

## Camp Hobé Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs)

### General

- Q What is Camp Hobé?
- A Camp Hobé is a special summer camp designed expressly for children and teens currently undergoing treatment for cancer as well as for their siblings. Our goal is to create an atmosphere that enhances self-esteem, fosters independence and friendships, and creates a feeling of belonging.
- Q Who can attend Camp Hobé?
- A Camp Hobé serves children and teens aged 4 – 19 years from the Intermountain area (UT, ID, WY, NV) or those being treated for cancer at Primary Children's Medical Center (PCMC). Children and teens diagnosed with cancer may attend Camp Hobé while they are being treated with immunosuppressive therapy (chemotherapy, radiation, or immunosuppressants) and for three camp seasons after their final immunosuppressive treatment. The patient's brothers and sisters may also attend during this period.
- Q How does Camp Hobé help my children?
- A Camp Hobé helps your children by addressing and relieving the psychological, social, and physical impact of cancer. Camp lets kids use and rediscover their bodies by letting them do activities they cannot normally do. The high level of supervision and medical care we provide makes this possible. Camp lets your children be kids again and lets them spend time outside a serious environment playing and learning through play. Camp returns kids to a peer group that they may have missed during treatment. At camp, living with cancer makes your children part of the crowd.
- Q How do I learn more?
- A Contact our office at 801-631-2742 or [wapitimama@camphobekids.org](mailto:wapitimama@camphobekids.org)
- A Visit the camp website at [www.camphobekids.org](http://www.camphobekids.org)
- Q When and where is Camp Hobé?
- A Camp Hobé is held each June. We have three different sessions, grouped by camper age:
- Day Camp: 4 – 7 years old, 2-day onsite program, children do not stay overnight
  - Kids Week: 6 – 12 years old, 5-day overnight program
  - Teen Week: 12 – 19 years old, 5-day overnight program
- A Camp Hobé is held at the beautiful Camp Wapiti site, which is located just outside Tooele, Utah. The campsite is approximately a 40-50 minute drive from downtown Salt Lake City.
- Q How do I know that Camp Hobé is a good program?
- A Camp Hobé is accredited by the American Camp Association and has been for almost 20 years.
- A The American Camp Association is the industry standard for best practices. Accreditation means that our camp complies with up to 26 mandatory standards on critical health and safety concerns. In addition, Camp Hobé complies with 20 – 40 additional standards in each of ten separate areas, including operations, facilities, staffing, programs, and aquatics. The accreditation process focuses on education and encourages camps to continually improve their programs.
- Q How is camp different from other support programs?
- A Camp Hobé has a commitment to patients with cancer and their siblings. We have set specific goals for how we want camp to help your children grow, including:
- Goal #1: Provide children with cancer and their siblings a place to “just be kids.”  
What we see happening, or how we know it happens: Children with cancer and their siblings have the opportunity to participate in camp activities just like healthy children whose families are not affected by cancer. The camp program provides a high level of medical and psychosocial supervision to ensure that these children are safe both mentally and physically during the camp experience.
- Goal #2: Provide children an opportunity to build support systems with others living with chronic illness.  
What we see happening, or how we know it happens: Using recreation and leisure skills, the camp staff provides a camping experience for children with cancer and their siblings who would otherwise not have this group experience.

Siblings find support in knowing that others deal with the same issues that they do. During the calendar year, other organizations provide opportunities for children with cancer and their siblings to learn about cancer and to talk about it. Camp Hobé provides a break from cancer, surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, hospitals, and illness. Campers are not expected to talk about their cancer experience while at camp, although we provide a supportive environment should they wish to do so. Discussions on these topics are facilitated when the campers start the conversations. Hobé Forever is an optional guided activity offered during camp where campers have time to remember friends who are not present that year. This activity gives campers the opportunity to express feelings of grief and loss if they desire. Camp staff members respect any requests for further counseling or discussion.

**Goal #3:** Encourage each camper to learn new skills and leisure activities by participating in small group and large group activities daily.

What we see happening, or how we know it happens: Campers rotate through activities such as arts & crafts, drama, archery, swimming, and nature. They also take part in specialized challenge activities (Teen Week), a carnival, or Hobé Jam, an outdoor rock concert.

**Goal #4:** Offer opportunities for campers to learn about nature, ecology and their part in preserving the environment during recreation and outdoor living.

What we see happening, or how we know it happens: Specific topics about nature will be offered during the camp session. Each cabin group will be assigned chores, including cleaning the dining hall, shower/restrooms, grounds, and cabins. In addition, camp administration and kitchen staff discuss reducing food wastage and the proper disposal of food, and encourage recycling dishes and other items as appropriate.

