

## 25 Years of Inspiring Confidence for Life

In 1984, an anonymous and caring visionary in the Dallas-Fort Worth community reached out to members of the medical profession and the Junior League of Dallas to assess the need for and availability of quality outdoor activities for chronically ill children in Dallas-Fort Worth. This group evolved into the founders of Camp John Marc (CJM). Working together, the founders researched and identified many specific emotional and physical benefits that result when children peacefully enjoy nature and participate in hands-on outdoor activities. They also found that traditional camp facilities in the Dallas-Fort Worth area often could not appropriately accommodate individuals with medical needs. The founders concluded that the best way to provide the therapeutic benefits of camping to young people living with chronic medical and physical challenges would be to provide a dedicated camping facility for their use.

After nearly three years of research and planning, “Special Camps for Special Kids” was founded in 1987 by the same anonymous visionary, CJM’s first major donor, and a group of passionate community members, doctors, child life specialists, camping professionals, social workers, Junior League of Dallas members, real estate leaders, and other

individuals and community groups, the construction moved quickly and remarkably. In nine months, the Facility was ready for its first campers. In the summer of 1991, a total of over 500 campers attended one of eight week-long camps and the therapeutic benefits of the outdoors became a reality for many children with health challenges in Dallas-Fort Worth.

Camp John Marc has grown significantly since 1991. Every year, CJM hosts eleven week-long summer camps and over 25 weekend camps.



*Windmill at Meadows Dining Hall*

professionals. many of these individuals served on the initial board. Formally incorporated, the dedicated board began fundraising and looking for successful programs to emulate. Finding little to draw on, they focused instead on the campers they sought to serve and what activities and environment they would most enjoy. They began to envision and design a fully accessible facility capable of providing traditional camping programs, as well as the medical care future campers would require.

In 1988, Jan and Marc Myers generously donated 135 acres of land from their Bosque County ranch to make this vision a reality. The donation honored their son, John Marc, a nature lover who died at the age of nine from a form of bone cancer. The realization of the CJM vision moved quickly over the next few years. Vance Gilmore was hired as Executive Director/Camp Director. The new camp facility was named Camp John Marc to recognize the Myers’ family’s generous donation. Don Madsen, an architect and friend of the Myers family, along with the firm Good, Fulton and Farrell created a warm, welcoming and whimsical design for the facility that would symbolize the spirit of CJM for decades to come.

On a hot and dusty day in 1990, the construction team broke ground at Camp John Marc. Thanks to the passion, dedication and financial support of many



*Original Donor’s Star on the Recognition Wall in the Saddle Room*

More than 1,100 campers are served each summer and 3,000 campers and family members attend CJM throughout the year.

This growth was made possible through the committed efforts of a CJM staff of six, summer staff of 24, volunteer staff of over 1,000, and an annual budget of nearly two million dollars.

While at CJM, children and young adults enjoy and benefit from participating in an ever-expanding group of programs. Traditional favorites include horseback riding, swimming, arts and crafts, archery, ropes course, cooking, and photography. The time at CJM is also an opportunity for the campers, a majority of whom live in an urban environment, to experience nature through activities like canoeing, fishing, building campfires, watching wildlife, and sleeping under the stars.



*Active Medical Treatments Take Place at Camp John Marc*



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Gentle Oak

- Many former summer staff members continue to serve their communities through careers in medicine or camping. Out of 265 CJM staff alumni, approximately 90 are doctors, medical students, physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, child life specialists, recreational therapists, occupational therapists, or are working for a camp full time.
- Camp John Marc, fully accredited by the American Camping Association since 1992, has twice received the Eleanor P. Eells Award, the ACA’s highest programming award. The 1993 award recognized CJM for being the first camping organization in the country to serve H.I.V. positive kids and their families. In 1997, CJM received its second Eells Award for outstanding programming related to its Phenylketonuria (PKU) Family Camp.
- Camp John Marc serves as a camping model for organizations across the country and abroad. Therapeutic camping community members have come from as near as Houston and as far as Japan, Ghana and

Australia to study CJM’s innovative programming and facilities. In 2013, CJM hosted the Special Needs Kindred Group where representatives of 38 Special Needs Camps in 19 different states spent three days sharing and learning about camping. During the conference, 51 representatives from the International Camping Fellowship, a worldwide assembly of camp and youth development professionals, also visited CJM. In a testament to the CJM organization, the ICF members came to Bosque County all the way from Russia, Mongolia, China, Canada, Australia, Ghana and Nigeria in order to find inspiration for their campers.

