

# Aftercare News

The Newsletter of the Aftercare Programs at the NC Jaycee Burn

## Why I want to be a volunteer peer supporter

By: **Mary Garner Oden**



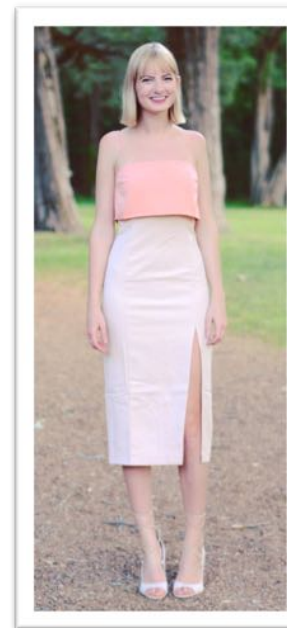
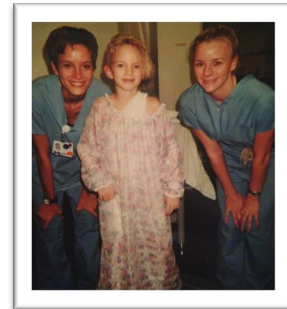
UNC  
NORTH CAROLINA  
JAYCEE BURN CENTER

"You're just like me!" That simple phrase is why I want to be a volunteer peer supporter. I've heard it multiple times throughout my life but I will never tire of it. It is almost always said excitedly from the mouth of a younger burn survivor, who is surprised and delighted because I have the same scars as them. The first time I heard this phrase I was in middle school on a mission trip called Glory Ridge. We went to a small town where we helped families repair and build their houses. One of the families had a young daughter who had been severely burned. She and her family had never met another burn survivor, least of all one who was a kid just like her. She looked at my back then touched her own scars, "You're just like me," she exclaimed excitedly. From that moment on, I realized I had the incredible privilege of being a symbol of hope to other burn survivors and their families.

At the time of my burn, I was only 6 years old. I did not recognize the gravity of what had happened or how my scars would affect me as a person until much later. While my scars are mostly hidden, I grew up at the beach and going to sailing camp. So I was in a swimsuit a lot. There was always this hesitation when I met a new kid. That familiar stare as they processed my unfamiliar appearance. When I was young, they would just bluntly ask me, "uh what happened to your back?" I happily obliged and watched as the wave of understanding washed over their face.

As I got older and was faced with those awful years known as middle school, the blunt questions became whispers behind my back and my friends were more concerned with appearance than ever before.

They would complain about zits or greasy hair or any other of the myriad of charms that come with growing up and I would envy them. Couldn't they see they were perfect? Didn't they know how lucky they were not to have MY problem? At the time, my burn felt like the biggest burden in the world. Nonetheless, I made it through my formative years with a good sense of humor and a lot of feigned confidence. This specific time in my life, makes me want to be a volunteer peer supporter most of all. Growing up is already so hard and awkward without having to deal with large visible scars. I would like to be able to be a support system for a survivor growing up right now because I wish I could go back to tell my middle school/high school self; "It does get better," "fake confidence turns into real confidence," and "that one boy who didn't like you because of your scars was just one boy." I want to be a volunteer peer supporter because I want to be able to help fellow survivors not only accept their burns and learn to live with them but to embrace their identity as a survivor.



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## 2017 Adult Reunion



The North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center just celebrated its 26<sup>th</sup> annual Adult "Celebration of Life" event in Chapel Hill, NC on November 11, 2017. The next reunion is scheduled for November 10, 2018 at the William and Ida Mae Friday Center in Chapel Hill! This year the event was attended by 300 people including survivors, family members, friends, staff of the burn center, local Fire Fighters, community members, N.C. Jaycee's and board members. The day's activities also included a separate children's program run with the help of wonderful UNC volunteers.

The day began with the opening ceremonies with the Durham Fire and Rescue and Chapel Hill Fire Department joint honor guards and the singing of the national anthem by new comer, Tameka Tisdale-Williams. The program was highlighted by a panel of two survivor couples who shared their stories of tragedy to overcoming the worst injury a person could face in their life journeys. We also heard from other survivors, staff and families during the open mike time at the end of the program. The silent auction continued this year under new leadership from Charlene Pell, a survivor and Board Member, her husband, C.H. Frazier and the North Carolina Jaycees. We were excited to have several Board members present this year, volunteering their time and resources during the auction. Many thanks to all!

