

CAMP FANTASTIC SERVING CHILDREN WITH CANCER

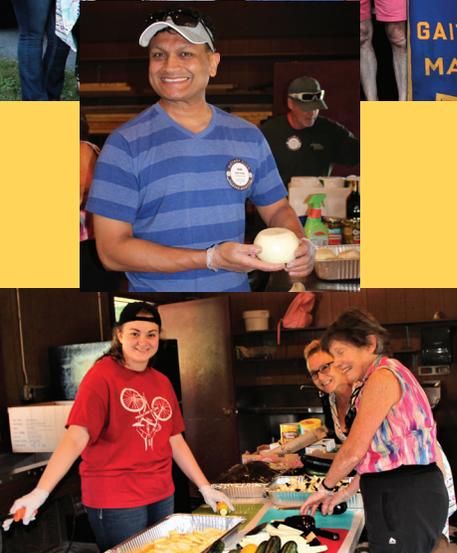
By Kenneth D. Weiss, Gaithersburg Rotary Club, August 17, 2019

was not large enough. However, it did waft its smoky smell into the kitchen. These problems were resolved and our group of 20 enjoyed its dinner at 4:30 p.m. We were ready for it!

Soon, more than 200 young people, half campers and half counselors and other staff members, walked and rode into the area, having fun and getting to know each other. The campers all had cancer, and most of the counselors were survivors. As the man in charge called cabin numbers, the kids and counselors in each cabin reported to the NIH tent for their medication. Then, group by group, they dashed to our double serving line to fill their plates. A few were in wheelchairs, each pushed by a counselor. Our musicians cranked up their amplifier, and the kids' voices tried to rise above it.

In a small ceremony, the camp Director thanked our club for the party and dinner. Then, our assistant district governor and our president spoke briefly, and a member was thanked for attending under difficult circumstances. The first night at Camp Fantastic was off to a very good start.

The take-down and clean-up went quickly, spurred by the impatient roar of the engine in our bus. A final photo, the door was closed, and our past-President's well-stocked cooler was opened. Small groups engaged in lively conversation, and the drive back to Gaithersburg passed quickly. Tired, yes, but, happy, oh, so happy. We certainly will do it again in August 2020.



[Above] A fantastic experience at Camp Fantastic serving children with cancer.

[Below] Archie Avedisian Way. That's now the name of the street that leads from North Frederick Avenue in Gaithersburg, Maryland to the Boys and Girls Club building. The new street name was inaugurated after a luncheon on July 26, 2019.

The big Erye bus had space in its belly for our supplies and equipment - and lots of space for 14 Rotarians and spouses. A half dozen others joined us at Camp Fantastic.

The floor in the pavilion, which two members named Scott had made less slippery, got rave reviews. A team of Rotarians ran to put the grill in operation, another sprang to prepare food in the rustic kitchen, and still another set up the serving area and "dressed" enough tables for more than 200 people.

Other tasks were to set up the game and gift table, prepare the beverage service (no caffeine for the kids), and hang our club banners near the large fireplace. The magician, Sly, and musicians, Stephanie and Dave, arrived later and did their own set-up. Stephanie and her husband, Geoffrey had driven from North Carolina for the event.

Very soon, the veggie burgers started falling apart, the mac & cheese (16 trays of it) wouldn't warm up, and the large grill

