

**Despite Recession, Camp Twin Lakes Launches
a Second Camp for Children with Challenges.**

Collaboration strategy injects new life into a state park and fulfills agency mission.

While many area nonprofits are cutting staff, retrenching on programs and cutting client services, Atlanta-based Camp Twin Lakes (CTL), which serves children with serious illnesses, will significantly increase its capacity as it opens Camp Twin Lakes- Will-A-Way, in Winder, Georgia this June.

In a unique cooperation agreement with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Camp Twin Lakes has raised funds enabling it to operate a second camp facility. The agreement expands CTL's recreational and therapeutic programs by 43 percent- just in time for the 2009 camp season.

Raising funds in a recessionary economy was only part of the challenge for Camp Twin Lakes. With CTL's flagship camp in Rutledge, Ga fully booked during summers and weekends, a fresh approach was needed to realize the agency's strategic mandate to increase camper capacity and to deepen the program's impact on each child.

Rather than try to raise \$20-30 million to acquire land and build a new camp from the ground up, CTL approached the State of Georgia about running its fully accessible facility, Camp Will-A-Way, located inside Fort Yargo State Park. Built in the 1970s to serve children and adults with disabilities, the 53 acre lakefront property was underutilized, but had tremendous potential to serve children with psycho-social challenges.

"Funders loved the idea of revitalizing Camp Will-A-Way," said Executive Director Eric Robbins. "They understood the economies of scale involved and the immediate impact their gift would have, enabling 1,000 new campers to experience independence, confidence and the simple pleasures of childhood this summer."

A lead gift of \$1.5 million from the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation launched a Phase I renovation plan that included remodeling eight of the 16 camper cabins, full renovation of the medical lodge, partial renovation of an arts and crafts building, and upgrades to the dining hall, security, plumbing and communications systems.

In its inaugural 2009 summer season, May 24 through August 7, CTL- Will-A-Way will collaborate with 13 "partner camps," giving kids with juvenile arthritis, craniofacial disorders, burn injuries, autism, Tourette Syndrome, thalassemia, and other challenges, a place to feel "normal" and experience the joys of camp.

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In Phase II, estimated at \$2.5 million, Camp Twin Lakes - Will-A-Way will renovate the swimming pool, remaining camper cabins, staff cabins, arts and crafts building, and other upgrades. By 2011, the camp will serve an estimated 3,300 campers annually, meeting all national and state standards for accreditation by the American Camp Association and increasing Camp Twin Lakes' overall capacity by more than 60 percent.

"The need for Camp Twin Lakes is immense, and it will continue to grow," notes Doug Hertz, CTL's founder. "There are only so many days and weekends each year. Because we want to serve as many children as possible, we had to increase capacity. We're so excited that Camp Twin Lakes- Will-A-Way makes our vision a reality."

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About Camp Twin Lakes

Camp Twin Lakes is a not-for-profit organization that offers year-round recreational, therapeutic, and educational programs for children facing serious illnesses and other physical, emotional and life challenges. With its network of partners, Camp Twin Lakes provides life-changing experiences for thousands of children each year at its state-of-the-art, fully accessible facilities, located in Rutledge, Georgia, and in Winder, Georgia. For more information, please visit www.camptwinlakes.org.