In 2014, former camper Kevin Randles beame CJM’s second Camp Director. Kevin became Executive Director in 2015, and former summer staffer Megan White stepped in as Camp Director. In 2016, Camp John Marc celebrates its 25th year of providing quality therapeutic camping opportunities for children from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. CJM looks forward to the next 25 years with high expectations for innovation and impact in serving our campers.



# Camp Cornstarch Kids

(for campers with Glycogen Storage Disease GSD)



Trevor Fishing for Netter—the Fish the Breaks Every Net!

“Hey, my name is Bill.” “And I’m Steve.”

On an unseasonably warm day in February, dads are taking their kids fishing at Camp John Marc. Everyone wanders off to quiet corners of the pier and the camp staff bait the casting rods with squirmy worms for each camper. Each camper tries their hand at casting for a while.

Joe can barely see over the rail, but through the middle open section of the covered pier he sees the three, big catfish hovering near the concrete pier. Everyone wants to see, so kids and dads gather around the inner circle. Joe drops his line trying to get it close enough to catch the attention of the fat catfish. His dad sits nearby teaching the finer points of casting in tight spaces. In a little while Joe’s dad leans down to his backpack and starts mixing a solution. He pours the solution into a giant syringe. Without letting go of his fishing rod, Joe lifts up his shirt and deftly flicks open the cap of his G-tube, never taking his eyes off the water. His dad attaches the syringe and holds it high above his head, like an IV, to allow the nourishment to seep into Joe’s little body. Fishing continues as if this is the most normal thing in the world. At Camp John Marc it is normal!

Shortly after, a dad who is fishing on the other side of the enclosed pier asks, “Is that glycosade (prescription starch)?” And the men begin a conversation. “Yes, Joe started glycosade a year ago. We had tried it earlier, but he could not tolerate it.” The other dad asked, “So how long can he go now?” Joe’s dad answers, “We used to have to give him cornstarch every two hours and now he can go for five or six hours.” “Yes, that’s what we are having to do now. Sue has her cornstarch every three hours, but we’re hoping to try glycosade. What kind of GSD does your child have?” “He has Type 1-B.” “Yeah, Sue has Type 3. Hey, my name is Bill.” “And I’m Steve.”

This story happened at Camp John Marc in February 2016 when the first camp in the country for campers with Glycogen Storage Disease (GSD) took place. GSD is a rare medical condition that is difficult to diagnosis. GSD is an inherited metabolic disorder that prevents a person from releasing stored sugar (glycogen) from the liver for energy. There are several different Types of GSD with various symptoms such as poor growth and low blood sugar. Many children with GSD require frequent feedings with cornstarch or slow release starches several times a day and at night. Frequent feedings during the day and night with cornstarch allows children with GSD to maintain normal blood sugar levels and begin to grow well. Camp Cornstarch Kids is a place where this shared experience brings kids and families together for encouragement and fun that inspires confidence for life.



Mom and Son Happy Together at Camp Cornstarch Kids

## Memorials

Joshua Allen (Esperanza Camper)	Luna Martell (SOAR Camper)
Ruth Allen	Preston McCarty (Ailihpomeh Camper)
Bryan Argueta (ID Camper)	Mary Lee Miller
Saul Baker	Sokvannada Muong (Reynal Camper)
Dick Bass	Jim Neill
Fern Batchko	Ann Nicholson
Francisco Bazaldua (MDA Camper)	Yenifer Ortega (ID Camper)
Briggs Berry (ID Camper)	Cherry Owens
Lucy Bryan	Eugene Passmore
Becky Burke	Jake Pettigrew (MDA Camper)
Brandon Burris	Doris Raynor
Alexus Cantu (Esperanza Camper)	Micah Reed (Esperanza Camper)
Rio Cantu (Sanguinity Camper)	Lucille Sanders
Web Carr	John David Scrivener (Esperanza Camper)
William Clarke	Luke Simons (Esperanza Camper)
Rod Cook	John Sisser
Kitra Counts (Sanguinity Camper)	Mary John Spence
ginger Daniel	Seth Stephenson (Moss Camper)
Oran & Hattie Elmore	Lynda Taylor
Tommy England	Mason Thornton (MDA Camper)
Jack Foster	Oliver Tidwell
Robert Garner	Christopher Trujillo (Esperanza Camper)
Cooper Wade Greene	Mathias Utley (Sanguinity Camper)
Elyssa Ann Jacobs (Moss Camper)	Paul Wallace
J. Lee Johnson, IV	Hunter White
Pat King	Joel Williams, Jr.
David John Koss	Donnie Wirz
Korban Kox (Esperanza Camper)	Pat Wood, Jr.
Crystal Marshall (Sanguinity Camper)	

