

# Camp Starlight

*Magic. Every Time A Child Smiles. Magic. Every Time A Friend Is Made.  
Magic. Every Moment We Spend At Camp. Magic.*

## Quarterly News

Issue 1 - 2013/2014



### Non-profit Status

What great news to receive on Camp Starlight's 15th year! 501(c)(3) status!  
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### Commission Members

Camp Starlight includes a specially crafted team with true professional quality.

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### Volunteer Spotlight

Jenny Block puts her design and dance skills to serious use.

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### Extraordinary Achievement Award

Joanne Brown - the "Jill of all trades?"

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### HIV/AIDS 101 - With Tyler Curry

"The Needle Prick Project" delivered more than just a basic education this year...it brought many of us even closer together.

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### "Camp" Also Means Family

There's nothing quite like...the "Camp Starlight Connection." A year of growth for Camp Starlight's family.

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## Camp's 15th Year!

*It all started with a simple idea and a desire to serve. After meeting so many kids that were in desperate need of a particular kind of freedom, support, and services, Katie Hennessy (then an outreach worker with Oregon and SW Washington Women's Intercommunity AIDS Resource) told her sister-in-law about the need she saw for a camp for kids infected with and affected by HIV.*

In August 1999, only seventeen months later, the research was done; the proposal was crafted; and the support was secured, under the direction of what was then called the Camp Starlight Advisory Council, Camp Starlight became a reality. Forty-three kids attended that year and the next year that number rose to more than sixty.

The heart of Camp always has been and continues to be the connection between the volunteers and the kids and the magic that this kind of community creates. Those who volunteer at Camp Starlight find



**A couple of our more senior campers, getting ready to celebrate one of Camp Starlight's milestones. "Sing a song, Camp Starlight. Sing a song!"**

themselves forever changed and often return year after year, awaiting the arrival of Camp — almost, if not just as much, as the campers themselves.

2013 was a big year for Camp. It achieved its own 501(c)(3) status and secured a remarkable new location. But those are the only changes to Camp Starlight, which remains steadfast and true to its mission and its campers. Camp is a place where art,

swimming, dance, shows, campfires, singing, laughter, games, and music fill the days of kids whose days aren't necessarily always so sunny.

Through generous donations, Camp Starlight makes sure that the kids who come to Camp have everything they need from clean clothes to warm bedding to balanced meals to medical care to mental health services to, of course, the most fun and support and freedom and joy and love that any kid could ask for.

Almost seventeen years ago, Hennessy had a simple, beautiful idea, and now the children of Oregon and Washington infected with and affected by HIV have a beautiful place to call home, a place of community, a place of magic, a place called Camp Starlight.

— Assistant Programs Director: Jenny Block

*(Extracted and edited from "For Kids Affected By HIV, Camp Starlight Is a Ray of Hope." 4/6/ 2013*

[www.edgenewyork.com](http://www.edgenewyork.com))

## 501(c)(3) APPROVED!

*When established in 1999, Camp Starlight did not operate as its own nonprofit organization. Instead, Camp Starlight initially sought sponsorship from other 501(c)(3) entities. Doing so ensured the donations to Camp Starlight were tax-deductible. Some of these fiscal sponsors included organizations such as Women's Intercommunity AIDS Resource (WIAR), Research & Education Group (R&E), and Cascade AIDS Project (CAP).*

*Obtaining our own 501(c)(3) had always been a long-term goal for Camp Starlight. The members of the Camp Starlight Commission wanted to see to it that the time and energy necessary for achieving this important status wouldn't take away from fundraising, planning for Camp, and connecting with families and our community.*

*In December of 2012, members of the Camp Commission took quite a leap to begin the process of taking full ownership of their beloved Camp Starlight, and became incorporated. With incorporation came planning, community and family outreach, and paperwork to complete – lots of paperwork! We produced applications, by-laws, articles of incorporation, and secured our insurance contract (just to name a few). No matter how grueling the task, we kept focused and motivated by what lay ahead.*

*In May of 2013 we received notification that our hard work and dedication had paid off; the application for 501(c)(3) non-profit status had been approved!*

*So, what does this mean to Camp Starlight? We can, more than ever, assure our community that we are creating a camp on our own terms and continue pursuing our own values, goals and mission. We foresee a more secure future and can continue answering a call that was conceived over 15 years ago. The call for our community to help meet the needs of families and children whose lives are impacted by HIV and AIDS.*

## Dr. Rebecca G. Block

*I was 7 years old the first time I went to summer camp. From the moment I stepped into my cabin, I knew camp was the place I belonged. I was a camper, then a counselor and then a department head. After moving across the country, I wondered if I would ever get to work at a camp again. Then I began working at the Women's Intercommunity AIDS Resource and learned they had just started Camp Starlight. That was in 1999.*



Stepping off the bus for my first year at Starlight was similar to my first year at camp as a child, magical. I was the Drama teacher that first year at Camp Starlight, a member of the Twinkle Team (mental health support team) the next and began my tenure as the Twinkle Team Director in my third year at

Camp Starlight. After my first year at Camp, I began working with the team of founders and planners to continue to develop Camp Starlight. I am so proud to be part of a group of dedicated and passionate volunteers. Camp Starlight is now a 501(c)(3) designated not-for-profit organization that continues to grow and thrive. The magic that is Camp Starlight grows with every year and with every camper, family and volunteer.

