

Camp Clark dedicates Jen's cabin in Jennifer Lynn Kane's honor

By Emily Wilcox

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CEDARVILLE – We are in the shortest, most beautiful season.

Tree branches heavy with fruit, leaves, life shimmer overhead. Children of every shape and color absorb conversation, sunlight, lessons, water, this moment. They shimmer like the trees, like the light on the pond. We have a few weeks of this, that is all.

Parents come here every year to Camp Clark, drop off their kids and leave them to weeks of swimming, midnight conversations, firelight, games and summer secrets. It is a precious time, like fleeting summer.

The children grow up and commute to work and sit at desks drinking coffee one day, thinking about the past and those halcyon, carefree days of summer when responsibility was a far-off notion, like Russia and taxes.

Jennifer Lynn Kane used to summer here, working as a counselor and then as a lifeguard. She guarded the lives of children, protecting their halcyon summer from tragedy - a guardian angel who watched. Her life was beautiful and brief, like summer.

She shimmered.

An accountant for Marsh and McLennan, Jennifer Kane was working on the 100th floor of the World Trade Center's North Tower, Sept. 11, 2001. She was 26 when the plane hit the tower, ending her life, and beginning her legacy.

Camp Clark YMCA director Larry Smalls addressed a crowd of family, friends and campers Friday, during the dedication ceremony of Jen's Cabin, a cabin restored and renovated in her honor.

"Jennifer Kane was a vivacious and popular young lady who worked here during her high school years in the early 1990s," Smalls said. "She enjoyed her work here and was well loved and respected by her campers and her fellow staff members."

Every year since her death, Kane's family, friends and coworkers gather to celebrate her life and raise money for causes that were dear to her, Smalls said. Their annual golf tournament has raised thousands of dollars for many organizations, including the Fallen Heroes Fund, the Massachusetts Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Plymouth Girl Scouts. Money from the fund also covers the cost of sending a needy child to Camp Clark every year and was used to refurbish Jen's Cabin.

“This year, the Old Colony Y Camp Clark was privileged to receive a generous donation to refurbish the cabin, as well as to establish a perpetual campership in Jen’s name,” Smalls said. “This cabin and the campership will help to remind campers and staff how Jen lived her life. She embodied the core values of the YMCA, which are caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.”

George and Faye Kane, Jennifer’s parents, and her two brothers, Matt and Tim, all toured of the cabin after the ribbon was cut.

“She absolutely loved little kids,” George said.

He and Faye thought she’d become a teacher, her original plan, but she wound up pursuing business and accounting instead.

But, maybe she became a teacher after all.

Her life is a lesson in compassion, her legacy, a reminder to give everything you possibly can, to protect children, to watch over the innocent, to protect them from evil.

Earlier, Smalls led the group in a prayer, a reading from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8:

“To every thing there is a season, And a time to every purpose under heaven. ...”

Jennifer’s season was the shortest, most beautiful one.

It was summer.