

SPRING 2021

THE DREAMCATCHER



News from Camp Māk-A-Dream

GOLD CREEK, MONTANA



Camp in a Pandemic

It is hard to believe a year has passed since we made the difficult decision to shift to a virtual season. We have learned a lot including how to do things we never thought we'd need to know. If you had asked us before the pandemic if we thought it would be possible to 'do Camp' virtually, we would have said no. In fact, we wouldn't have been able to imagine it. We are proud to say that we did it. We actually pulled off a wildly successful virtual season. We are confident the experience will help us to develop new programming to keep our community connected even after we return to in-person programs.

We knew virtual camp would not replace the in-person experience and did not want to offer programming just for the sake of doing something. Most importantly, we wanted to make sure we could provide meaningful experiences that reflected our mission and values. Thus, one of our first steps was to set the following goals to guide development of virtual programming:

- Provide opportunities for our community to connect despite the pandemic
- Welcome and engage new participants and introduce them to a supportive community
- Provide respite and joy to survivors and families to help them through these uncertain times
- Offer educational workshops to help survivors and families gain strength and resiliency

Once our goals were set, it was time to plan! We knew

some activities like archery, zip line and horseback riding could not be adapted to the virtual setting but it was easy to imagine how others like art, games and fireside chats could. By the end of the season, our team ran activities ranging from origami to cooking to Zumba to educational workshops on stress reduction and core values. Volunteers joined us each week to sing around the campfire and sway to 'Don't Stop Believing' at the close of dance party. Presenters from around the country offered workshops on topics such as nutrition, martial arts, clinical trials and self-advocacy. We even hosted a successful new program for survivors and their primary caregiver. 2020 was a year of challenges but also many successes. Ultimately, we believe the virtual camp experience brought our community closer together, deepened our understanding of the importance of our mission and will strengthen our work moving forward.

As we look back on 2020, perhaps the most important thing we learned is that we are a part of a strong, resilient community that truly believes the work we do matters. Camp Mak-A-Dream is in the business of providing support and creating connection. This past year, however, we were often the ones on the receiving end. Throughout the year we were humbled and inspired by the overwhelming generosity and trust of our community. We want you to know we are grateful, energized, committed to keeping our community together and ready to meet you in Gold Creek soon.

Live with. Live beyond.



Our Mission

Camp Māk-A-Dream empowers survivors and their families to live with and beyond cancer through life-changing Montana experiences where they strengthen life skills, gain resilience and develop lasting relationships.

2020 VIRTUAL YEAR ANNUAL REPORT

- + *13 camp sessions*
- + *386 campers/participants*
121 kids; 265 adults
- + *215+ hours of online programming created*
- + *202 "Camp in a Box" and Camp t-shirt goodie boxes sent out*
- + *A new electronic newsletter*
- + *504 riders*
in the first RATPOD Unlimited—Your RATPOD, Your Way—from all 50 states and 6 countries
- + *Expanded our team to include a Wellness Programming Manager*
- + *Successful new caregivers retreat and virtual fireside chats*

Executive Director and Board President Message

What a year! In April 2020, we had no idea that we'd still be contending with a global pandemic at this time. We are sure, like us, your world, relationships, activities and priorities have been altered. We are saddened by all those who have lost loved ones this past year be it from COVID, other illnesses or unexpected tragedies. We extend our whole-hearted support and healing hopes to all those who have been impacted by the many difficulties of this past year.

While this year was one of many changes and challenges at Camp, it was also one of immense creativity, enormous programming growth and deep gratitude for the incredibly generous and dedicated community who make Camp possible. You all did not let the pandemic detour you. The Durff family persevered with their annual fundraiser to honor their son Michael despite having to change it up to a drive through dinner and raffle. Many of you set up Facebook fundraisers to mark a special celebration like a birthday or anniversary. A number of our recurring donors were actually able to increase their giving during this uncertain time. Our RATPOD sponsors generously honored their commitment after we had to shift to a virtual event. Foundations that support our work continued to be supportive of our virtual programming. All of this together made a potentially devastating year turn into one of hope, connection, inspiration and fortitude. We appreciate all who continued to make Camp possible by donating, volunteering, participating and extending your encouraging thoughts with us. Because of you ALL, we know Camp will continue to thrive long into the future.