I am so honored to have the privilege to serve Camp Starlight, and to have the opportunity to learn and grow both personally and professionally. I hold the magic of Starlight inside me and seek to spread this light with everyone and everything I touch.

## Randall Bodkin

*If you would have told me nearly 12 years ago that being a camp counselor was going to change my life, I never would have believed you. I walked into my first summer at Camp Starlight in 2002 thinking that it was merely going to be a one-week experience that would give me the opportunity to work with kids. What I didn't know is that it would change my life forever.*



Having never gone to a sleep away camp as a child, I entered the camp world knowing nothing, except that I should maybe expect s'mores, cabins, and sing-a-longs of course.

What I ended up finding, however, was an environment where people take care of one another, where long-lasting friendships are created, and where being yourself and trying new things is strongly encouraged.

The sense of family, the amount of growth, and the ability to be one hundred percent yourself are things that keep me coming back to Camp Starlight year after year. Try to explain Camp to someone who has never been to Camp Starlight before...the idea of it all might seem a bit whimsical or magical. That's how it dawned on me, that part of what makes the Camp Starlight experience so special is the fact that only a small percentage of us really understand the impact it has.

It's not only the special bonds created between campers and counselors alike, but it's the lessons learned and the ability to give and share with others that truly make the Camp Starlight setting unlike any other. I know that I would not be the person I am today if not for my time at Camp Starlight. Starlight has allowed me to create lasting relationships with my campers and co-staff and has allowed me to find another place that I can call "home."

## Kit Noble

*My connection to Camp Starlight actually began back in the 1980's in New York City. I found I needed to do something to help at a time when stories of border babies in the hospitals were overwhelming to me.*



*These kids just needed some nurturing, some human contact other than the doctors and nurses who only had time to take care of their medical needs.*

I volunteered through an organization

called Northern Lights. One year they were contacted by Birch Summer Camp because they were looking for volunteers to be counselors at a camp for kids and caregivers who were impacted by HIV/AIDS. I became one of their counselors and continued until I moved to Portland.

Then, the universe aligned several people in the right place at the right time, to join Katie Hennessy of Woman's Intercommunity AIDS Resources in her quest to establish a similar camp for kids in the Portland area. Camp Starlight was born.

I was a head counselor for several years and helped throughout the year doing whatever was needed. In the beginning years we would find a way to help the kids with items they may have forgotten or just didn't have (e.g., warm coats or sleeping bags). We found ourselves collecting donations and getting in-kind donations so that we could provide even more for all of our kids when they arrive at Camp.

I am honored that our "store" is known as Kit's Kaboodle and I hope to be a part of Camp Starlight for as long as this magical place is needed.

Rebecca Block & Randall Bodkin





## Jenny Block

Meet Jenny Block, the camp dance teacher and so much more! Jenny spends her days at camp wearing colorful costumes and sharing dance with kids of all ages. Her million-dollar smile and warm personality motivate even the shyest of campers to try out a few new moves.

Jenny also serves as the co-host of “Night of 1,000 Stars”, camp’s infamous talent show. Wearing the most fabulous of evening gowns that would make Vanna White take notice, she MCs the night with equal parts humor and grace. Last year, on the final morning of camp, Jenny organized a “flash mob” where the entire camp performed the choreography they had been learning. It was a great way to end the week!

When Jenny is not at camp, she is always coming up with ideas to make next year even better. As an accomplished author, Jenny has written multiple articles published in the Huffington Post and other publications, promoting Camp Starlight and giving it national visibility. This country-wide exposure gave rise to new volunteers from as far away as New York! In addition, Jenny worked hard to make sure camp’s costume closet was over-flowing in 2013. Thanks to her, camp received costumes in all sizes ranging from princesses to ninja turtles. Many kids like to wear the costumes from dawn to dusk for no particular reason. This makes the dance stage a very entertaining place to be throughout the day. Nothing beats the sight of little Cinderellas and Power Rangers learning a dance to the most recent Top 40 hits!

Jenny appears to be hooked after her two summers with Camp Starlight. That’s a good thing for the kids counting down the weeks and days until next year. When they get off the bus, there Jenny will be, dancing in a rainbow tutu, welcoming each of them to the best week of the year.



