

Ultimate Camp-In Keeps Kids Affected by Childhood Cancer Connected

Northwestern Mutual and Lollipop Theater Network create unforgettable experience with the help of SpongeBob SquarePants and other celebrity camp counselors

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 2, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Research¹ shows that summer camps for kids with pediatric cancer can strengthen social skills and self-esteem and facilitate moments of needed respite. Northwestern Mutual, through its Foundation and in collaboration with [Lollipop Theater Network](#), recently hosted [The Ultimate Camp-In](#), a one-of-a-kind at-home virtual camp experience bringing together hundreds of children and families affected by childhood cancer. Complete with star power from camp "counselors," the Ultimate Camp-In was a memorable day of connection and carefree adventure for families facing similar challenges.

Experience the interactive Multichannel News Release here: <https://www.multivu.com/players/English/8654151-northwestern-mutual-and-lollipop-theater-hosts-childhood-cancer-camp-in/>

By collaborating with Lollipop Theater Network, a non-profit dedicated to bringing movies and entertainment to children in hospitals due to chronic or life-threatening illnesses, the pastime of camp was transformed into a virtual experience enjoyed in homes across the country, creating connection in the age of social distancing.

The event kicked off Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, a time to support those affected, while also raising awareness and funds for research and cures. Children had the chance to meet the iconic voice of SpongeBob SquarePants, they also caught a sneak peek of a never-before-seen trailer of the upcoming movie, *The SpongeBob Movie: SpongeBob on the Run*, and excitedly asked Tom Kenny questions about what it's like to be a Nickelodeon celebrity.

The Ultimate Camp-In also featured live activities with other celebrities, from ballet lessons with International Prima Ballerina and NYC Ballet Principal Dancer Tiler Peck and a magic show and mindreading session with David Kwong, to drawing their favorite characters with Nickelodeon animators and decorating cupcakes with actress Monique Coleman of High School Musical fame and Cake Camp's Julie Gordon. Campers also enjoyed story time, making s'mores and joining other activities families know and love from traditional outdoor camps.

"As with our past camp events, this year's Ultimate Camp-In was rewarding and inspiring, and we feel fortunate to safely unite families impacted by childhood cancer virtually," said Eric Christophersen, president of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation. "The pandemic has forced many traditions and in-person experiences to be postponed or canceled - but we remain committed to doing our part and creating community for these special families, something that is more important than ever. To provide a fun camp escape for these children and parents, even for a day, was an honor."

Peyton Richardson, a dynamic 18-year-old childhood cancer survivor joined as Camp-In emcee. No stranger to the trials and tribulations families undergo while on a childhood cancer journey, Richardson brought perspective and hope to the event, which connected children currently fighting cancer, survivors, siblings and loved ones who often lack supportive communities that understand their treatment and emotional needs.

"We were thrilled to partner with the Northwestern Mutual Foundation in order to create fun, interactive experiences for pediatric patients and their families amid these challenging times," said Evelyn Iocolano, executive director and co-founder of Lollipop Theater Network. "It was such an inspiring day, and in true Lollipop Theater Network fashion, delivered an escape for patients and their families to learn new skills and create lifelong memories!"

Running back Aaron Jones of the Green Bay Packers also stopped by to say hello as part of an ongoing partnership between the Northwestern Mutual Foundation and the Green Bay Packers' and the new *My Cause My Cleats* collaboration. Jones invited attendees to design a pair of cleats for him to wear this season. The collaboration is part of an annual NFL-wide effort in which hundreds of players wear customized cleats designed to showcase causes that are important to them during the same game week.

Northwestern Mutual launched its [Childhood Cancer Program](#) in 2012 to find better treatments and cures, provide family and patient support and aid those who struggle with the long-term effects of treatment. The program has contributed more than \$30 million with the help of its employees and financial advisors nationwide and has funded more than 400,000 hours of research. Northwestern Mutual sees a future in which children and families can move beyond the fears of cancer and find happiness, because all kids deserve the chance to just be kids.

For more on The Ultimate Camp-In, visit <http://foundation.northwesternmutual.com/camp/>.

For more photos and videos, visit <https://publicity.gettyimages.com/event/the-ultimate-camp-in-hosted-by-northwestern-mutual>.

About Northwestern Mutual

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About Northwestern Mutual Foundation

The mission of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation is to improve the lives of children and families in need. The Foundation has given more than \$386 million since its inception in 1992 and is designed to create lasting impact in the communities where the company's employees and financial representatives live and work. We accomplish this by combining financial support, volunteerism, thought leadership and convening community partners to deliver the best outcomes. Our efforts are focused nationally on curing childhood cancer, and locally on education, neighborhoods and making our hometown of Milwaukee a great destination.

Visit [Northwestern Mutual Foundation](#) to learn more.


About Lollipop Theater Network

A 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2001, Lollipop Theater Network has created entertaining programming for children facing life-threatening illness nationwide. These programs give them the opportunity to experience magical escapes in the form of movie screenings of current films, music jams, artist days led by top Animation Studios, and visits by some of their favorite celebrities. Our hope is to bring a moment of relief into the lives of the children and families who need it the most. To learn more, please visit: www.lollipoptheater.org

¹ APA Kelada, Lauren PhD*,†; Wakefield, Claire Elizabeth PhD*,†; Cruz Silva, Maria C. BPsych*,†; Signorelli, Christina PhD*,† Camps for Children with Cancer and Their Families: A Systematic Review of Psychosocial and Physical Impacts, Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: February/March 2020 - Volume 41 - Issue 2 - p 145-156

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<https://news.northwesternmutual.com/2020-09-02-Ultimate-Camp-In-Keeps-Kids-Affected-by-Childhood-Cancer-Connected>