



## Parent Packet

### KyMel, Inc

KyMel, Inc, is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that was established in 2015 with the goal to provide connecting experiences for families on the cancer journey. It is the mission of KyMel, Inc. to support families living with, through, and beyond the cancer experience. KyMel, Inc relies 100% of dedicated volunteers to run our organization and programming. We have zero paid staff. Over 150 volunteers give countless hours annually to ensure Camp Hope, Camp SIBsational and KyMel itself run smoothly. KyMel is governed by a board of directors composed entirely of volunteers from a variety of fields. They bring experience in finance, legal, medicine, fundraising, non-profit management and more. KyMel currently offers two programs. Camp Hope, a camp for youth with cancer, and Camp SIBsational, a camp for the siblings of youth with cancer. The board is always looking for new ways to support families on the cancer journey.

### Camp SIBsational Mission Statement

It is the mission of Camp SIBsational: To support and celebrate siblings through the cancer journey by providing a fun, active, and safe camp experience

### Camp SIBsational Philosophy

We know that the diagnosis of cancer affects the entire family. Oftentimes siblings can feel scared, neglected, guilty and even jealous. While these are all normal emotions they can make many siblings feel isolated. Camp SIBsational provides those siblings a fun experience with peers who also understand how they are feeling better than anybody else. While not a therapeutic camp, SIBsational will have mental health professionals on hand at all times to help if needed. Camp SIBsational is the first sibling-only camp of its kind in the region.

## Our History

Our work began in 1983 by Donna Brown, who we lovingly refer to as “Ma” Donna. After losing her two children, Kyle and Melani, to cancer, Ma Donna was determined to create a supportive and hopeful community by connecting children and families on the cancer journey. She built that community through one of the most typical shared experiences a child with cancer can have but often doesn’t – summer camp.

For decades, we’ve been bringing together children from across the heartland for Camp Hope, a week-long immersive camp experience operated 100% by volunteers. In 2015, we became a 501(c)3 nonprofit named KyMel, which honors the memory of Kyle and Melani, and recognizes our rich history of creating hope and connection.

During the fall of 2016, a group of dedicated individuals embarked on a passionate, purposeful and intentional development journey. The Camp Hope Heartland Board of Directors showed a collective interest in the investment of a camp experience, uniquely for the siblings of children with cancer. A camp planning committee of hard-working, heartfelt individuals and leaders came together to build Camp SIBsational in March of 2017.

Through the “tireless giving of time, energy and self” and two and a half years of planning, the Camp SIBsational Committee partnered with Camp Wood, YMCA in Elmdale, Kansas to introduce and champion the first, inaugural Camp SIBsational in the summer of 2019.

On July 28, 2019, Camp SIBsational as a camp for the siblings of youth with cancer was fulfilled. A brush with history and an experience charged with moments of “playing, creating, and laughing” together, as siblings, kin and chosen family. KyMel, Inc recognizes that cancer affects the entire family and remains committed to offering this camp, the first sibling-only camp in the region. A safe, fun and active summer camp experience for siblings; to be cherished as individuals, honoring stories, individual uniqueness and belonging amidst a journey with cancer and within the greater KyMel community and beyond.

In addition to the launch of Camp SIBsational, we will continue to explore opportunities to expand our shared experiences and broaden our KyMel community even more.

What started as a special place beyond the rainbow for children with cancer on the plains of Kansas has launched a movement to support entire families. Our vision to build upon Ma Donna’s legacy will require a diverse and robust network of support and volunteers. We hope you will join us as we grow our community

and build connections through shared experiences for families on the cancer journey.

## Registration and Check-In

For all campers, registration begins at 2:30 p.m. on July 28. Please do not bring your child to camp before that time. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation to and from camp. All staff and volunteers will have meetings that day and will be getting things ready! No camper registrations will be processed until 2:30 p.m.

**UPDATE:** Camp staff will greet you starting at the parking by Jones Lodge (not by the cabins). Keep belongings inside your car and instructions for unloading belongings will be provided during the check in process.

Once in Jones' Lodge there will be a few quick stops:

- o Check-In Table
- o Camper Gift and Yearbook Table

Medications will be checked in with Camp Wood Nurse at the nurses office or Jones Lodge.