With heartfelt gratitude,
Kim McKearnan and Dan McGee

Save the Date!

You are cordially invited to celebrate our
25th Anniversary "Re-Do" at the

Gold Creek Gala

October 2, 2021 | Hilton Garden Inn | Missoula, MT

Tickets for the event will go on sale in August 2021

For more information and updates, please visit

<https://www.campdream.org/events/25thanniversarycelebration/>

We hope to see you there!



“Virtual” Leads Camp to Create New Wellness Programming

As you have read, and like so many people, Camp Mak-A-Dream discovered new ways to maintain connections throughout the pandemic. As the use of video communication platforms like Zoom expanded into everyone’s professional and personal lives, Camp began offering a new wellness program in the 2020-2021 “off season” – Virtual Fireside Chats.

In-person Fireside Chats have evolved since the start of Camp’s adult retreats. This new online version was based on the facilitated discussions first developed by Vivien Weiss, LMHC, during in-person Ovarian Cancer Retreats. Usually, the discussion begins with a topic selected by the facilitator, but participants can lead the discussion in any direction they choose. Fireside Chats offer a safe place where cancer survivors can share personal struggles, wisdom gained through experience, and supportive encouragement for each other.

The virtual version of Fireside Chats began in October 2020. Camp Mak-A-Dream offered two chat sessions each month, one for previous attendees of Ovarian Cancer Retreats and one for previous attendees of Women’s Cancer Retreats. Participation picked up quickly as word spread. Soon there were groups as large as 28 women joining a single Virtual Fireside Chat.

In order to make sure that Camp was offering a meaningful and valuable experience, we sent all registered participants a survey in January, asking for feedback. We learned that while Camp’s chats were not the only virtual support groups that people attended in 2020, most participants wanted Virtual Fireside Chats to continue even after Camp returned to in-person programming. Also, we learned that the “best parts” of the virtual chats included “communicating with and seeing friends,” “hearing from other cancer survivors,” and “learning new skills and concepts.”

We continue to learn and sort out plans and programs impacted by the pandemic. While there is still uncertainty, there is also hope and excitement for a gradual return to “normal”. We cannot wait to resume our in-person programming, but also anticipate we will continue virtual offerings aimed at strengthening life skills, promoting resilience and creating opportunities to develop meaningful relationships. We remain committed to providing wellness programming such as the Virtual Fireside Chats that provide support and encouragement to survivors and their families.

2021 Cost-free Programs

Open to cancer patients in or out of treatment

*Virtual Spring**

May 6-8 Caregivers Retreat

Cancer survivor and their care giver (ages 21+)

May 13-15 Ovarian Cancer Retreat

Women diagnosed with Ovarian cancer (ages 21+)

May 20-22 Spring Women’s Retreat

Women diagnosed with any type of cancer (ages 21+)

*Virtual Summer**

June 15-17 Young Adult Conference

Young adults diagnosed with cancer (ages 18-35)

June 29-July 1 Heads Up Conference

Young adults diagnosed with a brain tumor (ages 18-35)

July 6-8 Kids/Young Siblings Camp

Children diagnosed with cancer & siblings and/or children of cancer patients (ages 6-12)

July 13-15 Teen/Teen Siblings Camp

Teens diagnosed with cancer and teen siblings and/or children of cancer patients (ages 13-18)

July 20-22 Teen Heads Up Conference

Teenagers diagnosed with a brain tumor (ages 13-18)

*Tentatively Planned In-Person Fall Sessions**

August Family Camp

Montana families affected by Cancer

Sept. 9-13 Ovarian Cancer Retreat

Women diagnosed with Ovarian cancer (ages 21+)

Sept. 16-20 Women’s Cancer Retreat

Women diagnosed with any type of cancer (ages 21+)