**Goal #5:** Help each camper develop socialization skills and new interests.

What we see happening, or how we know it happens: In addition to other program activities, each camper works with their cabin group to create and perform a skit and a cheer. The campers work together to set up behavior rules for their cabin area, with guidance from their cabin counselor. They sit together for meals and use the “buddy system” during activities and when moving between locations.

**Goal #6:** Give kids opportunities to develop leadership skills, and help them take these opportunities.

What we see happening, or how we know it happens: The campers work together to set up behavior rules for their cabin area, with guidance from their cabin counselor. Some activities give campers the chance to volunteer to be the “first” one to try it. Campers can also be leaders by following camp rules, and contributing to and participating in all activities. After campers reach the age of 15, they are eligible to be Counselors-in-Training and help staff with program activities or assist an adult counselor with a group of kids.

## **Registration**

**Q** How does my child register for Camp Hobé?

- A** Registration information for Camp Hobé is sent out every spring to all children who are currently being seen at the PCMC Hematology/Oncology clinic. The information is sent from the hospital. The hospital does not give Camp Hobé any information about your child, including your child’s name or the fact that they are being treated for cancer.
- A** You may also refer your child to us. Referring your child to us will help us make sure that you get the information in a timely fashion. We will also be able to contact you about future Camp Hobé events (we are unable to do this through PCMC). We have a referral form that you may send us, or you can contact us with your child’s name and contact information.

**Q** What else do I need to do to get my children ready?

- A** Once we receive your registration form, we will send you more information about when to arrive at camp and what your kids need to bring, along with a packet of forms that you need to complete before bringing your children or teens to camp.

Q Which camp session should I send my 6- or 7-year old to?

A You can send your 6- and 7-year olds to either Day Camp or Kids Week. Remember that all Kids Week campers check in on Monday and stay until Friday, including these young ones. Register your child for Day Camp if you think they are too young to be away from you for 5 days and 4 nights. This might include kids who attend a different camp session from their siblings, have never gone to overnight camp, or have never stayed over with friends. Kids who function below a 6-7 year old developmental level must attend Day Camp.

Q Which camp session should I send my 12-year old to?

A You can send your 12-year olds to either Kids Week OR Teen Week. Please consider your camper's physical and emotional maturity level when making this decision. Twelve-year olds who usually do well at Teen Week include those who attend the same camp session as an older sibling, have gone to overnight camp or stayed overnight with friends, function at or above a 12 year old developmental level, or are "big for their age." Once your 12-year old camper is registered for a session, they cannot switch sessions without the Camp Director's approval.

### **Cost**

Q How much does Camp Hobé cost?

A The cost to your family is minimal. We understand that cancer has a huge impact on a family's finances. We also believe no child should be turned away from camp due to financial need. Therefore, we charge a nominal registration fee of \$15 per child for Day Camp and \$35 per child for Kids Camp or Teen Week

Q Is there financial assistance available?

A Yes. Fee waivers are available for those in serious financial need. If you request a fee waiver, you will need to pay a \$5 refundable deposit to hold each child's place at camp. This deposit will be returned when the camper checks in at camp.

Q What if my child gets sick or decides not to go to camp? Will I get my money back?

A If campers decide not to attend camp, fees and deposits are only refunded if you call the camp office. You must tell us the camper is not coming to camp.

A If the camper cannot attend because of illness, you can call us any time before camp starts and get a refund. If the camper decides not to attend for any other reason, you must call at least 1 week before camp starts if you want a refund. No refunds are given if the camper leaves during camp for any reason, including illness, schedule conflicts, or disciplinary action.

### **Camp Activities**

Q What do the kids do at camp?

A Many activities are available, just like any other camp, such as crafts, nature, field games, creative expression (writing, drama, poetry, music), hiking, mountain biking (teens only), rock climbing (teens only), introductory SCUBA dive (teens only), archery, campfires, and free play. We also provide Hobé Forever, a program that gives campers a structured way to express grief and loss in a safe environment.

Q Are the activities safe for my kid?

A We have many safety rules in place and use protective gear when needed. Our volunteers are trained in safety and emergency plans before camp starts. Some activities require additional precautions (archery, biking, climbing, SCUBA) or release forms (biking, climbing, SCUBA). The volunteers and medical staff are constantly evaluating the campers to be sure that they are physically able to safely participate.

Q Do they take special precautions for cancer kids?

A We are careful with all the campers, whether they are cancer patients or healthy children. Our volunteers are given training on the special needs of cancer patients and taught signs that may suggest a cancer patient is becoming ill (neutropenic, low platelet count). Volunteers and medical staff constantly evaluate campers to be sure that they are physically able to safely participate.

