



30 Years & 30 Heroes

Hero #25 of 30



From top: Adrienne (third from left) with camp friends Debbie, Kristen, and Olga; her '88 camp portrait (left inset); with counselor Aimee (inset right), and with her family: husband, Adon, and children Abram, age 2, and Abby, age 1.

Adrienne joined Special Love in 1988 when she was 11 years old and was still knee-deep in treatments for leukemia in Richmond, VA. Her lengthy camp experience, which spanned nearly a decade, is so iconic that we let her describe it in her own words:

Cancer will turn your world upside down and I was no exception. My usually outgoing personality had been introverted and I was very anxious to do new things, especially without the comfort of family close by. But from the very moment I boarded the bus to camp, I felt like myself again — I was headed to Camp Fantastic!

Ramona, Rhiannon, Jarvis and the rest of the gang welcomed me as if we had been friends for a long time. That was always the feeling I got when going to any Special Love event (I rarely missed one). Camp Fantastic let me, and everyone else, just be themselves. My fondest memories from Camp Fantastic are campfires, crazy fun camp songs, many firsts, and all of the cute boys! I think I had a new crush at least every year, but it was probably more like every minute!

Today I am a pediatric hematology/oncology nurse in Tucson, Arizona. I frequently sing songs that I learned at camp to or with my patients (and definitely to my own kids). I also tell my patients my story of going to camp for the first time, especially when they are afraid to try something new that is fun. My patients really appreciate that, not to mention the fact that I've "been there, done that."

One of the greatest things I got from camp, though, was all the friendships that I made. I will truly cherish all of them.

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