

FIRESIDE

newsletter



COCA-I

Strengthening the international community of camps for children with cancer and their families through networking, advocacy, and education.

March 2014



5 Things to Keep You Sane This Summer.

Panicked yet? You may be knee-deep in camp preparations by now, or maybe your true “busy season” is a few weeks away. Either way, here are 5 Things to Keep You Sane This Summer:

- 1. Start with the big (important) things.** Like Stephen Covey famously explains in his demo with rocks, sand, water and a jar, if you don't put the big rocks in the jar first, they ain't gonna fit. Figure out what the big, over-arching issues are on your camp to-do list and spend real time on them. You can build momentum with a few easy tasks, but don't get sucked into quick wins at the expense of the stuff that can make or break your camp. Pretend camp starts tomorrow – what would you be most panicked about? That's a good way to rank what you should be working on today.
- 2. Delegate.** Resist the temptation to do everything so you know it's done. No one grows without new responsibilities and the worst legacy you can leave behind when you're gone is the mess that results when no one knows all the stuff you did while you were around.
- 3. Welcome critical thinking.** I used to chafe when I got criticism of my emails until I realized that was the only sure sign I had that someone was reading them! Self-help guru Jack Canfield likes to point out, “The universe rewards action.” You're better off getting stuff done and adapting it as necessary based on feedback than you are in waiting until everything's perfect.
- 4. Plan with your audience in mind.** What may seem like a great idea to you may not be perceived that way by your campers/staff. No two people see the world exactly alike – take a minute to see camp as your campers see it. Having trouble? Ask them! Better yet, pay a visit to another camp, preferably one where you don't already know (and are well-known by) everyone in camp. I did that many years ago and was floored by how little I understood “the rookie perspective.”
- 5. Remember that the campers don't have a script.** Some of the best camp memories come from those days when everything doesn't go as planned and the spontaneous magic of camp takes over. You can always claim that you planned it that way...

Check out the *Fireside* for more ways to help you have a safe and sane summer and watch the *Fireside* and the COCA-I list serves for some upcoming online training.

Hope it's a great one!



2014 CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars for
November 6-9, 2014 and plan to join
COCA-I in beautiful Salt Lake City, UT.

Hosted by [Camp Hobé!](#)

COCA-I President

THANK YOU to our
2013 COCA-I CONFERENCE PARTNERS



children's
Hospital

Greenville Health System

COCA-I is thankful for the generous support of
Greenville Health System



children's Hospital
Greenville Health System

BI-LO CHARITIES CHILDREN'S CANCER CENTER



FIRESIDE
newsletter

THANK YOU to our
2013 COCA-I CONFERENCE PARTNERS

Affiac®



THANK YOU to our
2013 COCA-I CONFERENCE PARTNERS

Camp Smile-A-Mile

Alabama's Program for Children with Cancer



Jazz Pharmaceuticals™

Innovation that performs

AMGEN

CAMPBRAIN

Love your Software

beads
of **COURAGE**®



FIRESIDE
newsletter

Region **1** News

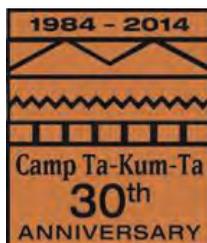
What does South Hero, Vermont have in common with Mobile, AL? Amazing kids who trade places twice a year for once in a lifetime experiences with others just like themselves.

Camp Ta-Kum-Ta and Camp Rap-A-Hope have built a world class program that crosses the geographical gap between Alabama and Vermont. Like Camp Ta-Kum-Ta, Camp Rap-A-Hope offers year round programs for children ages 7 to 17 who have or have had cancer. At the Children's Oncology Camping Association – International Conference in 2012, Directors from each camp were talking about how fun it would be for kids from Alabama to experience snow and for kids from Vermont to experience deep sea fishing. Thus began discussions on the possibility of, and ultimately the planning and implementation of an exchange program. The resulting program is the first of its kind and offers groundbreaking opportunities for Children's Oncology Camps not only within the United States and Canada but also internationally.

In March of 2013, Camp Ta-Kum-Ta welcomed two Campers and two Counselors from Camp Rap-A-Hope to its facility in South Hero, Vermont for their annual Oldest Camper Winter Weekend. In September of 2013, Camp Rap-A-Hope welcomed two Campers and two Counselors from Camp Ta-Kum-Ta to its facility in Mobile, Alabama for their annual Teen Weekend.

