

S'more Sibling News

Welcome to the 2010 Camp To Belong Summer Camp Season!

Karyn Schimmels – Board Chair

Here we are, another year of sibling reunions and creating valuable opportunities for quality time together! I am a firm believer that great things happen when youth and mountains meet!

At camp, when children explore the world around them and learn that "I can" is much more powerful than "I can't," magic happens. Camp To Belong is a purposeful environment created just for the youth we serve. Here, they learn real life skills, develop self-esteem and gain a sense of belonging with each other. Whether our campers are playing, exploring nature, conquering new heights or becoming part of a camp family, brothers and sisters are creating memories that will last a lifetime.



Karyn Schimmels

CTB promotes belonging and a great space to show kids how to live together and care for one another. CTB is an equal opportunity life changer. We address universal childhood needs not specific to a particular racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group. Nobody is left out. It's all about childhood. It's all about siblings. It's all about our compassion for them. As camp season nears, let us all strive for compassionate leadership through our camp directors, counselors and other camp personnel.

Thank you all very much for all that you do to make this amazing experience happen for our kids!

Camp To Belong - Northwest

As we near camp season a special story comes to mind, one that shows a profound example of human kindness. At the center of this story is Riley, a beautiful 12-year old girl from Sherwood, Oregon, with the heart and soul any parent would be so proud of. Her strawberry blonde braids, self determination and convictions are a force to be reckoned with!

I met Riley after she had read an article in the local newspaper about Camp To Belong. She wanted to help. In 2007, she proudly gave me a contribution of over \$300 that she earned through a garage sale. In 2008, in lieu of a birthday party and gifts for her 10th birthday; she set her eyes on a completely different goal: hiking 21 miles in the Grand Canyon and raising money for CTB! Riley raised over \$1,750 for camp that year. And in 2009

and 2010, she has helped by collecting and donating birthday party decorations and presents for campers.

Riley is a part of our CTB community and a selfless donor who, at such a young age, realizes the importance of reuniting brothers and sisters separated in care. . .she gets our mission! Riley loves to contribute each year. What she doesn't know is that her random acts of kindness are a wonderful example of how one person can truly make a difference in this world. Since the age of eight, Riley has been a dedicated donor. Amazing! We are so proud to have Riley as part of our CTB family.



A Week That Lingers a Lifetime

Lynn Price – Founder & President Emeritus

It is humbling to think as we start our sixteenth summer of Camp To Belong, we continue to hear from campers and counselors across the years—from our very first camp in 1995 to our most recent camps of 2009. The connections come when you least expect it. Our youth share stories of growing up, going to college, getting married and having kids of their own. And our counselors share stories of continuing their education, launching careers, getting married and growing families.

Camp To Belong is not just a week of camp. It's memories and connections that linger a lifetime. It's quality time with siblings learning each other's favorite colors, sports teams and singers. It's brothers and sisters becoming comfortable with others who share the same challenges of separation as they do. It's the moment siblings blow out the candles together on their sibling birthday cakes. It's the laughter of enjoying carnival games. It's the awe of learning opportunities for college. It's the inspiration of volunteers who come to give and get much more in return.

This year, Chalitta returns to Camp as a counselor—10 years after she attended as a camper with her siblings. I still remember the song she sang at the campfire that rose toward the sky and sent shivers down everyone's spine. She recently reconnected saying, "How is Camp To Belong going? I really miss the camp experience because everyone was so fascinating and warm-hearted. Thanks so much for giving me the opportunity to have that experience!" She remembered us and we remember her.

With your generosity as a counselor or financial contributor or year-round volunteer, many more siblings will be able to remember their own special week...one that lingers a lifetime.

Camp To Belong - Massachusetts

Judy Cockerton – Founder & Director

Since 2005, when we launched our first Camp To Belong MA on beautiful Cape Cod, I saw the need to create a year-round sibling connection initiative for sisters and brothers separated through foster care. So as the buses were pulling out of CTB MA, I decided to pilot a monthly program for our campers called Sibling Sundays. On the first Sunday of every month during the school year, campers and counselors gather at the Treehouse Community, a multi-generational village where families adopting children from foster care live with caring neighbors. Siblings spend the day together sledding, swimming, ice skating, roller skating, baking, decorating cookies, hiking, playing basketball and rowing on the Connecticut River.

When I think of a story of connection from Sibling Sundays, I think about three beautiful sisters who live in separate homes. They are ages 8, 10 and 11. Their 15-year-old brother has been connected with two of his sisters since they were born. He re-connected with his 10-year-old sister at a Sibling Sunday event after not having been in touch for more than seven years. His last memory of his little sister was watching the social worker remove her from the car and walk her up the steps to her foster home when she was a toddler. He was 6 years old and powerless to do anything about the situation. For seven years he felt responsible. Being introduced to each other again at Treehouse on a Spring Sibling Sunday was a momentous occasion for this brother and sister. Thoughtful planning, including the right people and program supports, have helped re-build their family system.