**IF SOMEONE ELSE OTHER THAN A PARENT/GUARDIAN WILL BE PICKING UP YOUR CHILD ON AUGUST 5TH**, please notify KyMel Staff during the check in process OR prior to Friday, August 4th. We will not release any child without a notice from the parent/guardian. You may email us the name at [sib@kymel.org](mailto:sib@kymel.org). This person MUST have a proper photo identification.

## Change of Plans

If your plans change and your child will not be able to attend Camp SIBsational, please notify us. You may call Katie MacDougall at 713-501-9965 before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, July 26.

**If your child has been sick (e.g., flu, fever) 10 days prior to camp, please do NOT send your child to camp *without talking to us first*.** We cannot risk the health and well-being of the other campers. If you have any questions, please contact Mandy Graul-Conroy, MD at 618-713-3926.

## Communication

Watch your email and make sure [SIB@KyMel.org](mailto:SIB@KyMel.org) is on your allowed list so that it doesn't go to spam. We will communicate only through email with important updates about camp.

## Medications and Medications Sheet

Upon arrival at camp, if your camper will be taking medication while at camp, they will visit with the Camp Wood nurse. She will be administering medications the week of camp.

Be prepared to provide your child's current medication dosages so we can continue their medication during the week of camp. This is for ANY medication. **You must complete the online health history forms prior to camp.** An adult who is most familiar with your child's medications should complete the form. ***All prescription medications must be in their original bottles or have a signed order from your child's physician.***

For parents who are sending their child to camp with someone else, please make sure the forms are filled out and reviewed the day prior to camp. Please make sure you provide an accurate phone number so that the medical staff can reach you if there are any questions during the check-in process.

*Remember, you **DO** need to bring your child's medications and medical supplies to camp, including over-the-counter medications. You do need to bring the medication and instructions on how your doctor wants it given. If your doctor would like to give specifics about your child's medications, they may contact Mandy Graul-Conroy, MD at 618-713-3926.*

## Insurance Information

We must have all of your child's insurance information. Please make sure that the online section is completed fully. This is needed so that the information can be presented at the hospital in case emergency treatment is needed for your child.

If your child suffers a significant injury or illness during camp, you will be notified via phone by either the Camp SIBsational team member or Camp Wood Nurse. You will also be notified of any emergency room trips that are required. We do our best to call prior if at all possible but the safety of your camper is paramount.

We will also inform you at the end of camp of any non-urgent concerns our volunteers or the Camp Wood Nurse addressed that they feel you should have

for your child's medical records. We do not routinely send home reports of minor injuries (i.e. scrapes).

Our campers are very special to us and because of that we are very concerned about their health and safety. If a camper is deemed at risk for injury due to his/her medical needs, he/she may be asked to refrain from an activity. A camper's safety will **ALWAYS** have priority over the experience. Please be aware that the Camp SIBsational team and Camp Wood Nurse has the responsibility of setting the restrictions while at camp, even when the parent has authorized the child otherwise. When there is a conflict between these two situations, the parent will be notified by the Camp SIBsational team.

## Activities

At registration, please tell the medical staff if your child has any limitations that may affect his/her involvement in camp activities.

Camp SIBsational provides a variety of activities which may include Basketball, Kickball, Climbing Tower, Boating, Arts and Crafts, Dancing, Fishing, Soccer, Dodgeball, Horseback Riding, Swimming, Archery, Ropes Courses, Zip Lining, and more.

To determine the campers swimming ability, a swim check is conducted on the first day of each session. This test consists of treading water for 5 minutes and swimming 100 yards (four lengths), and jumping in completely submerged, resurfacing, and swimming to the dock. Anyone that has not taken the swim test will be given a red chip. Red and yellow chip swimmers may retest at the discretion of the Waterfront Director.

- **Green chips-** Swimmers who tread water for 3 minutes and swim 100 yards (4 lengths) are allowed to use the entire swimming area, go lake canoeing, playaking, sailing and river canoeing.
- **Yellow chips-** Classified as swimmers who tread water for 1 minutes and swim 2 lengths of the swim check. They are allowed to swim inside the enclosed dock, and go lake canoeing.
- **Red chips-** Non-swimmers or swimmers who fail to pass or choose not to take all parts of the swim check. This camper may enter the water only up to the first lane rope or where they can comfortably stand. They can lake canoe with a PFD.

The high ropes course is for campers 13 and older only.

Campers will be supervised at all times by Camp SIBsational volunteers.

## Dance Theme

This year's dance theme is the **Camp SIBsational Olympics!** Many volunteers and campers will come in costume, but it is definitely not required.