## Honorariums

Emilia Aycock	Maggie Mathis
Anne Bass	Christopher Matteson
Thresa Belcher	Stan Mayfield
Tracey & David Bell	Jim Meadows
Stephanie Bowman	Andrew Mesa
Barbara & Pete Brown	Mary Catherine & Austin Miller
Fred Brown	Mary Anne Mitchell
Luke & Katie Campbell	Sparky Moore
Laura Cleney	Jan & Marc Myers
Morgan Coleman	Marc Olson
Shelley DeNicholas	Hannah Ostermayer
Fritz & Mary Lee Duda	Thomas Wilson Park
Matt “Bubba” Dumas	Jane & Chick Pierce
Emily Evans	Loyd & Michal Powell
Dennis Fallon	Lyn Prater
Mary Clare Finney	Dean Renkes
Joanne & Ben Gates	Marlie Roose (Moss Camper)
Vance Gilmore	Anne Roth
Courtney Golden	Lee Rury
Trevor Golden	Phil & Cindy Satterfield
Grace Goldman	Lynn Sears
Tom & Ronda Grimsley	Austin Serrano (Esperanza Camper)
Cynthia & Ben Guill	Zachery Shapiro
John & Dianne Hawkins	Michelle Sheffield
Ralph Heins	Rick & Bettye Slaven
Erin Hunter	Kevin Thornton
Tom & Joanne Hurtekant	Carol & Gifford Touchstone
Callie Jarmon (I-Thonka-Chi Camper)	Cheryl Trott
Ford Jones, IV	Luke Wade
Stewart Keller	Ley & Jan Waggoner
MaryKate Kelly	Todd Waletzki
Jeff Lewis	Megan White
Bruce Mamary	Melissa and Dave Wood



### Summer Camps

**Ailihpomeh\*** – hemophilia   **Broncho\*** – asthma  
**Esperanza\*** – cancer   **Fun** – asthma, cystic fibrosis  
**I-Thonka-Chi\*** – burn survivors  
**Joint Adventure\*** – juvenile arthritis   **Jubilee\*** – sickle cell disease  
**Koinonia** – cystic fibrosis   **MDA\*** – muscular dystrophy   **Moss\*** – cardiology  
**Reynal\*** – kidney   **Sanguinity\*** – cancer and blood disorders  
**TLC\*** – spina bifida   **Wenoweez** – asthma

### Weekend Camps

**AIDS Foundation of Houston** – AIDS   **Amigo\*** – craniofacial  
**Autistic Treatment Center** – autism   **Braveskin\*** – dermatology   **Candlelighters\*** – cancer  
**Carpe Diem\*** – tuberous sclerosis   **CMC Family\*** – cancer   **Courage\*** – siblings of campers  
**DBMAT** – deaf, blind, multihandicapped   **E.E.G.\*** – epilepsy   **Easter Seal** – physical challenges  
**Esperanza Teen Retreat\*** – cancer   **Feliz\*** – cancer  
**Fortnight** – cystic fibrosis (campers from England)   **Gilda’s Club North Texas** – cancer  
**Camp Cornstarch Kids\*** – Glycogen Storage Disease  
**Hands Down Family Camp\*** – upper limb differences   **ID\*** – immunodeficiency  
**Jubilee Teen** – Sickle Cell disease   **Kindred\*** – cystic fibrosis siblings   **Kuumba** – HIV/AIDS  
**LIGHT\*** – cancer   **Lupapalooza\*** – lupus   **Morning Star\*** – bereavement  
**Night Owls\*** – special needs family respite   **NOW\*** – brain tumor  
**O’Hana\*** – life after cancer   **Oasis** – crohns & colitis  
**Our Children’s House\*** – traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries   **PHEnomenal\*** – PKU  
**Phoenix\*** – trauma patients   **Planet Cancer** – cancer   **Promise House** – youth at risk  
**Rainbow Days** – homeless children   **Reynal Teen** – kidney  
**SI Challenge** – sensory impaired   **SOAR\*** – organ transplant   **Sol\*** – bereavement  
**STAR\*** – neurological injury   **Strong\*** – neurological   **Tecumseh\*** – HIV/AIDS  
**TLC Family\*** – spina bifida   **TLC Hispanic Family\*** – spina bifida   **UCP** – cerebral palsy

### Outreach Programs

**Weekend Family Getaway Program** – offers families a relaxing scheduled-free weekend  
**Mothers’ Teas** – Teas for mothers who lost a child who was a camper  
**Happy Camper Program** – camp activities in the hospital

*\* Indicates camps participating in weekend camps as of 2016*





It has been said that you can leave camp, but camp can never leave you. How true this statement is to me.

