



HAPPINESS IS  
CAMPING  
a camp for kids with cancer since 1982

20  
22

# 30 Years of Happiness (and Change)

## Dear Camp Friends,

This year marked my 30th summer at Happiness Is Camping and I can't help but think about how much things have changed at camp over that time. 30 years ago, the roads at camp were made of dirt, our idea of "air conditioning" in cabins was a summer breeze through an open window, and campers had little more than a pack of cards to entertain themselves. Now freshly paved roads lead to air-conditioned cabins that keep our campers cool while they play video games or watch movies on the televisions found in each bunk. Rainy days used to mean endless hours of bingo and board games. Now they mean dodgeball and Color Wars in our gymnasium. Movie nights were shown using grainy VHS tapes on a box television that weighed more than most of the kids watching it. Now movies are streamed with WiFi (can you believe it? WiFi at camp!) using our state-of-the-art projector and surround sound systems.



Our programs have also changed. When I first started, serving siblings was still a new concept and they were limited to one session per summer. Now we proudly welcome siblings all summer long, something that most oncology camps still don't do. We've extended our reach to serve the entire family including patients, siblings, parents, and other caregivers through Family Camp. Pediatric cancer survivorship has thankfully increased over the last 30 years, and many of the medical advancements that made it possible are on display right here in camp's health center. Increased survivorship has given camp an important opportunity to serve teens with cancer with programs designed to benefit them into adulthood. Finally, in 2023 we're experiencing another incredibly important change by hosting programs for children with sickle cell disease for the first time in our history.

And yet, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Kids with cancer still find a supportive, understanding community at camp just as they did 30 years ago. Parents still cry on pick-up day when their sick child runs up to them smiling, some for the first time since their diagnosis. Wigs are still tossed aside before jumping in the pool, everyone still cries on the last night of camp, and the rest period after lunch is still the kids' favorite time of the day. There's one thing that will never change: camp is important.

Camp is and always will be important to the kids and families we serve. One parent wrote to us and said that her daughter came home feeling less sorry for herself because she met others with lasting effects from cancer treatment. Another mom wrote that nobody gave her daughter strange looks because of surgery scars or asked her what her port was. A dad wrote that he was relieved to learn that his healthy son could attend with his sick sister because camp made him feel important and accepted. One final parent said that camp gave her family their fun-loving, happy, "pre-cancer" boy back.

Camp is a place where miracles happen daily. That was true during our first summer in 1982, it was true when I started in 1993, it's true today, and it will still be true long after I am gone. Another truth that will never change is that Happiness Is Camping couldn't exist without the support of our donors. This holiday season, I respectfully ask that you make a gift to Happiness Is Camping. Camp has changed drastically over my 30 years. Right now, there is a child with cancer or sickle cell sitting in a hospital room with their family. With your support, camp will change their lives forever.



Warm Regards,

Richard Campbell  
Executive Director

# Lighting the Candle and Passing the Torch

On the last night of the last session each summer we have a special closing ceremony. All of the kids who are aging out get a candle and have the opportunity to share some thoughts on what HIC has meant to them. This summer was my 10th as the full time nurse so I have had the great honor of watching this particular group of young people grow from sweet, cute little ones to beautiful, kind and respectful young adults. I'm so very proud of each one of them! And it's only appropriate that I age out with them. Their words of how important HIC has been to them, the beauty of the relationships they have created and cultivated, the memories of being "normal" and surrounded by people who just get it; these are the reasons I am so devoted to HIC and our mission. I'll still volunteer for a week each summer, but it's time to pass my candle to someone else. The campers will be in great hands with our newly minted Co-Nursing Directors, Yvette Murillo and Jenna Kelly. I've said it before, but it is worth repeating - to all the

families we serve, thank you for trusting us with your children! Thank you for allowing us to bear witness to their journey and for sharing them with us. They are amazing in so many ways (ok, sometimes they are annoying, too), but what is so moving is how kind they are to one another. How supportive they are in ways that are quiet but meaningful. Or how supportive they are in ways that are loud and impactful. They are incredible as individuals, but as a whole they are mighty! This place comes alive when they are here. We will miss them over the next year, but look forward to seeing many of them for summer 2023! The magic couldn't and wouldn't happen without the support of our many donors, both big and small. So pat yourself on the back and know you are making a difference and we are so very, very grateful!

