



*(From top left): Jamie today and throughout her many camp years, including 1987 (top right).*

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# 30 Years & 30 Heroes

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**Jamie's** introduction to Camp Fantastic could not have come at a better time for her and her family. In 1987, Jamie had relapsed with leukemia after being cancer-free for two years and considered nearly cured. For her family, the news was understandably devastating and terrifying. Ironically, for Jamie who was almost 12 and ready for her first year of middle school, being told she would lose all of her hair was the scariest part. "The possibility that (hello) I may not survive never actually crossed my mind," she remembers.

But Camp Fantastic was a place where almost everyone was bald (and wig free) and they danced, laughed, and truly understood. Jamie says, "**When you have cancer, suddenly your family and friends aren't sure how to approach you and they tend to tiptoe around you. That can be devastating for a kid, because all you want is to be normal.**" But camp counselors and staff were not afraid and genuinely wanted to better understand what the kids were going through. Jamie and her fellow campers could (and would) talk for hours about their cancer without worrying about scaring each other away. Jamie says that's what kept her family coming back year after year and also led Jamie to be a camp counselor years later. Jamie relapsed again at 18 in her first semester of college (she says her cancer always had great timing). She had a bone marrow transplant, which had its own set of challenges, and joined Special Love's Young Adults with Cancer (YAC) Weekends.

Thankfully, Jamie has been cancer free since 1995 and now works and lives in Washington, DC, where she is pursuing (and has almost finished) a Masters in Public Health. She recalls, "**Through my relapses and everything else, the staff, fellow campers (YACers now), and families were there for my family and me. They've played such an important role throughout our lives.**"

 **30th Anniversary**  
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