CAMP OOCH & CAMP TRILLIUM

A JOURNEY FOR LIFE
“Sometimes I tell my friends, ‘I’m glad I had cancer.’ They’re shocked, ‘You could have died!’ I turn and say, ‘Dude. Camp Ooch.’”

—Damien, Camper

“We were lucky to have Camp Trillium. It was the most important part of my son’s treatment. Medicine may have saved my child, but Camp Trillium saved our family.”

—Carlos, Camper Parent

A diagnosis of childhood cancer is a big, scary, swerve in the road. It changes life in an instant. While more kids are surviving cancer, the journey to recovery is traumatic—for the child and every member of their family.

Suddenly, it can feel like everything is about cancer. Simple joys like friendships, birthday parties, or sports teams are left behind in the need for medical appointments, hospital stays, and long absences from school.

For over 35 years, Camp Ooch & Camp Trillium have offered a different path—where the healing power of fun, friendship, and self-confidence are closer than kids and families could ever imagine. This is the life-changing gift our donors give our Campers.

Camp Ooch & Camp Trillium decided they were better together. In January, 2020, we officially merged. Childhood cancer doesn’t stop at regional boundaries, and now, neither do we!

Now, we can grow our impact to reach many more kids and families who deserve to feel the magic of Camp. To make sure no one misses out, we must raise $13 million every year. And we need your help.
CAMP IS A JOURNEY.
FOR LIFE.
BUT THERE IS NO JOURNEY WITHOUT YOU.

Since 1983, Camp Ooch & Camp Trillium have been woven into and through the lives of kids with cancer and their families. With our donors’ and partners’ help, and without government funding, we’ve grown to be an important part of the circle of care for the children and their families.

Now that we’ve merged, very little has changed—including our shared belief that no child or family in crisis should ever be turned away.

We’re ready to take the next bold step: serving everyone in Ontario directly affected by childhood cancer. That’s more than 4,200 kids and their families.

To do so, we’ll need to grow our programs in more Ontario health centres, broaden our support to parents and siblings, and welcome more families new to the concept of Camp.

And we’ll need to bring Camp magic to kids and families, right where they are—at the hospital bedside, in clinic waiting rooms, or close to home in their community.

This requires significant new investments over the next five years—and can only happen with your support. Together, we must ensure that not a single child, not a single family, misses out on the Camp Ooch & Camp Trillium experience.

“Camp changes your life—it’s something so special and it never leaves you—there’s a kind of magic about Camp.”

—Dave, Camper Parent

MY JOURNEY: A CAMPER’S STORY

From before their first birthday to late in their teens, thousands of kids affected by childhood cancer have experienced the Magic of Camp. Some are newly diagnosed and on active treatment. Some are in remission. Some are terminally ill and in palliative care. We offer programs for them all, year round, at no charge to their families.

When Eric first arrived in hospital, he was just two. Most days, he was an in-patient that year. By the time he was four, he was an enthusiastic Camper, not only participating in every activity offered in the hospital, but excited that he was now old enough for day camp.

Then came the diagnosis: his cancer was terminal.

As Eric’s discharge date approached, his parents seemed hesitant about the idea of day camp, but finally agreed.

We didn’t let cancer get in the way of his fun. Nurses waterproofed his central lines so he could swim—twice a day! The waterslide was his favourite. With his chest wrapped in protective plastic he called himself the “Silver Power Ranger.”

He would put on his red cape and cowboy hat, every day, then join in, laughing and having fun. The final day of Camp was his birthday—possibly his last. Rather than be at home, Eric was determined to spend that day at Camp with his friends. And we threw him a true Camp-style birthday celebration.

His parents say they aren’t sure how they were convinced to send their son to Camp at that point in his life, but they are glad he went. At Camp, he got to be a super hero, a cowboy, a singer, a swimmer, an artist and a friend. He learned he was good at them all. He got to be a kid.

Later that year, as Eric became palliative, we ran a special program just for him, his family and his friends from Camp. The theme? Power Rangers, of course.
**MY JOURNEY: A PARENT’S STORY**

At the heart of our volunteer-driven organization is a team of passionate people; from all walks of life who come together with the single goal of giving children affected by childhood cancer the chance to have fun, to just be kids—from the time they’re first diagnosed in the hospital.

“I’ll never forget when your organization entered our lives. It was the night we learned our four and a half year old son had leukemia. We’d thought it was just an ear infection. But, late at night, our family doctor called to urge us to emergency.

Not until later, when the elevator doors opened to the sign ONCOLOGY, did it hit me. I felt drained, thinking, “How do I explain this to him?” After seeing the doctors, Oliver was slumped in bed.

Then came a knock at the door, and two young women with guitars. “Can we come in?”

“Sure,” I croaked.

“What’s your name?” asked one. Oliver didn’t answer. Didn’t look up.

Unfazed, they introduced themselves. “And if you see us anywhere, we’re always looking for fun.” I blinked back tears and managed my first smile. Oliver was sitting up, curious.

“You don’t even need to tell us your name,” they said. “We can tell by your PJs that you like Batman. Wait, maybe you ARE Batman! And,” they pointed at me, “this must be your butler—Alfred!”

And they started singing about how the world needed Batman, so brave and so strong. And that Alfred needed Batman too! Oliver lit up.

He has been in treatment for 2-1/2 years now. He doesn’t think about being at the hospital. He only thinks about his Camp friends and experiences. The last two years, he’s been so sick in December, and they bring the holidays to him. A boy who can’t leave his room for weeks—it’s heartbreaking. But you find a way to make it magical.”