- Q Are the cancer patients allowed to swim?
- A Yes. The pool at Camp Hobé is closely supervised by our medical staff and also meets all safety and licensing requirements of Tooele County. Cancer patients may swim, but must report to the Infirmary right after the activity for line checks and dressing changes (if needed). The medical staff will not allow a camper to swim if they feel it is not in the camper's best interests, based on their current state of health.
- Q Will my children be assigned to stay in the same cabin group?
- A Not necessarily. Cabin groups are assigned by age and gender, in order to best meet the physical and psychosocial needs of our campers. While siblings of the same gender who are close in age may be assigned to the same cabin group, this cannot be guaranteed. Most campers need – and enjoy – the chance to spend time with their peers. Each camper gets the individual attention they need from their counselors, whether they are a cancer patient or a patient's sibling. Each camper creates their own special memories to share with their siblings at mealtimes, all camp events, or after the camp session.

### Medical Support

- Q What medical facilities are available onsite?
- A The campsite has an onsite infirmary that is staffed by trained pediatric nurses & a physician. We provide medications and routine care during camp sessions. We offer our program to children and teens at all stages of cancer treatment, from newly-diagnosed to palliative care to post-therapy.
- Q Are there medical professionals at camp?
- A Yes. At least one prescriber (doctor, physician assistant, nurse practitioner) is onsite at all times.
- A Yes. Several oncology-trained or pediatric nurses are onsite at all times.
- Q Is the camp affiliated with PCMC?
- A Yes. PCMC provides medical support for Camp Hobé. The on-call residents are available to assist our medical volunteers with any emergencies or other medical situations.
- Q How far is the nearest hospital?
- A The campers are within 60 minutes of advanced medical care at all times. Mountain West Medical Center in Tooele is 5 – 10 miles away. Primary Children's Medical Center is about 45 minutes away from the campsite by car.
- Q Do my kids need a physical exam before camp?
- A Yes, all campers must have a physical exam before they arrive at camp. We cannot complete physical exams at the campsite, for liability reasons. All campers must have a physical exam before arriving at camp. Both cancer patients and their siblings must have a physical exam every year. The form is included in this packet, or we can send you one by fax, email, or snail mail.
- Q What if my child gets sick or hurt at camp?
- A We hope this does not happen. However, we want you to know if your child gets sick or hurt at camp. We will call you if your child has any injury or illness that requires off-site treatment, a new prescription medication, or more than 6 hours of observation in the Infirmary.
- Q My child is very sick. What are the medical requirements for them to attend camp?
- A Because our campers have special medical needs, we have set guidelines for when children may come to camp. These mostly apply to kids who are staying overnight without a caregiver (parent or guardian) on site. However, we (the camp medical staff) make all final decisions. No campers (sibling or cancer patient) may have any condition that might endanger the health, safety, or emotional well-being of other campers or volunteers. This includes disorders like apnea, poorly-controlled seizures, or other poorly-controlled medical conditions. Additional requirements for cancer patients include:
- Absolute Neutrophil Count (ANC) above 500 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, and stable or improving (not falling)
  - Platelet count above 50,000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, and stable or improving (not decreasing)
  - Hematocrit above 30% and stable or improving, rather than worsening
  - Not treated with intravenous (IV) antibiotics when checking in at camp
  - Not treated with total parenteral nutrition (TPN) or intravenous (IV) fluids when checking in
  - Not treated with oxygen therapy when checking in at camp

## Transportation

Q How do we get to camp?

A You are responsible for bringing your children to camp and picking them up at the end of the session.

A There is no shuttle from PCMC. We may be able to help you find a carpool with other families in your area. However, you must send all your completed and signed registration forms with the carpool. If you don't, your child will not be allowed to stay at camp.

A We will send you a map to the campsite once your child is registered for camp.

Q When do I bring my children to camp?

A Kids Week (6-12 Year Olds): Check-in and camper registration is on Monday at 9:30AM, during the first week of our camp season.

A Day Camp (4-7 Year Olds): Check-in and camper registration is on Monday and Tuesday at 9:30AM, during the second week of our camp season

A Teen Week (12-19 Year Olds): Check-in and camper registration is on Monday at 9:30AM, during the second week of our camp season.

Q When do I pick up my children?

A Kids Week (6-12 Year Olds): Camp ends on Friday at 3:30PM. You can come at 3:00PM for our closing program. If you can't join us at 3:00PM, please be at the camp by 3:30PM to pick up your campers.

A Day Camp (4-7 Year Olds): Day Camp ends on Monday and Tuesday at 3:30PM. You can come at 3:00PM each day for the campfire program. If you can't join us at 3:00PM, please be at the camp by 3:30PM to get your kids.