Sibling Sunday and Camp To Belong MA are made possible by an array of fabulous Partnerships. We thank our funders, the Treehouse Foundation, our amazing corps of volunteer counselors, Beaver Summer Programs, our host camp, the MA Department of Children and Families, Camp To Belong International, and the hundreds of dedicated individuals who support the Sibling Connections mission and vision.



Camp To Belong - Maine

Kim Burrows

In August 2009 I had the chance to volunteer at Camp To Belong Maine for a day. It was an awesome experience and one that I will hold onto for many years. I started my morning by helping to check in campers. They were so excited to arrive knowing an entire week of fun camp activities with their siblings was ahead of them. There is no greater bond than that between a brother and sister and this was confirmed during my time at camp. I had the chance to watch the children swim in the afternoon and sit around the campfire with their arms around each other at night. I ended the evening in one of the cabins watching two brothers play a game. As a former youth in care myself, experiencing the mission of Camp To Belong was such a satisfying experience and made it all the more hard to leave. Today, I am proud to sit on the CTB Maine planning committee and be a part of a work study program at the Muskie School of Public Service.



Camp To Belong - Nevada

Ellen Lloyd-Child Focus

"Camp To Belong is not just for sibling preservation. It's just as important for the volunteers who reunite with the kids!" Those are the words of Mary Riley-Lowe, UPS Air Operations Supervisor, in Las Vegas. Her experience at 2009 Camp To Belong NV so affected Mary that she used her 200 hours of volunteer time from CTB to qualify the member camp organization, Child Focus, for an elite level of giving through the UPS Foundation. Through Mary's efforts, UPS generously donated \$20,000 to Child Focus for Project Logon to upgrade the agency's technology for helping youth search for jobs and colleges, as well as provide distance learning modules to train volunteers and enhance life skills for the kids we serve.

"The UPS Foundation is committed to funding impactful programs that make a meaningful difference in our communities, so we are proud to support Project Logon at Child Focus," said Ken Sternad, president of The UPS Foundation. Thanks to Mary, more children in care in Southern Nevada will be helped and for that we are forever grateful. We—and the kids—can't wait to see her at camp in June!



Camp To Belong - Orange County

Sharon Landis-Orange County SSA

Kids playing, laughing and crying—these are some of the memories I took away from my wonderful and exhausting week as a camp counselor for Camp To Belong OC. But this was not just another summer camp; it was a very special and powerful week that I shared with 42 children and 26 staff members last July at the Outdoor Education Center in Irvine Regional Park.

Picture siblings who don't have traditional relationships coming together to play, eat and sleep. There was the sibling set of four girls, who learned to canoe together, made sibling pillows stuffed with love notes and still found time to fashion each other's hair at night. Another sibling set found courage together as they held hands and whizzed across the zipline. Another group of siblings hiked up a dusty trail while laughing and looking out for tarantulas. Each showed amazing sibling support. At campfire that evening, the children listened quietly to a carnival volunteer sharing his poignant story of being in Orangewood Children's Home as a boy. Today he is a police officer.

Memories were made at camp and relationships strengthened. At the final night campfire, each child was given a pebble. They were instructed to throw their pebble in the water if ever they forgot their importance in life, showing them how even a small thing can move big things and make an impact. Our final family group hug was a very emotional time, knowing that everyone would part...but holding onto hope for the lasting connections that were made that week.





We Need YOU!

The goal of a Camp To Belong in every state and beyond requires each of us to pick up a stone, hurl it with all our might and start a ripple in each of our communities. Hundreds of volunteers and donors are doing this already. But with your help, we can make an even bigger splash for siblings everywhere.

Are you ready to dive in? Then volunteer, donate or contact us at Camp To Belong headquarters today! To learn more, visit camptobelong.org.

Camp To Belong 2010 Camp Dates:



CAMP TO BELONG-NEVADA
June 13-18, 2010 Pathfinder Ranch

CAMP TO BELONG-MAINE
August 16-21, 2010 Camp Wigwam

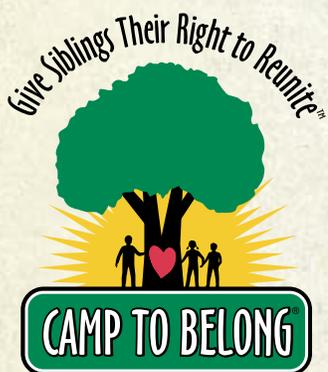
CAMP TO BELONG-NORTHWEST
June 27-July 2, 2010 Camp Silver Falls

CAMP TO BELONG-WASHINGTON
August 16-21, 2010 Miracle Ranch Camp

CAMP TO BELONG-GEORGIA
June 27-July 2, 2010 Camp Twin Lakes

CAMP TO BELONG-MASSACHUSETTS
August 24-29, 2010 Camp Taconic

CAMP TO BELONG-ORANGE COUNTY
July 26-31, 2010 Outdoor Education Center



Make a Difference at Camp This Summer!

Your tax deductible gift of any amount will make a significant difference for siblings this summer.

My/our check is enclosed for \$ _____.

Credit Card Type: _____

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Please make check payable to **Camp To Belong** and mail to: P.O. Box 1146, Marana, AZ 85653.

Contributions are tax deductible according to IRS guidelines. For more information, please call 1-888-7-BELONG.