## Luggage

Upon arrival, leave your camper's belongings in your car. After registration, you'll drive your car to Jones Village to unload belongings into your child's designated cabin.

***All clothing and other items need to have your child's name clearly written on or attached to them.***

## Personal Property

Camp SIBsational reserves the right to confiscate any personal property it deems unsafe or disruptive to the camp environment. Confiscated items will be kept by staff and returned to the parent at the end of camp.

- **Cell phones** cannot be in a camper's possession during camp. Aside from the fact that cell phones are expensive and can get lost or stolen, the physical camp environment is not kind to such items. Another drawback of having cell phones at camp is many of them have built-in cameras. There have been instances at some schools and camps around the country where children have secretly taken photos of others during changing or showering times and later uploaded those images onto the Internet. Cell phones and pagers will be turned in at the beginning of camp to the KyMel staff person. Campers may request to use their cell phone under the supervision of their houseparent to call home during the week.
- **Weapons** including, but not limited to, guns, ammunition, and knives are not allowed at camp with the exception of law enforcement officers. If weapons are brought to camp, they will be turned in to the Camp Director and locked up. The weapons will only be turned over to the parents or guardians and not the campers.
- **E-cigs/vaping/tobacco** products are not allowed at camp in any format. If brought they will be confiscated and returned to the parent upon leaving camp.
- **Personal property**, which is non-dangerous, may be kept in the cabin with the approval of the houseparent. This would include belongings such as

fishing poles and musical instruments. The owner is responsible for the safety and upkeep of these items.

- **Electronic devices**, including computers and DVD players should not be brought to camp. If brought to camp, these items will be turned over to the Camp Director or KyMel Liaison for the duration of the camp. The camp is not responsible for the loss or damage to such items. **Smart phones are not allowed at camp and will be turned over to the Camp Director or KyMel Liaison until camp is over.**

- **Personal audio devices** (iPods, MP3 players) are allowed in the cabins only. The camp is not responsible for loss or damage to such items.

- **Money** is to be turned over to the Camp Director upon arrival and returned to campers on the day of departure. There will be nothing for campers to buy.

- **Animals**, other than for the use in camp activities and service dogs, are not allowed at camp.

- **Cars** are to remain locked in the designated parking area throughout the duration of Camp. Campers who drove themselves to camp, should not return to or access their cars until the conclusion of camp. Discovery that any camper is struggling to maintain such boundaries may result in the confiscation of car keys or dismissal from camp.

- **Cameras** are not allowed in bathrooms, shower houses and cabins. Any violation of this policy will result in confiscation of camera. Disposable cameras are highly encouraged.

## Attire

Camp SIBsational does have a dress code. Please, no spaghetti straps, plunging necklines, short shorts, clothing with offensive language/symbols or bare midriffs. Campers with inappropriate attire may be required to have a change of clothes brought to them. **Remember the 3 B's: No bosoms, bellies or bums!**

Keep in mind the number of days your camper will be at camp and please pack accordingly, also understanding that we are an outdoor environment where campers can (and often do) get muddy, sweaty, wet and dirty -- that is one of the most fun parts of camp!

## Mail

Mail is a very important event at camp and to your child. We encourage all parents to send their child a card or letter some time during the week of camp. *Keep in mind there can be a delay in letters/packages getting to Camp so send them early or give letters to Camp SIBsational team during check in to be handed out on specified day/s.*

*Camper's Name and Jones Village  
Camp SIBsational  
% Camp Wood YMCA  
1101 Camp Wood Road  
Elmdale, KS 66850*

We will use Facebook for your to check in with Camp SIBsational during the week.

***We will not be texting pictures of individual campers.*** Please check social media for daily picture updates. This allows campers and volunteers to be immersed in the camp experience! If you are not on the KyMel Facebook, please join.

## Visitor Policy

In order to maintain a safe camp environment and due to the shortness of camp week, no visitors are permitted at Camp SIBsational. This includes family and friends of campers. Exceptions are rarely made and only with the prior approval of Camp SIBsational Committee. If you feel a visitor is necessary, email us prior to camp to discuss. Volunteers are instructed to notify security of any person who does not have a Camp SIBsational visitor badge or Camp Wood YMCA staff shirt. Tours of Camp Wood are encouraged at check-out time when you have resumed responsibility for your camper, so your child can share his/her experience with friends and family.

