

LOVE LETTER

JULY 2019 | SUMMER ISSUE



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A Master Class in Perseverance

An Essay by our own
Delaney Wahl

If there is one thing to know about me, it is my resilience. I was born into a military family. My dad served for the first 16 years of my life which meant that I basically lived in a single parent home the majority of the time. The Army came with its perks, but it also came with its hardships. We had to move every couple years, not really knowing where to call "home". The hardest part was struggling through my dad being deployed for a year at a time on more than one occasion. This lifestyle gave me a pretty thick skin and taught me how to be adaptable in new places and situations.



PERSEVERANCE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

I was forced to give up the sport I grew up loving. I knew that quitting sports was not an option, so I decided to join soccer and that is where my love affair with the sport began. After my first year playing soccer, I had surgery to remove the tumor that had been growing in my arm for years. Soon after my surgery and not long after my 13th birthday, I received the news that I had a rare cancer called Epithelioid Hemangioendothelioma (EHE). EHE is so rare that I was one of only seven teenagers in the world that had been diagnosed with it. There was minimal research being done and only about 300 people worldwide who even knew this cancer existed. My family and I sat around for a few months with scary thoughts in our minds while all of us continuously said things like, "I hope they find a cure" and, "I hope they can fund this trial". Soon enough my mom and I looked at each other and realized there was no "they", there was only an "us".

Throughout my whole childhood, I was a gymnast, determined to continue that path in college and hopefully make a career out of it. I began feeling extreme shooting pains in my arm around age eight. I then endured years of treatment for something doctors did not recognize. I went through diagnosis after diagnosis and trial and error tactics to try to treat the pain. After about four years, I had reached a point where I was in and out of doctor's offices while being in constant pain and I lost partial use of my arm.

After removing the tumor from my arm, my scans were clean for a couple of years. Then, in November of 2016, I got a call from my doctor informing me that my cancer had returned in the form of tumors in my lungs. He told me that I would be starting an experimental form of chemo in December and that it would make me very sick. December came and I did, in fact, get very sick. It took a toll on me physically and mentally, but I was determined to not let it completely affect my life. I had always done well in school and I knew I was going to have to work even harder to keep it that way. Short term memory loss from my treatment gave me some struggles, but I rolled with the punches and learned new study tactics that helped me retain information. Soccer kept me motivated to get better and even on my worst days when I felt deathly ill, you would still find me on the field, early to practice.

Some achievements I have made over the past few years include being in the academic top five percent of my graduating class, becoming a member of the National Honor Society, winning the D-1 State Championship for girls' soccer, and being named Most Valuable Player on my high school soccer team.

I am extremely proud of all of the things I have been able to accomplish while facing adversity, but I consider being alive to write this essay today to be my greatest accomplishment.

Amazon Smile

Do you shop on Amazon? Did you know Special Love has an **Amazon Smile** account and can benefit from your purchase? For every purchase made on your Amazon Smile account, Special Love will get a small percentage in a donation from Amazon!

To set your account up, visit <https://smile.amazon.com> from your computer and select Special Love as your charity of choice. Amazon will do the rest. It's that easy!

Be sure and check out our **Wish List** too!



The Kathy Russell

Emergency Financial Relief Fund

Special Love is here to help when you need it. The Emergency Relief Fund assists families in need during their cancer journey with:

Utilities (electric, gas, phone) which are in danger of being shut off for non-payment

Auto repairs that are necessary to allow a parent or caregiver to provide transportation to and from medical treatment

Rent or mortgage payments

Other emergency situations involving basic living expenses

Funeral expenses

Families must apply through their hospital social worker. For more information contact Judy Martin jmartin@speciallove.org or visit www.speciallove.org/financial-relief/



Kay/Moore Scholarship Fund

We are excited to share that Special Love awarded Kay/Moore Scholarships in May to 36 former and current campers!

The fund, established in 1989, assists young adults with their post-secondary education or training, and since 2017, we have been fortunate to have generous individual donors underwrite some of the scholarships. Guardian Scholarships, named for the donor, allow us to expand our funding to assist even more campers in need.

