



Top and middle: Jeff with camp friends Chrissy and Katie at the first Camp Fantastic and at last year's session; with his family Brady, Julie, Camryn, and TJ.

30 Years & 30 Heroes

Hero #30 of 30

“A camp for kids with cancer.” Jeff still remembers hearing those words, not long after he was told that the osteosarcoma that had invaded his bones was likely to cost him one of his legs. Jeff was one of the 29 kids who came to the very first edition of Camp Fantastic in 1983. Neither Jeff nor the rest of the campers or inaugural staff knew quite what to expect, but what they got was nothing short of magical. Jeff remembers it all in fragments: the bus that brought the campers into the 4-H Center, only to stall halfway up the hill (the staff sprang into action to carry both luggage and campers up to the lodge); the snipe hunt that ended in a surprise rock concert (a memory that was relived at Camp Fantastic’s 30th anniversary in 2012); Dr. Pizzo, our first camp doctor, leading the med staff while dressed in Bermuda shorts and a camp t-shirt; a multitude of camp activities, from horses to hiking and archery to arts and crafts; and the roaring campfire that ended every day.

Jeff spends his days doing many of those same activities, only now it’s with his three children, who he calls “true blessings.” Like many former campers and staff, Jeff made his cancer experience an integral part of his career—he is a co-founder of AbilityPro, a leading prosthetics company in the Greater Washington area. He credits his camp mentors for the compassion and caring that he brings to his job and passes on to his patients:

“For that first year, and for every one of the past 30 years, Camp Fantastic was a place where kids could be campers, not cancer patients. And that’s all thanks to the vision of Tom and Sheila Baker as well as to their late daughter, Julie, who was treated for cancer in 1976 and was Special Love’s first angel. They allowed young cancer patients like me to go from being a victim to being a survivor.”

To support more heroes like Jeff, [click here](#), visit us on [Facebook](#), or call 888-930-2707!