## Joanne Brown

Please join us in congratulating Joanne Brown, who was the recipient of Camp Starlight’s first-ever Volunteer of The Year Award.

Since 2005, Joanne has served as a dedicated volunteer camp counselor, generously giving her time, attention, energy and heart to our campers, and lending her support to Camp by donating countless hours of her time to staff numerous fund-raisers and events over the years.

On top of all of this, Joanne really put the pedal to the metal in 2013. As a newly-elected member of the Camp Starlight Commission, Joanne lent her voice and perspective to Camp’s effort to becoming its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and threw herself into whatever job needed to be done to help Camp Starlight through the transition. Joanne worked tirelessly behind the scenes, serving as our Volunteer Coordinator to create a strong sense of community among our staff of volunteer counselors. She also took on the lion’s share of the administrative work that helped make Camp possible this past summer.

Her untiring commitment to the kids and community of Camp Starlight is inspiring to all of us. The Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Joanne during closing ceremonies on the final day of Camp 2013. Please join us in thanking and congratulating Joanne Brown!



## Tyler Curry

Camp Starlight welcomed Tyler Curry into our camp family this past year.

Tyler is a freelance writer and founder of The Needle Prick Project, a video, photo and editorial project designed to elicit open conversation on what it means to be HIV positive today. Tyler’s mission was to attend Camp Starlight for two days and allow volunteers to participate in his project by way of photos and stories.

Tyler also led our stigma session during volunteer orientation. He openly and beautifully shared his personal journey with us. What Tyler brought to volunteers, and what he brings to the national community, is an open conversation about stigma and HIV. He asks the hard questions. He makes us think, he sometimes makes us cry and he reminds us that we are all the same, regardless of our status.

A few weeks before camp, Tyler decided he wanted to experience camp to its fullest and signed on as a counselor for the week. He was assigned to the Twinkler cabin and as magic would have it, they were a perfect fit. Tyler shifted from working on his project to helping create a week “where the fight against HIV stigma is left to the adults.” The project could wait. There were Twinklers to care for, rumpuses to shake, ponies to ride, and arts to be crafted.

Camp Starlight is grateful for the love and care Tyler gave. He captured the magic on film and in words, and allowed the national community to have a peek into camp. Once his work was published, the requests to volunteer and the donations followed. Tyler’s writing and projects invite us all into the HIV conversation. He shows us there is nothing to fear, and he gives us hope that one day stigma will be nothing but a word. He gave Camp Starlight the greatest gift of all; a public voice for our kids and our camp. We are forever grateful.



# The Starlight Family is Here

**"It doesn't matter if this was your first year at Camp Starlight, or your 15th. You are all here right now. You are family."**

**— Dr. Rebecca G. Block**

*Camp Starlight is all about relationships and connection. It's about connecting families to camp, the kids to one another, and the volunteers to the kids and forming lasting, fulfilling relationships designed to serve the individuals involved and the community at large. Personally connecting with families who are impacted by HIV/AIDS is the first opportunity Camp Starlight has to establish a relationship.*

To begin establishing this connection, Camp Starlight volunteers attend a monthly networking meeting with case managers. Following the meeting, case managers are then able to provide families with information about Camp Starlight, as well as assist with camper applications. The case managers can then connect the interested families to the Camp Starlight Family Advocate, Sandi Cour Griffin.

This step is key because this allows the Family Advocate an opportunity to establish a personal connection with the family, allowing her to share Camp Starlight's history and answer any questions the family may have about the Camp Starlight

experience. It is also an excellent opportunity for the Family Advocate to get to know the family and the camper(s). In the past, we have noticed that this interaction reassures families that their children will have a fun and safe camp experience.

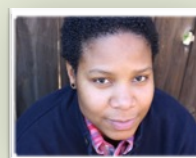
Camp Starlight prides itself on its commitment to diversity and supporting all families. In fact, family is what Camp Starlight is all about. From volunteers to donors to campers to the families of the campers, Camp Starlight is all one family committed to serving the needs of kids impacted by HIV.

As the time to leave for Camp Starlight approaches, the Family Advocate reconnects with families and answers any new questions that may arise. She also provides camp site information; drop off and pick up times and dates; and other relevant information. We want all of the families to know that we take a keen, personal interest in the well-being of their children. We want every camper to have a great and safe experience. To help ensure the latter, our camp location is kept confidential and is only provided to families and volunteers.

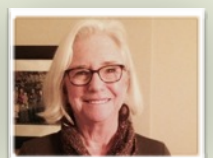
Throughout the year, Camp Starlight holds fundraising events and community outreach events for campers and their families, including events like a Portland Winterhawks game.

Connection and relationships are what make Camp Starlight such a special community. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing the smile on the faces of our campers as they get off the bus on the first day of camp. And the Camp Starlight Family Advocate is one of the many members of the Camp Starlight team that make that life-changing moment possible.

