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[Camps and Retreats for Families and Children Affected by Cancer](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 12/2015

Summer camps, week-long retreats, or weekend gatherings can be a wonderful way for children, adults, and families to come together to experience new adventures, find support, and learn something new about themselves.

The following list highlights just some of the numerous national and international camps and retreats offered throughout the year. Often, these programs cost campers and their families very little, if anything. Talk with an oncology nurse or social worker to learn more about camps, [support groups](#) [3], and other programs that help people affected by cancer connect with each other.

Most camps offer full-time care for children with special needs. Some have doctors and nurses on staff to provide medical care to campers when necessary. However, if you or family members are considering attending a local or distant camp or retreat, talk with your doctor first.

[Angel Foundation's Camp Angel, Minnesota](#) [4]

Camp Angel (*previously Kids Kamp*) provides three days of therapeutic activities for children and teens (Kindergarten-18) with a parent or caregiver living with cancer. Camp provides a unique opportunity for children and teens to have fun and enjoy camp activities, along with intentional and meaningful activities lead by trained volunteers and staff. Teens (13-18) stay overnight and challenge themselves to foster camaraderie and a willingness to work together.

[Arizona Camp Sunrise and Sidekicks, Arizona](#) [5]

Arizona Camp Sunrise offers special programs for children who have or have had cancer. The Sidekicks program is specifically for the siblings of children with cancer. Arizona Camp Sunrise offers weeklong, residential summer camps, day camps, weekend retreats, teen trips, and other year-round special events.

[Camp Carefree, North Carolina](#) [6]

Camp Carefree offers a free, 1-week camping experience to children with chronic illnesses, including cancer. They also run camps for siblings of chronically ill children, as well as a week for children with a sick parent.

[Camp Fantastic, Virginia](#) [7]

Camp Fantastic is a weeklong camp for children ages 7 to 17 who have received cancer-specific treatment within the past 3 years. Camp Fantastic provides classes, recreation, themed adventures, campfires, and other activities and a full staff of medical caregivers.

[Camp Friendship, Maryland](#) [8]

Camp Friendship is a free, weeklong residential camp for children with cancer. The [Carol Jean Cancer Foundation](#) [9] also offers programs for children who have a parent with cancer and siblings of children with cancer. The Teens “N” Twenties (T”N”T) program is for older teens and young adults, ages 18 to 25, touched by cancer and includes a travel camp, weekend programs, and support activities.

[Camp Kesem, throughout the United States](#) [10]

Organized by college students, Camp Kesem is a weeklong, sleep-away summer camp for children with a parent who has or has had cancer. The camps are held on college campuses throughout the United States. Each of the camps is organized and operated by a group of student leaders.

[Camp Mak-A-Dream, Montana](#) [11]

Camp Mak-A-Dream is a medically supervised, cost-free camp for children, teens, and young adults with cancer. Camp Mak-A-Dream also offers a camp for siblings who have a brother or sister with cancer and hosts retreats for adults with cancer.

[Camp Quality, throughout the United States](#) [12]

Camp Quality serves children with cancer and their families by providing year-round programs, experiences, and companionship, at no cost. Currently, there are 15 camps established in 12 states. The camps offer exciting activities, a chance to develop new friendships, and opportunities to help children develop courage and emotional strength. Some camps also offer these opportunities to siblings.

[Camp Rainbow Gold, Idaho](#) [13]

Camp Rainbow Gold is a free summer camp for kids with cancer, as well as siblings and families. These camps take place in the Sawtooth National Forest near Ketchum, Idaho, and give campers the opportunity to fish, hike, do crafts, and make lasting friendships. Camp Rainbow Gold also provides a college scholarship program and a teen support group.

[Camp Rap-A-Hope, Alabama](#) [14]

Camp Rap-A-Hope is a weeklong summer camp in Mobile, Alabama for children and teenagers, ages 7 to 17, who have or have had cancer. The camp is free and provides opportunities for swimming, kayaking, horseback riding, arts and crafts, and other fun activities.

[Camp Sunrise, Maryland](#) [15]

Maintained and sponsored by Johns Hopkins Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center's Division of Pediatric Oncology, Camp Sunrise is a week-long, overnight summer camp held in early August in Maryland, for children who have been diagnosed with or have survived cancer.

[Camp Sunshine, Georgia](#) [16]

Camp Sunshine offers a variety of free programs throughout the year that give children with cancer who live in or are treated in the state of Georgia the opportunity to enjoy activities like swimming, horseback riding, and arts and crafts and make new friends. There are also programs specifically for siblings and parents.

