

Okizu: Supporting families affected by childhood cancer

Cancer is a scary word, and yet most people have been touched by this disease in one way or another. A childhood cancer diagnosis is especially unexpected and devastating, and it is an experience that affects the entire family. Okizu provides unique support to each member of these families by offering free camp and peer support programs for them.

Programs include week long summer camps for the patients and their siblings, weekend family camps, bereavement programs, and Teens-N-Twenties trips for older patients and siblings. These programs allow parents to receive support from others who have faced the same challenges. Children who have a sick sibling or have lost a sibling to cancer are able to get important and much needed individual attention and support. And childhood cancer patients and survivors have the opportunity to focus on fun and be surrounded by others who truly understand their experiences while still receiving their treatments if needed.

Okizu's 500-acre camp facility is nestled in the Sierra Nevada foothills near a small town called Berry Creek and supports families from all over Northern California. Campers are able to participate in fun camp activities such as swimming, boating, archery, arts and crafts, fishing, and more. They get to sing campfire songs, make ice cream, and jump into the conga line at baseball lunch. Okizu gives these families a safe place to call their second home and a sense of camaraderie and support that plays a unique role in the healing process.