Special Love's 2019 Scholarship Recipients:

Olivia Adams
Heather Alba
Nesma Aly
Nadia Anderson, *Karen Nielsen Memorial Scholarship*
Christina Arevalo
Jairo Ayala
Haley Baker
Zoe Chen
Nicholas Dawson
Emma Delaney
Sylvia Escolero
John Gonzalez
Sameika Graham
Alexandra Hancock, *Lyn Mickley Huff Scholarship*
Sydney Harris, *Jokers Wild Scholarship*
Amanda Johnson
Catherine Johnson
Isha Kunnath
Andrew Luckabaugh
Andrew McCaffrey
Destiny McKenzie, *Millbrook High School Mike Fries Scholarship*
Seth Middlecoop
Courtney Ott
William Peterson
Nitin Ramachadran
Brandy Robinson
Jordan Sandy
Erin Schulte, *Hahn Family Scholarship*
Rachel Simon
Navin Slater-Ranjit
Elizabeth Scott
Abby Snider, *Malloy Automotive Scholarship*
Samira Vuchula
Serena Wade, *Dennis Chastain Memorial Scholarship*
Delaney Wahl, *Caleb Ingram Scholarship*
Jabari Wilkins

Interested in supporting a young cancer survivor with a scholarship in your name or the name of someone you love? Contact Kim Jappell at Special Love at kjappell@speciallove.org or 888.930.2707.



Scholarship Spotlight

My life was transformed by cancer and Special Love. At the age of four, I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, and I am blessed to say I have been cancer free since my treatments. I have been an active participant in various Special Love camps and events, and my siblings went to BRASS Camp. My most valuable experience was at Camp Fantastic! I made friends with kids who were going through the same experience and understood how it felt to battle cancer. It allowed me to be a kid: going horseback riding, playing in the pool and taking mini-cooking classes.

Special Love helped my family and I make the most out of those difficult years during and after my treatments, and allowed us to enjoy what matters most – time with loved ones.

My struggle and victory over cancer has helped shape me into the person I am today. Cancer has been a blessing in disguise since it forced me to take the path less traveled and it has helped shape my outlook on life. My passion in life is to give back to those around me. By pursuing my education in Physician Assistant studies, I hope to give back to those in the medical field, and be among the future healthcare providers and researchers.

Erin Schulte
Hahn Family Guardian Scholarship Recipient

Erin is currently a Physician Assistant student at Shenandoah University, completing her clinical rotation elective in oncology at MD Anderson in Houston, Texas, having graduated in May 2017 from George Mason University with a bachelor's degree in Bioengineering, and a minor in Biology. She was a three-time Provost Scholar Athlete Award recipient, and currently is a House of Delegates representative for the Shenandoah University Physician Assistant Class of 2019.



The Debut of Chic & Campy



Special Love's Annual Gala 2019 held on April 5 at the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner brought together more than 300 donors, volunteers, supporters and campers to celebrate and raise awareness for Special Love. This year's theme "Chic & Campy" gave guests a chance to experience activities from camp including face painting, caricature artists and a camp craft.

"I was blown away by his story." This was a common reaction to Ryan Tomoff, 26 a young adult cancer survivor who stunned the room to silence recounting his cancer journey and how Special Love has been there every step of the way. Ryan, who now returns to Camp Fantastic every year as a counselor, continues to dedicate his time to our programs and we are in awe of his bravery.



Ryan Tomoff, former Camper, Counselor, and Young Adult Cancer Council Member



Mistress of Ceremonies
Andrea Roane



Mark Moseley, Circle of Love Recipient



Jay Robinson, Randy Schools Light of Love Awardee and Kathy Russell, Long-time Camp Volunteer



John Taylor, Board President, Jay Robinson, Mark Moseley, Jan Bresch, Executive Director

Andrea Roane, retired WUSA 9 news anchor serve as the emcee for the evening and we were so grateful! Ms. Roane brought energy to our special appeal with Camp Ambassador Sarah providing her own camp stories and memories along the way. A powerful duo!

We honored two individuals, who have long histories with Special Love. The **Circle of Love** award was presented to **Mark Moseley**, former Washington Redskin and NFL MVP. Mr. Moseley has long been an ambassador and friend to our organization. The **Randy Schools Light of Love** award was presented to **Jay Robinson**, longtime volunteer and board member. Grinning ear to ear and surrounded by his family that evening Jay had a certain glow about him. It was our honor to recognize the unwavering support of both gentlemen as we may never be able to repay their kindness.

New also to 2019 were our Camp Ambassadors, both Camp Fantastic and BRASS campers there to share just what having Special Love in their lives means to them. We are so proud of all our ambassadors!

