

The Paths That Lead to Camp John Marc

CHRISTIAN SHANNON is a junior majoring in chemical engineering and is also in the STEM path to the MBA program at the University of Alabama's Culverhouse College of Commerce. The STEM path is a unique program that provides students majoring in science, technology, engineering or math the opportunity to earn their undergraduate degree in four years and an MBA with one additional year of study. Christian, known as "Bama" at Camp, spent the past two summers on staff. His passion for serving Camp John Marc's campers with a high empathy factor can be traced back to his close relationship with his older sister, Stephanie, who has special needs. Of his experience at Camp John Marc, Christian says, "Because these campers didn't choose to have these afflictions, they can't heal themselves or rid themselves of these ailments, so it's on people like me who have been blessed with different achievements and different skills to take care of these campers. And, it's just something I really enjoy doing. The campers are able to smile during what they are going through...compare that to a bad day you might have had. This has taught me to shake things off, to get back up and get going, because if the campers are able to do it, so should you."



KYLE LAMB is a former Camp Sanguinity camper and is on the path of applying to a Master's Program in Recreation Administration with an emphasis in Therapeutic Recreation. When Kyle was fifteen a leukemia diagnosis taught him to go out and live life to the fullest while he knew he had the chance. Kyle took up hockey and played for his high school team.



Kyle at kickball with I-Thonka-Chi campers.

At times he had to stop and rest but he played with passion. During his teen years, Kyle endured two years of chemotherapy treatments, often spending up to three weeks in the hospital with each treatment. Kyle has dealt with two brain surgeries due to arteriovenous malformation, and in recent years, from the brain surgeries, had to relearn how to walk and to switch from being left-handed to right-handed. However, this did not slow down Kyle's goal to be on summer staff at Camp John Marc. He was Challenge Course certified and Lifeguard certified in late spring 2014. On any given day during the summer of 2014 you could hear the sounds of joy and excitement as Kyle led a group of campers in sports and games. Kyle possessed a unique insight into the needs of Camp John Marc's campers because he had "walked in their shoes." Kyle showed our campers they could have fun doing a variety of activities, including "tarp surfing," a unique activity where a large tarp is pulled up to look like a giant wave as a camper, with assistance, rides through the "wave" on a skateboard or in their wheelchair. In addition to providing fun activities, Kyle showed our campers that they can get through treatments and procedures. Kyle also modeled tremendous perseverance. Of his experience, Kyle said, "My summer at Camp John Marc was life changing. There's something about losing yourself in the service of others that helps you find yourself. Camp John Marc only validated my passion for helping others in need."



JENSEN ANDERSON is on the path of a sophomore at the University of Texas at Austin, majoring in Child Development with a goal of becoming a Child Life Specialist. In 2003, at the age of seven, Jensen was diagnosed with lymphoblastic leukemia. For three years Jensen underwent chemotherapy. In 2004 Jensen started attending Camp Esperanza and did not stop until she "graduated" in 2011, after attending Camp for eight years. Since the age of twelve, Jensen had a goal of being a staff member at Camp John Marc. Last summer Jensen achieved this goal. It was a dream come true for her. Jensen enjoyed getting to experience the other side of Camp and liked being a staff member as much as she enjoyed being a camper. She inspired our campers to try new activities and served our campers with insight. Jensen said of her Camp experience, "I was a direct recipient of the joy and confidence that Camp John Marc gives as a camper, so getting to witness and be a part of a whole summer at Camp John Marc is almost beyond words. Camp always was and always will be like coming home to me."



Christian at cookout with a TLC camper.



Jensen visiting with a TLC camper.

These individuals are only three of many Camp John Marc staff members who, over the previous twenty-four years, have made a significant difference in the lives of the campers we serve. Through empathy, shared bonds, and a deep appreciation of the great outdoors, the staff members of Camp John Marc do make a difference.

My How Time Flies at Camp Ailihpomeh



Lance as a teen camper at Camp John Marc.

Very few individuals can attest to having been at Camp John Marc every summer since it opened 24 summers ago. One of them is Lance Williamson.

