



# 2024 Pediatric Oncology Camps Impact Summary

## Our Mission

To give joy, hope and the healing power of the outdoors to children living with cancer and their families.

## Background

Care Camps Foundation's singular goal is to raise and distribute funding to support medically supervised pediatric oncology camping programs across the United States and Canada. We solely support camps who are members of the Children's Oncology Camping Association (COCA) who provides oversight of the camps' quality assurance and professional education.

To actualize our mission and distribute funding to pediatric oncology camps, Care Camps Foundation provides grant opportunities annually for COCA members to: 1) support their core operations, and 2) help with capital improvement needs.

- Core operational support can be used for:** any part of operations, including rent, salaries, transportation, food services, among others, and
- Capital improvement support can be used for:** the purchase of specific needed items (such as sports equipment, mattresses and bedding, canoes or other water equipment, computers, first aid equipment).

**ALL pediatric oncology camps who apply for Care Camps Foundation's grants are awarded funding if they meet the following baseline criteria:**

- ▶ Are a COCA member;
- ▶ Provide medical supervision for all respective camping programs;
- ▶ Are engaged in COCA's Gold Ribbon quality program; and
- ▶ Attend one or more of COCA's educational and professional development seminars.

**The grant application is designed to gather and collate the following information for each camp:**







- ▶ Organization type, location, and contact persons;
- ▶ Expense budgets and costs to provide specific programs;
- ▶ Types of programs and services offered;
- ▶ How often programs/services are provided;
- ▶ Numbers of attendees (campers, siblings, other family members);
- ▶ Staffing; and
- ▶ For those applying for capital improvement support, the specific use for the funding.

In addition to financially supporting pediatric oncology camps, Care Camps Foundation also provides funding to COCA to support their Gold Ribbon quality accreditation program and professional education for their members.

## Pediatric Oncology Camps' Impact

In 2024, Care Camps Foundation awarded over \$2,000,000 to support 117 pediatric oncology camps' operational and capital improvement needs – 101 were located in the U.S. and 16 were located in Canada.

Overall, across the U.S. and Canada, pediatric oncology camps funded by Care Camps Foundation had an enormous impact in 2024.

-  Collectively, the pediatric oncology camps **provided eight different types of programs** and touched the lives of over **41,000 individuals** - children living with cancer, siblings, parents and other family members.
-  Nearly all camps **served children between 6 and 18 years of age**.
-  The eight types of camp programs offered were: **Outpatient Residential, Day Camp, Sibling Camp, Family Retreat, Bereavement Camp, In-hospital Program, Outpatient Clinic Program, and Virtual Camp**.
-  In addition, **'Camp-in-a-Box' kits were distributed by camps to children who could not attend** other camp programs.
-  **Overnight residential camp** was the most common type of program offered.
-  Many camps also provided **special programs in addition to their regular activities, including leadership skills training, environmental education, and STEM/STEAM education**.

See Tables A-D for detail. (The following data reported is for the 2024 calendar year.)

**TABLE A**

| ATTENDEES                  | # SERVED      |              |               |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                            | U.S.          | Canada       | Total         |
| Campers                    | 15,182        | 3,855        | 19,037        |
| Parents                    | 9,025         | 1,917        | 10,942        |
| Siblings                   | 8,560         | 1,893        | 10,453        |
| Other Family               | 848           | 7            | 855           |
| <b>Total Lives Touched</b> | <b>33,615</b> | <b>7,672</b> | <b>41,287</b> |

**TABLE B**

| AGE RANGE OF CAMPERS    | # OF CAMPS SERVING* |        |       |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------|-------|
|                         | U.S.                | Canada | Total |
| < 6 years of age        | 62                  | 14     | 76    |
| 6 yrs to 10 yrs of age  | 99                  | 14     | 113   |
| 11 yrs to 18 yrs of age | 100                 | 16     | 116   |
| > 18 yrs of age         | 23                  | 3      | 26    |

\* Many camps serve multiple age ranges.

**TABLE C**

| TYPE OF CAMP PROGRAM<br>(U.S. and CANADA) | # OF CAMPS | # OF SESSIONS | # OF DAYS | # OF KITS |
|---|------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| Overnight Residential Camp                | 105        | 277           |           |           |
| Day Camp                                  | 55         |               | 531       |           |
| Sibling Camp                              | 59         | 154           |           |           |
| Family Retreat                            | 64         | 172           |           |           |
| Bereavement Camp                          | 27         |               | 102       |           |
| In-hospital Program                       | 19         |               | 1,982     |           |
| Outpatient Clinic Program                 | 22         |               | 2,383     |           |
| Virtual Camp                              | 28         |               | 410       |           |
| Camp-in-a-Box                             | 30         |               |           | 4,495     |

**TABLE D**

| SPECIAL PROGRAMS OFFERED   | # OF CAMPS |        |       |
|----------------------------|------------|--------|-------|
|                            | U.S.       | Canada | Total |
| Leadership Skills Training | 84         | 14     | 84    |
| Environmental Education    | 74         | 14     | 74    |
| STEM/STEAM Education       | 46         | 7      | 46    |

## Thank You!

In summary, none of this could have been possible without the very generous support of our donor partners. The cards, photos, stories and more that we continually receive from the camps exemplify the joy, hope and healing we aspire to give to these special children and their families.

For more information about the pediatric oncology camps we fund, visit [www.carecamps.org/camps-we-support](http://www.carecamps.org/camps-we-support).



