

S'more Sibling News



Penthea Burns

A Journey with Camp To Belong

Penthea Burns, Camp To Belong Board Chair

Certain things happen in our lives or in the world around us, and those moments are clearly cemented in our memories. In early 2000, I was in my office at the Muskie School of Public Service when the phone rang. Jennie, a young woman who had grown up in foster care, was on the other end of the line. She was excitedly telling me about Camp To Belong and a woman named Lynn Price. Jennie knew what it meant to grow up without her siblings in her daily life and she gave me this charge that day: "We have to bring Camp To Belong to Maine." That call began the creation of change for Maine's brothers and sisters who were separated by foster care and it brought Maine into the history of this great organization—Camp To Belong (CTB).

Now, 12 years later, Maine is one of the nine CTB member camps, including Massachusetts, Oregon, Nevada, Georgia, Washington, Orange County (CA), New York and Australia. CTB's board, Executive Director and community members work together to strategically develop camp programs in jurisdictions where siblings need an organization that prioritizes their rights to connect, be together, create memories and strengthen their bond. In every state, there are children and youth separated from their siblings. Reuniting them is Camp To Belong's mission.



Camp to Belong Board Members

Camp To Belong is more than a summer camp program. In addition to the powerful impact that camp has for every child, CTB and its volunteers create a safe and caring place for children who wake up every morning longing to be reunited with brothers and sisters. One camper says, "I have been changed by this camp in more positive ways than I could ever ask for. I am not only closer to my siblings, they are closer to me. At this camp all I see are happy kids not wanting camp to ever end. I am absolutely in love with CTB. It will forever hold a spot in my heart."

Campers let us know the benefit of increasing relationships with peers, building camaraderie and reducing isolation. All this leads to greater community and personal connections. In their words, "The best thing is I know that there are other people who have gone through the same thing. I've made new friends and when I have a problem I have people to count on to help me!"

Increasingly, CTB member camps are adding reunion activities across the year. All of these activities make a difference in the lives of children who have already endured enough difficulty. For Maine, this journey began 12 years ago, but I know there are children in other communities who would benefit in the same way Maine children have benefitted. Let's work together so brothers and sisters can deepen their connection and build their relationship to last a lifetime.

Whether you are a volunteer counselor, a year-round volunteer, a donor or supporter of Camp To Belong, thank you. YOU are the Power of the Ripple!

Check out our website! Visit www.camptobelong.org

CAMP DIRECTOR Q&A

We have the most awesome Camp Directors ever! We thought we would share, in their words, answers to questions we asked about Camp To Belong.

What is the most memorable thing someone with Camp To Belong has said to you?

"I never thought I could do something important with my life before, because I'm just a foster kid. Now I know I can. Thank you for believing in me."

Another: "I've never had much of a family. Camp To Belong Washington is my family now."

–*Deb Kennedy, Camp Co-Director **Camp To Belong-Washington***

"Oh, there are so many things, I don't know how to narrow it down. A counselor, Patrick, grew up in foster care and experienced separation from his siblings. He went from foster care straight into the U.S. Marine Corps. He experienced tours of duty, including combat, in Iraq and Afghanistan. His experiences in the military had a tremendous impact on him. He shared his story with the campers and was an incredible counselor. About two weeks after camp, he called me and told me CTB Orange County had changed his life. After all he had been through, CTB had changed his life. All I could say was, Wow!"

–*Cindy Roe, Camp Director **Camp To Belong-Orange County***

What is your most vivid visual at/with Camp To Belong?

"During a hectic carnival event when everyone was enjoying their BBQ meal on the porch of the lodge, or walking around, or sitting in groups and chatting, there were two brothers who took their plates of food to the waterfront rock wall and sat together looking out over the water. When a counselor pointed it out to those of us sitting with her, we all took the moment to cherish that scene of these two brothers not caring about who was around them, but just taking the time to be together to eat and talk. Amazing...truly amazing."

–*Heidi Krieger, Camp Director **Camp To Belong-Maine***

"I may never know the impact experienced by the kids, their caregivers and/or caseworkers, camp volunteers, the camp location staff, or our agency staff involved. But I will carry the image of campers, many wearing the capes made for them by their siblings, as they sat quietly together, smiling, reflecting on their week, making scrapbooks. It's my reminder that when you do what is right, good comes from it."

–*Joanne Trinkle, Camp Director **Camp To Belong-New York***

What have you modeled for your family and the legacy you want to leave because of your experience with Camp To Belong?

"Service to others is so important. Sibling relationships and family are so important. Anyone can make a difference for others no matter how small or large we are, or how young or old. Don't let your wounds make you become someone you are not. Believe in the Power of the Ripple!"

–*Karyn Schimmels, Camp Co-Director **Camp To Belong-Northwest (Oregon)***

"I have modeled for my family a sense that things are bigger than just what you can see and that it is important to give back. It's about giving to a charity that you can be passionate about."

–*Julie Stevenson, Camp Director **Camp To Belong-Georgia***



CAMPER QUOTES:

And now, some of our campers...in their own words.

"Camp To Belong gives me a week to be with [my siblings] and show them I still love them and care for them. So I have to say thank you guys for letting me at Camp To Belong."