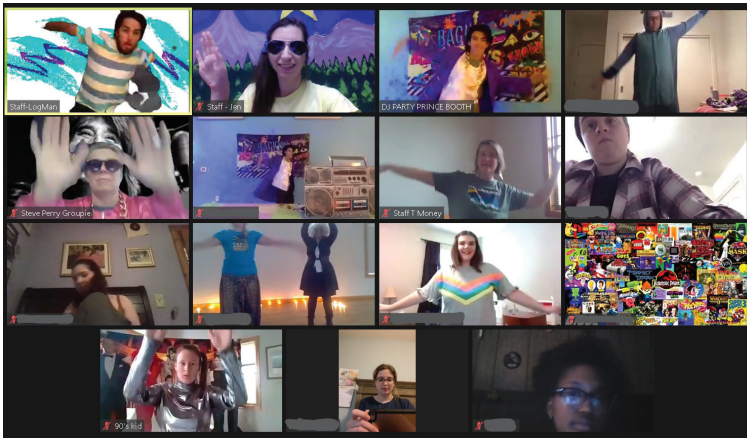
October Caregivers Retreat

Cancer survivor and their caregiver (ages 21+)

*Some sessions in 2021 may have slightly different criteria or be combined due to effects of the ongoing COVID-19 virus. Announcements about the fall season programs will be made in early June, with the application process opening for those programs in mid-June. Our primary concern is for the health and well-being of our community, so decisions will be based on the most current recommendations by the CDC, state and local government guidelines and industry best practices.



New at Camp in 2020-2021



Everyone loves a dance party, even on Zoom!



Let's make a photo book to hold some of those great Camp memories.



Campfire may have looked different online, but thanks to Bella, it sure sounded great!

Camp Mak-A-Dream also **ADDED** some new programming & event opportunities between our usually scheduled sessions throughout our spring, summer and fall seasons.

The **Gold Creek Camp Connection** electronic newsletter was the first addition. Each month we put together content, fun do-on-your-own activities and craft projects, delicious recipes and cooking demonstrations by Chef Joe in the Camp Kitchen, and shared information about what else was going on here in western Montana and at Camp. To date, we've been sharing these issues with campers and volunteers who have taken part in Camp programs over the last couple of years.

Each June, we typically host more than 500 bicyclists for a 127 mile ride around the Pioneer Mountains in southwest Montana (RATPOD). This fundraising event has been integral to providing operational support for Camp—for making our programs possible. Given gathering restrictions and public health mandates, we were not able to come together in Dillon in 2020. Instead, we created RATPOD Unlimited—Your RATPOD, Your Way. It was a virtual event in which participants could bike, hike, walk, run, paddle or whatever on June 20th to support Camp Mak-A-Dream. We managed to still have more than 500 participants and, even better, they came from all 50 states and 6 countries! Because of this resounding success, we will continue to host this virtual option for RATPOD each year. Join us on June 26th this year! Visit www.ratpod.org for more information.

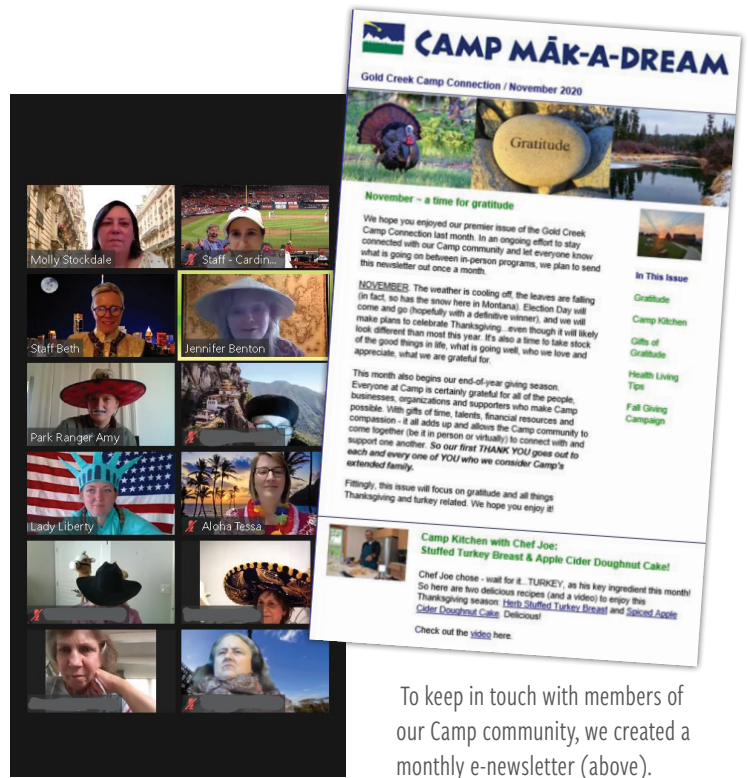


Monthly fireside chats (which you can read more about on page 3 of this newsletter) were the next new thing added in the fall of 2020 to help keep those camper connections going throughout stay-at-home recommendations and to diminish feelings of isolation and missing in-person gatherings with friends, family and the Camp community.

