and be amazed at the energy and enthusiasm of these kids. Centreville High School, VA; www.syasports.org/lacrosse/lax-for-a-cause

April 13, 2018 | Special Love's Casino Royale!

Spend a fun-filled evening playing casino games (with "funny money"), dining on delectable food, bidding on spectacular auction items, and dancing to the popular band Retrospect. Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, McLean, VA

April 7, 2018 | Buzzing for Change Head-Shaving

Time for a new hairstyle? We have just the answer. George Washington University's Alpha Phi Omega chapter

once again is hosting a "buzzing" event on campus to benefit Special Love. George Washington University, Washington, DC; www.facebook.com/GWUB4C



May 5, 2018 | 7th Annual IBEW Local 26 Poker Run

Special Love's good friends at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26 are planning for their 7th (yes, 7th!) exciting poker run through the scenic byways of Maryland and Virginia. Riders are welcome — by bike or by car — and so are sponsors! www.ibewlocal26.org



Mark your calendar now for Special Love's Casino Royale on April 13, 2018!

THANK YOU, 2017 Casino Royale Major Sponsors

High Roller
E&G Group

Viva Las Vegas Beverage Sponsor
FD Associates Inc.

Double or Nothing Benefactor
Goldin & Stafford

Beginner's Luck Patrons
Borger Management
Clark Construction Group
Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.
Walter P Moore
Offit Kurman

Gaming Table Sponsors
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JLL Capital Markets
McKissack & McKissack
MedStar Health
PGN Architects
Turner Construction

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Bank of Clarke County
Hariton, Mancuso &
Jones, PC
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Kastle Systems
Leach Wallace Associates
The McGrath Law Group
Revere Bank
Scott-Long Construction



Association for teaming once again to host a wonderful lacrosse marathon to benefit

The Inner Cure: A Unique Workbook for Kids with Cancer

"During these difficult times, we believe we all need an inner strength. Sure, you have Mom and Dad, doctors, nurses, and friends to help, but during these bad times, the only person who is going to determine the fight, how long we battle in these bad times, is you," write Tom and Sheila Baker, Special Love's founders, in



Special Love founders and authors Tom and Sheila Baker

their new book, *The Inner Cure*.

"Our thoughts for this book have come from being associated for 35 years with children and teens fighting cancer," the Bakers explain. "They are the most courageous and toughest people we know. They are our heroes. They don't give up and they enjoy life to the fullest."

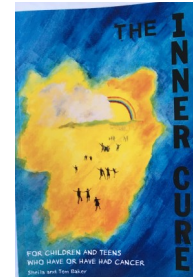
For Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September, Special Love introduced *The Inner Cure* to its community.

Familiar to many who know Special Love's programs, the Bakers often will show up at weekend camps, BRASS Camp for siblings, and major fundraisers, and they're always at Camp Fantastic. Living through the loss of their daughter Julie to lymphoma in 1976 and given their many years in deep conversations with Special Love's

campers and volunteers, the couple discovered consistent themes.

"Our hope is that this book not only helps children and teens to fight cancer, but it helps the family to understand what they are going through or are about to go through, and to join in the fight," the Bakers say. "We know patients must deal with medication, radiation, and chemotherapy. All of this is part of the OUTER CURE. But you can never be totally cured until you have the INNER CURE. And the only one that can administer that is YOU!"

Amazon offers *The Inner Cure* for \$10.00. All proceeds benefit Special Love's programs.



For the Love of Horses — and the Support Beam Foundation

Nothing beats seeing the smile of a child with cancer first learning to ride a horse. Joy, relief, a sense of accomplishment, magic. It's one of the bonds made at camp that pediatric cancer patients never forget.

Thanks to the Support Beam Foundation, dozens of Special

Love's campers had the chance to take their first



Many campers spend smile-filled hours with their favorite horses

little deeper, knowing I wanted to have more direct involvement with the kids," Levin explains. "We noticed that Special Love hosted monthly events. It all just came together at the right time."

Through his foundation, Levin and Pick first helped fund and volunteered at Octoberfest, providing woodworking kits. "The campers wanted me to hold their wooden birdhouses while they nailed them together," Levin laughs "My thumb was three times larger when I left."

Today, Levin lives along the water in Annapolis. He's in the process of building a reef to repopulate the Chesapeake Bay with oysters, adding to his philanthropic efforts.

