

MORE than a **NUMBER**

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

**camp
kudzu**



We've Got Diabetes Covered!

We've Got Diabetes Covered!





Jennifer Odom
Chair, Board of Directors

Message from Our Board Chair

Serving as Chair of the Board of Directors is a big responsibility for any organization. Whether it's a mission-driven nonprofit or a for-profit enterprise, the Board of Directors has one key responsibility: ensuring the organization is strategically focused and financially able to meet its core objectives while maximizing its impact on the clients it serves. For-profit corporations, like many of our supporters who are listed in the Annual Report (and for whom we are very grateful), seek to maximize financial profit for shareholders and other key stakeholders. They must stay relevant and seek opportunities for growth. At Camp Kudzu, our "clients" are our campers, emerging leaders, alumni, and their families. **Our success is not measured in sales, the size of our budget, or financial profit, but instead by the reach and impact of our programs.**

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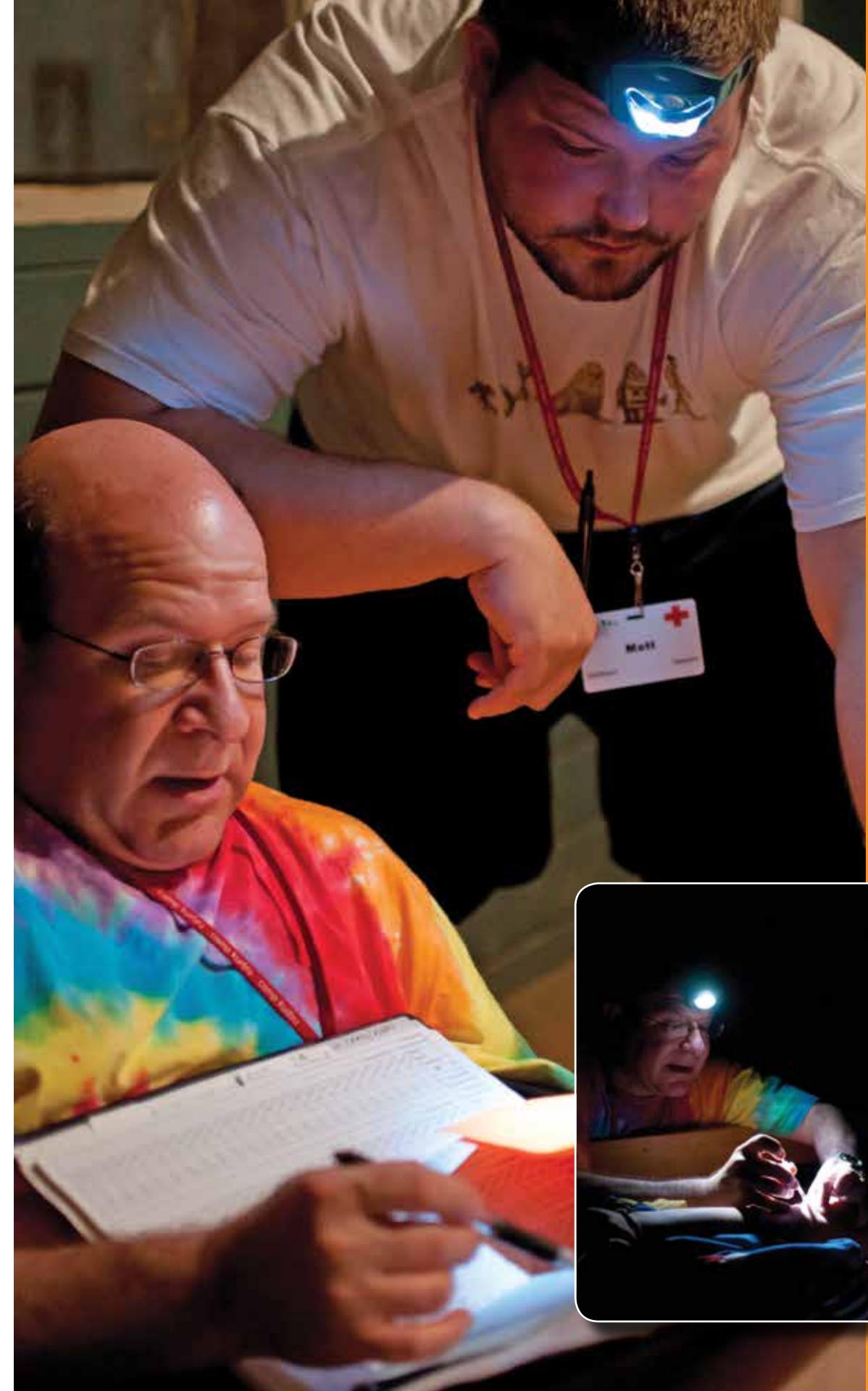
Kevin Zgong

