

Mission Statement:

Camp Trillium provides **recreational programs** for children with cancer and their **families** to provide a **normalizing** environment and to help in the healing process.

- **Recreational programs:** This is what our programs are all about! It is simple but exactly what the children and families need from us. FUN! Sometimes people think a camp for children with cancer and their families will be sad but most of the time it is about celebrating life, having fun and letting kids be kids! Our goal is fun! We don't bring up cancer as camp is actually their chance to just be kids and forget about cancer!
- **Families:** It is Camp Trillium's philosophy that childhood cancer is a family diagnosis. This is why we have programs for the whole family. It is also why we have siblings of the children with cancer at ALL our camper programs. Camp is equally for the child with cancer and for their brothers and sisters. Everyone in the family can get so much out of the camp experience!!
- **Normalizing:** We let kids be kids! So much of their life is defined by cancer but when they come to camp, they are just kids. Playing, having fun, making new friends...every child should have those opportunities ...camp brings these opportunities back.

Who is at camp?

- **Children currently going through chemotherapy and radiation:** About 10-15% of the kids at camp are currently battling cancer. For these children camp is often about getting a chance to do the things other kids get to do every day. It is all about making new friends, playing and doing activities they don't normally get to do!
- **Children who are in remission:** About 20-25% of the kids at camp had cancer and are now in some stage of remission. We are proud to say that once a child has become part of the Camp Trillium family, they are part of the Camp Trillium family for life. Camp remains an important part of their lives since they develop such a strong social network at camp. Trillium is happy to support these children as they deal with long term side effects and the chance of relapse. It is also great for families who are newly diagnosed to get to interact with families who are now off treatment.
- **Siblings & bereaved siblings:** About 60% of the children at camp are siblings of on treatment or in remission children. Siblings are equally important at camp! Life completely changes for the siblings when their brother or sister is diagnosed with cancer. Every child at camp is treated as wonderful, special and unique....because they are! As a volunteer, you are not told who is a patient and who is a sibling because they all get the same great care.
- **Parents:** Needless to say, family camps include parents! Parents also get a lot of out camp! Camp can be a chance for them to reconnect with their children in a recreational environment, it can be a chance for them to have a break from their children and know they are well taken care of and they also get a chance to connect with other parents that have also had to deal with childhood cancer.

Cancer at camp

- Cancer is in the forefront of everything we do at camp. We make a huge effort to modify all our programs, games and activities so everyone can be involved. By planning ahead for the special needs of our campers, it allows cancer to fade into the background.
- We have a trained medical staff consisting of oncology nurses. As a volunteer, you are not expected to have a medical background. You are a “play specialist” and if anything medical comes up, you take the campers to our medical centre (the Bodyshop) and the nursing crew will take care of the child and let you know how to follow up.
- Out of respect for the confidentiality of the campers, we will only tell you information about the campers that you need to know to give them proper care. Because they are kids, they will probably tell you their whole life story, but that is their business to tell, not ours!

Summer Programs

- **Family Camps** are sleepover programs for the whole family. Typically we have between 80-90 campers at camp at one time, which includes parents. Volunteers are matched up with a family as a “Special Friend” to get to know them, have fun with them and give them an amazing camp experience. Children can be anywhere from newborns to seventeen years old. Families have their own area in a cabin and volunteers sleep separately in our counselor bunkhouse.
- **Kids Camps** are sleepover programs for children between the ages of eight and fifteen. Typically we have about 80-90 children at camp at one time. They are separated by age and by gender. Volunteers are responsible for groups of about ten children, along with the help of 2-3 other counselors, as cabin/group leaders. Volunteers stay right in the cabin with their group and are with them day and night!
- **Day Camp** happens in a number of cities across Ontario for children aged four to seven. Day camp numbers vary quite a bit but typically have between 10 and 20 children. Volunteers help out from 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday to Friday and are matched with ~2 children as “Special Friends”. Each city runs a bit differently as we set up in a local city park and have access to an indoor space (if weather is bad) and near a pool or splash pad.

Summer Program Notes:

- There are no costs for volunteers for the sleepover programs (Family Camp and Kids Camp). Room and board are provided.
- Because we do not have facilities at day camp, volunteers must have their own place to stay and bring their own lunch each day.
- Volunteers arrive the day before the sleepover programs at 7pm, for training and orientation. For day camp there is a two hour training and orientation the day before camp starts, usually 6-8pm.

Summer Sites

We have two summer sites, both running Family and Kids camps.

- **OuR Garratt's Island** (near Picton): <https://camptrillium.com/ourisland/>
- **Rainbow Lake** (in Waterford): <https://camptrillium.com/rainbowlake/>
- Our day camps run for 5 days in each of the following cities:
 - **Toronto, Barrie, Oakville, Ottawa, London, Kingston, Hamilton**

School year programs

- **Weekend camps** are just like our summer programs but shorter! Volunteer arrive at camp for 5:30pm on Friday and are all done by 2pm on Sunday. We have family, kids and teen weekends.
- **McMaster Children's Oncology Unit:** We look for volunteers to spend time with in and out patient children. Volunteers play games, do crafts, hang out and generally make the hospital a more fun place. Additionally volunteers let parents and children know about our camp programs. Volunteers are required to have an "at-camp" volunteer experience before being considered for a placement at McMaster.

How to sign up for programs

- Once you have completed the volunteer intake process, which consists of filling out an application (<https://forms.camptrillium.com/?q=volunteerapplication>), having an interview/information session and providing three references. You will be added to the Volunteer database and get emails about volunteer opportunities.
- To sign up for a program, simply reply to the email. If you are busy or not interested in the volunteer opportunity simply ignore/delete the email. It goes out to many people and we are only looking for a response from those wanting to sign up or looking for more info.
- Volunteer positions are filled on a "first come, first serve" basis. There is no deadline for when you need to sign up. If you contact us at the last minute, there is a good chance that we will have filled the volunteer positions but there is also a chance we have had a cancelation and be super excited that you can make it out.

Before you come to camp for the first time:

Before coming to camp for the first time, all volunteers are required to submit a minimum of two weeks before arrival:

- A Criminal Record Check current within the last year.
- A Camp Trillium health record with proof of a 2-step Tuberculosis test found here: <https://forms.camptrillium.com/?q=staffhealth2018>

Have fun and thank you so much!!!:

All of our programs are absolutely free for the children and families who use them. Partly this is because of wonderful people who donate money and partly this is because of wonderful people like you who donate their time through volunteering. We really appreciate you helping to make a difference in the life of a family dealing with childhood cancer!