We were delighted to have healing touch and massage practitioners join us for the second year; lead by Amelia Vogler, healing touch professional and wife of Blake Tedder. We also had a chair massage available throughout the day. Many attendee's took advantage of this great opportunity to experience a new practice of taking care of themselves. The Dixieland Band celebrated their 26<sup>th</sup> year volunteering their musical talents during lunch. We are thankful and grateful for all our volunteers who made this year's reunion the success it was. It is our hope that you will join us next year for the "Celebration of Life" and that you will spread the word in your community to other survivors/families you may meet. All are welcome!

## **Burn Center Humor**

**By: Amber Thompson, RN, CCRN**  
**Burn Center Nurse**

Burn nursing is a job that generates this question from many people: "How in the world do you do that?" Usually, my response is "it is very rewarding and I enjoy seeing my patients progress from being acutely ill to discharging home". That statement is accurate but there is more to being able to do this hot, sweaty, labor intensive job. The other two factors that play a huge part in sustainment of burn nursing is the amazing team of nurses that I am blessed to work with, and HUMOR!! Nothing about a patient being burned is ever funny, in fact it is devastating. Nurses use humor that is non-patient related to get through some tough days. I like to call these humorous moments "Burn Nurse Bloopers"! I hope they make you smile as much as they did me!

These are some of my most recent burn nurse bloopers:

1)The thermostat was broken in my patients' room and it was so hot in the room. I walked in and without thinking I asked the patient "Aren't you about to burn up in here?" He stated "No, I've already done that!" Lord have mercy!! I had to apologize over and over! Luckily, he was a great sport! Him and I laughed all night about my statement and his response!

2) Once I had a physician order to send the catheter tip culture from a central line change over. I also had a physician order urine electrolytes on the same patient. When I went to obtain the urine specimen I picked up the specimen cup that contained the catheter tip, and without seeing the catheter tip I filled up the cup with urine!! Geezzzzzz! Now there will be no catheter tip culture and I had to explain why to the physician (that was the worst part)!

3) I was recently assisting a patient off the bedpan. This patient was a great help in the turning process so I didn't grab any help to take her off the bedpan. She rolled over and I removed an almost completely full bedpan of urine and because I was alone and didn't want to leave the patient turned and unattended by going to the bathroom to empty it, I just sat it down on the floor. I finished up the cleaning process and as I went to get the covers at the end of the bed I stepped right on the side of the bedpan! I sent urine flying up my leg! I stepped on the side so hard that there was very little urine left! It was all over my leg and in my shoe :( The patient said "Did what I think just happened, really happen?" I said "If you think that I stepped right on the side of your bedpan and flipped an enormous amount of your urine all over me, then yes, what you think just happened really happened"! I cleaned my skin, changed my pants, and tossed my shoes! I put on a pair of patient gripper socks for the rest of my shift and an old pair of shoes :) That was the first time I have ever done something like that and I hope it was the last!

4) In order to reposition a patient in the bed we place the bed on a "Max Inflate" setting. This allows the mattress to firm up to aide in moving up or over in bed. One time I was taking care of a patient that had a radiator explosion incident and I was assisting him with moving up in bed. I made the statement "I am going to blow your bed up first before we move up", with wide eyes and a big smile the patient said "I really don't want to blow up again!" I apologized profusely for the word usage and we both enjoyed the laugh. Now I say "I am going to adjust your mattress setting"-so far that seems to go over better.

As the old saying goes “Laughter is the best medicine”, when we can laugh at our mistakes as nurses, when we laugh with our patients, when we can laugh with each other, we form a bond that is stronger than the heaviness of the moment and there is a breakthrough of healing that occurs on many levels. I am so grateful to my patients over the years for their patience with me, sharing laughs with me, and smiling through their pain. You all are the real reason we are able to do our work day in and day out.



