



OKIZU

Supporting Families with
Childhood Cancer



YEAR IN REVIEW

CONNECTIONS

Dear Okizu Friends,

The Okizu community is strong, resilient, and committed. Our families are lifted up by each and every one of you who generously give of your resources, time, and talents to provide meaningful and life-changing camp experiences. These experiences give our campers crucial social-emotional skills, a sense of freedom, and connection with others who understand.

As we begin another new year, the idea of connections and family are foremost in our minds. Some of the ways the Okizu family grew and connected were:

- We started the year with a staff retreat to strengthen team connections and recommit to our core values.
- We launched the Okizu Young Professionals Council, made up of diverse and passionate professionals in the Bay Area who are committed to supporting Okizu.
- We were invited to join in End of Treatment celebrations for some of our campers.
- Our families were invited to spend time with many of our Bay Area professional sports teams and participate in special programs with their athletes.
- One day events and family picnics provided extra touchpoints and connections throughout the year.

And, at the heart of all we do are our peer support summer camps and family retreats, including programs for patients, siblings, families, and young adults.

One camper's mother wrote us, "My son was diagnosed one year ago but we never met any other families until Camp Okizu. Connecting with families who have had similar experiences makes us feel validated and not so alone. There was a very strong sense of community and connection."

We are looking ahead to building our community and connections in 2024. We are honored to have you all as part of the Okizu family, supporting our campers and their families.



Suzie Randall
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



“Connecting with families who have had similar experiences makes us feel validated and not so alone.” – Okizu Mother



LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR

Dear Okizu Family & Friends,

2023 has been an inspiring and fulfilling year for Okizu. Though we have been looking for a permanent home for our Camp for the last three years, we have learned so much in the process about what we want and need in a site, as well as what we don't want. We feel like we are getting closer and have searched far and wide, considering nearly 50 properties all over Northern California!

While we don't yet know where our next home will be, we know this: Kids need Okizu now! Our campers need the adventure, friendships, and fun of summer camp. They need joy, healing, and connection with their truest peers who understand what it's like navigating childhood cancer.

That is why we are committed to continuing to offer our programs at the best rental sites available. Moving around presents a challenge, but we continue to get inspiration from our families. In 2023, we offered two weeks of Oncology Camp, three weeks of SIBS Camp, eight Family Camp weekends, one-day events, and Teens-N-Twenties programs.

Plenty of work is ahead as we continue to fulfill our commitment to our campers, and we will need your help to accomplish our near and long-term plans. We are excited to roll up our sleeves with you and get to work.



Ana Brubaker
BOARD CHAIR

2023 CAMP SUMMARY

Camp Okizu has always been a very special community that allows families to heal from the challenges of childhood cancer and to make connections that continue to provide support. For the second summer since 2020, Okizu campers were able to attend our programs in person and we have been able to create the Okizu magic and build community wherever we are.

As we begin another year and camping season, the need for community is ever present. Over the past few years many of our families felt isolated while they dealt with one of life's greatest challenges. As Okizu programs resumed and began to flourish again, more and more families and kids were able to connect with others who understand their challenges, which has left them feeling less alone on their journeys.

Camp Okizu provides a safe place for kids to be kids and share their stories with people who accept them unconditionally. It's a place where they can be their authentic selves, make friendship bracelets to fill up their arms, catch hot dogs during baseball lunch, and dance the night away with the best of friends to Uptown Girl!



CONTINUITY AND COMMUNITY ON THE ROAD IN 2023



1,000+ People Served



21% Average Percentage of New Campers in Each Session



750+ S'mores Consumed



11,000+ Feet of String for Friendship Bracelets Used



150+ Camp Songs Sung

OKIZU COMMUNITY SUPPORT

3

Family Picnics

3

SIBS Camp Sessions

2

Oncology Camp Sessions

8

Family Camp Sessions

- ✓ Bereaved Teen Program
- ✓ Teens-N-Twenties Program
- ✓ Numerous Special One-Day Events
(INCLUDING SF 49ERS, SF GIANTS, SAC REPUBLIC, SJ EARTHQUAKES)

THE SEARCH FOR HOME

“The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.” — Maya Angelou

THE SEARCH CONTINUES AFTER THE FIRE

Since wildfire destroyed our camp location in Berry Creek in September 2020, we have been very fortunate to find temporary campsites that have welcomed our families with open arms. We are grateful to be running our programs again and to have such lovely places to gather and connect.