Lance first arrived at Camp John Marc as a Camp Ailihpomeh camper in 1991. He was six years old. He still remembers feeling both nervous and excited while he waited on the bus. There was a lot of commotion outside the bus door every time a camper walked off. Not realizing that Camp had only recently opened, he assumed everyone was just excited to see old friends. Little did he know...when Lance walked down the bus stairs every face he saw greeted him with a level of excitement he had never encountered before. “They all seemed to know me. It was like being famous,” he recalls.

Lance attended Camp as a camper for the next 13 summers. He especially enjoyed arts and crafts, cookouts, and participating in theme night. During his last three summers as a camper, he was a part of the Camp Ailihpomeh Leadership Program. Lance believes things he learned in the Leadership Program aided in his acceptance to the University of Texas at Austin.

After his years as a camper, Lance became a volunteer. He has volunteered at Camp Ailihpomeh for the past 11 summers. During that time, he has also graduated from UT, became a Lighting Designer for large events such as the Lollapalooza in Chicago, and married his wife Nadja. They have had two girls, 3-year-old Liliana and 1-year-old Alexandra.

Impressively, through all those life changes, Camp John Marc has stayed a constant. Lance has not missed a single Camp John Marc summer. His determination and commitment to showing up and making a difference in the lives of Ailihpomeh campers is commendable to say the least. And he is an especially valuable role model because he intimately understands many of the physical challenges, such as infusions and joint bleeds, the young men in his cabins face. He knows what living with hemophilia on a daily basis looks like.

When asked about how it feels to have been involved with Camp for so long, Lance says, “It certainly has been interesting to watch the Camp evolve over the years...The dining hall, cabins, and recreation barn especially stand out in my mind as things that have remained the same throughout the years and always feel like home when I get to Camp. All of the new additions and updates to Camp never feel out of place; they feel as much a part of Camp as anything else.” But it’s not just the buildings that Lance feels connected to. “Some of my cabin mates from when I was a camper have become lifelong friends. We fall in and out of touch, but all roads lead to Camp. Camp is my favorite time of the year. Ever since I was old enough to come, I have looked forward to my week in July,” he said.

Camp John Marc’s program has influenced Lance in many positive ways through the years. He feels that no matter how much energy he pours into the week, he always gets more out of it than he puts in. He believes Camp has made him a better person and a better father.

This summer, as Camp John Marc celebrates its 25th anniversary, Lance will also celebrate his 25th year at Camp. Reflecting back at this anniversary, he offers a sentiment that many of us who love camp can also relate to. “Camp has impacted my life in more ways that I can even think of. Camp has been a source of inspiration and strength. It is my home away from home. It is the family that is always there for me.”



Lance at Camp as an adult volunteer.



DID YOU KNOW??

We are Celebrating our **25th** Summer
at Camp John Marc!!
Where user groups pay only 1/3
of the actual cost for Camp and the
CJM Board raises the remaining 2/3 since 1991!

Rob's Reflections



Rob sidewalking at Camp Moss.

I am happy to be the new Board Chair of Camp John Marc. I will have some big shoes to fill in following Marc Myers. Marc served as Chairman in an exemplary manner for three years.

For the past eleven summers I have been fortunate to be able to spend a week at Camp John Marc volunteering at Camp Moss, our camp for children with heart disease/defects. It has continued to be the highlight of my summer.

Last summer Camp John Marc hit a milestone—we served our 55,000th camper! How about that? So many campers have been positively influenced through their Camp John Marc experience. In addition, 2015 will mark our 25th summer of inspiring confidence for life for our many campers—another proud milestone!



Marc Myers, Vance Gilmore, and Rob Farrel at a Camp John Marc Board Meeting.

For the past twenty-four years we have been very fortunate to have Vance Gilmore serve as both our Camp Director and Executive Director. Vance has been an exceptional leader and has been the driving force for Camp John Marc to set the standard for leadership and innovation in the camping industry. We have been blessed as an organization to have him serve as our Camp Director for these many years. Vance made the decision late last year that it is time for a change and has stepped aside as Camp Director, but will for now, retain the role of Executive Director. I am pleased to announce that former Camp John Marc camper, summer staff member and Assistant Director Kevin Randles has assumed the role of Camp Director. As we continue to evaluate our organization for future changes, we have named long time staff member Megan White to the new role of Associate Camp Director. These leaders are passionate about the mission of Camp John Marc and are committed to our tradition of providing quality service to all our campers and partners. We are excited to see how their new and innovative ideas will enable Camp John Marc to continue to lead the way.

