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Camps and Retreats for Families and Children Touched by Cancer

A Resource List

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 offers just some of the thousands of national and international camps and retreats available during the coming year. This list is intended as information only; to learn more about camps support groups [1], and other ways to connect with others, talk with an oncology nurse or social worker.

Most camps offer full-time care for people with special needs, and some include staff oncology doctors and nurses who provide medical care to campers when necessary. And to make these camps/retreats accessible to as many people as possible, many are available at low or no cost. If you or family members are considering attending a local or distant camp or retreat, talk with your doctor first.

American Cancer Society (ACS), High Plains [2]

ACS High Plains Division provides information about free summer camps for children with cancer. The camps are located in Kansas, Hawaii, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas.

ACS, New England [3]

ACS provides information about three New England camp programs located in Colebrook, Connecticut; Ellsworth, Maine; and North Scituate, Rhode Island.

Angel Foundation's Kid's Kamp, Minnesota [4]

Facing Cancer Together, a program of Angel Foundation, offers a free camp for children ages five to 18 who have a parent with cancer. Facing Cancer Together offers education and support programs for the whole family throughout the year.

Arizona Camp Sunrise and Sidekicks, Arizona [5]

Established by the ACS, Arizona Camp Sunrise offers special programs for children who have or have had cancer and Sidekicks, programs 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, Texas [6]

A cancer support group from the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, The Anderson Network, sponsors Camp CareFree. The Anderson Network consists of more than 1,300 cancer survivors. Camp CareFree is a weekend retreat open to any M.D. Anderson patient age 25 or older who receives medical clearance.

Camp Kesem, throughout the United States [7]

Organized by college students, Camp Kesem is a weeklong, sleep-away summer camp for children ages six to 13 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 [8]

Camp Mak-A-Dream is operated by Children's Oncology Camp Foundation. It is a medically supervised, cost-free camp for children (ages six to 13), teens (ages 14 to 18), and young adults (ages 19 to 25) with cancer. Camp Mak-A-Dream also offers a camp for siblings ages six to 17 who have a brother or sister with cancer and hosts retreats for adults with cancer each fall.

Camp Quality, throughout the United States [9]

Camp Quality offers a summer camp, as well as year-round support programs for children with cancer. Currently, there are 14 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.

Camp Rap-A-Hope, Alabama [10]

Camp Rap-A-Hope is a weeklong summer camp for children and teenagers ages seven to 17 who have or have had cancer. The camp is offered for free to the campers and their families, and provides opportunities for swimming, kayaking, horseback riding, and other fun activities.

Camp Sunshine, Georgia [11]

Camp Sunshine is a week-long retreat for children with cancer and their families. Camp Sunshine's focus is on alleviating the strain of this illness on both the child with cancer and other family members.

Cancer Services of New Mexico's Family Cancer Retreats, New Mexico [12]

Family Cancer Retreat is a free, three-day educational retreat for adults with cancer and their families. The event includes a combination of educational workshops and family activities. The retreat is held twice a year in Glorieta, New Mexico.

First Descents, throughout the United States [13]

First Descents is a free, seven-day kayak camp for young adults with cancer. First Descents uses kayaking and other outdoor activities to help campers face challenges associated with living with cancer in a fun and supportive environment. Other outdoor activities include rafting, challenge courses, horseback riding, and teamwork exercises. Learn more about First Descents [14].

Harmony Hill, Washington [15]

Harmony Hill, located on the south shore of the Olympic Peninsula's Hood Canal, offers weekend, residential cancer retreats for people with cancer and their loved ones.

The Hole in the Wall Gang, Connecticut [16]

The Hole in the Wall Gang is a camp founded by Paul Newman in 1988 that offers summer programs, fall reunions, parent support programs, and other outreach programs. The Hole in the Wall Gang is one camp within the Association of Hole in the Wall Camps [17].

Kokolulu Cancer Retreats, Hawaii and Bali [18]

Kokolulu Cancer Retreats offer group and personal retreats for adults with cancer focusing on integrative medicine and mind, body, and spirit connections.

Life Beyond Cancer, Texas [19]

Life Beyond Cancer is a four-day retreat for women cancer survivors focusing on issues related to wellness after cancer treatment, along with self and community advocacy.

The Lighthouse Family Retreat, Georgia [20]

The Lighthouse is a seaside family retreat for children with cancer. The purpose of The Lighthouse Family Retreat is to provide a place of hope and renewal to families facing challenges and allow them to escape for a week of fun and rejuvenation. Some highlights of the program are family-centered beach games, arts and crafts, parent support groups, and evening activities that include a luau, talent show, spa treatment time, and a special night out for the parents.

Reel Recovery, Programs throughout the United States [21]

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 [22]

River Discovery specializes in river-based programming where participants address the emotional and physical challenges cancer survivors face after treatment.

Smith Farm Center for the Healing Arts, Washington, DC [23]

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

Special Love, Inc., Virginia [24]

Special Love provides camps, support networks, and other unique experiences for children with cancer, their siblings, and families.

More Information

Cancer in Children [25]

Cancer in Teens [26]

Cancer in Young Adults [27]

Additional Resources

Pediatric-Oncology Resource Center: Cancer Kid Camps [28]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/node/25368
[2] http://www.cancer.org/MyACS/HighPlainsHawaiiPacific/ProgramsandServices/high-plains-camps
[3] http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@newengland/documents/document/americancancersocietysummercam.pdf
[4] http://www.mnangel.org/events/calendar-of-events
[5] http://www.azcampsunrise.org/
[6] http://www.mdanderson.org/patient-and-cancer-information/guide-to-md-anderson/patient-and-family-support/anderson-network/support-programs/anderson-network-support-programs-camp-carefree.html
[7] http://campkesem.org/find-a-camp/
[8] http://www.campdream.org/
[9] http://campqualityusa.com/
[10] http://www.camprapahope.org/
[11] http://www.mycampsunshine.com/
[12] http://www.cancerservicesnm.org/programs/retreat.php
[13] http://www.firstdescents.org/
[14] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Advocacy+and+Policy/Patient+Advocacy+and+ASCO/Advocate+and+Survivor+Voices/Patient+Advocate+Guest+Columns+and+Podcasts/First+Descents%3A+Free+Outdoor+Adventure+T
[15] http://www.harmonyhill.org/personal-retreats
[16] http://www.holeinthewallgang.org/
[17] http://www.holeinthewallcamps.org/
[18] http://www.cancer-retreats.org/
[19] http://lifebeyondcancer.org/retreats.html
[20] http://www.lighthousefamilyretreat.org/
[21] http://reelrecovery.org/home.php
[22] http://www.riverdiscovery.org
[23] http://www.smithcenter.org/programs-retreats.html#.UCFdyk1IT4Y
[24] http://www.speciallove.org/
[25] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Children
[26] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Teens
[27] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Young+Adults
[28] http://www.acor.org/ped-onc/cfissues/camps.html