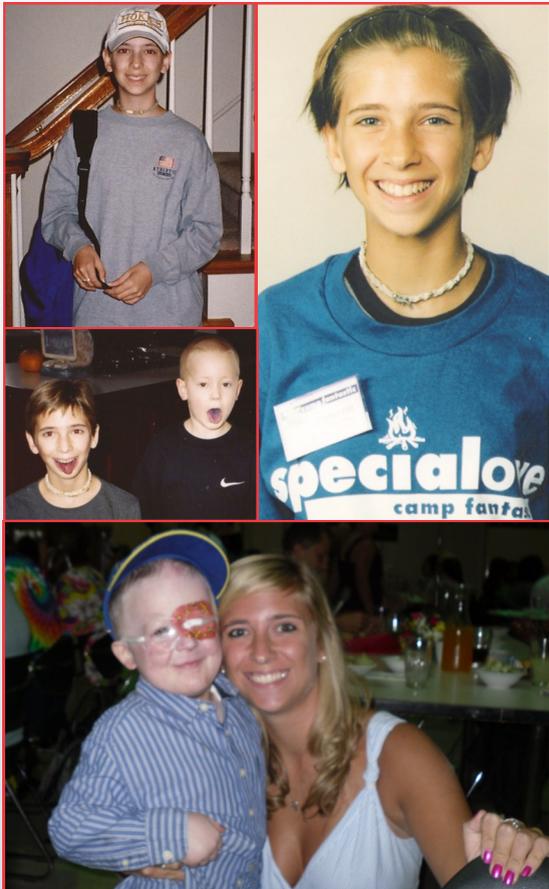


30 Years & 30 Heroes

Hero #14 of 30



Clockwise from top left: Jen during her cancer treatments in 1997; her first camp portrait in '98; with Ale (our Hero #4) at Camp Fantastic in '99, and with fellow camper Ryan McGee in '97.

Jen didn't want anything to do with camp when she first heard about it. "After diagnosis [for leukemia]," she recalls, "I never wanted to be around sick kids because in my head, that meant it was real and I was sick, too. Denial worked for me until my parents pushed me out of the house, with my best friend in tow, to Fantastic Friends Weekend in 1998. When I got home, my parents could not get me to stop talking about it. They asked if I still didn't want to go to Camp Fantastic and I replied, 'Duh! Of course I'm going!' After that weekend, I fell in love with Special Love."

That first camp weekend (and the following visit to Camp Fantastic that same year) was the beginning of a long and busy relationship between Jen and Special Love, one that has stretched to the present day and has included teen outings, our young adults (YAC) program and, most recently, her role as board liaison for our Youth Board. The Youth Board was created in 2007 and provides input and energy to Special Love's camps and fundraising events. Jen is a teacher in Blacksburg, VA and is currently part of an increased outreach effort to the Roanoke Valley area, an effort that is already attracting more kids and families to camp from that area. Jen concludes,

"Special Love has provided me with a new family that truly understands what it means to be a cancer kid. I cannot put into words what Camp and Special Love mean to me. There is a very special place in my heart for my camp family that can never be replaced. I am so thankful that my parents shoved me out the door for that first Friends Weekend; I've been thanking them ever since!"

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

 **Special Love**
for children with cancer