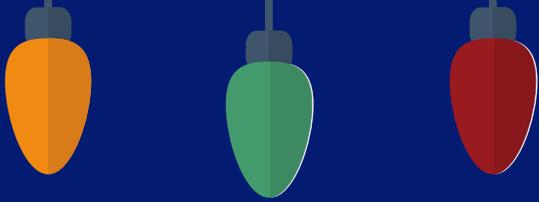
Our Camp Ambassadors: Emily Crabtree, Kate Heavner, Sarah Rostock, Nitin Ramachandran, Abby Snider, Matias Wall, Serena Wade, Ryan Tomoff



Camper Nitin Ramachandran, Camp Medical Director Dr. Steve Chanock & Camper Serena Wade

We would like to recognize again our "Big Chief" and "Lodge Dean" Sponsors:





2019 Holiday Cards

Christmas talk, in July!? It's too early! Well, it's never too early to talk about our amazing child artists who create the beautiful artwork for our Special Love Holiday Cards! The artwork has been selected..so stay tuned for ordering information!

Beneficiary Events in Review

Beneficiary events are one of the most common and fun ways organizations help Special Love through fundraising. They can be anything from a trivia night to a high-end gala, and all of the in-between. We are fortunate enough to have quite a few throughout the year, here's just a few from the last quarter.

Alpha Phi Omega—George Washington University

Special Love Service Week, held each April, took on a whole new look this year and it was a blast! The brothers of the service co-ed service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega at George Washington University, who have long created innovative fundraisers on campus for Special Love, took their creativity to the next level this spring ending with a Trivia Night. A full room and strong competitive spirit made for a very fun night. A local camp family joined in on the fun speaking about their experiences with Special Love and even the youngest at only 6 years old spoke. The full service week raised more than \$2,700 and we cannot be more proud of this strong group of young people, we can't wait for next year!

Special thanks go to all APO brothers and especially Service Week Chair Annie DaVita and Chapter President Emily Bailey.



Christine Etue and her son Ryan sharing their family story



GWU students playing trivia

PS- Six APO brothers also volunteered at BRASS Weekend in March on the Saturday. They were such a big help and blended right into the fun. Thank you!

Institute for Real Estate Management (IREM) Gala

Storms held off for just enough time to enjoy some time on the terrace of the beautiful Congressional Country Club, setting of the Annual IREM Gala held on May 10, 2019. We'd like to say it was our rain dance but most likely our new friend NBC4's Meteorologist Chuck Bell helped make that happen (HOW HOW! Chuck). The IREM Gala has benefited Special Love for the last 14 years and consistently brings together an ever growing and dedicated group of professionals to support our programs. From our partnership with IREM not only are we honored to be the beneficiary of their annual gala we have also developed amazing relationships with individuals serving on Special Love organizational and fundraising committees and our board of directors.

A very special moment of the night was when camper Nitin Ramachadran stood proud to tell his story, capturing a normally chatty crowd with his powerful telling of how Camp Fantastic changed him as a person. To add to the incredible mood of the room Nitin's mother, Jyothi, told her side as a mother and caregiver. Describing how she would call Nurse Tammy every day during Nitin's first week of camp to check on her son and how comforting that connection was. The strength of our mother and son duo was felt wide across the room and certainly left an imprint on guests with more than \$80,000 raised this year.

Special Love was also very happy to offer the 2017 Camp Fantastic quilt, full of camper artwork, as a live auction item. A small bidding war erupted and we were astounded when the quilt went for \$2,200.

We cannot be more grateful for our partnership with IREM, and a special thank you to Rob and Jean Collins, Anthony Curtis, Melissa Steele and Catherine Smolka.



Meteorologist Chuck Bell modeling the presentation check



Camper Nitin Ramachadran sharing his story at the IREM gala



IREM Gala Director Rob Collins, Special Love Executive Director Jan Bresch, Jyothi Raghavan & Nitin Ramachadran



Joker's Wild Jesters Crew Cash Party

The Joker's Wild Crew hosted their annual Cash Party benefiting Special Love on April 13th, raising over \$6,000. Our very own young adult cancer survivor, Serena Wade, spoke about her cancer journey and what camp means to her. Her passionate story would prove to make a BIG impact on the crowd. At a Cash Party all guests are given a number and once your number is called you are out of the running for the evening's big prize. Slowly the crowd is riddled down to just 10 left in the game and with the suspense building, those 10 becomes just two individuals. To our enormous surprise that pair made Special Love the lucky ones and donated back all of their potential winnings!

