

A DAY IN THE LIFE...



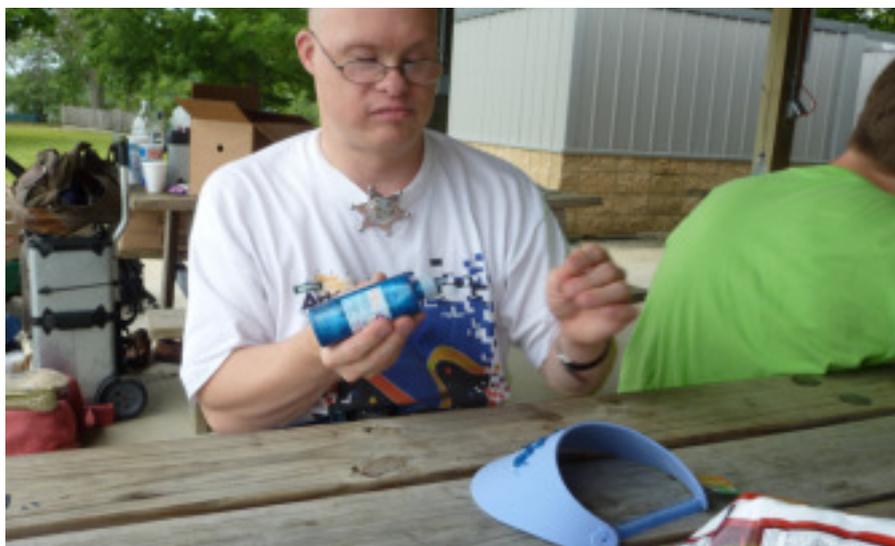
Caring for a family member with a disability is an awesome responsibility. That is why Camp Christopher offers respite care services to persons with disabilities all year long. With options for youth, adolescents and adults, Camp Christopher provides an appropriate and stimulating environment where campers can receive high quality medical care, recreation, personal care and supervision. These programs provide a consistent and familiar source of support to families that work tirelessly to ensure that their family member is well cared for, happy and connected to the community.



A glimpse
into the world
of families
caring for a
loved one
with a
disability.

Meet the Millers

Mr. and Mrs. Miller are remarkable people. They have adopted more than a dozen children with disabilities into their family over the years. Many of these children were found in orphanages in developing countries and suffered terrible neglect. Over the years, five of these young people have attended the Catholic Charities day camps for children with disabilities. This wonderful service provided a summer-long recreation program that allowed the children to socialize with friends and engage in traditional recreation like other children in the community while their parents remained employed. Today, all five of these young adults receive respite care at Camp Christopher throughout the year where they enjoy all the camp has to offer as well as the opportunity to meet and catch up with friends.



While at Camp Christopher, Mr. and Mrs. Miller are able to attend to the needs of their other children, some of whom have more serious medical problems. They use the time to catch up on everyday household chores and home improvement projects. Sometimes, they even carve out some time to relax!

The Miller's have raised their children to be happy and well adjusted members of the community. Many of them work at jobs they love or attend day programs in the community. The support that they receive through Camp Christopher's respite program has contributed to the stability of their home over the years and will hopefully continue to do so for many years to come!

“It is only when we stand up, with all our failings and sufferings, and try to support others rather than withdraw into ourselves, that we can fully live the life of community.”

JEAN VANIER,
COMMUNITY AND
GROWTH



THE NAMES OF FAMILIES HAVE BEEN CHANGED THROUGHOUT THIS PUBLICATION.

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Life can change in the blink of an eye...

Mary was the proud mother of an active 2 year old son, Billy, and was expecting her 2nd child any day. One afternoon, exhausted and in need of a nap, she turned to a family member to babysit Billy for the afternoon while she caught up on some rest. Unfortunately, while at his relative's home, tragedy struck, and Billy was the victim of an accidental gun shot wound to the head causing him to have a massive stroke. He was rushed to the hospital where he received surgery but the prognosis was grim. Billy was strong, and with God's help, he pulled through. But he had a long road ahead of him to recover. Before Mary knew it, she was caring for an infant, and a 2 year old who due to his injuries, had to relearn everything he had been taught up to that point in his life. Mary's boys developed side by side from that point forward.