## Going Home

Parents must arrive at camp no earlier than 10:30 a.m. and no later than 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 3rd. All camp volunteers and staff will leave at 12:00 p.m. **PICK UP WILL BE AT THE SMALL PARKING LOT BY JONES VILLAGE.** If you do not arrive on time, two members of the Camp SIBsational staff will remain with your child however this may affect registration the following year.

At the time of registration, be prepared to provide information about your child's transportation home. Campers will only be released to those individuals specified at the time of registration.

On Saturday, August 3rd, **ALL** campers are required to **check out** with a Camp SIBsational team member.

Medications will be given to the adult designated to pick up your child. If your child was involved in any incidents during the week, the Camp Director or Camp SIBsational will discuss the concerns with you. *(Parents will be notified immediately if their child is involved in a serious incident).*

## Lost and Found

Every attempt will be made to return lost and found items while your child is at camp. All Lost and Found articles are shown to the campers before packing. Lost and Found items will be available at check out on closing day for your camper to pick up.

Upon request by parents, Lost and Found items will be shipped to the camper. You will be charged shipping and handling, and the package will be mailed C.O.D.

Lost and Found items will be kept for two weeks, after that donated to a welfare agency, Camp SIBsational does not take responsibility for items that were not turned into the Lost and Found.

We are looking forward to seeing you on July 28, 2024. If you have questions regarding camp, please contact Camp SIBsational at [SIB@KyMel.org](mailto:SIB@KyMel.org) or call Katie MacDougall, Camp SIBsational Chairperson at 713-501-9965.

## Camp SIBsational Mission and Goals

### Camp SIBsational Mission Statement

To support and celebrate siblings through the cancer journey by providing a fun, active, and safe camp experience.

### Goals and Objectives

**Goal:** To provide campers with a safe, supervised camping environment.

**Outcome Objectives:**

1. Camp SIBsational will follow the ACA ratios:
  - a. 4-5 year olds: 1 adult for every 5 overnight or 6 day campers
  - b. 6-8 year olds: 1 adult for every 6 overnight or 8 day campers

- c. 9-14 year olds: 1 adult for every 8 overnight or 10 day campers
  - d. 15-18 year olds: 1 adult for every 10 overnight or 12 day campers
2. Select a minimum of volunteers per session to maintain higher-level, camper-volunteer ratios
  3. Orient all volunteers to the policies and procedures of camp.

**Goal:** To offer siblings of youth with cancer opportunities to interact with others who have similar circumstances and expand the desire for social interaction

**Outcome Objectives:**

1. All campers will interact with others by the end of the session.
2. At least 75% of all campers will actively participate in small group activities of their choice.
3. Campers will be able to name at least two other campers with whom they have spent quality time interacting, and
4. Campers will be able to verbalize to a staff member or parent the interests of two campers that are both similar to, and different from, their own (identifying four interests in total)

**Goal:** To provide to the parents whose children attend camp a safe, secure program, and to provide them with all necessary information and support.

**Outcome Objectives:**

1. 100% of families receive camp packets and final information at least 2 weeks prior to camp.
2. 100% of the families will have received written documentation regarding Camp SIBsatioanal.
3. 100% of the families will meet with a representative of Camp SIBsational and a member of the medical staff at arrival.
4. Maintain accreditation with the American Camp Association

**Goal:** To provide maximum benefits to the children from the donations received.

**Outcome Objectives:**

1. All restricted camp gifts will be used for camp programs.

**Goal:** To provide a camp setting where all campers feel supported, safe and respected

**Outcome Measure:**

1. Campers will complete the ACA Camp Connectedness questionnaire while at camp with the goal being that 75% of campers ages 10 and up report feeling an increase feeling of connectedness as a result of participating in Camp SIBsational.

**Goal:** To increase a camper's ability to develop positive relationships, as the benefits of a positive support system for youth of siblings with chronic illnesses are well known

**Outcome Measure:**

1. Campers will complete the ACA Friendship Skills (detailed version) while at camp. The goal will be that 50% of campers ages 10 and up show an improvement in their ability to build and maintain friendships because of their experience at camp.

Camp SIBsational Committee,

Katie MacDougall, Camp SIBsational Chairperson

Mandy Graul-Conroy, Medical Administrator and KyMel Liaison

John Dobson, Camp Director

Heather Nicholas , Activities Director

Teresa McVey, Family Liaison

Allison Taber, KyMel Board Member

Vanessa Crotinger , Committee Member

Judy Wagner, AdHoc Member