It is with great success that Camp Ta-Kum-Ta hosted two Campers and two Counselors from Camp Rap-A-Hope again this year, on February 8th and 9th. They arrived on Friday evening and went up to Bolton Valley Ski Resort for dinner with Hattie Johnson our Development Director. They were able to watch the night skiing and got some great pictures at the base of the mountain. After a good night's sleep they headed up to South Hero for two days of ice skating; story telling; pranks; human bowling (sledding into pins); awesome food; BACON; lots and lots of laughter; memories and friendships that will last a lifetime.

Camp Ta-Kum-Ta also hosted its Youngest Campers for a weekend in January and it's Middle Campers for a weekend in March. We are so proud of this Winter Program, its growth, and all it offers to our campers and volunteers.



News out of Camp Okizu!

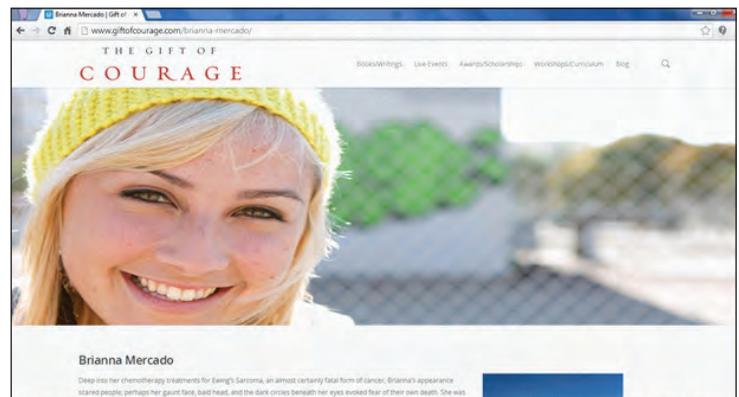
Brianna Mercado, an Okizu staff member (and past camper), is featured in the *The Gift of Courage*, a compilation of uplifting stories about everyday heroes.

Brianna, who is an inspiration to all of us at Okizu, battled Ewing's Sarcoma as a teenager. She says, of her life post treatment, "After being a year out of school, I returned with the pure motivation to live life to its fullest... I always keep an image in the back of my mind of the children I met in the hospital. I know how badly they had wanted to be living a healthy life again. I volunteer for this and a thousand other reasons all based in the natural desire to share love and make lives better. I found a calling by volunteering."

We were in awe of Brianna when we saw her perform at a Gift of Courage live empowerment event in San Francisco. She spoke beautifully and we even got to see her dance!

When she is not dancing or touring with *The Gift of Courage*, Brianna works at a bakery in New York City and volunteers at Okizu as often as she can!

Read more about Brianna and *The Gift of Courage* at www.giftofcourage.com/brianna-mercado.



2014 COCA-I ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Hosted by [Camp Hobé!](#)

Mark your calendars for **November 6-9, 2014** and plan to join COCA-I in beautiful Salt Lake City, UT.

The Conference Planning Committee wants you to know:

- 2014 will feature [Kurt Podeszwa](#), [Jason Kotecki](#), [Steve Peck](#), and [Dallas Graham \(The Red Fred Project\)](#) as speakers.
- Wonderful location! Salt Lake City is not only beautiful, it has great travel options! Plus take the lightrail from the airport to the conference hotel for only \$2.50 one way. [Plus, you can ride in the downtown area for free!](#)
- There is much more to Salt Lake than the Mormon Tabernacle Chior! Visit the many wonderful art galleries, local restaurants, and great shopping located just blocks from the hotel.



Region 9 News

Ka-roo-ka-kookoo-koo-kookoo!

Attention one and all! In case you missed Region 9 aka The Great White North aka Canada just held our Mini-COCO on January 27-28 in Toronto at the Camp Oochigeas head office. All together we had 11 camps and 31 people in attendance. We got caught up on what all our camps have been up to and got down to some committee work as well. This year's theme was "FUNDING THE FUN" where we spent Thursday afternoon discussion individual fundraising practices and national fundraising initiatives. By the end of the two days we were able to develop 4 objective for 2014:

1. Raise over \$25,000 in national fundraising to support the region
2. Ensure all camps have up to date standards revised by the Medical Standards Review Committee
3. Generate an inventory of all non-summer camp programs currently being run by member camps
4. Promote pediatric oncology camping throughout the region

The membership committee is also preparing for 3 peer visits this summer and rolling out a new training module to make the peer review process more effective. Four camps (Camp Delight, Camp Goodtimes - BC, Camp Quality - Northern, Camp Quality - Southern) were presented with certificates to acknowledge they have now obtained "Gold Star Status". A big thank you to Camp Ooch for their hospitality and we can't wait to see everyone again February 26-27, 2015. Until then keep up the great work!

