

Home Away From Home

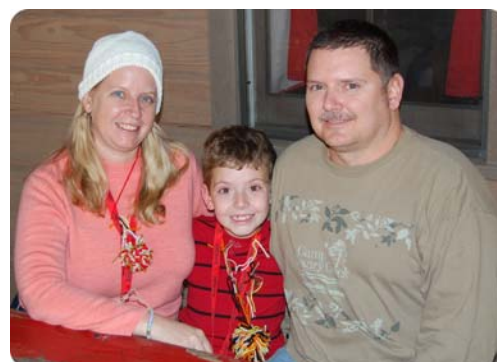


If you listen very carefully, you can hear them...hundreds of seriously ill children from Pensacola to Miami are packing their bags and anxiously counting the days until they arrive at Camp Boggy Creek for a week of fun and a lifetime of memories. The Camp will welcome children in over 13 different illness groups beginning on June 11. For many it will be their first time away from home, but Boggy Creek will quickly become (and always remain) their ***Home Away From Home***.

After attending Spina Bifida Family Retreats with his parents, Stephen looks forward to attending his first summer session in August. "Nine years old is perfect for going to Camp by myself," he exclaims, "but I think my Mom will cry when I go." His parents, Anne and Lee, add, "It will be tears of joy."

Nicknamed Tripp (for being the third in his family, or triple), Stephen knows that living with spina bifida (a birth defect that involves incomplete development of the spinal cord or its coverings) means taking extra care of his body. It can mean taking longer to do some things, because of braces, crutches, and wheelchairs, but that doesn't mean he can't do exactly what he wants at Camp Boggy Creek where it's possible to do anything!

After learning about Camp Boggy Creek from their son's nurse, Suzanne, at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, Tripp's parents, Anne and Lee, submitted a family retreat application. Tripp was only 7-years old and had just had surgery, one of many that his illness requires. When the family arrived at Camp, they weren't sure what to expect, but before they left, they knew their lives would never be the same. "The best thing about coming to the Family Retreats was meeting other families who understand what having a child with spina bifida means," shares Anne. "I had heard about Hole in the Wall Camps and knew they were for children with special healthcare needs, but when we got here, I could never have imagined a place like Boggy Creek," adds Lee.



Tripp has had 14 surgeries since birth, seven of those in just the past 24 months. His family spends a great deal of time in hospitals and doctors offices. However, at Boggy Creek, they found lasting friendships and endless possibilities. When Tripp attends the spina bifida summer session in August, he will reconnect with friends he has made during family retreats. He will also enjoy his favorite activities: horseback riding, archery, woodshop, ping pong and theatre. But most important, he will know that he isn't alone and will feel safe, respected and loved at his ***Home Away From Home***.

Over 1,100 children, like Tripp, will come to Boggy Creek this summer. You can help seriously ill children experience the magic of Camp. [Please consider a donation to Boggy Creek](#) and help Florida's ***Home Away From Home*** be the best place ever for Tripp and all the campers!