Billy worked hard over the years, but he would live with paralysis on one side of his body for the rest of his life. The injuries resulted in permanent traumatic brain injury and for the rest of Billy's life, he will require specialized care to attend to his disabilities.

When Billy was about 5 years old, Mary found Camp Christopher. It was to be the beginning of a beautiful friendship! Today Billy is almost 50 years old and his parents continue to use the respite program every month. The program not only provides his parents with a break, but it also provides Billy with a chance to see friends he has grown up with and who love and enjoy his company. For Billy, Camp Christopher is home.

“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

FRANCIS OF ASSISI



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Caregivers Need Your Support

Some of the stories families have shared over the years about the unique ways that their family member's disability has effected their household bear repeating as a testament to the challenges these caregivers face on a daily basis. Here are just a few:

...Mr. and Mrs. Jones have twin sons who have both been diagnosed with autism. One very early morning, while their parents slept, the boys helped themselves to the entire contents of their father's wallet (after he had just cashed his paycheck) and treated themselves at a restaurant to breakfast. The boys were safely returned home after the restaurant staff called the authorities when they observed the boys trying to stuff the balance of their parent's money into a donation box.

...The Cunningham family was working on teaching their adult daughter, Susan, to be more independent. They were specifically working on letting Susan be home alone. It was a slow process, but over the course of almost six months, they felt confident that she could be home for an hour by herself. Unfortunately, that progress was quickly washed away one afternoon when Susan decided that the dog needed to be washed. She did everything she had seen her parents do when they washed the dog. She used the baby pool and the hose and even used the special dog shampoo. Unfortunately, she did all of this in the living room. Needless to say, the damage was significant, and Susan's independence took a few steps back that day.

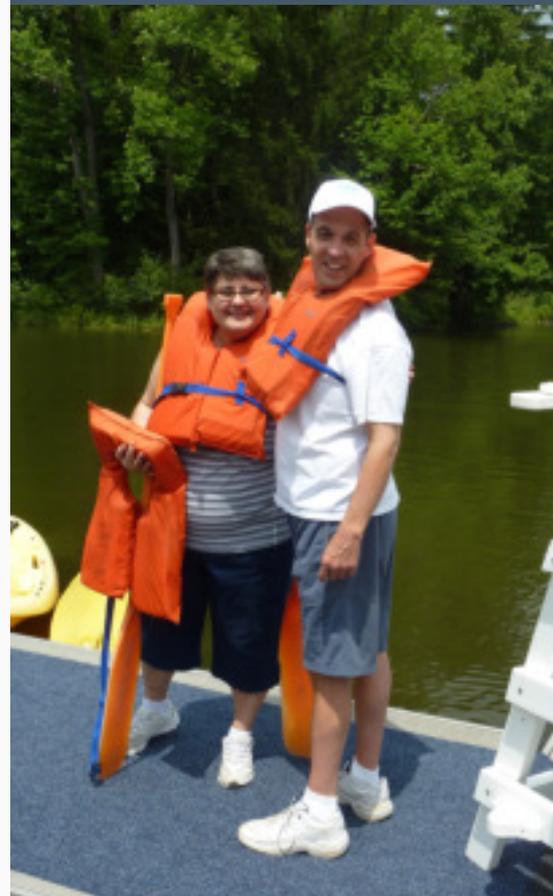
...The Whitman's daughter, Tina, is a 35 year old adult who works on the cleaning staff at the high school. For as long as her parents can remember, Tina has dreamed of getting married. At one point, she accessed a phone at the high school from which she managed to order a wedding cake and booked a band. You can probably imagine her parents surprise the day that cake was delivered to her home with a hefty bill.

Caregivers face challenges like this every day. Balancing the care of their family member with a disability with the needs of their other children, grandchildren, employers, neighbors, and one another takes it toll.

Respite care at Camp Christopher provides a crucial resource to these families so that they can continue the difficult work they do every day. Your support will allow Catholic Charities to continue this important work that impacts so many families.

“There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver.”

ROSALYN CARTER



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