We are so grateful to have such a close partner in the Winchester community and look forward to future events. A special thank you to Tim Day and the whole Jesters Crew for a wonderful evening, and their longtime support.

Serena Wade sharing her story with the party-goers



Members of the Joker's Wild club and Special Love

Great Day on the Greens

With nearly 100 golfers this year, the 35th Annual Tom Baker Memorial Camp Fantastic Golf Tournament was a success! The weather was perfect, the Rock Harbor Golf Course beautiful as ever, the guest of honor Mark Moseley charming, and the camaraderie joyful. A huge thank you to our volunteers, we couldn't have handled everything without you! And a special how how to our sponsors, if we didn't have you, there wouldn't even be an annual golf tournament!

Once again thank you to our **Title Sponsors**: Fort Collier Group, Loudoun Mutual Insurance, Shockey Companies, and Specialized Engineering!



Camp Fun at Home!

We know that not everyone gets to be one of our campers, so we thought you might want to bring a little camp home! This gives you the tools to make SLIME...a camper favorite!

Beware slime making has a tendency to travel from bowl to clothes, hair or furniture. Choose old clothes for this activity and try to catch runaway glops quickly. Keep vinegar handy for tough spots on clothes!

Length of Activity: 15 minutes to hours of fun! Slime can be stored in a ziplock bag for up to 2 days

Items Needed: Large mixing bowl, mixing spoon, white glue (Elmers or any brand labeled school glue), cornstarch, food coloring and warm water

Recipe:

2 cups white glue
1 cup cornstarch
3 cups warm water
5 drops food coloring

Start by measuring out the 2 cups of white glue and add to the bowl. Next mix into the glue the 1 cup of cornstarch. Add the 3 cups of warm water half at a time to make it easier to combine. Following the first half add 5 drops of you favorite food coloring color! Once combined this is a great opportunity to wash hands and bowls as the slime **MUST SIT FOR 5 MINUTES UNTOUCHED**. To prep the play area lay down a piece of wax paper or plastic wrap for slime adventures! **Happy Sliming!**



What We've Been Up To..

BRASS Weekend

This year's BRASS Weekend hosted 110 people at the Outdoor Learning Center at Horizons in Harrisonburg, VA. The weekend was filled with amazing artwork, a karaoke contest, crafts and of course a dance party! BRASS-ers got a small taste of what's to come with the BRASSapalooza theme for this year's BRASS Camp!



Summer Family Day

This year, we hosted our first-ever Summer Family Day at Clearbrook Park in Winchester, VA. It was perfect. Paddle boating on Trout Lake, swimming at the pool, volleyball games, playgrounds, and of course the EIGHT GIANT INFLATABLES were all a huge hit with our campers and their families. Our good friends at Hooked on Hope came up from Virginia Beach to teach rod and reel skills (fishing) on the lake and we even had a soft serve ice cream truck come in the afternoon (thank you Mattie's Soft Serve)! It was an absolute blast, and a great new twist on Reunion Family Weekend!



YAC Weekend

YAC (Young Adults with Cancer) Weekend was held in our Tidewater region at the Airfield 4-H Center in Wakefield, VA. Nearly two dozen survivors and volunteers enjoyed two days of relaxation with card games, trivia contest, campfire time, and even a beach day! It was the perfect way to kick off the summer.



Registration is now open for

7th Annual Fall in Love 5K

Saturday, September 14th 2019 in Canal Park, Washington, DC!

Kids 10 and under are **FREE!**

Visit speciallove.org for more details!





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WHAT'S UP NEXT

SEPTEMBER 14

7TH ANNUAL FALL IN LOVE 5K

CANAL PARK, WASHINGTON, DC

SEPTEMBER 21

SPECIAL LOVE KOA DAY

KOA WILLIAMSBURG, VA

OCTOBER 11-13

OCTOBERFEST WEEKEND

4-H CENTER, FRONT ROYAL, VA

NOVEMBER 23-24

PARENTS GETAWAY WEEKEND

WINCHESTER, VA

DECEMBER 1

HOLIDAY PARTY

FRANCONIA, VA



Feel the Love?

Check out our social media channels to stay up-to-date on Special Love happenings.

-  @Specialovecamps
-  @Specialove_org
-  @Specialove_org
-  @Specialove_org
-  @Specialovecamps

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Audited financial statements are available on our website,

www.Speciallove.org

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