[carecamps.org](http://carecamps.org) | [info@carecamps.org](mailto:info@carecamps.org) | 1-800-431-0513





Care Camps  
Foundation

# Pediatric Oncology Camps Innovations Summary Report

## Background

In 2024, Care Camps Foundation piloted a new grant opportunity for selected members of the Children's Oncology Camping Association (COCA) to further develop innovative camp programs. Pediatric oncology camps that were currently offering innovative programs were eligible to apply. Examples of innovative programs included (and NOT limited to) STEM/STEAM education, mental/emotional health programs, diversity programs, school programs, hospital/clinic programs, and any program that is 'out-of-the ordinary' from traditional camp programs.

After disseminating an Innovations Grant application to all COCA members, ten individual pediatric oncology camps were selected to receive \$1,500 to:

**1** Enhance their respective innovations during 2024, and

**2** Provide a written summary that would be disseminated to all COCA member camps.

**How this came about:** Over the past several years, Care Camps Foundation has been intrigued to learn about various innovative programs, that were offered by COCA member camps in addition to their 'regular' camp activities. We also heard that many camps aspired to provide more innovative programs and wanted to learn about what other camps were offering. Therefore, our purpose in offering this PILOT grant opportunity was to elevate innovative camp programs being offered to children living with cancer and disseminate these best practices to all COCA members *so everyone benefits*.

## The requirements to apply for the Innovations Grant were as follows:

- ▶ The camp was a current member of COCA and received a Care Camps Foundation Operational Grant in 2024.
- ▶ The camp was currently offering their innovative program in 2024.
- ▶ The innovative program was replicable or adaptable for other pediatric oncology camps to implement.
- ▶ The camp agreed to provide a written description of their innovative program.
- ▶ The camp would be willing to present their specific innovative program at a future COCA webinar.

The following report is a summary of the innovative programs from the ten camps who received grant funding from Care Camps Foundation in 2024.

## Innovations Grant Recipients

The following is a summary of the ten pediatric oncology camps selected and their innovation.

| CAMP  | LOCATION        | INNOVATION  |
|---|-----------------|---|
| <b>Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation of Southern Arizona</b> | Arizona, U.S.   | <b>Essential Household Supply Program</b> – distribution of food boxes, paper goods, diapers, cleaning supplies for families experiencing financial and logistical challenges   |
| <b>Campfire Circle</b>  | Ontario, Canada | <b>Hospital-based Camp Program</b> – dedicated program space “The Cabin”; bedside and group activities, some televised over SickKids CCTV   |
| <b>Project C.A.M.P</b><br><i>(The Center for Courageous Kids)</i>     | Kentucky, U.S.  | <b>Sensory Room</b> – a safe space to interact with a range of stimuli and obtain respite from the sensory overload of other camp activities; designed for campers with sensory processing impairments and similar challenges   |
| <b>Aurora Day Camp</b>  | Georgia, U.S.   | <b>Teen Board</b> – a leadership program designed to develop the next generation community leaders and volunteers who will contribute to supporting families dealing with pediatric cancer  |
| <b>Horizon Day Camp</b>   | Maryland, U.S.  | <b>STEAM Education</b> – an opportunity and access point for guiding campers’ inquisitive nature, critical thinking, creativity, and connection   |
| <b>Camp Hobé</b>  | Utah, U.S.      | <b>Beads of Courage</b> – campers and counselors give and receive beads in recognition of their courage in facing their own challenges, and their support for other campers; the beads are strung onto a necklace that becomes ‘something tangible’ to show and tell their experiences and relationships with other campers |
| <b>Camp Quality USA</b>   | Michigan, U.S.  | <b>Zen Den</b> – a space and specialized team offering core psychosocial programming (e.g., therapeutic breathing, yoga, fidget games, and creative expression) designed to enhance social and emotional exploration  |
| <b>Camp Casey</b>   | Michigan, U.S.  | <b>Horses in the Hallway</b> – visits to the classrooms of children with cancer to educate their peers using interaction with a therapy horse to encourage empathy while also celebrating the sick child  |
| <b>Camp One Step</b><br><i>(Children’s Oncology Services, Inc.)</i>   | Illinois, U.S.  | <b>CONNECTED</b> – a virtual camp program designed to reach children who cannot attend in-person camps; features activities they can do online with staff and other campers, and offline on their own; includes a box of supplies need for each activity  |
| <b>Arizona Camp Sunrise &amp; Sunrise Sidekicks</b>                   | Arizona, U.S.   | <b>STEM Education</b> – an all-camper evening program of entertaining/ educational STEM activities called ‘Alchemy Night’ that includes chemistry experiments, physics demonstrations, and electromagnetism; designed to encourage curiosity and natural discovery  |

## Innovation Accomplishments

Based on the final reports from the ten pediatric oncology camps, the following are four overall themes of their accomplishments.

1

### Practical and Logistical Support for Children and Families

Several programs focus on providing assistance or enrichment outside of in-person camps for children with cancer and their families. They emphasize aiding families through financial, logistical, or emotional challenges.

- ▶ **Essential Household Supply Program**
- ▶ **Hospital-based Camp Program**
- ▶ **CONNECTED**
- ▶ **Teen Board** (*trains the next generation of social service leaders*)

2

### Well-being and Emotional Support

Two programs aim to provide emotional respite and support. They focus on improving the mental, emotional, or sensory experiences of children, offering a sense of safety, comfort, and community.

- ▶ **Sensory Room**
- ▶ **Zen Den**

3

### Educational and Developmental Activities

Two programs focus on fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity through structured and hands-on activities. In addition to being educational, these programs offer therapeutic engagement that can serve as a positive distraction from medical challenges.

- ▶ **STEAM/STEM Education** (*two camps*)

4

### Connection and Community

Several programs foster a sense of belonging and connection among campers as well as some non-campers, both in-person and virtually. These initiatives allow for social interaction and shared experiences, encouraging empathy, communication, and friendship.

- ▶ **Horses in the Hallway**
- ▶ **Hospital-based Camp Program**
- ▶ **CONNECTED**