**Burn Core: Twice a year the Burn Center holds an intensive training, called Burn Core for new staff. Welcome to the newest group of burn center employees. We are glad you are here!**

## Technology and Innovation

One of the most unique collaborations we have undertaken has been with some of the brightest minds in technology. We started working with the Serious Games Class at UNC a few semesters ago, and the first project was a home fire safety educational game, formatted to work on an iPad. If you have a school age child in your life, please give it a try at <http://harr1son.github.io/>. It is not yet at the stage where we can download an app, so you will need internet access to play it on an iPad or computer. We then decided on the topic of stress management for burn patients and their family members, and one of the student groups asked us if we were interested in Virtual Reality! Virtual Reality in burn care began over a decade ago, with costly and bulky equipment. Current advances have made it much more cost effective and user friendly. We are currently collaborating with the students on a virtual reality program to use on the highly portable Gear VR. We hope to use this technology with adolescents and young adults, as a novel way to help them manage their hospital experience with a little virtual escape! We are very excited to watch this program evolve to the point where we can use it at the bedside.

We are always open to new collaborations with campus tarheels and we would love to hear from you if you have an interest in helping out at our programs!

## Firefighters Burned Children's Fund



**The Lee County FFBCF conducted its annual toy drive to benefit the burn center. Followed by a wonderful lunch for families and staff, with Christmas Caroling to spread holiday cheer**

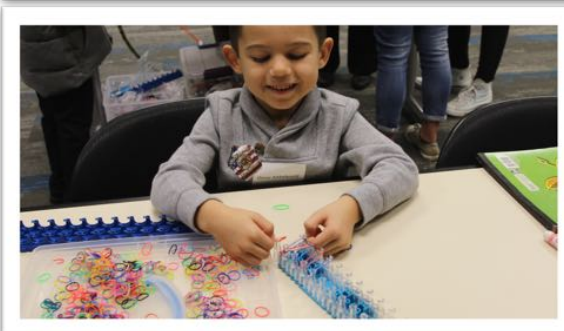
Have you heard about the Firefighters Burned Children's Fund? If you have had a child or teenager participate in any aftercare event, they have likely benefited from the support this dedicated organization has shown our programs. Their mission statement tells us that they are "dedicated to the support, education and recovery of burn survivors and their families and the prevention of burn injuries." The FFBCF provides support to all patients with burns, through their many varied donations. From tennis shoes to t-shirts, the FFBCF often fulfills our wish list of needed items and provides supports to our adult programs.

With 25 chapters around the state, The Firefighters' Burned Children Fund, Inc. (FFBCF) is operated for the sole purpose of raising funds. This is done by a variety of methods, the most common of which is collecting and selling aluminum cans. The proceeds earned are used to provide non-medical assistance to victims of burn injuries, and developing and implementing burn prevention programs. This amazing organization was started in 1989. The support directly comes from the good hearted people in various communities across the state. For example, our most recent donation was from the Mooresville FFBCF chapter, with stuffed animals donated from the Brody-Thompson Foundation, and toys for all ages gathered by the Community of Atwell and Richards Coffee shop. Fund raisers come in many forms, and we encourage you to consider supporting FFBCF events near you.

The FFBCF of Wake County invites you to join them for the annual "Hometown Heroes" Firefighter Fashion Show at the Southern Women's Show, held at the NC State Fairground - Jim Graham Building on Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, and Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm on the fashion stage. At the burn center, we are excited to welcome one of the newest chapters, right here in Orange County! Also joining the lineup are Southport/Brunswick and Coastal Carolina chapters.

The FFBCF also sponsors scholarships for burn survivors! We want to make sure that all burn survivors who are planning to continue their education past high school are aware of this resource! Multiple scholarships are available. If you are a burn survivor age 25 or under, you may be eligible to apply. The deadline for submitting your application is **June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018**. You can find out more information at <http://ffbcf.org/scholarships.html>.

## Campus Collaboration

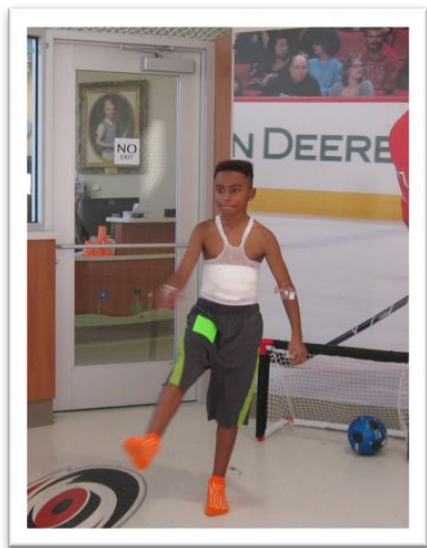


Aftercare realizes that we are incredibly fortunate to have relationships and associations with the University of North Carolina. College students are such a great resource for us to utilize, and we seek collaborations that truly benefit everyone involved. For several years we have enjoyed the help of the "For The Kids" group of dance marathon students to assist us with our children's program at the Adult Reunion.

