

A LETTER from the HEART

Camp del Corazon's quarterly newsletter for campers, parents and friends

Spring 2004

Notes from the founders

Camp del Corazon: A decade of fun

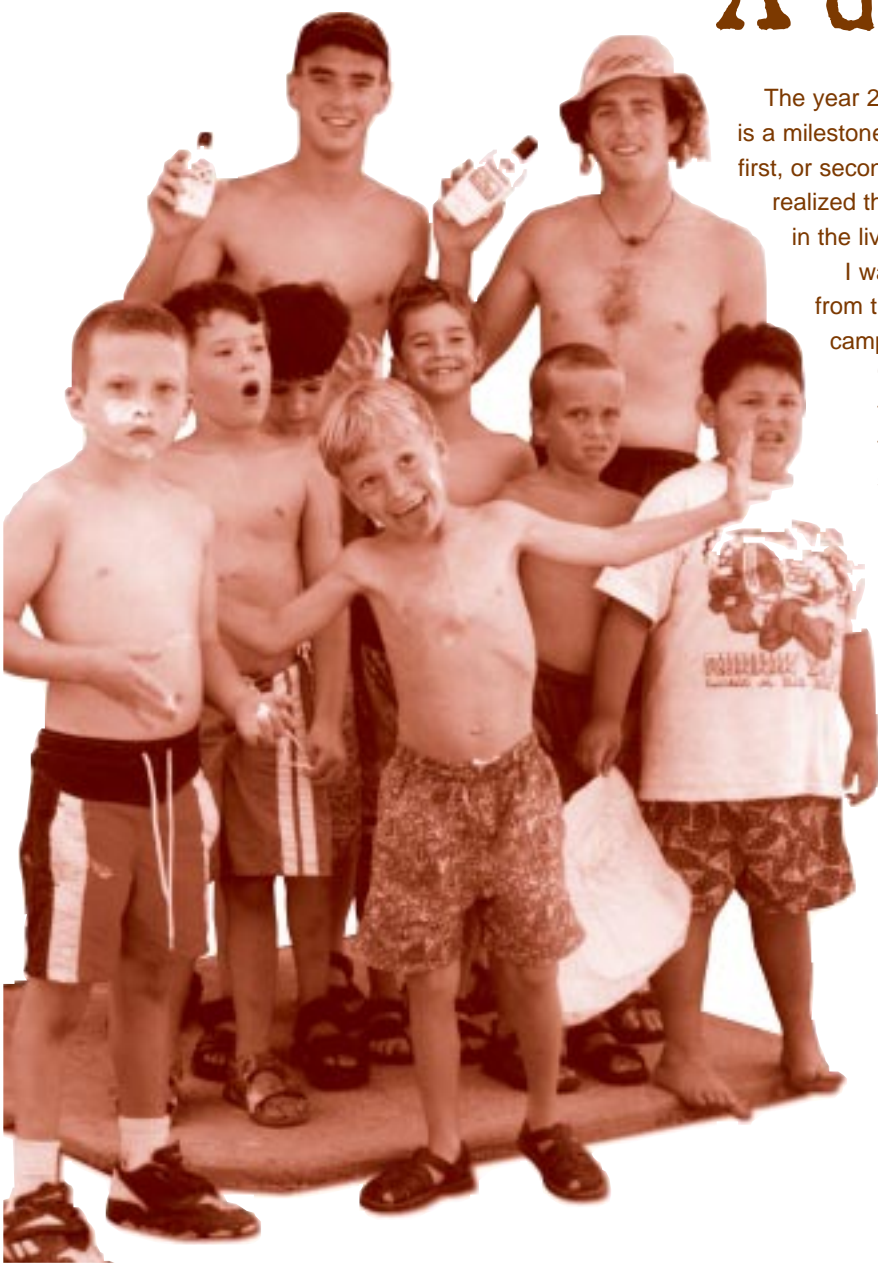
The year 2004 will mark the 10th session of Camp del Corazon. It is a milestone that we did not give much thought to when we did the first, or second or even third session. I can still recall the moment I realized that Camp del Corazon had become a permanent fixture in the lives of children with heart disease.

I was standing on the deck of the "Miss Christy," returning from the third session of camp, when one of our first-time campers asked me how long I had been the doctor at camp. "Three years," I replied, to which he inquired, "Who was the doctor before you?" I then asked him how long he thought Camp del Corazon had been around. I was shocked when he said, "Maybe twenty years".

It was then that I realized Camp del Corazon had the feel of something that had always been there, and therefore would always be there. In just three short years, Camp del Corazon had become such an integral part of their lives, it was hard to imagine a time before – and impossible to imagine a time after – Camp del Corazon. It was at that moment that I realized Camp del Corazon would outlast me, these kids and many more kids just like them. I also realized that there was an important place for camp in the lives of these children. How else could it become so important so quickly?

Kevin Shannon, M.D.
Medical Director

See the back page for a note from
Executive Director Lisa Knight, R.N.



2004 Events

April 3
Gala del Sol Black Tie Event

April 23-25
Leadership Program

June 5
Universal Symposium

June 12
1st New Staff Interviews

July 9
Davi Golf Tournament
For information, contact Janene Hogan at (909) 587-6888.

July 10
2nd New Staff Interviews

July 23-25
Lifeguard/Waterfront Training

August 7
Climbing Wall Training

August 13
Staff Application Deadline

August 28
Staff Training Day

August 30-September 3
Teen Camp 10th Year

September 3-7
Junior Camp 10th Year

October 23
Family Festival in Long Beach

First annual Gala del Sol black tie event scheduled for April 3



Have you heard the buzz? The 1st Annual Camp del Corazon Gala del Sol is going to be a night to remember!