In February, our first ever virtual play, entitled 'Help Desk,' was hosted online as a joint venture between Camp Mak-A-Dream and its long-time program partner, the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation out of New York. This project brought together eight brain tumor survivors and one sibling (many of whom are also past campers), along with staff members from both organizations, for nearly six weeks of auditions, run-throughs and dress rehearsals. It resulted in the live online performance (thanks to Zoom!) viewed by close to 200 spectators!

Finally, came the Game Night for Grown Ups series in March featuring different types of interactives puzzles, quizzes, games and trivia activities for past camp participants from our young adult and adult retreats. We had nearly 30 brave souls join us and a great time was had by all (including staff)! This was not only fun, but a great way to keep up our Zoom facilitation skills between virtual programs.

Now that we know campers are 'game' to take part in a wide variety of online Camp activities, it's pretty clear that 'virtual' programming, although certainly not a replacement for in-person gatherings in Gold Creek, will continue to enhance the retreats and weeks of Camp craziness for years to come!



To keep in touch with members of our Camp community, we created a monthly e-newsletter (above).

Despite spending most of last year in our homes, we did take a trip around the globe during our Where in the World game.



The Cast of the virtual play "Help Desk" during one of many rehearsal sessions.



Who knew you could create art using salt?



It was Mayhem for sure during the 80s prom murder mystery night.

Campers REMEMBERED

Sharri Adams
St Paul, MN

Sherry Adams Baker
Four Oaks, NC

Kitty Baierl
Green Bay, WI

Lynn Blair
New York, NY

Karen Blaszkowski
Marshfield, WI

Laurie Booth
Post Falls, ID

Ramona Burks
Bellevue, WA

Athena Burns
San Francisco, CA

Stacy Cardwell
Bowling Green, KY

Pam Connelly
Bolton, CT

Michelle Conner
Waldorf, MD

Kathy Day Kline
Bakersfield, CA

Vivian Devletian-Ibishian
Richmond Hill, ON

Ramsey Diaz
New York, NY

Allison Feldkamp
Lake Elmo, MN

Cherie Fifield
Florence, MT

Janet Fogg
Harrisburg, PA

Julie Garrabrant
Valley Park, MO

Tasha Greer
Detroit, MI

Maureen Grosshuesch
Bellingham, WA

Julie Hairston
Olympia, WA

Sherril Hougui
Waxhaw, NC

Debbie Kirchhauser
Langley, WA

Shonece Leonard
Washington, MI

Jill Maxwell
Lafayette, CO

Melissa Mohr
Cincinnati, OH

Jess Orona
Fort Worth, TX

Sally O'Shea
Granby, MA

Judi Pinson
Concord, CA

Nicki Raitt
Coralville, IA

Widget Richards
Marietta, GA

Cathy Smith
Lemoynne, PA

Larkin Stringer
Cumming, GA

Kim Swearingin
Amelia, VA

Mary Jo Vossen
Cooper City, FL

These campers have passed away in the last year. List current at time of printing.



Quotes from Campers & Families

“The Virtual Fall Ovarian Cancer Retreat was a very refreshing and rewarding event for me. I found it very empowering, social and educational.” – Erna (Fall Ovarian Participant)

“Thank you to everyone for an AMAZING 4 days! My extrovert daughter loves to be involved with everything and everybody. Thanks for shining some light in her COVID summer.” – Mabel (Parent of a Teen HUC participant)

“Virtual Camp allowed me to connect with my peers while being able to social distance. It gave me the socialization I was craving during quarantine and allowed me to learn more ways in which I can support my friends. The educational tools I learned have allowed me to understand and manage my stress as well as practice meditative techniques.

Although I miss being at Camp in Montana, it meant the world to interact with my friends.” – Gigi (participant, HUC)

How Can I Help Camp?