They show up eager to engage with the kids, armed with dance moves and music, and ready to have a good time. For the children's program we also have joined forces with the Medical Student Pediatric Interest Group as they join us with stethoscopes and lab coats to run a teddy bear clinic. This is always a popular station, with countless stuffed animals getting a check up and necessary bandages! The kids love wearing hospital gowns, gloves, and masks, and talking through common accident scenarios with the medical students. New to the lineup at the kids program this year was the addition of the Art Heels. The Art Heels join us to run an activity station with paracord bracelets, beads, and other projects to keep creative minds and busy hands constructively engaged. Partnering with student groups from campus is always a win-win situation. Students help out for a good cause. Kids enjoy their time with college students, and a good time is had by all. The partnership grows stronger every year!

## Never underestimate the importance of peer support!

By: Kelly Clark, CCLS, LRT/CTRS  
Child Life Specialist



Recently, I had three boys close in age who were all admitted around the same time. The boys were all in different stages of their treatment and recovery and different places in accepting their injuries. I had the opportunity to review “Rehearse Your Response” with one of the boys and he decided that he would prefer not to share his story if asked. He could readily answer, “I don’t feel like talking about it, but thanks for asking.” He also had reservations about being around other people because he didn’t feel like he was “handsome” anymore. However, when I told him that I needed his help welcoming a new patient, he didn’t hesitate. I coordinated with the families of the three boys and arranged for them to meet for the first time in the playroom. My young friend who didn’t want to share his story immediately told every detail of how he was burned (I suspect because he was curious about the other boys but didn’t want to ask). Our newest patient locked in on similarities between their accidents and volunteered his own story, and within a few minutes of meeting, all three boys had shared and started to bond.

Then the fun really started. Each of the boys had very different injuries and needed to move different parts of their bodies, especially the boy with the newest burn who had come to the playroom in a wheelchair. For the next 30-45 minutes, the boys engaged in nearly every sport imaginable (that can be played indoors in some way) and were encouraging one another to move- standing, bending, reaching, and stretching.

In the days that followed, the boys took the initiative to check in on one another, offering encouragement, invitations to play, and congratulations when it was time for discharge. Their families exchanged contact information, and one of the boys, the one who didn’t want to share, didn’t want to be seen, even came back for an outpatient visit and made a point of coming up to see his buddy who was still an inpatient. All three boys hope to reunite at Camp Celebrate this spring!

## Sign up now for Camp Celebrate! Registration is open!

If you are interested in volunteering at Camp Celebrate, please contact Michele Barr as soon as possible, or visit our website for an application. We will be interviewing applicants and compiling a top notch volunteer crew through April 1<sup>st</sup>. If you know a pediatric burn survivor 7-15 years old who is interested in coming to camp, it's time to sign up! Contact Michele! Applications are available at

<http://www.med.unc.edu/burn/burn-programs/aftercare-programs-temp/camp-celebrate-1>

### Contact Us

We recruit volunteers to assist us in all our programming needs and are always happy to talk with anyone interested in volunteering. If you would like more information about any of our Aftercare programs, or if there are ways that Aftercare can assist you, please contact us!

Visit our website for more information: <https://www.med.unc.edu/burn>

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### Upcoming Events

**Adult Retreat 2018- April 13-15, 2018**  
Camp Caraway-Sophia, NC

**Camp Celebrate 2018- May 18-20, 2018**  
Camp Kanata-Wake Forest, NC

**FFBCF Scholarship Deadline- June 1, 2018**

**Teen Camp- August 3-5, 2018**  
Camp Caraway- Sophia, NC

**Family Camp- September 7-9, 2018**  
Camp Kanata- Wake Forest, NC

**World Burn Congress- September 12-15, 2018**  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

**Call (919) 962-8427 for more information!**