– *Joshua*

"For the past several years I have felt lost without my siblings. Now I feel found and that I have a purpose for being here—my siblings."

– *Lucy*

"I like that every kid at camp is happy to be here and that the activities are the best. All the counselors are the greatest, I like they put their time and effort to be here and I hope every one of the counselors comes back next year."

– *Manny*

"I want to come to this camp until they tell me I can't come any more."

– *Beth*

"If I had the choice of spending a whole year in Hawaii or 45 seconds with my brother, I would choose my brother."

– *Seth*

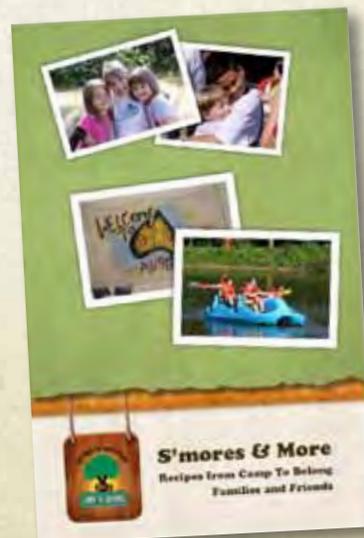
"I was in foster care for about 2 years (from about 12 to 14), and I was separated from my brother as soon as we entered the system. I just want to say 'thank you' to Camp To Belong for the wonderful memories and the amazing opportunity to unite with so many amazing people. It was an experience I will never forget. I still have the picture book full of memories and the rock that was given to me at the closing campfire. My heart will forever be filled with the love I felt at your amazing camp."

– *Quanzale (former camper who is now an adult)*

CTB COOKBOOK:

Yes, that's right, it's here—The Camp To Belong COOKBOOK!

We are pleased to announce that the Camp To Belong S'Mores & More cookbook is here, just in time for camp season. This beautiful, colorful cookbook is 60 pages packed with over 75 recipes with everything from appetizers to main dishes to desserts. Recipes are all from Camp To Belong family and friends and include great dishes from all over the U.S., Canada and Portugal. The cost per book is \$9.99 (plus \$1.99 s/h). You can order the book by going to our website and clicking on the "Cookbook" icon found on our home page. Order your copy today!



DONATE YOUR USED CAR AND PROVIDE A WEEK OF CAMP!

Do you have a used vehicle that you want to get rid of? Perhaps you are considering a move from a large vehicle for an economy car, have a college student that no longer uses the family car or an aging parent who no longer drives. Life changes often leave us with cars, boats, RV's or motorcycles that are frustrating to dispose of. Camp To Belong has partnered with CAR (Charitable Auto Resource) to be able to accept your donation of a vehicle, boat, RV or motorcycle. CAR is a nationwide non-profit with a great reputation of excellent customer service. Camp To Belong can accept vehicles from any state, in any condition and best news—CAR will take care of everything for you! It takes only a few minutes to complete the online form or to call. CAR will arrange to have your vehicle picked up, title handled and a donation record sent to you. Your old ride can provide a week of camp for siblings across the country! To learn more, go to www.camptobelong.org and click on the "Ways To Give" Donate tab.



CAMP DIRECTORS CONVERGE!

Ever wonder where camps get their great activity ideas or best counselor training practices? Every year our dedicated camp directors, volunteer counselors and community members gather for the CTB Annual Meeting. Member camps met in January in Phoenix to exchange ideas and put their activities into motion with their colleagues. Camper activities included "Minute To Win It" and "Sibling Superstar Game." Camp directors also learned new trends in child welfare, thanks to Sarah Greenblatt from Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. And everyone had a great time with awesome counselor teambuilding and training activities, including "Invisible Suitcase" and "Connected By A String." Overall, it was a great time for one and all in our continued quest to make Camp To Belong the best experience for our siblings!



Camp To Belong 2012 Camp Dates:

CTB-Nevada

Camp Site: Pathfinder Ranch, Mountain Center, CA.
June 23-29, 2012

CTB-Oregon

Camp Site: Camp Silver Creek, Salem, OR.
June 24-29, 2012

CTB-Georgia

Camp Site: Camp Dream, Warm Springs, GA.
July 8-13, 2012

CTB-Orange County

Camp Site: Outdoor Education Center-Irvine, CA.
July 23-28, 2012

CTB-Northwest/Washington

Camp Site: Miracle Ranch Camp-Port Orchard, WA.
August 13-18, 2012

CTB-Maine

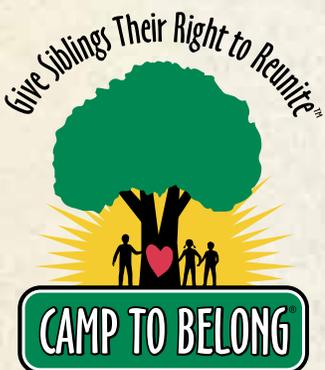
Camp Site: Camp Wigwam, Waterford, ME.
August 14-19, 2012

CTB-Massachusetts

Camp Site: Camp Taconic, Hinsdale, MA.
August 20-25, 2012

CTB-New York

Camp Site: Camp Chingachook, Lake George, NY
August 25-30, 2012



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: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Signature: _____

Verification Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Billing Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

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.