—Rose, Camper Parent

**MY JOURNEY: A SIBLING’S STORY**

Since 1983, Camp Ooch & Camp Trillium have travelled hand in hand with thousands of families on their journey with childhood cancer, including bereaved siblings. This is just one story.

Ali had just turned eight. His middle sister Fatima had just turned five. Their younger brother, Ahmed, age three, had just been diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. It was hard for the whole family—they were in full crisis mode. Mom took three years off work so that she could spend time with Ahmed in the hospital.

Everyone in the family suffers when a child has cancer. Cancer took Ali and Fatima away from the comforting and familiar routines of life, away from friends and family, and away from each other. Ali and Fatima had to stay at their grandparents for a while.

The summer following Ahmed’s diagnosis, the entire family attended family Camp at Rainbow Lake. Here, they connected with others, enjoyed nature, played, and forgot about cancer—even if it was for just a little while. At Camp, the older children were able to understand more about what was happening to their youngest brother.

Ali and Fatima found they could be themselves again, and enjoy special family times together outside of the hospital. At Camp, they learned that they were not the only siblings who felt the way they did—they were no longer alone. That summer, Ali and Fatima built happy family memories they will cherish for a lifetime.

“It’s cool to have something that you and your brother do together for so many years. It’s about the two of you and a community of kids just like you.”

—Ceilidh, Teomul Camper
The Camp journey often starts in the hospital... Campers (and their siblings) first feel the Magic of Camp in hospital (clinics, waiting rooms or at bedside) when a Program Specialist asks if they want to play. Kids get to choose whether or not to join in, because the relationship between us and families is built on trust and respect.

...the journey continues into the community... Community and family programs in cities such as Hamilton, London, and Ottawa, as well as the Greater Toronto Area, will allow more and more Campers and their families to experience the Magic of Camp close to home, province wide. Whether it’s day camp, our version of The Amazing Race, a sleepover, or finger painting under a tree, we aim to give Camp to kids, wherever they live.

...at day camps, year round... For children with cancer ages 4–7, Day Camps introduce younger Campers to Camp. During summer and March Break, Community Day Camp week offers nonstop fun for Campers and siblings (8–14). Often held close to hospitals, these allow even the most medically fragile Campers and their siblings to enjoy Camp programs together—and offer their parents healing respite.

...at Overnight Camp... In all four seasons, kids and their families are immersed in nature and build memories that last a lifetime. Kids—even those undergoing the most intense stages of their cancer journey—attend Camp on their own, choosing from one of three sites. Here, Campers are given safe opportunities to develop physical, life, and leadership skills. The Magic of Camp helps them recapture a spirit of fun, friendship, self-confidence, and independence.

That same magical formula applies to families who attend family Camp. Just like the kids-only Camp, it’s here that new friends and memories are made, and new communities are built. Families leave their cares behind and enjoy special times together away from home and hospital in the supportive embrace of others who understand their journey.

Ultimately, pointing young adults to the path of leadership The transformational journey of laughter, friendship, self-discovery, and compassion doesn’t end as Campers reach their teens. Leadership programs help Campers (ages 15–18) grow into confident, responsible young adults as they move into their broader communities. Campers enjoy many choices about how to continue their Camp experiences, from multi-day expeditions such as white water canoe trips or dogsledding to camp counsellor training—getting hands-on learning about the joys and challenges of working with children. Campers can also opt to gain a Grade 11 high school credit to help them keep pace with their peers at school.
HERE WE ARE GOING NOW.
JOIN US.
Camp Ooch & Camp Trillium began as an overnight camp for kids with cancer. Today, we are much more. Tomorrow, our plans will take us even further.

Wherever families are in the cancer journey, Our goal is to help them—by keeping families together at family camp, by offering programs for terminally ill Campers, or hosting day camps that bring joy to very young Campers while giving their parents much-needed respite. Across the province, we could help strengthen every family in crisis affected by childhood cancer.

But we can only do this with you.
If we raise the $13 million essential to our goal annually, we will serve 50% more families across the province. That means every year, we will be able to introduce hundreds more kids and families affected by childhood cancer to the transformative experience of Overnight Camp.

That means we will reach every specialized paediatric oncology centre and every corner of the province, being a positive part of the cancer journey for children and families, no matter where they live.

Not only will we be able to do all of this, we’ll be able to do it now—when so many children and families are already waiting.

Raising funds has never been more critical—together, let’s end their wait.

OUR PRIORITIES

1 CREATE NEW CAMP COMMUNITIES ACROSS ONTARIO
Camp Ooch & Camp Trillium provide more than overnight camp opportunities. Our dream is to expand to meet more families, wherever they are in their cancer journey—in more places across the province.

2 DEEPEN OUR SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES
Cancer shatters a family. Our In-Hospital and community programs let families interact in ways that aren’t just about treatment. Not only do we need to keep doing what only we do so well, but we need to bring more experiences to the whole family.

3 BRING MORE CAMPERS TO OVERNIGHT CAMP
We need ongoing funds to bring more kids and families to Camp where they can rediscover the joys that were interrupted by cancer—not just in summer, but year round.
“The attitude children develop coming out of Camp is an important part of their therapy and their healing process, and really helps them to fight their cancer better.”

–Dr. Jim Whitlock, Division Head, Haematology/Oncology, The Hospital for Sick Children