

Summer Camp Fun

Unlike families with healthy children, Noah's Children families must – on a daily basis – balance the devastating loss of a “normal” life and yet still live as normally as possible. Caught in the midst of this stressful new way of living are the brothers and sisters of the patients, and their parents who are desperately trying to take care of the entire family. Many siblings get left at home while mom and dad spend time in ICUs. These kids have done without a lot because family incomes are cut in half when a parent has to quit work to care for a sick child. And then comes summer ...



Noah's Children chaplain Sallye Hardy says, “There's something life-changing about doing something you've never done before at summer camp.”

Thanks to Bon Secours Lab employees, who raised \$7,300 through a gift basket sale this year, Noah's families were able to access a unique summer opportunity – camp. Thirty-three siblings participated in 54 different camps, totaling more than 200 days of summer fun! These camp experiences were selected by the children and their parents and facilitated by the entire Noah's staff. Parents completed applications, while families, friends and volunteers transported the campers – but in the end, it was the children and the staff of these great programs that really made it happen.

A gift of being a community-based program is that Noah's doesn't have to ‘do it all.’ Creativity and collaboration multiplied the

Continued on page 2

Escape to Camp Selah



It's amazing what a simple camp experience can do for a child. Just look at the Dillard brothers, Jaylen, 7, and Thomas, 9. Last summer Noah's Children (thanks to your donations!) offered to send the brothers to camp, but they weren't interested in attending “because they'd never been away from home before,” said their mom, Dorine. “But they had so much fun that they didn't even miss us. This year, they had their bags packed two weeks ahead of time and went to Camp Selah, a five-day sleep-away camp in south central Virginia.”

It's important for her sons to have some play time away from home. Their sister, Sammie, 6, has a rare form of cancer that has left her blind and in a wheelchair. (Sammie also participates in the Music Therapy Program – see article on page 3.) “Sometimes the boys get tired or frustrated when they have to help Sammie, even though they know she can't do things for herself. Taking care of her feels like a job for them, and this camp experience gives them an opportunity to escape everything for awhile.”

According to Thomas, his favorite part of Camp Selah was going to the pool everyday and playing games that won him new toys. “It was awesome,” said Thomas. “I want to go back again and again!”



Siblings: In The Shadow Of Illness

From the Medical Director:
Bob Archuleta, MD, FAAP, FAAHPM



Living with a severely ill sibling

and knowing the possibility of death are complicated and profound experiences. Siblings share much of their daily life, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. They may share the same room, bed, toys and books. Caring for a child with a life-threatening illness places tremendous strains on the child's parents; they may feel overwhelmed and have little energy left over to devote mindfully to their healthy children.

Siblings are affected by their brother's or sister's life-threatening illness to varying degrees. Commonly occurring negative behaviors they display may include acting out, such as arguing,

showing off, disobedience; frustration and feelings of rejection, neglect, and resentment; crying, sadness, depression; loneliness; anxiety; guilt; sleep and eating disturbances; and hindered academic success.

Over time, families do a remarkable job of learning to live with some semblance of normalcy and some sense of control. At no time, however, do their actions completely remove the challenges or pain that comes from living with a child who has a life-threatening and ultimately fatal illness. Noah's Children understands that to help a sick child, we must also help the siblings, and we do so in a variety of ways which are highlighted in this issue. We appreciate the community's financial support that is directed to helping the siblings who live in the shadow of serious illness.

Call for Volunteers and Donations

As evidenced by this issue's stories, Noah's Children offers a number of programs for patients and family members, all of which are made possible by your generous donations. Two of our newest programs include:

Meal Program

Noah's is now offering home-cooked or store-bought dinners to our families on a monthly basis. We are currently recruiting sponsors and have already received gift cards from Golden Corral, Sibley's Barbeque, Applebees, Jason's Deli and Olive Garden.

Big Brother/Big Sister Program

While Noah's has offered this program in the past, we're giving it a new face and trying to pair many more volunteers with siblings to help provide social and emotional support. Volunteers usually spend a few hours per month taking their "little brother/ little sister" to the park, the children's museum, out to dinner, etc.

If you're interested in participating in or donating to either of these programs, please call Volunteer Coordinator Naomi Moskowitz at (804) 287-7686.

Summer Camp Fun

Continued from front page

opportunities for our siblings and empowered the families to gain some sense of control of this part of their life.

Some of the programs attended by Noah's siblings included Camp Selah, Cheerleading Camp, Bon Secours Nursing Camp, Bon Secours SMH Family Center, Level Green Riding Camp, Boys and Girls Clubs, Shaka Smart Basketball Camp, Camp Thunderbird, Brigham Young University Youth Program, Chefs Camp, Harp Ensemble, St. Joseph's Villa Preschool and Ice Skate Nation.

