



Lily Nazarian
to me ▾

Wed, Oct 29, 1:46 PM (20 hours ago) ☆ ↶

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Alumni Association of the University of Michigan <malumni@mail.umalumni.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 29, 2025 at 1:30 PM
Subject: You gave Leila and Minette a week they'll never forget.
To: <kmfrank@umich.edu>



I want to share this story with you, Lily.

As the sun set over Walloon Lake, 9-year-old Leila Hudson and 6-year-old Minette Mejia skipped hand-in-hand to their cabins. While they had only met mere hours earlier, they walked similar paths in life, leading them to this special moment on a summer night at Camp Michigania.

Leila and Minette were among the campers who attended Camp Michigania during Victors Week, and you gave them the experience of a lifetime.

Your gift to the Mott Family Program Fund made this possible — read about their magical week.

[READ THEIR STORY](#)

Thank you, Lily, for your unwavering support of these families, this program, and all the things that make Camp Michigania such a special place for all campers.

Thank you, and Go Blue!

James McRae
Camp Michigania Director
Alumni Association of the University of Michigan

P.S. Interested in learning about more ways to make a difference? Visit our [Give to Camp Michigania](#) webpage.

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A Camp Michigania Getaway

Victors Week has provided a special experience for some Mott Children's Hospital patients for 20 years.

As the sun set over Walloon Lake, 9-year-old Leila Hudson and 6-year-old Minette Mejia skipped hand-in-hand to their cabins. While they had only met mere hours earlier, they walked similar paths in life, leading them to this special moment on a summer night at Camp Michigania.

Leila and Minette were among the campers who came to Michigania during Victors Week, from June 7-14. Since its launch in 2005, Victors Week has given families with children receiving care at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital the opportunity to enjoy a fully-funded week at Camp Michigania, the Alumni Association's family camp located in Northern Michigan. And it's all thanks to the support of generous donors who give to the Mott Family Program Fund.

This summer, four families traveled to Camp Michigania and for an entire week their lives were not defined by health challenges. Instead, they learned to sail, spent afternoons polishing rocks, tried their hand at archery, toasted marshmallows over a bonfire, and soared through the air on the zipline. They were just like any other family making core memories.

Leila's favorite moments were the ones spent "fiddling around" in the nature center. Minette enthusiastically recalled horseback riding as "the funnest part," followed closely by swimming and painting a garden gnome in the Ceramics, Arts, and Crafts center.

For Leila's mother, Amy Greenwell, and Minette's mother, Samantha Mejia, the entire week felt "like a huge deep breath of relief" — one they felt they hadn't been able to take since becoming parents of medically complex children.

Leila was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis when she was an infant, and Minette was born with a rare, inherited metabolic disorder, MPS1, also known as Hurler Syndrome.

“

LITTLE BREATHERS LIKE THIS KIND OF HELP TAKE THAT BURNOUT AWAY AND HELP US REALIZE THAT THERE'S STILL A LOT OF BEAUTY IN LIFE, AND WE STILL GET TO EXPERIENCE IT.”

Most of their lives have been spent dedicated to daily treatments, doctor appointments, surgeries, and inpatient hospital stays.

“When you're in the medical world, there isn't really a

world outside of it sometimes . . . there are a lot of things that our families don't get to experience that everyone else does,” Greenwell says, recalling missed birthday parties, holidays spent in hospitals, and vacations that never happened due to financial or health restraints. “Little breathers like this kind of help take that burnout away and help us realize that there's still a lot of beauty in life, and we still get to experience it.”

Watching their girls bond over their “similar and constant medical experiences” was meaningful for Greenwell and Mejia, both of whom are single moms supporting their daughters through health challenges. It quickly led to a friendship of their own.

“We had no idea that both of us were in such similar situations, and I think it added a really unique and special experience to being [at Camp Michigania],” Mejia says.

ACCESSIBLE AND ENJOYABLE FOR EVERYONE

Julie Piazza, a certified child life specialist with the office of patient experience (OPE) at Michigan Medicine, has been attending and facilitating Victors Week at Camp Michigania since 2006. Watching families connect and enjoy this experience together feels just as special each year.

