

### 3 Generations Impacted by

# CAMP GRADY SPRUCE



Alicia, Suzanna, Katie, Jenn (1991)

In 1983, I was 9 years old. I attended Camp Grady Spruce for the first time. Camp was always important to me – something I looked forward to all year long. When I was 13 or 14, camp became more than just a fun summer diversion. I faced the same pressures that kids face today – making friends, fitting in, being athletic, resisting peer pressure, etc. Camp became an escape from that competition. Camp became the one place I could truly be myself. Camp

was unconditional acceptance. I have often wondered if the real me would have even

developed had I not had camp in my life to let that person peek through. I made friendships that have lasted a lifetime. I learned how to trust people and to be trustworthy. I gained self-confidence that has carried me through into adulthood. I learned an appreciation for the world around me.

My mom describes camp's role in my life as follows:

*Jennifer Lavender is my daughter and I feel that Camp Grady Spruce changed her life in a deeply positive way over the nine years that she attended. Jennifer is the middle of three daughters and, while as beautiful, smart, and accomplished as her sisters, she often felt at odds with herself and the world. Every child feels this, but being a middle child, and very intense, probably made these transitions more difficult for Jennifer than many other children. I felt that we just could not build up her self-esteem, that no matter what we said or did, or what she accomplished, she felt no worth at her core.*

*From the first visit to Camp Grady Spruce, Jennifer embraced it. Over the years, the kids, counselors, and staff there were able to reinforce her value, uniqueness, and self-esteem, as school, home, and family had been so unable to do. She made supportive friends, gained responsibility, learned to follow and to lead, and learned to love. The Camp and its people set Jennifer on a path of self confidence, secure in the knowledge that she was very capable and very lovable.*

*At the risk of being overly dramatic, I credit Camp Grady Spruce with saving my daughter, Jennifer.*

I was a camper, a CIT (counselor in training), JC (junior counselor), and counselor. 1992 was my last summer at Camp Grady Spruce.

I am now a parent. My son, Wilson (a first grader at Hexter) spent a week at Camp Grady Spruce last year. His thoughts are on the following page. I, however, cannot express the gratitude I have that camp is there for him. Ready and waiting to provide him with the same life changing experiences that it did for me a generation ago.

My name is Wilson. I had my 7th Birth day at Camp Grady Spruce. My favrite part about camp was the blob. You go up on a high diving bord and you jump on to a big floating thing. The blob and camp is super fun I hope every kid goes to camp.



**WILSON – HEXTER STUDENT**

I am excited to have officially joined the Partner's Campaign this year. JOIN ME in helping ensure every kid has the chance to go to camp. Personal financial contributions are the only way to raise money directly for a specific program in the YMCA. That makes your donation – of ANY amount - so very important.

All donations are tax deductible.

**REMEMBER CAMP GRADY SPRUCE WHEN PLANNING THIS SUMMER'S ACTIVITIES!**

Learn more at [www.campgradyspruce.org](http://www.campgradyspruce.org) or email me at [drlavender@gmail.com](mailto:drlavender@gmail.com)

Thank you for your help in getting kids to camp,

Jennifer Lavender



**TO DONATE:**

EMAIL ME ([drlavender@gmail.com](mailto:drlavender@gmail.com))

- THE AMOUNT OF YOUR PLEDGE
- AND YOUR PHYSICAL MAILING ADDRESS