The event is scheduled for Saturday, April 3rd at the Globe Theater at Universal Studios, Hollywood. Our 2004 Medical Honoree is Hillel Laks, M.D., whom many of you know, as he has been instrumental in the care of many of our campers and counselors.

We are also extremely thrilled to be honoring the cast and producers of ER and to have Larry King involved with this event. McKenzie Westmore from "Passions," and her husband Seven will be the hosts for the evening,

and we plan to have a fun program, silent auction and great entertainment.

We have such a fantastic committee working so hard on making this event a great success. Many volunteers are spending hours working on the décor and theme, recruiting volunteers, acquiring auction items, creating all printed materials, selling tickets and securing sponsors. For more information or to become a part of this event, please contact Ronya Waters at the camp office at (818) 754-0312.

Casey Burns becomes Program Director

Casey Burns ("Indy") has joined Camp del Corazon as Program Director. "Indy" is a youth programming professional having worked in leading roles with national not-for-profit organizations, universities and private companies for over six years. He most recently volunteered with Camp del Corazon as our trainer for lifeguarding and climbing wall staff, while taking on the role of Climbing Wall Director.



I'm excited to join the staff and volunteers of Camp del Corazon. Throughout Camp del Corazon's history, its strength has been its volunteers. I've enjoyed listening to volunteers tell stories from past years, truly giving me a sense of Camp del Corazon's proud tradition. Following the lead of our Executive Director, Lisa Knight, 2004 will see structured growth of our camp programs while adding to the excitement of summer camp. I'm eager to share in the continuation of this tradition during these exciting times while making a difference in the lives of children with heart disease.

— Indy

Annual Family Weekend to be held June 5

Save the Date! Reserve your seats now!

The American Heart Association and Camp del Corazon 4th Annual Family Weekend is scheduled for Saturday, June 5th.

This free symposium will allow parents of children with congenital heart disease and adults living with congenital heart disease a unique opportunity to spend the day with L.A.'s experts in the field.

We're pleased to have Dr. Vaughn Starns, Hastings Distinguished Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Chair of Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California. While the adults are attending the symposium at the Universal Sheraton Hotel, the children will be exploring Universal Studios/ Hollywood theme park with the outstanding volunteer staff of Camp del Corazon.



Donor's Corner

SCOR Cardiac Cyclist Club

SCOR, or Specialized Coronary Outpatient Rehabilitation, was founded in 1974 as an outpatient rehabilitation group for those who have experienced coronary problems or required specialized exercise through cycling to improve or regain their health. Now in its 30th year, SCOR has over 200 members.

As a non-profit organization, they raise funds through rides and activities in order to send children with heart-related problems to our camp and also a similar camp in Louisiana, in addition to sponsoring other organizations or groups that promote cycling and better health.

We would like to thank SCOR for their continued support. Every year their donation greatly assists in camp programs and in sending our children to camp. To learn more about becoming a member of SCOR, please call (562) 690-9693



Leadership Weekend

Who: Ages 18-25
Where: Malibu, California
When: April 23-25

The program this year will focus on living with heart disease and how it relates to:

- Developing or enhancing your leadership, communication and relationship skills
- Learning skills and strategies to meet today's real-life challenges
- Having FUN!
- Discussing heart disease and its overall effects
- Learning from professionals about key issues regarding transitions to adulthood

The Camp del Corazon Leadership Weekend is now accepting applications for 2004.

Specific program information will be sent to you upon acceptance into the program. Complete program information and application materials can be downloaded from www.campdelcorazon.org. For more information, call the camp office (818) 754-0312.

Ten years of camp

I think that the most important confirmation of our accomplishment is a look back at the mission statement and purpose which we wrote a decade ago. I still remember the day, ten years ago, that Kevin and I were sitting in his office asking each other why we were going to start a camp for children. Will it really make a difference in the lives of children with heart disease? How do we know that a child who comes to camp will be changed or influenced as a result of their experience at camp?

As the co-founder of Camp del Corazon, I have had the privilege of a ten-year perspective into the growing lives of children with heart disease. It has been a unique window to watch and listen to what it is like for a child to grow up with heart disease. Not from the bench in the examination room or hospital bed, but from a circle of children during a bedtime cabin closing or a casual beach towel conversation. It is amazing how children will share fears and concerns when they feel they are being listened to, that they matter and that – most of all – they are safe.

Although our time together is short, it is over many years that we come together. I have watched them grow and seen the friendships that develop and last for years. I have a file full of letters and emails from parents telling me how important it is what we are doing, and telling me about the changes they have witnessed in their children.

So I ask myself, at this significant ten-year milestone, is our purpose still important? Have I, as Executive Director, been true to our mission?

If this is reflected in the number of returning campers and new applicants, then we are right on track. I also know that I have a very big job in front of me, as there are so many more children who we could and should be serving. I have been so blessed that you have allowed me to be a part of something that really does matter. We are making a difference.

Lisa Knight, R.N.
Executive Director

Attention shoppers!

Macy's Community Benefit Days: Sherman Oaks & Westminster

We are again teaming with Macy's for their Community Benefit Days. We will be selling tickets for \$10 each, which will entitle the holder to enjoy 10%-20% off almost everything in the Sherman Oaks and Westminster stores on May 20th.

Camp del Corazon keeps the monies raised from the ticket sales, plus a percentage of the monies raised on May 20th. This fundraiser proved successful for us in October at the Pasadena location, when we raised over \$1,500! If you are interested in helping sell tickets or purchasing tickets for either location, please contact the camp office.

Spring edition!