Meanwhile, we have been ambitiously looking for a new, permanent home for Camp Okizu. We are searching for a property that will be accessible and inviting, and will provide a home away from home for our families for many years to come.

With our priorities of Safety, Accessibility, Programming, and Insurability in mind, we have researched and visited properties all over Northern California, including ranches, other camps, horse facilities, bare land, and everything in between. We have a realtor and an enthusiastic Site Committee, along with other supporters and resources, all committed to finding the right place to call home.

While we haven't found the perfect spot yet, we are dedicated to finding it and feel incredibly lucky that our temporary facilities have welcomed our families so warmly.





VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT MEET BONZO

Camp Okizu has become a second home to Bonzo, who first attended with his family in 2011. He appreciates the accepting and loving community that he gets to be a part of and has made many lifelong friends. As a camper, Bonzo shared that Okizu helped him gain perspective and clarity with “something as confusing as childhood cancer and how my siblings’ experience with cancer has shaped me and my family.”

Recently, Bonzo continued his Okizu journey by becoming a volunteer! He is now a vital part of Okizu’s safe and welcoming environment, helping provide Okizu campers with the same support and understanding that helped him thrive as a camper. He loves seeing them take their first tentative steps at camp, trusting others enough to open up, share their stories, and accept the support of their peers. He also enjoys teaching the Harmony Ridge campers about our camp mascot, Tajar, and personally delivering Tajar letters to them. Most of all he loves seeing campers have fun and always jumps at the opportunity to teach them classic camp games like Mafia!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT MEET CONFETTI

Confetti first attended Camp Okizu in 2014 and has been a large part of the Okizu community ever since. As a camper, Confetti loved Okizu because it allowed her to meet amazing people and help build endless friendships. Camp has helped her heal from all the hardships she has faced in her life as a childhood cancer survivor, and is thankful that it provides a judgement-free zone that ensures all our campers can relax and have an amazing time. Confetti fondly remembers playing the game Dutch Blitz as a camper at Family Camp and enjoying the company of others in the camp environment.

Confetti joined our volunteer team in 2023. She enjoys watching the campers grow more confident throughout the week, and the big smiles on their faces. She remembers looking up to all her counselors as a camper and now feels honored to be able to provide that same positive role model to all of her campers. Confetti loves taking the extra time to make meaningful connections and create a welcoming environment where they can flourish and shine. No matter how shy a camper is at the start of the week, all of Confetti’s campers will be seen smiling and playing with each other by the end of the week!



NEW EVENTS IN 2023

SPREADING AWARENESS & RAISING FUNDS ALL OVER!

Bring the Love

FEBRUARY 9

The Bring the Love committee created an amazing event held in Danville. We made lots of new East Bay friends and had a wonderful time while raising more than \$35,000!

Marin Country Club Golf Tournament

SEPTEMBER 16

The Marin Country Club held its first ever all-club, multi-sport tournament, dinner, and auction in September. It was a day of competition and camaraderie, and they raised almost \$200,000!



YPC Sip & Paint

SEPTEMBER 23

Okizu's newly formed Young Professionals Council (YPC) held a "Sip & Paint" event in San Mateo. It was an afternoon of painting, fundraising, and fun, and raised more than \$6,000!

Danville Children's Guild

NOVEMBER 13

The Danville Children's Guild selected Okizu as the 2023 beneficiary of their annual luncheon supporting Contra Costa County families. The Guild raised \$168,000 for Okizu East Bay Families through sponsorships, a lively auction, and holiday market!