Thank you for your support of Camp John Marc. We could not continue charging our users only one-third of the true cost of Camp without the support of our many friends.

Rob Farrel
Camp John Marc Board Chair

Memorials

- Buddy “The Camp Dog” (a King Charles Spaniel)

Bobby Neal Armstrong

Sellers Aycock, Jr.

Saul Baker

Hannah Barnes

Briggs Berry (ID Camper)

Kenneth Blackford

Harmon M. Cohen

Harry M. Coley

Rod Cook

Dorothy Rogers Cullum

Jared Dahlander (Night OWLS Camper)

ginger Daniel

James Eastland

Charlene Edgin

Karen Shea Edwards

Gloria Fulbright

Page Hagemann

Ethan Hallmark (Sanguinity Camper)

Jack Harbin

Rue Evans Henry

Charlie Bill Hirsch

Ray Holcomb

Ruth Martin Innes

Elyssa Jacobs (Moss Camper)

Leslie “Bud” Jones (Esperanza Camper)

Eugene Guy Kinder

Luke Ledbetter

Stephanie Lopez (Esperanza Camper)

Travis H. Lynch

Grace Katherine Manns
- Jeneatte Lucille Mariana

Christopher Matteson

John McCormick

Calvin McKinney

Jim McLaughlin

Lane Minton

Demoiya Mitchell (Reynal Camper)

Sokvannada MOUNG (Reynal Camper)

Yenifer Ortega (ID Camper)

Shelley Penny

Nell Perry

Amanda Pierce

Danny Prescott

Jeff Raggio

Brandy Moore Ratchford

BJ Reynolds

Mercedes Rogers

Patricia Sandstad

Adele Seybold

Mary Jane Coleman Shields

Olivia Smith (Esperanza Camper)

Shayde Smith (Moss Camper)

Maria Vallejo (Sanguinity Camper)

Pete Veldman

Magda Verfaillie-Antenius

Paul Wallace

Oscar White

Randy Wideman

Betty Lu Williams

Jim Williams

Honorariums

- Janie & Rolan Anderson

Monica Baca

Trish & Mark Beauregard

Mary Cook & Bob Blanshard

Jeff Buford

Pam & Dan Busbee

Kathryn Busch

Carolyn Campbell

Mr. & Mrs. Vance Campbell

Frances Campbell

Joan & Dick Cantrell

Lucretia & David Cargill

Dr. & Mrs. Jim Cotton

Brooks Cullum

Bret Farrar

Gracie Gates

Vance Gilmore Family

Jennifer & Rob Goodman

Jan Goss, MD

Janis & Bill Gould

Mr. & Mrs. Mitch Hart

Dianne & John Hawkins

Ralph Heins

Anthony Herman

Mark Hokamp Family

Sondra & Leigh Holt

Joanne & Tom Hurtekant

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Laney Grace Meixelsperger

Robert P. Miller

Cecilia & Marvin Moore

Jan & Marc Myers

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Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Ornelas

Hannah Ostermayer

Barbara & Jon Page

Katherine & Michael Phillips

Jane & Chick Pierce

Kiley Poppino

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Diane & John Scovell

Marion & George Scragg

Lynn & John Sears

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Kim & Mike Tanner

Russell Tether

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Linda & John Vorhies

Jan & Ley Waggoner

Tom & Rebecca Waggoner

Bill & Denise Wallace

Megan White

Susan Williams

Sonja Wood

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online through our website?

www.campjohnmarc.org



Camp Talk Photos by Karen Gilmore

BREAKING NEWS
 Karen Gilmore's work is featured
 as the Cover Photo for
American Camp Association's
National Publication
CAMPING MAGAZINE
 March/April 2015 Issue!



Big News!!

Camp John Marc's Management Office
 Has a NEW Address, as of January 28th

2929 Carlisle Street
Suite 355
Dallas, TX 75204
214-360-0056

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know: mail@campjohnmarc.org

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