*Retired 2017

Thank you!! We want to recognize the invaluable leadership and commitment of all our doctors, nurses, clinicians, alumni, parents, and friends who have volunteered their precious time and talents. And we would not be Camp Kudzu without the generous financial support from you, your friends, and your family. I look forward to great things in Camp Kudzu's future!

Jennifer Odom

(Parent of a Teen T1D)
Chair, Board of Directors
Camp Kudzu, Inc.



"The importance of properly managing insulin and blood glucose is essential to the health of kids living with type 1 diabetes. They must learn to manage the disease with proper medication, nutrition, and activity. That's why I refer patients to Camp Kudzu, where they can learn all those things and enjoy being a kid too."

Dr. Andrew B. Muir

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 2006 at the age of seven. At the time, I was a little timid and self-conscious about my diabetes. I didn't have anybody that I could relate to, so I felt secluded in some ways from the rest of my friends. As I continued to live with type 1 diabetes, I became more confident in myself. But it wasn't until I found Camp Kudzu that I learned to truly embrace my diabetes and feel comfortable living with it.

I first attended Camp Kudzu as a camper when I turned eight years old. Camp Kudzu was smaller back then but that didn't stop me from finding the spectacular family and support system I have today. At camp, I instantly felt that I belonged. Everyone around me was at least in one way exactly like me. This sense of belonging and knowing that I was not alone was important in building my character as I grew up.

As I grew older and continued to attend camp, I began to formulate a description of Camp Kudzu into one word. **Home**. Camp Kudzu was not only a place I went to every summer to escape everything outside of it; it was a home. I've gained friends who also serve as my support system and my outlet. I've gained connections, mentors, and role models I aspire to be like as I live a long, healthy life with type 1 diabetes. Because of Camp Kudzu I have gained the ability and the strength to overcome obstacles that have potential to bring me down. Because of Camp Kudzu, I have been able to get through tough times in my diabetes and learn more about myself and my abilities than I would have ever known. Because of Camp Kudzu, I am able to confidently attend college 10 hours away from home at Hampton University and work towards my bachelor's degree in science. Because of Camp Kudzu, I am positive that I can follow my dreams to complete medical school without letting my diabetes consume me.

Camp Kudzu has given me so much as a camper, which is why I am proud to come back as a volunteer and help give other kids the confidence, love, and opportunities it gave to me. I completed my counselor-in-training years when I turned 17 and was no longer able to attend as camper, and I can truly say that doing that was one of the best decisions of my life. During this time, I was able to be on the other side and be one of the people impacting the lives of those around me. This gave me even more insight into what Camp Kudzu is truly about. My experience working alongside all of Camp Kudzu's wonderful staff and volunteers has shown me the beauty in everything Camp Kudzu has to offer. I know that there is no better way to give back to this phenomenal organization than to volunteer my time. For this very reason and many others, I am more than excited and honored to return to Camp Kudzu as a volunteer this upcoming summer and many more summers to come.

Camp Kudzu has helped me become the person that I am today. Because of Camp Kudzu, I know for a fact that I am **MORE than a NUMBER**. Camp Kudzu will always have a special place in my heart and I will forever be a part of the Camp Kudzu Family.

Camp Kudzu Made Me Sure that I am...

MORE than a NUMBER

By Zharia Richards



My Experience as a T1D Mom By Juandlyn Richards

hypoglycemia, hyperglycemia, syringes, blood sugar meter... and the list goes on. I never left Zharia's side and would often just sit and watch her sleep while feeling helpless and hopeless. Zharia was so brave learning about her "new normal". Dr. Quentin Van Meter had such a calming spirit and was very patient and understanding, assuring us that our child was going to be okay. He checked on us each day of our stay.