SAVE THE DATE FOR THESE 2024 EVENTS!

SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

21st Annual Evening Under the Stars Celebration for Okizu, Sacramento, CA

OCTOBER 12, 2024

20th Annual Lobsterfest Benefit

Hosted by New England Lobster Market and Eatery, Burlingame, CA

Learn about upcoming events, purchase tickets, and more:

okizu.org/events

Interested in hosting an event? Learn more here:

okizu.org/host-an-event

OKIZU FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

FROM THE BRISTOW FAMILY

“Ewing’s Sarcoma changed Maren’s life at 2.5 years old. The solid tumor found by doctors had caused Maren to have a spinal cord stroke, and paralysis. The side effects of the cancer comes with its own set of daily challenges that Maren faces head on with grit and determination. Some days are easier than others. Shortly after treatment, a favorite Oncologist recommended Camp Okizu.

We attended our first Family Camp in 2015, when Maren was just 4 years old, and knew from the beginning that Camp Okizu was special. This past summer, both Maren, age 11, and Sloane, age 10, attended Oncology Camp and SIBS Camp, and the friendships forged, memories made, and smiles multiplied are imprinted on their hearts forever. In fact, Maren has said that, “Camp is so awesome! I get to be with friends and it is easy to talk with them about the hard stuff because they all already understand about the hard.” One of Maren’s friends that she has met at camp has even written her a letter from her new home in Spain!



These friendships can be long distance, but these friends and Camp Okizu really uplift her every day! We help Maren remember these amazing experiences and to look forward to the fun, especially when Maren’s “hard” seems to be piling up. Camp Okizu friends are referenced very often in our household, as these friends instill hope, and they encourage positivity and what CAN be accessible for Maren, which we LOVE!”

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

ALOHA KAI

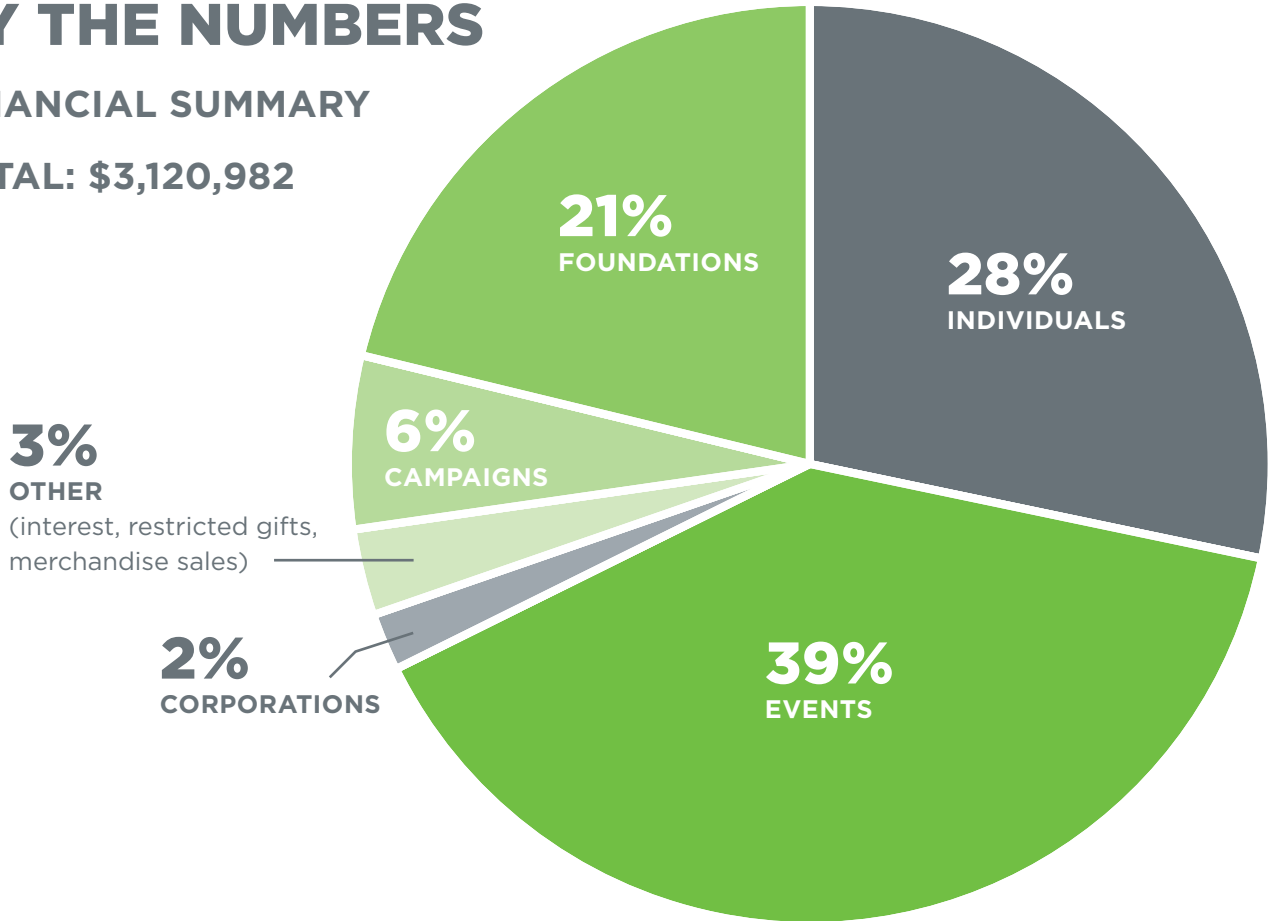
Longtime Okizu supporter Owen Gray competed in the inaugural World’s Toughest Row Pacific as one of 14 teams from across the world. He successfully rowed from Monterey, California to Kauai, Hawaii with partner Jayme Linker, in the summer of 2023—45 days, 6 hours and 17 minutes—covering 2,452 miles. In doing so, Owen joined a very select group of Americans who have rowed more than one ocean. Owen’s second ocean row was once again in support of Okizu and he raised \$116,000!



