

Camp Bluebird offers cancer survivors rest, friendship and fun

By: Birmingham Times

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Forge staff hosted "Forge Football Frenzy" booth highlighting a healthy tailgating recipe. (Lloyd E. Beard Photo, Forge)



*Attendees of Camp Bluebird Fall 2018 including campers and counselors.
(Lloyd E. Beard Photo, Forge)*

October traditionally represents that time of the year when many spotlight breast cancer with events, screenings, and community outreach, but during the month there is one camp in October where adult survivors of all cancers can gather for three days and two nights of sharing, educational workshops and fun.

“Camp Bluebird” offers a period of respite, camaraderie, education, and fun to cancer survivors from all health systems throughout Birmingham.

“Activities include canoeing, fishing, cooking, games, singing . . . all meant to support attendees in their survivorship and give them a period of time to think about something other than cancer,” said Susan Sellers, St. Vincent’s Foundation President.

During Camp Bluebird, Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center (Forge) hosted the “Forge Football Frenzy” booth highlighting a healthy tailgating recipe. Forge staff demonstrated to survivors that eating healthy is not only beneficial to survivorship but it’s also easy, fun and delicious. Campers sampled a Buffalo Hummus Dip courtesy of Nourishing Plate, an evidence-based nutrition information blog for cancer prevention, treatment and survivorship.

“Forge helps address lifelong health and wellness questions, needs, and concerns for survivors and their loved ones,” said Caroline McClain, manager of Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center.

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Johnnie (left) and Christine, both among the many campers, look forward to this time each year when they can surround themselves with others from similar journeys. (Provided Photo)

“Camp Bluebird creates the perfect atmosphere for Forge to connect with survivors, teach topics important to their survivorship, and share resources and programs that may be of benefit to them or their families. We love this opportunity to laugh, learn, and celebrate together.”

On this cool fall day at Camp Bluebird, it was evident that despite the effects of cancer, the various activities casted a warm glow on each of the camper’s smiling faces. Camp participant Johnnie Griffin said, “It is amazing to be around people who understand your journey.”

These sentiments were echoed throughout the camp not only from campers but from counselors alike. “Volunteering here and serving has been the most impactful [experience] of my life,” said Catherine Prewitt.

St. Vincent’s Foundation (which is part of Ascension) has funded the camp since its inception and is a sponsor of the event.

To learn more about Forge, visit www.forgeon.org, email info@forgeon.org or call 205-838-6159.

Forge assists survivors and co-survivors in taking an active role in their fight against breast cancer by offering support, knowledge, strength and direction. Through Forge, all those touched by breast cancer can bond with others to Forge a new future.

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