There are lots of everyday items needed at Camp, so please consider donating something from our Wish List(s). Donations may also be tax-deductible. For a complete list and link to our Amazon Wish List, please visit: <https://www.campdream.org/ways-to-support/our-wish-list/>

Camp Mak-A-Dream may be the perfect place to hold your next group function. Our fully accessible facility sits on 87 beautiful acres in Gold Creek, Montana, accommodates both small and large groups and is available to outside groups for rental in the off-season, late fall through early spring. Visit: <https://www.campdream.org/about/facility-rental/> or call us at (406) 549-5987 for more information.



All of our past campers are remembered in the Granader Gardens at Camp.

Michigan Chapter - Friends of Camp

The 2020 pandemic created a myriad of challenges for people the world over. Staff in Montana had to act quickly in order to create a virtual experience that would come as close as possible to an actual week at Camp Mak-A-Dream.

Here in Michigan, our 20 year-long fundraiser called Cookies and Dreams also had to be changed. In a normal October, the event takes place inside a large mall and draws 400 to 500 people, mostly children. Fifteen to twenty of the best cookie bakers in the Detroit suburbs volunteer to bring hundreds of their cookies and baked goods. The children taste each treat and then vote on which are the best in a variety of categories. In addition, we have face-painting, jewelry making, a DJ, music, dancing, prizes and plenty of ice cream, healthy sandwiches and snacks. It's a fun night for a great cause.

In 2020, our Friends of Camp Mak-A-Dream (FoCMAD) - Michigan Chapter Board of creative young women and men came up with a brilliant substitute for Cookies and Dreams. They called it "Cookies on the Go" which was

a drive-by event. Thankfully, many of the same cookie bakers were able to volunteer their time and talents. They packaged the cookies and our volunteers handed them to the parents and children in their cars. We sold Camp tshirts, sweat shirts and other Camp swag. We raised over \$20,000! Thank you to everyone who made this such a success.

Last year, we lost one of our board members, Bob Mellen. Bob was on the FoCMAD board for 20 years serving as treasurer. He traveled to camp many times and shared his experiences with his grandchildren. His granddaughter, Sydney, wanted to honor her Papa's memory. She launched a fundraiser for Friends of Camp Mak-A-Dream and raised over \$9,000 for the Robert Mellen Travel Fund which will help pay for campers' air travel to Camp from Michigan.

Members of our FoCMAD Michigan Chapter look forward to the time when campers can return to Camp where they can enjoy the freedom Camp provides and the beauty of Montana.

Farewell to Beth Jones

The past year has brought so much change and, yet, has made us all that much more grateful for all we are fortunate to have in our lives. One more change is upon Camp Mak-A-Dream. Our intrepid, creative, energetic Camp Director, Beth, will be leaving our Camp team after 15 years of serving our organization, campers and mission well. While we will miss her daily presence, trivia prowess and invaluable leadership, we are excited for her new professional "adventure" with the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation (CBTF). And, even better, we will continue to get to work with her in her new capacity given that CBTF is one of our valued partners.

We are sure there are innumerable stories of shared laughter, tears, butte hikes, learning and late nights with Beth at Camp. A flair for costumes, fun dance moves, witty repartee, insightful survey monkey inquiries, seemingly endless energy for running the zipline up and down the ravine and profound compassion for our campers and their families—we will miss it all. Beth has been an integral part of the success and growth of Camp Mak-A-Dream over the past couple of decades and, as a bonus, we've been privileged to watch her son, Isaac, grow up along the way.



Please help us thank Beth for her many contributions and commitment to Camp, our campers and our mission. It won't be the same without her, but how lucky are we to have benefited from her talents, friendship and kindness for so many years. Cheers to you, Beth!



Children's Oncology Camp Foundation
 P.O. Box 1450
 Missoula, MT 59806-1450
www.campdream.org

Camp Māk-A-Dream 2021 EVENTS

5th Annual Lip Sync Battle
 at Ogren Stadium
 May 16, 2021 | Missoula, MT
LipSyncMissoula.com

20th Annual RATPOD
 Ride Around The Pioneers in One Day
 June 26, 2021 | Dillon, MT
www.ratpod.org

GOLD CREEK GALA
 25th Anniversary Re-Do Celebration
 October 2, 2021 | Missoula, MT
Campdream.org/events/25thanniversarycelebration/

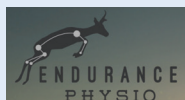
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