Once we returned home, I became very overprotective and was afraid to leave Zharia alone, but of course she had to go to school. Zharia was the only T1D student in the school, so we had to educate the entire school on T1D and how to care for her. The school nurse, Mrs. Jones, was an angel and is still in touch with Zharia. Dr. Van Meter and his office were a tremendous help. He referred us to Camp Kudzu so we signed Zharia up and the next summer she was able to attend Camp Barney. We didn't know what to expect and were fearful of leaving our child alone for a week. We were nervous and anxious, but Dr. Van Meter assured us that she would be fine. We didn't relax and enjoy a week's "vacation" from T1D. We were a

We spent Labor Day weekend at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) for a week-long diabetes education session that was crammed into 3 days. We sat in the waiting room nervous, doubtful and fearful.

So much information was being thrown at me so quickly: insulin, carb ratio, carb counting,

Camp Kudzu is more than just a camp or at least it has been for our family! By W. Scott Richards

When Zharia was diagnosed at 7, it was a major shock.

Initially, we wondered what limitations type 1 diabetes would place on her dreams and goals. How does an otherwise healthy and active young child deal with all that comes with this disease? More importantly, how do we, as parents, support her, encourage her, and make things as normal as possible?

We had the benefit of wonderful family and friends around us, but no one could relate from Zharia's perspective. At the age of 7, she had to explain to her friends what diabetes was, how it affected her, and that it was not contagious. We couldn't fully grasp the impact of her friends' parents, who no longer felt comfortable with her sleeping over because of the responsibility of helping her with diabetes management.

We learned about Camp Kudzu soon after Zharia was diagnosed and she was able to

ball of nerves – well, at least I was. But when we arrived to pick up Zharia and attend the closing session, I realized how much the kids loved Camp Kudzu and didn't want to leave. Zharia continued to talk about her experience at camp and how she became pen pals with her newfound family. She enjoyed camp so much that she reminded us of the dates the following year and for several years to come to make certain she had a spot. Zharia attended Camp Kudzu every year from age 8 to 18. For her last year of camp as a "camper", she left a national conference in California that she was attending with her school to make sure she was at Camp Kudzu to start that Sunday. She was determined not to miss a year of camp. For the next two years, Zharia attended camp as a Counselor In Training and loved it. This year she is looking forward to attending as a counselor.



accept an appointment to the board of directors, join the development committee, and co-chair the annual golf tournament. I get the opportunity to work alongside some of the most committed, giving, and passionate people I have ever experienced for a common cause. Camp Kudzu's mission and what it means to the children and families we serve must be expanded to reach communities that are under-supported and I will do my part to make sure this happens. I feel that I am obligated to try to give as many families as possible the same experience and benefits that we have gotten from camp. We are truly blessed to have had the benefit of Camp Kudzu. This is why I support Camp Kudzu. This is why I encourage everyone within my sphere of influence to learn of the good we do and support our mission of *Educating, Empowering and Inspiring kids living with T1D*.



