

Wonderland Camp Welcomes New Executive Director



Wonderland Camp is pleased to announce Jill Wilke, MS, RN, is now executive director. Wonderland Camp serves children, teenagers and adults with disabilities since 1969. It hosts campers from across the United States, offering adaptable activities and is one of the few camps that welcomes campers with disabilities beyond age 21. Typical summer activities like swimming, boating, rock wall climbing are all offered at Wonderland Camp and have special safety equipment designed for use by these extraordinary campers.

In 2020, Wonderland Camp was among the many entities that had to halt their normal course of business due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “The majority of our campers have come to Wonderland for several years and were devastated to miss out of camp last summer.,” said Wilke. There are normally eleven weeks of summer camp and four weekend camps in the Fall that host up to 100 campers each week. Some campers come to camp multiple times in one summer. Last year, over 1,000 campers were left missing camp along with over 100 camp counselors without a summer job. However, in 2021, Wonderland Camp is hopeful. “We expect that with precautions in place and the vaccine we will be able to have camp this summer.,” said Jill Wilke.

One of the first goals it to make sure camp is safe to open so the fun can resume for the campers. This winter, Wilke started the hiring process and planning for additional safety and health precautions.

“We are working with the County Health Department to determine if our staff will be considered essential workers and have the opportunity to vaccinate in earlier phases. We plan to hire additional cleaning staff, use PPE as needed, and hand sanitizer to reduce the spread of the virus.,” she said.

Wilke is the granddaughter of Charles J. Miller, founder of Wonderland Camp. She has spent countless summers enjoying the camp with her grandfather and has previously served as President of the Wonderland Camp board of directors for the last four years and a board member for the last 14 years. Wilke, a master’s prepared registered nurse, moved full time into to the Lake of the Ozarks in 2014 after inheriting her grandpartents’ lake home, which is adjacent to camp. Previously, Wilke has spent 33 years in health care. Most recently as the director of Home Health, Hospice & Palliative Care at Lake Regional Health System. Her health care and administrative experience is a significant benefit to the camp because of the population the camp serves and her vast knowledge of regulatory compliance.

“I am excited to take on this new role and use my experience to continue my grandfather’s mission which is so near and dear to my heart.,” she said.