"It's so rewarding and feels good to give back," Levin says. "I get so much pleasure from supporting the kids at camp." He pauses, then asks excitedly, "Hey, maybe they can come explore the oyster reef some day?"

When Levin volunteered with another organization, he met an eight-year-old battling cancer. That moment changed his perspective: "I wanted to have a bigger impact."

ride at Camp Fantastic. The half-dozen oh-so-gentle horses made their way to camp in

August, coordinated by horse therapy expert Lori Cordova, the volunteer head of the camp stables.

Based in Maryland, the Support Beam Foundation was launched by Rick Levin several years ago. Levin is the founder and former owner of the urban lifestyle fashion chain DTLR, or Downtown Locker Room. The foundation has built playgrounds and gyms in inner cities.

But a few years ago, when

Levin was volunteering with an organization that provides colorful surgical mask covers to pediatric patients, he met an eight-year-old battling cancer. That moment changed his perspective. He knew he wanted to do more to help, "to have a bigger, hands-on impact," he explains.

Levin's assistant, Christine Pick, knew a young man undergoing cancer treatment whose sister attended Special Love's BRASS Camp.

"Christine started digging a

Survey Says: "BRASS Camp Is Fun and Stress-Free"

"When you're fighting childhood cancer, things are either extremely important or unimportant," wrote one parent of a pediatric cancer patient in response to a survey about Special Love's siblings camp. "BRASS Camp enables siblings to rise to the 'extremely important' category. My two cancer sibs gained friendship and camaraderie from BRASS at a time when they were in short supply."

As part of her doctoral studies at Clemson University, perennial BRASS and Camp Fantastic volunteer Donna Gregory decided to study BRASS Camp

and BRASS Weekend (for Brothers And SiSters) to identify areas for improvement.

Gregory is the chief of the Recreation Therapy Section of the NIH Clinical Center's Rehabilitation Medicine Department.

"I believe we have a strong finger on the pulse of the needs of siblings, and my research validated much of what we already knew," she explains.

The program attributes that ranked high in importance? Not surprisingly, "BRASS camp is a fun and stress-free environment" and "BRASS Camp is a supportive place for campers to talk about the

cancer experience."

Several areas did reveal a need for more conversation, Gregory admits: first, increasing awareness of BRASS through information from home hospitals and, second, providing transportation to and from camp. (Some parents prefer to personally deliver their children to camp.) The latter two fell into the "Possible Overkill" category of the study.

"BRASS is near and dear to my heart," says Gregory. "I helped get it started and helped create the weekend program. I've seen the positive impact the camp has on siblings, and



Camp Counselor Donna Gregory (center) will do just about anything to make campers smile. She conducted the survey of the BRASS community.

it's good to now have data that says we've created what siblings need. I'm actually surprised there aren't more siblings-only camps."

Gregory sent her online survey to 130 BRASS families; 43 percent responded.

An Essay: A Bright Spot in an Often Dark Journey

By Dr. Diana Winthrow,
Camp Counselor

For the past six nights, I have slept on a bottom bunk and awoken to the view of the Shenandoah Valley out my window. I have shared a space smaller than my bedroom with

who works largely with administrative data, I have also benefited from seeing first-hand the population whose lives we hope to improve with our research.

My commitment to oncology camps is strong – I could spend pages trying to convey all that I have witnessed and learned

from my time there.

But today, two observations strike me as most important to share with you:

Cancer harms long term. Oncology camps do not only cater to patients on active treatment, but continue to serve campers into young adulthood and as they transition to counselors. The resilience

and strength of the survivors are immediately clear as you walk through camp. Unfortu-



"Camp is FUN," says camp counselor and epidemiologist Dr. Diana Winthrow, whose commitment to oncology camps "is strong." Camper Tatum (in tutu) agrees.

five people – my co-counselors and three 11- and 12-year-old survivors of childhood cancer.

For the girls, it was their first time at Camp Fantastic. Within hours of their arrival, one had declared, "Camp Fantastic is AWESOME" in Sharpie on a quilt square she was decorating while waiting to check in with the medical staff. Within days, the three had declared themselves best friends. On the second to last night of camp, they all performed solo vocal performances to a cheering crowd at the talent show and took turns hugging each other as they stepped off stage. And as they got on the bus home, they exchanged contact information through tear-blurred eyes.