BY THE NUMBERS

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

TOTAL: \$3,120,982



FUN FACTS AT A GLANCE

9%

Above Industry Standard
Donor Retention Rate

\$250

Average Online Donation

12%

of Donations from
Bequests/Planned Giving

OKIZU PRESERVATION FUND

The Okizu Preservation Fund was established in 2016 by Neil and Kathy Hennessy in conjunction with Hennessy Funds to provide funding to ensure the future and longevity of Camp Okizu. To date, a total of \$4.1 million has been raised through their annual Shindig fundraiser, where Neil and Kathy Hennessy along with Hennessy Funds have matched every dollar donated!



**HENNESSY
FUNDS**

PARTICIPATING HOSPITALS

The medical supervision, professional support, and endorsements of the Oncology and SIBS (Special and Important Brothers and Sisters) Camps come from the children's oncology treatment centers serving Northern California and Northern Nevada. Many of the staff have participated throughout the year in the planning and evaluation of camp policies and procedures. Okizu operates in cooperation with the following treatment facilities:

California Pacific Medical Center, San Francisco

John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center

Kaiser Permanente Roseville Medical Center

Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara Medical Center

Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford

Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento

UC Davis Medical Center

UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital San Francisco



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OUR MISSION

The mission of Okizu is to help all members of families affected by childhood cancer to heal through peer support, respite, mentoring, and recreational programs.

All Okizu programs are always offered free of charge.

OUR CORE VALUES

COMPASSION

We believe that compassion toward our families is at the core of everything we do.

SUPPORT

We believe in serving families coping with childhood cancer.

COMMUNITY

We believe in creating a safe place where our families can connect with and care for each other, and in creating opportunities for our supporters and volunteers to impact the lives of our families.

EMPOWERMENT

We believe in building stronger selves and families.

INTEGRITY

We believe in being transparent, honest, and ethical in all of our interactions.



Learn more at
okizu.org and
join us @okizu!

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