## Family Outreach Committee Leaders



**Ebony Frison**



**Sandi Cour Griffin**



# Camp Starlight 2013

*"There were Twinklers to care for, rumpuses to shake, ponies to ride, and arts to be crafted."*



*Hey Paul annnd Kelly  
(middle left and  
right)!!!*

*Hey WHAT???*

*ROCK THE BOAT!!!!*



*The pond provides a relaxing space  
for us to fish, examine aquatic  
critters, or simply catch up with  
some of our closest friends.*



*Some of us were  
already pros (clearly!)...  
but for many, this was a  
first ride to becoming  
knowledgeable  
equestrians!*



# In Appreciation

*There's a tradition at Camp of communing before each meal. The opportunity for praise and recognition emerges. This is our time to say "thank you" to each other. To everyone who contributes to this special week, we give our most sincere gratitude.*

## Red Ribbon Foundation

Jonathan Reitan

## NetRippers FC

Sammy Rodriguez

## Special Thank You

Rock and Pika

Mark Griffin

Alan Cassinelli

## Department Stores

Costco

Target

Fred Meyer

Big 5 Sporting Goods

Bi-Mart

## Corporate

Schwabe Williamson and Wyatt

Portland General Electric

Amica Mutual Insurance

Oregon Kickball Club

## Volunteers/Venues

Jesse Meida - Ace Hotel

Michelle Alonzo

Arthur Lindsey - Art Curator

Everyone Who Attends Camp

## Media

Statesman Journal

Huffington Post

PQ Monthly

Jenny on the Page

98.7 The Bull

Needle Prick Project

## ARTISTS:

AARON FRISBY, ASHLEY ANSON, ASHLEY CLARK, BARRY MCGEE, BRYCE KNIGHTS  
BWANA SPOONS, CHRIS CORALES, CHRIS JOHANSON, CHRIS OWEN, CHRIS PASTRAS  
CHRISSY PIPER, CLARE ROJAS, CLINT WOODSIDE, DAN GLUIBIZZI, DAVID ALLAN PETERS  
DEVON MALDONADO, EMILY SHUR, GABRIEL ANGEMI, GREGG KAPLAN, KRISTIN LAN  
JEFF KLING, JOHANNA JACKSON, JON HUMPHRIES, JONNY LUCZYCKI, LORI D., MADORA FREY  
MARCO SIAZ, MARK PENXA, MEL KADEL, NATHAN CORDERO, PATE GONZALES, PATRICK O'DELL  
RICH JACOBS, ROGER SELINER, RUSS POPE, SAGE CORSON, SARAH GOTTESDIENER  
STEVE SIAZ, THOMAS CAMPBELL, TIM KERR, TRAVIS MILLARD, VALESKA BACHAUER

MUSIC BY DJ JEN Q

## CAMP STARLIGHT

FOUNDED IN 1999, CAMP STARLIGHT PROVIDES A CARING, SAFE, SPIRITUAL AND FUN SUMMER CAMP  
EXPERIENCE FOR CHILDREN IN OREGON AND WASHINGTON WHOSE LIVES ARE AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT : [www.camp-starlight.org](http://www.camp-starlight.org)

## Camp Starlight's Continued Mission

*Founded in 1999, Camp Starlight provides a caring, safe, spiritual and fun week-long residential summer camp for children in Oregon and Washington whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS. Some of our campers are HIV+ themselves, while others have someone in their immediate family – a parent, a sibling, a care-taker – who is infected. Camp Starlight brings forth a sense of safety, acceptance and friendship so that these children can cast aside the worries and fears they may have around HIV and enjoy a rich, rewarding and fun summer camp experience in an environment free from the burdens of stigma or shame. Children come to Camp Starlight at no cost to their families, and enjoy a one-to-one ratio with a staff of knowledgeable,*

*compassionate, and devoted volunteers, including medical, educational and mental health professionals. Activities at Camp Starlight include swimming, arts and crafts, music and dance, nature hikes, horseback riding, archery, sports and recreation, a camp-wide talent show, campfires, sleeping out under the stars, and a whole lot more. It's an incredibly fun and magical week focused solely on the kids.*



## Commission Members

**Randall Bodkin — Chair**

**Ebony Frison — Co-Chair**

**Kit Noble — Treasurer**

**Melanie Smith-Wilusz — Secretary**

## Committees

Camp Director - Randall Bodkin

Development - Kit Noble, Jesse Meida

Volunteer Coordinator - Joanne Brown

Social Media and Marketing - Scott Weimer and Greta Swanson

Outreach - Sandi Griffin and Janet Bailey

Programming - Mel Smith and Jenny Block

Camper Community - Ebony Frison

Mental Health ("Twinkle Team") - Mark Duell

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