A Teen Week (12-19 Year Olds): Teen Week ends on Friday at 3:30PM. You may arrive at 3:00PM for our closing program. If you cannot join us at 3:00PM, please be at the camp by 3:30PM to get your teens.

Q Who can pick up my children at the end of camp?

A Campers may only be picked up by parents or legal guardians, or an adult whose name you give us in writing. All campers must be picked up and signed out by an adult (someone over 18 years old) at the end of the camp session. If you will not be picking up your child personally, you must give us the name in writing of another adult who is authorized to pick up your child. Even if the adult is the camper's sibling, you MUST put their name on the form or we will be unable to release the camper to them. If your child is a Teen Week camper and is licensed to drive, you can indicate this on the form.

## Other Practical Stuff

Q What should my kids bring to camp with them?

A We have a general list of things that they should bring, as well as things that they should not bring. Please please please put their names on everything.

A Should bring: sleeping bag or bed roll, pillow, towels & wash cloth, underwear, long pants / jeans, sweater or sweatshirt, t-shirts, shorts, shoes, socks, pajamas, swimsuit, hat, flashlight, soap, sun screen, bug spray, toothbrush & toothpaste, deodorant, comb and/or brush, feminine hygiene products (if needed), set of warm clothing (long pants, long-sleeve shirt, closed-toe shoes) and a warm jacket.

A Might want to bring: inexpensive camera / film, musical instrument, autograph book, rain poncho, day pack / fanny pack, swim cap / goggles, sun glasses

A Do not bring: money, electronic equipment (laptops, IPODs, MP3s, Gameboys, DVD or CD players), videos or DVDs, weapons, alcohol or illegal drugs, cell phones or pagers, pets or other animals

Q Why do my kids need to bring a photograph with them?

A We ask all families to send 1 recent photograph of their child to camp. This helps us get to know the kids more quickly and also helps us keep your child safe if there were ever an emergency at camp.

Q What if my child gets homesick?

A Every year, a few kids get homesick at camp. This is a normal part of being away from home. And, it's part of growing up, as children gain independence and begin spending time away from their family. Camp may be very different from a child's home environment – rooming with others, different food. There are many ways you can help your child prepare for camp and reduce homesickness, including:

- Avoid telling your child that they will get homesick,
- Talk to your child about what they will get to do at camp,

- Practice sleeping in a sleeping bag in their room and use a flashlight instead of a light switch,
- Practice sleeping in a tent in the backyard (or in the house),
- Send a favorite toy, pillow, or blanket with your child to help them stay connected with home,
- Show your child how to write a letter to you and give them pre-stamped, addressed envelopes (even if the letters arrive after they get home, writing the letter may help them feel less homesick),
- Send letters or care packages to your child – you can give these to camp staff at check-in and we will give them to your child during camp. To be most helpful, write letters that:
  - ✓ Ask open-ended questions (what do you like?) instead of yes/no questions (do you like camp?)
  - ✓ Encourage the child to write back about their friends, activities, the food, and their counselors
  - ✓ Focus on your child having fun (I bet you loved field games!!) instead of how you miss them
  - ✓ Praise your child for coming to camp
  - ✓ Remind your child how much you love them

Q Will my children be able to call me from camp if they are homesick?

A Usually not, although a staff person may call on their behalf. We have found that having children call home usually makes homesickness worse. If a child is very homesick, the camp staff may call you for the child. This lets the parent and staff person talk about the situation without upsetting the child. We want camp to be a good experience for your kids, so we try very hard to help campers beat homesickness. Homesickness is a short-term thing – most kids feel better after 1-2 days. Kids usually feel most homesick when they are tired, bored, or hungry. Once they are rested, fed, or busy with activities, they feel better. And, when camp is over, kids are proud to have “beaten the homesick bug.”

### **Volunteers**

Q How old are the volunteers?

A Day Camp or Kids Week volunteers: 20 years and up; Teen Week volunteers: 21 years and up; Counselors in Training: 15 years and up. Counselors in Training (CITs) are only used during the Kids Week camp.

Q How are volunteers screened?

A All volunteers must re-apply for positions every year and are interviewed every year, no matter how long they have been volunteering at the camp.

A We conduct criminal background checks annually on all volunteers over the age of 18. For younger volunteers, we require letters of reference and we contact several references about the volunteer.

Q Are volunteers trained?

A Yes, training is mandatory. Volunteers must attend a full day of training prior to the camp session on topics such as working with children, handling behavior problems, medical concerns at camp, and how to be silly. In addition, volunteers are given a comprehensive training manual. The weekend before the campers arrive, volunteers receive an additional day of training at the campsite on safety, emergency procedures, medical issues, and working as a team.