



“ The week we send Cassidy to camp every summer really is the highlight of the year. We start looking forward to it in March when the applications first come out.” - Gina Duncan, mom to 25-year old Cassidy, who has autism and has been going to camp since she was 8 years old.

CASSIDY'S STORY

EASTER SEALS SUMMER CAMPS

Cassidy had never been away from home before Easter Seals. She never had the opportunity to go to any other regular overnight camps – camps for children without diverse abilities.

“We had had a lot of barriers getting into regular camps,” says Gina. “We thought Cassidy would never have a camp experience, something I think is so important for any child growing up. One of my favourite memories is picking Cassidy up at the end of her first week that first year and she looked like she hadn’t showered in a week, but she had! She looked like any other child returning home from a week away at camp.”

Easter Seals campers are no different than typical kids going to camp. Just like everyone else they go to camp and have fun. They’re just kids and adults enjoying each other, supporting each other, and teaching everyone around them, including the counsellors, about what true friendship means. It’s a place for inclusion and acceptance.

“It’s what summer should look like for every kid,” says Gina. “They just want a chance to be themselves without anyone judging them and making assumptions about them. At camp they don’t worry about anything. They just have fun and a big part of why that is, is because of the counsellors.”

“For us as parents, it’s also a week that we miss our kids, but it also gives us time to rejuvenate, so we can have more fight in us for the challenges that lay ahead,” says Gina. “As much as Cassidy needs the week, so do we.”

“My favourite part is making new connections and new friends I hadn’t met before,” says Cassidy. “And the food and the games!”

“These camps need to go on. These camps for our children are life changing,” adds Gina. “It teaches them kindness, compassion, support of one another and not to be afraid. To be able to go out in the world and be themselves. Nobody places any expectations on them and they just shine. It’s those experiences that come home and shape them, giving them the tools to help them with their day to day life challenges.”