“There's nothing like the magic of Michigania and just being in that setting on a lake, in a whole different situation where you can finally relax and enjoy,” Piazza says. “You are arm-in-arm with somebody who has also navigated something really tough, and you can empathize with them and learn from their experience.”

Piazza recalls the years when there was only enough funding to invite two families. Thanks to continued donor generosity, the program has since expanded, with enough funds to welcome more families as well as Mott liaisons





Thanks to donor support, four Mott families were able to experience the Michigania magic this summer.

and medical staff members. Mott liaisons and health care providers are referred through a collaboration with OPE and Mott's Child and Family Life team. The additional support "makes the families feel more secure knowing there is a Mott physician present and people who are connected to their children's health needs and journey."

"We have some wonderful donors who love Camp Michigania and Mott Hospital, and they wanted to marry their two experiences and help make it possible for families who would not otherwise get to do this amazing trip and have time in a place that is beautiful, that offers activities for every age group, and is a safe space," Piazza says. "[The families] really get to gather together and celebrate their family as opposed to navigating their health care journey, where they are usually focused on surviving, treatment, and the stress of it all."

Continued gifts have also allowed Camp to ensure programming is accessible and enjoyable for the families, whether that means adapting a ladder to help a child get

up on the zip line, providing golf carts for families to get around the grounds, or finding alternative activities and accommodations for unique medical needs.

"[The camp staff] has been really wonderful," Piazza says. "They work really hard to make these things accessible and make the experience really positive. The gratitude of the families is just palpable."

"We had no idea it would be this grand of an opportunity . . . it means more than you could possibly imagine," Greenwell says.

For the Mejias, not even Disney can come close to the Michigania magic.

"We did a Make-A-Wish trip in May of last year, and I would say, bar none, this was far superior. We would pick this week at Camp Michigania over Walt Disney World any time, easily."

KATIE FRANKART is a marketing communications manager for the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan.

Mott Family Program Instagram Reel

Click image to watch Reel



The image displays an Instagram Reel interface. On the left, a video thumbnail shows a young child with blonde hair, wearing sunglasses and a blue safety harness, standing on a path covered in wood chips. A white play button is centered over the video. To the right of the video is the post's metadata and text. At the top right, the account name "michiganalumni and mottchildren" is shown with a verified badge and "Original audio". Below this is the post text: "michiganalumni 🌟 These campers had a special Michigania experience during this summer's Victors Week thanks to donors who support the Mott Family Program." This is followed by a link icon and the text "Tap the link in our bio to read the story." and "8w". At the bottom of the post area are icons for likes, comments, shares, and a bookmark. Below these icons, it says "Liked by coolcalls and 242 others" and "September 2". At the very bottom of the interface are icons for a profile, a comment bubble with the text "Add a comment...", and a "Post" button.

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Original audio

michiganalumni 🌟 These campers had a special Michigania experience during this summer's Victors Week thanks to donors who support the Mott Family Program.

Tap the link in our bio to read the story. [🔗](#)

8w

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Liked by coolcalls and 242 others
September 2

👤 Add a comment... Post



Alumni Donors!



Meet Minette, one of the campers from this year's Victors Week at Camp Michigan.

For one week this summer, Minette got to be just a kid: horseback riding ("the funnest part!" she said), swimming, and painting a garden gnome. For Minette's mother, Samantha, the week felt "like a huge deep breath of relief" — a feeling she and other parents hadn't felt in far too long.

Your gift to the Camp Michigan Mott Family Program makes these moments possible, giving young patients at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital a chance to laugh, play, and embrace adventure, all at no cost to their families.

Make your next gift and help more families experience the magic of Michigan.

MAKE A GIFT

Thank you for the
best week of my
life. It was so EPIC!!!
I will remember
forever!!!!!! Minette

Thanks to your continued generosity, the program has expanded, with enough funds to welcome more families as well as Mott liaisons and medical staff members. Mott liaisons and health care providers ensure every family has the support they need to have an "epic" experience at Camp — just like Minette. Read Minette's story and see how your support makes it possible.



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