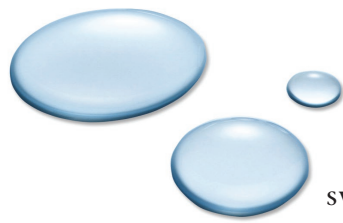
As I wind down my journey with Camp John Marc, I want to thank the current and past Camp John Marc Board Members. You supported and encouraged me; for this I am grateful. To all the Camp John Marc donors, you played a huge role in making our mission become reality—thank you. To all the Camp John Marc Medical Team Members, Camp Volunteers and Camp Staff Members—your winning ways are vital to our mission.

In closing, my thanks to the campers of Camp John Marc. You motivated me and taught me so much about true confidence.

In the spirit of my tradition of sharing camp stories, here are two from my “hypothetical vault” of stories.

Campcerely,  
*Vance Gilmore*

# juan



Juan, a ten year old camper, could not swim. In fact, he had never even been in a swimming pool before coming to Camp John Marc. But Juan bravely chose swimming as his project at Camp Esperanza, even though he was in the end stage of cancer.

Juan wore a knit cap to the first day of swim lessons, not wanting his bald head to be seen. Nervously arriving at the pool, he decided he didn’t want to get in the water. After watching for a bit, he regained his confidence and decided to get in the water. Once in, Juan listened intently to his instructor; and in trust, he began inventing a modified freestyle with his hands and legs. With tremendous perseverance and grit, Juan learned to swim over the next several days. On the fifth and last day, Juan swam the entire length of the pool doing his freestyle. After this accomplishment Juan’s spirits were high and he started to talk about his future.

On Saturday, Juan returned home from CJM and wanted to go to the community swimming pool. Surprised at this request, his mother followed her motherly instinct and took her son where he wanted to go. Overwhelmed with emotion, his mom watched as Juan swam the entire length of that pool! On their way home, Juan and his mom spoke candidly about life, his future, and his fears.

The following Sunday, Juan was admitted to the hospital. Sadly, he died just four days later. Juan’s mom later shared that his CJM accomplishment led to something invaluable. The talk they shared on the car ride home from the pool turned out to be the last meaningful conversation they would have. A treasured experience.



# peaches



In August, Camp Joint Adventure campers travel just down the road to Old Sundown Ranch to pick peaches off of a tree - a new, exciting, and enriching activity for most campers. Arriving at the ranch, the campers in Bryan’s cabin each were given a brown paper bag to carefully harvest three peaches. The number three was stressed so that the orchard could sustain all the campers during the picking season. Heading into the orchard, everyone busied their hands and minds with peach picking and enjoying nature. When it was time to head back to CJM, as everyone loaded in the van, the Director noticed that Bryan’s brown bag was busting at the seams. He had packed as many peaches as he possibly could into his little brown bag.

In spite of Bryan’s heinous “crime,” the Director chose not to say anything to Bryan. But, as luck would have it, the foreman for Old Sundown Ranch pulled in just as the group from CJM was leaving. The foreman was a big man who drove a big truck with a big gun rack in the back window. The Director could not pass the chance for the group to laugh at Bryan’s opportunistic peach-grab. As the foreman passed the van, the Camp Director signaled for him to stop. When they were side by side, the Director and the foreman rolled down their windows. The Camp Director secretly held up three fingers to the foreman and asked, “Are you here to check that the campers have picked the right amount of peaches?” Thanks to the clue, the foreman knew how to respond. In his deep, slow voice he replied, “Yes, I need to see the campers’ bags and make sure they only got three peaches each.”

At this point there were several not so subtle thumps on the van floor as peaches rolled out of Bryan’s bag and under the rows of seats in front of him. The CJM van rocked with the laughter of his cabinmates. Visiting the orchard is always a special opportunity for campers to use their hands and build relationships, but humor (and all those spilled peaches) especially bonded the group of pickers that day.







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