A Big Sister's Experience

By Ashlyn Richards

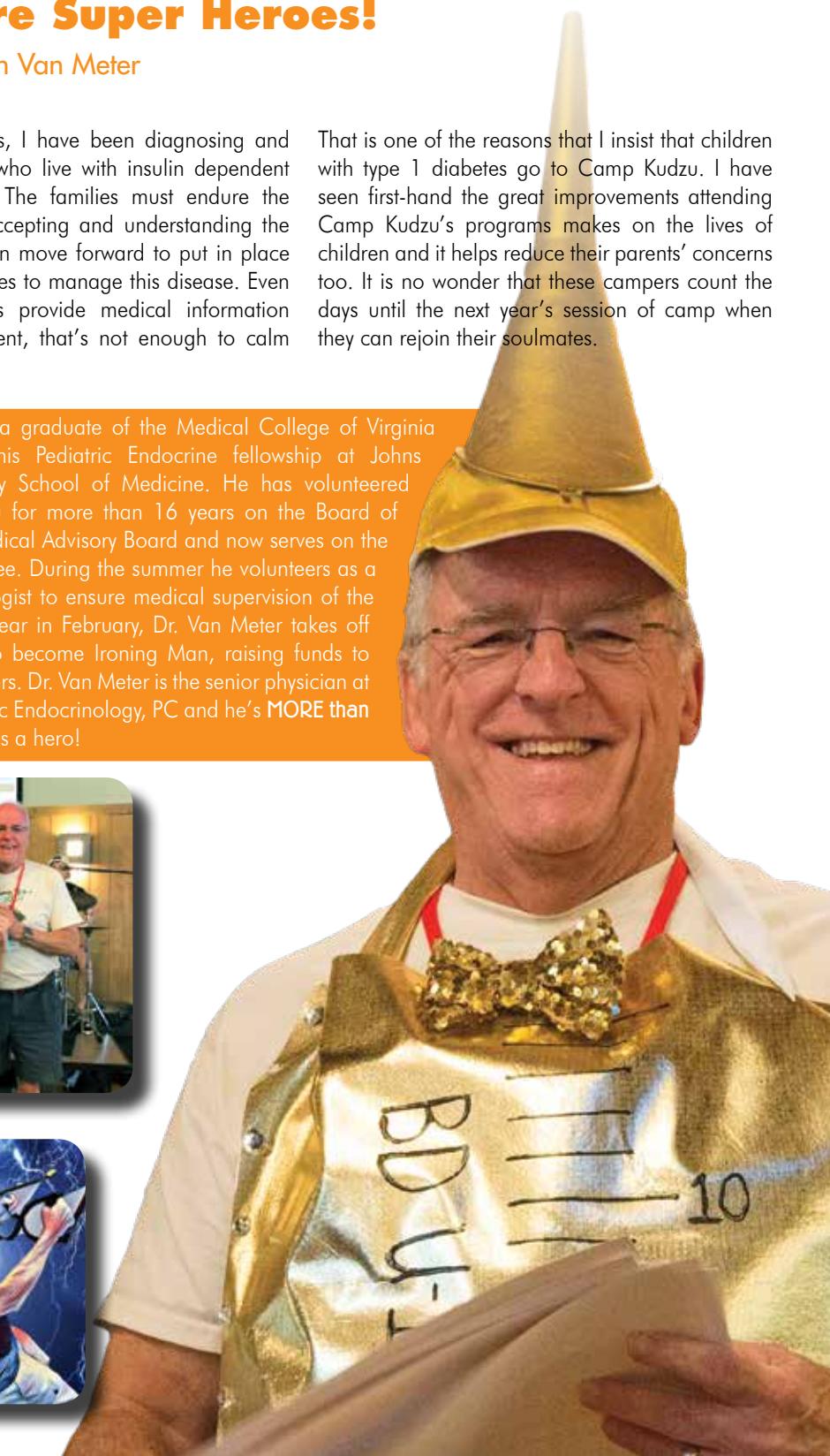
Camp Kudzu has definitely helped me as Zharia's older sister. When she was first diagnosed, it was really hard to watch my sister experience low blood sugar, to give her insulin, and check her blood sugar. It was new and frightening. We would be nervous to leave her places by herself with others who didn't really know what it meant to have diabetes because we were not sure if she could take care of herself. We were just always in fear that something would happen. Camp Kudzu definitely helped ease that fear and it made it easier for me to watch her check her blood sugar, give herself insulin, and help her with her lows because she was more confident in her abilities to do it herself. Camp Kudzu also made her feel more confident in living with diabetes. It showed her that having diabetes didn't make her weird or different and seeing her confidence made me feel better as a big sister. Now I am comfortable and worry free when she is alone. Thank you Camp Kudzu!

Camp Kudzu's Volunteers are More Than Numbers... They are Super Heroes!

By Dr. Quentin Van Meter

For over 40 years, I have been diagnosing and treating children who live with insulin dependent type 1 diabetes. The families must endure the initial shock of accepting and understanding the diagnosis and then move forward to put in place the lifestyle changes to manage this disease. Even though physicians provide medical information with encouragement, that's not enough to calm their fears.

Dr. Van Meter is a graduate of the Medical College of Virginia and completed his Pediatric Endocrine fellowship at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He has volunteered with Camp Kudzu for more than 16 years on the Board of Directors and Medical Advisory Board and now serves on the Advisory Committee. During the summer he volunteers as a camp endocrinologist to ensure medical supervision of the programs. Each year in February, Dr. Van Meter takes off his stethoscope to become Ironing Man, raising funds to support the campers. Dr. Van Meter is the senior physician at Van Meter Pediatric Endocrinology, PC and he's **MORE than a NUMBER**. He's a hero!



That is one of the reasons that I insist that children with type 1 diabetes go to Camp Kudzu. I have seen first-hand the great improvements attending Camp Kudzu's programs makes on the lives of children and it helps reduce their parents' concerns too. It is no wonder that these campers count the days until the next year's session of camp when they can rejoin their soulmates.



THE COMPASS SOCIETY

COMPASS SOCIETY members ensure the stability of Camp Kudzu by offering multi-year major gift commitments. Annual payments and recurring gifts are accepted. Please contact Sandy Yates at (404) 495-4852).