Noah's chaplain Sallye Hardy who attended several of the camps this summer said, "There is something life-changing about getting to do something you've never done before and being with people in similar situations. Facilitating this work was a great joy for me. Watching the excitement in the parents and the siblings when they discussed what they wanted from camp was the best part. Their lives go on, despite the illness of their brother or sister, and this summer, they got to do something they wanted to do. It's a blessing for them and for us."

For more information or to donate to any of our sibling programs, please call the Noah's Children office at (804) 287-7686.

Music to Their Ears

According to the American Music Therapy Association (www.music-therapy.org), “Music therapy is an established health profession in which



Noah's Children partners with the HARPS Foundation and the Academy of Music to provide music therapy sessions for our families.

music is used within a therapeutic relationship to address physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs of individuals.” Ever wish this type of specialized therapy were available for your children? Well, thanks to a recent partnership between Noah's Children and the HARPS Foundation (American Youth

Harp Ensemble) and the Academy of Music, Noah's Children is offering music therapy sessions for our families.

Currently serving nine patients and four siblings, the therapy classes are designed to provide a meaningful outlet for expression. Following an initial assessment to determine individual needs and goals, music therapists work with the patients or siblings on a weekly basis for approximately one hour per session.

“Music therapy is unlike other therapy in that it is provided in the home or school, and the entire experience is very specialized,” said Lynnelle Ediger, artistic director of the American Youth Harp Ensemble. “It truly does increase the quality of life for everyone involved.”

The program allows the HARPS Foundation and the Academy of Music to make a difference in the lives of Noah's young patients, their siblings and families. “Both of our organizations are committed to providing rich and meaningful experiences to young people,” added Ediger. “This partnership with Noah's Children was a natural fit.”

A Connection Point

Noah's Music Therapy Program has been especially meaningful to the Hogan family. Their daughter, Lois, was enrolled in a private music program before she passed away from leukemia earlier this year. Now their two-year-old son Mac is enrolled in the Noah's Children Music Therapy Program. Because Mac is autistic, the music therapy program serves a dual purpose for him. “He cannot speak words,” said mother Catherine, “but he can communicate via sign language and an iPad, so music therapy helps him engage with people and also helps increase his attention span.” Sitting and focusing isn't easy for Mac, but their music therapist Kim is a great teacher. At a recent session, Mac was more interested in looking at a book which, said Catherine, “would normally occupy him for about 15 seconds before he moved on.” But Kim followed him. She picked up that book and immediately turned it into a song that had him fully engaged for several minutes!”



Noah's Music Therapy Program serves a dual purpose for Mac Hogan.

There's also a special bond to Lois that music therapy provides the Hogans. “The therapy sessions have forged a connection to Lois because music was such a big part of her life,” said Catherine. “So having Mac involved creates this connection to his sister somehow. It's comforting to know that something good has been passed along to her brother. This program is a gift.”

Friends of Noah's Children

When Mary Willis was asked if she could provide transportation to and from a Boys and Girls Club camp for the children of two Noah's Children families, Willis was quick to say yes.

Willis has known both families for more than five years and says each one has given their children pure, unconditional love. (Both have a child with severe brain damage.) “To be able to provide transportation so these children could enjoy a fun summer week and improve their quality of life was a gift for me as well,” said Willis.

And Noah's Children feels gifted to have such a special volunteer like Mary Willis.

IN MEMORIAM

Yokana Stezen Kaleebi
2.4.95 – 5.10.11

*We celebrate the life
of this child
and honor all those
who love him.*

Announcements

Service of Remembrance

Please join us **Sunday, November 13, from 3:00-5:00 p.m.** at the **St. Mary's Hospital Chapel** as we remember our beloved family and friends who've passed away. Preservice music will be provided with a reception following the service and special activities for the children. For more information, please contact Sallye Hardy at sallye_hardy@bshsi.org or at **(804) 287-7686**.

Bereavement Workshop for Moms

For mothers who have lost a child, Noah's Children will host a bereavement workshop titled "Writing Towards Healing." Led by Carol Henderson, this workshop will focus on restorative self-expression through writing in a safe, nurturing environment. No writing experience is necessary to attend.

Henderson realized this type of workshop could be beneficial to bereaved mothers after writing a memoir, *Losing Malcolm*, about the loss of her own infant son. Henderson said, "I was approached by many with stories of their own losses, and I told them they could write it down. Mothers gain a fresh perspective when they



are able to put feelings on a page instead of just having them in their head," she said.

The two-day workshop will be held at the Washington-Franklin Hall at Randolph Macon College in Ashland on **Friday, October 21, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.** and **Saturday, October 22, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.** Limited to 15 attendees, the workshop is free to Noah's mothers and grandmothers, although reservations are required. Interested participants should contact the Noah's Bereavement Coordinator, Chaplain Sallye Hardy, at **(804) 287-7686** or e-mail sallye_hardy@bshsi.org.

Visit Us on the Web
www.noahschildren.com



5855 Breomo Road
Medical Office Building North
Suite 409
Richmond, VA 23226



Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2611
Richmond, VA