...In my five years volunteering at oncology camps, I have seen many of the benefits that camp provides to campers and their families. As an epidemiologist

"At camp, kids are no longer defined by their cancer. Instead, they can choose an identity they prefer for the week — theatrical, athletic, or artistic."

nately, hearing loss, limited mobility, visual impairment, amputation and signs of graft vs. host disease are also evident. Depression, anxiety, behavioral problems, learning deficits, and fertility issues reveal themselves over time.

While late effects and survivorship research have been gaining attention and funding in the last decade, there is nothing quite like 150 or more pediatric cancer survivors standing around a flagpole, or lining up for meds before dinner, to illustrate that there is more work to be done.

Camp heals long term.

While camp can't necessarily heal the physical side effects of cancer, I am certain it helps children and families cope with them. At camp, kids are no longer defined by their cancer. Instead, they can choose an identity they prefer for the week – theatrical, athletic, or artistic.

It was through a conventional camp in my childhood that I learned that despite dreading Physical Education class, and often being last picked for teams at school, I could win a windsurfing award at camp. That little construction paper award gave me the confidence to embark on other athletic pursuits as I grew. For kids whose experience at school has inevitably been affected by the "otherness" of their cancer, these opportunities to overcome challenges and fears can be doubly important. The therapeutic value of camp goes so much further, too: Through camp, patients, survivors, and their families build a community of support that continues to serve them long past remission. Young children who have not had a chance to go to school learn those key kindergarten skills of sharing and taking turns. The list goes on.

I can't help but take a reflective tone when trying to convey why oncology camps mean so much to me, and to many peo-

Capital One Hosts First Fun-'n-Games Pop-Up Camp!



An afternoon filled with virtual reality games, a photo booth with crazy props, "improv" acting behind a one-way mirror, office-circling scooters, volcanic crafts, bowls filled with gummy bears, all the pizza you care to eat, and massages for parents? That's our kind of party.

Thank you, Capital One, for hosting Special Love's first "pop-up camp" at the firm's Vienna, Virginia, offices!

Stay tuned, families. More pop-up camps are in the works!



ple I know. But most of all, of course, camp is FUN. It is a bright spot in an often dark journey. To see us in action, check the highlights reel from Camp Fantastic 2017 at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYN9MNDem-Q.





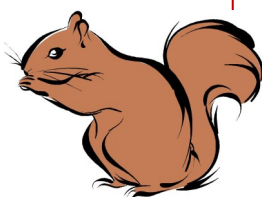
117 Youth Development Court | Winchester, VA 22602
31 Center Drive, Box 2062 | Bethesda, MD 20892
888.930.2707 | www.speciallove.org



Top: Pumpkin-carving mania at Octoberfest



Bottom: The cape-clad Washington REIT team powers up SuperHero Day at Camp Fantastic.



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CFC # 49642 | CVC # 100078



BackBurner | Mark Your Calendars for Loads of Fun, Campers!

December 3, 2017 | Special Love's Holiday Bash | Silver bells, candy canes, elf hats, and red-and-green everything — they'll all be there to help celebrate the season. Join us! Franconia Fire Department, Franconia, VA.



January 5-7, 2018 | Fantastic Winter Weekend | Skiing, snowboarding, tubing, or just relaxing by the fire. Your pick! Teens will



head to Bryce Resort for a day of fun in the snow and then back to the 4-H Center for games. 4-H Center, Front Royal, VA.

January 12-15, 2018 | Ski Family Weekend |

Gather the family for a holiday weekend on the slopes in the popular Canaan Valley. Activities are

available for all ages for camp-eligible families. Pack your winter wear (and your good spirits) for a phenomenal winter break together. Canaan Valley Resort, Davis, WV.

March 9-11, 2018 | BRASS Weekend | Get that BRASS feeling when siblings convene at camp for bonding (i.e., yucking it up) in the early spring. Be prepared for loads of fun, brothers and sisters. 4-H Center, Front Royal, VA.



Time to plan for Special Love's Holiday Bash on December 3. A perfect start to the festive season!



Special Love, Inc., is a non-profit, IRS 50(c)(3) organization, and all donations are tax-deductible. Financial statements are available upon request and are on file with the Secretary of State, Maryland, and the Division of Consumer Affairs, Virginia.

