

ABOUT KIDS CAMP 2018

The Foundation is now accepting referrals for Kids Camp 2018, to be held this summer in Bakersfield, Fresno and Northern California.

This 2½ day overnight camp provides kids a safe environment to find healing and peace through games, activities and common fellowship with each other.

Bereavement counselors are on site to work with children who may need one-on-one time and attention. The camp is open to any child in the community even if their loved one didn't utilize hospice services.

If you would like to refer a child or sponsor a camper, contact your local Foundation office (listed on

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Thanks to the generous support of businesses and individuals, the Foundation provides Kids Camp at no cost to campers. Please consider being a sponsor.

Camp helps kids cope with loss now, impacts future

We enjoy receiving feedback about Optimal Hospice Foundation Kids Camps and how the camp experience touches families. Here are a couple of those stories where camp has made a lasting impact.

Sharing and Healing

Colton and Clayton Harris, now ages 19 and 15, attended camp in 2010 after having lost their dad and grandfather. Their mom Suzi Harris said, "It was a hard to let the boys go away [to camp], but I had to put my feelings aside. I was confident that it would be good for them and a safe place for them to continue the grieving process. And it gave me some time to sit back and grieve on my own."

"The local newspaper published a story about Kids Camp that included a photo of my son at camp. He had a BIG smile on his face. I knew, even more then, I made the right decision. They had fun and some time to heal."

Looking back at the experience, Colton says he was happy that he went to camp. "I was really shy at that age. But camp ended up being great and I learned how to share my feelings. I also remember that I got to help others learn to play golf."

When asked what he would tell a kid about going to camp, Colton said, "Yes, go to camp. You get to meet new people, have fun, and forget about your problems for a while."

Clayton was much younger when he went to camp. He remembers "swimming a lot, jumping on the water trampoline and meeting new people."

Suzi added, "When I picked them up, Clayton couldn't wait to show me the marshmallow catapults they made."

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ABOUT KIDS CAMP 2018,

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the last page). More information and referral forms are available at OptimalHospiceFoundation.com and Facebook.com/Optimal HospiceFoundation. Referral forms may be submitted year round.

2018 KIDS CAMP SCHEDULE

Bakersfield Kids Camp

The 25th Annual Bakersfield Kids Camp will be held:

Sunday, July 29 – Tuesday, July 31 at Gergen Ski Ranch for ages 9 to 12

Wednesday, August 1 – Friday, August 3 at Gergen Ski Ranch for ages 12 to 16

Saturday, July 28 (one day) at Madison Grove Park for ages 6 to 9

Fresno Kids Camp

The 14th Annual Fresno Kids Camp will take place **Friday**, **July 6 – Sunday**, **July 8** at Camp Oakhurst for ages 8 to 16.

NorCal Kids Camp

Our 4th Annual NorCal Kids Camp for ages 8 to 16, hosted by The Taylor Family Foundation, will be **Friday, August 17 – Sunday, August 19** at TTFF at Camp Arroyo in Livermore.



Camp impacts future,

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Both boys said that they were glad that they went to camp. Clayton shared, "I learned to be more open [about loss] and now I'm not afraid to tell anyone about what happened."

Colton experienced another loss a few years ago. "Colton was the one holding his friends together and lifting them up. I believe his experience at camp helped him to deal with that horrible loss," said Suzi.



Kids Camp Counselor Dakota Greenwell is preparing for her fifth year at camp.

"Camp is so wonderful. Being around a bunch of kids who experienced a loss at the same age I was when I lost my mom, or even younger than I was, allows me to relate to them and help them with their grieving. But at the same time, they are helping me," said Dakota. "Helping them is grief counseling for me too. Plus, I get to come back and heal more each year."

"Camp gives kids a place to have fun and take a break from having to grow up so quickly. Life still goes on, and they can have some fun, even though they may be struggling."

Dakota is applying for medical school. We are proud to say that, on her





application, she chose Optimal Hospice Foundation Kids Camp as one of her most meaningful community service activities outside of school.

Dakota explained, "Camp allows me to relate and really connect to the kids and other counselors. That skill of empathizing with others will lead me to be a better medical professional in the future. I'm growing every year at camp."

Dakota didn't have the opportunity to go to a camp when she lost her mom. "At age 13, I would not have wanted to go to a camp. Now looking at it as an adult, I know I would have loved it."

"Kids don't necessarily want to come to camp. Sometimes parents send the older sibling along to be with a younger child, and you can see that attitude. We see one or two each year. I like to connect with that kid right away. I let them know that camp is not lame, we're all a bunch of weirdos, and we're going to have fun together. By the end of camp, we see a 180-degree change in their attitude."

"Kids need to go through the grieving process and have a safe place to do so. But the camp is just as impactful for the adults who are there, even for those who have not had a loss. So much joy is given and received. I love it and I want to be there to experience healing with the kids. It's really cool and an opportunity for me to grow."

Dakota helps a young camper at the rock wall.



Contact the Foundation Office for more information, sponsorship opportunities or to purchase tickets

All Proceeds Benefit the Optimal Hospice Foundation Local 501(C)3 Non-Profit 559-320-8000 www.optimalhospicefoundation.com



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Support groups available through Optimal Hospice Care

These groups are open to the public and offered free of charge.

BAKERSFIELD Tuesdays 10-11:30 a.m.

Thursdays 6-7:30 p.m.

First United Methodist Church 4600 Stockdale Hwy., Room 4 (661) 716-4000

Counseling available en Español

FRESNO

Mondays 3-4:30 p.m.

Fairwinds - Woodward Park 9525 Ft. Washington Rd. (559) 320-4000

Counseling available en Español

HUNTINGTON BEACH Group Sessions Offered

Call for information

Huntington Terrace Assisted Living 18800 Florida St. (562) 494-7687

LAKE ISABELLA Thursdays 1-2:30 p.m.

Optimal Hospice Care Office 6504 Lake Isabella Blvd., Ste. E (760) 379-5038

LANCASTER

Counseling available

Call for information Optimal Hospice Care 44151 15th Street, Space 201 (661) 674-3300

MADFRA

1st & 3rd Wednesdays 2-3:30 p.m.

Cedar Creek Senior Living Center 500 N. Westbury Blvd.

(559) 320-4000

Counseling available en Español

MODESTO

Group Sessions Offered

Call for information **Optimal Hospice Care** 1101 Sylvan Ave., Ste. B-10 (209) 338-3000

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2nd & 4th Thursdays 2-3:30 p.m.

Sierra Hills Retirement Center 2500 West Henderson Ave. (559) 741-7220

Counseling available en Español

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Call for information Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World 13560 Saint Andrews Dr.

(562) 494-7687

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Call for information Optimal Hospice Care 3461 Brookside Road, Ste. A2 (209) 670-8000

TAFT

1st & 3rd Wednesdays 1-2:30 p.m.

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Tuesdays 1:30-3 p.m.

Tehachapi Senior Citizens Center 500 East F St. (888) 597-6115

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Optimal Hospice Care 2439 W. Whitendale Ave., Ste. B (559) 741-7220

Counseling available en Español



Bakersfield, Fresno, Modesto, Stockton and Visalia Call area numbers for details