[Camp Sunshine, Maine](#) [17]

Founded in 1984, Camp Sunshine provides free of charge retreats that incorporate respite, recreation and support, while enabling hope and promoting joy, for children with life-threatening illnesses and their families through the various stages of a child's illness. On-site medical and psychosocial support is included. Bereavement sessions are also offered for families who have experienced the death of a child from a supported illness.

[Cancer Services of New Mexico's Family Cancer Retreats, New Mexico](#) [18]

Family Cancer Retreat is a free, 3-day educational retreat for adults with cancer or adult survivors and their primary care giver. The event, which occurs twice a year, includes a combination of educational workshops and informal discussion sessions with others who are coping with some of the same issues.

[First Descents, throughout the United States](#) [19]

First Descents offers a number of weekend and weeklong outdoor adventure programs for young adults, ages 18-39, with cancer and young adult cancer survivors. First Descents' multi-day adventure programs are centered on whitewater kayaking, rock climbing, or surfing and are free

of cost to all first-time participants.

[Harmony Hill, Washington](#) [20]

Harmony Hill, located on the south shore of the Olympic Peninsula's Hood Canal, offers a Cancer Program that address the psychological, physical, and spiritual needs of people with cancer. The Cancer Program consists of 3-day retreats, offsite workshops, and a webinar series for people living with cancer, survivors, family members, and caregivers.

[The Hole in the Wall Gang, Connecticut](#) [21]

The Hole in the Wall Gang, located in Ashford, Connecticut, is a camp founded by Paul Newman in 1988 that offers summer programs, family weekend programs, and other opportunities for seriously ill children and their families throughout the Northeast, free of charge. The Hole in the Wall Gang is just one camp offered by the [SeriousFun Children's Network](#) [22].

[The Lighthouse Family Retreat, Florida and North Carolina](#) [23]

The Lighthouse is a family retreat for children with cancer. The program provides a place of hope and renewal to families facing the challenge of cancer and allows them to have fun and relax. Some highlights of the program are family-centered beach games, arts and crafts, parent support groups, and evening activities that include a special night out for the parents.

[Reel Recovery, Programs throughout the United States](#) [24]

Reel Recovery is a fly fishing retreat for men of all ages recovering from all types of cancer. It provides an opportunity to receive professional fly fishing instruction, share stories, and make friends.

[River Discovery, Idaho](#) [25]

River Discovery offers river adventures for survivors of childhood, teen, and adult cancers for free. These programs, which last between one and 6 days, give survivors the chance to hike, swim, raft, paddle board, and kayak while learning about natural history, canyon history, and camping skills. Activities can be customized to accommodate any fitness level and no experience is required.

[Smith Center for the Healing Arts, Washington, D.C.](#) [26]

Smith Center offers retreats and programs for people with cancer and their caregivers. The Center facilitates several weeklong, residential retreats each year in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

More Information

[For Children](#) [27]

[For Teens](#) [28]

[For Young Adults](#) [29]

[Finding Support and Information](#) [30]

Additional Resource

Ped-Onc Resource Center: [Cancer Kid Camps](#) [31]

Links

- [1] <http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/children/camps-and-retreats-families-and-children-affected-cancer>
- [2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>
- [3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25383>
- [4] <http://www.mnangel.org/fct/campangel>
- [5] <http://www.azcampsunrise.org/>
- [6] <http://www.campcarefree.org/>
- [7] <http://www.speciallove.org/camp-fantastic/>
- [8] <http://www.cjcf4kids.org/campFriendship/index.asp>
- [9] <http://www.cjcf4kids.org/default.asp>
- [10] <http://campkesem.org/find-a-camp>
- [11] <http://www.campdream.org/>
- [12] <http://www.campqualityusa.org/>
- [13] <http://camprainbowgold.org/>
- [14] <http://www.camprapahope.org/>
- [15] http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/kimmel_cancer_center/centers/pediatric_oncology/camp_sunrise/
- [16] <http://www.mycampsunshine.com/>
- [17] <https://www.campsunshine.org/>
- [18] <http://www.cancerservicesnm.org/programs/retreat.php>
- [19] <https://firstdescents.org/>
- [20] <http://harmonyhill.org/node/23>
- [21] <http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/Page.aspx?pid=471>
- [22] <http://www.seriousfunnetwork.org/camps-and-programs>
- [23] <http://www.lighthousefamilyretreat.org/>
- [24] <http://reelrecovery.org/>
- [25] <http://www.riverdiscovery.org/>
- [26] <http://www.smithcenter.org/programs-retreats.html#.UCFdyk1IT4Y>
- [27] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25114>
- [28] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25116>
- [29] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25117>
- [30] <http://www.cancer.net/node/30666>
- [31] <http://www.ped-onc.org/cfissues/camps.html>