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"I'm proud to be a member of the Compass Society because I know that my gifts help children living with type 1 diabetes learn how to manage their disease. This will empower them to do whatever they set their minds to without diabetes getting in their way."

Karen Carlson, MD





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"Our experience with Camp Kudzu has meant a lot. We're happy to inspire so many children to take control of type 1 diabetes and live healthy lives."

Jeff Fusile
 President,
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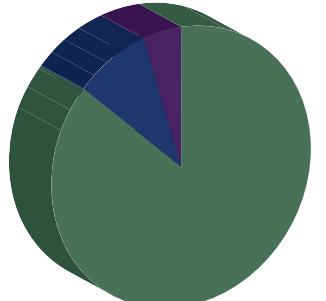
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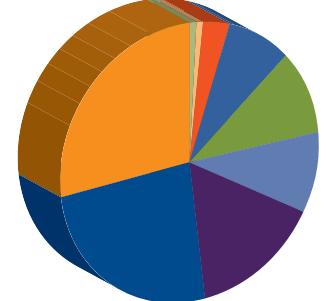
- **Programs- \$2,155,793**
- **Funding - \$220,873**
- **Mgmt/Admin - \$114,412**

MORE than a **NUMBER**

We recognized Alexandra "Alex" Allen for her time and leadership as executive director and the incredible volunteers who have given shape to Camp Kudzu past 19 years. We are so proud of what we've accomplished and how it all came together at the 10th Annual Benefit Luncheon – raising the bar and paying tribute to Alex and six amazing Ambassadors: Catherine "Kaki" Bennett, Jamie Cross, Anna Rambo, Katie Rhea, Kelsey Rogowski and Andrew Sturniolo.



Revenue



- Civic Clubs - \$21,325
- Third Party - \$23,835
- Corporate - \$82,903
- Foundations - \$206,619
- Events - \$247,910
- Individuals - \$231,291
- Fees - \$370,157
- Donated Services - \$619,111
- Donated Goods - \$659,061

Where Our Campers Call Home...



MORE than a **NUMBER**

As the Executive Director and member of the Camp Kudzu Team, I am aware of the numerous and sometimes daunting responsibilities we face as we serve our families living with type 1 diabetes (T1D). Together, we need to ensure we are offering meaningful programs that provide impact and valuable life skills to all 700+ of our campers. We also need to ensure our 400+ volunteers, who give shape and help make our programs excellent - are also well-informed and empowered to do their very best. The possibilities are staggering as we consider reaching out to 6,000 children in Georgia who are living with T1D and expanding our resources to meet their needs. All of this must be done while we simultaneously provide good financial stewardship of our donor dollars, so stakeholders can be confident that every contribution meets its intended purpose. That said, it would be easy to measure Camp Kudzu only by our numbers. Yet, if we focused solely on the numbers, we risk losing touch with our the most significant responsibility, which is meeting the individual needs of each camper so that they can live happy, healthy, productive lives and take charge of T1D.

Our campers are more than a number! They have names, incredible aspirations and diverse family and social networks – like Zharia Richards, who you can read about in this annual report. She is a delightful and inspiring example of how Camp Kudzu seeks to empower each camper experience. We take great pride in Zharia and all our campers – current and past alumni! We evaluate ourselves on their accomplishments and when they return as adult volunteers, we know our programs are not only fun and educational, but their experience at Camp Kudzu has positively impacted and shaped their lives. Each year when 80 or more camper alumni return as volunteers, they not only invest their time in children, who, like them, experience life with the currently incurable T1D – they also inspire the next generation and exemplify just how Camp Kudzu’s programs made a difference for them.

Finally, as we consider what the future means for children living with T1D, we are certain that we MUST DO MORE to serve them. The growth that Camp Kudzu has experienced during the past 19 years illustrates our resilience and adaptability, none of which would have been possible without our committed stakeholders. Listing you and other contributors, who donated between October 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017 is a small acknowledgement, but sincere attempt to express our heartfelt thanks. Regardless of the amount or number, we sincerely appreciate your meaningful gift, which – along with the combined strength of supporters, generous volunteers, and our committed Board of Directors – makes it possible for Camp Kudzu to focus on each of our campers. Your continued engagement is critical to equipping our campers with the diabetes education and the self-confidence to succeed. You too are **MORE than a NUMBER!**

Robert G. Shaw
Executive Director
Camp Kudzu, Inc.



Robert G. Shaw
Executive Director

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