## THANK YOU!

Laura San Miguel • Board President



# Our Best One Yet? Summer In Review

Although last year was a great success, we knew that our campers and families needed a more “normal” summer camp experience this year. Our Medical Council consists of some of the nation’s top pediatric oncologists and nurses, and they were vital in drafting our COVID-19 policies. We implemented several key policies designed to keep our campers safe including mandatory vaccination, testing, and masking indoors. These COVID-19 policies were much less intrusive than the ones we implemented in 2021, allowing us to host a safe, “normal” program this year.

Our season began over Memorial Day Weekend with Family Camp. Family Camp serves children with cancer 6-16 and their immediate family members. Patients, siblings, parents, and other caregivers enjoy a fun-filled weekend designed to be a truncated version of Summer Camp. Families battled in Color Wars, lounged by the pool, climbed the ropes course, and broke camp records at the Guinness Book of HIC Records competition! Family Camp is important because it creates a network of families who have been through similar situations. It also familiarizes campers with our program so they feel comfortable enough to register for Summer Camp. 80% of eligible Family Camp attendees registered for Summer Camp, and one mom even wrote that she wouldn’t have felt comfortable sending her daughter to camp alone had she not experienced our activities and staff at Family Camp first. Mission accomplished!

Family Camp was followed by Summer Camp, our flagship program. We offered five week-long sessions of overnight Summer Camp for children with cancer and their siblings, ages 6-15. The highlight of the summer was the brand-new circus-themed night activity. Our kids need to bring their show on the road! Magician Michael Kirschner returned to HIC and dazzled us with his amazing tricks. We had five themed dress up days including Cabin Band, where Admin stole the show with their Kiss costumes. A camp favorite night activity Road Rally made a comeback, and the pirate-themed evening featured some messy mutineers. And after hitting the jackpot at Storage Wars, the Robins were treated to a five-star lunch at the toughest table to reserve under our dining tent!

Cabin Wars is our summer-long competition that pits cabin vs. cabin in nightly activities including trivia, Olympics, The Last Jedi (a Star Wars-themed battle royale), counselor hunt, and Hussey’s Casino Night. Congratulations to the Mohawks, our youngest boys’ cabin, for winning this year’s competition! The Mohawks made a hilarious movie during Hollywood Premiere that asked, “Was Jaws really a mean shark or just a misunderstood, heartbroken fish in love?” Their video can be seen on our Facebook page. Another special shoutout to the Blue Jays, our second-youngest girls’ cabin, for being named Cabin of the Summer for their camp spirit (and coordinated outfits).

Summer Camp 2022 also featured specialty programs designed to better serve our children with cancer and siblings. Thanks to our friends at Monat Gratitude, we offered Beyond Cancer for the first time in 2022. Beyond Cancer extended our educational programming to serve each child at camp, providing them with opportunities to learn basic life skills for independent living and to engage in meaningful STEAM workshops.

Summer ended with Prom, a camp wide rendition of “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough,” and a tearful aging out ceremony for 16- and 17-year-old campers. Camp was different this year. Maybe it was the new, intentional programming or the return to normalcy, but Summer 2022 was easily our most impactful summer in recent history. Thank you all for making it possible!



# Sickle Cell

**Sickle cell disease (SCD)** is an inherited blood disorder that is caused by a mutation in the hemoglobin protein (the part of the red blood cell that carries oxygen throughout the body). Sickle cell causes intense pain crises described as if the patient's bones are being crushed with multiple fractures occurring at once. SCD is associated with increased risk of kidney failure, stroke, and morbidity. The median age of death for patients with SCD is 40, and life expectancy has decreased since 1994.

We are ecstatic to announce that HIC will begin hosting this greatly underserved population for the first time in 2023. We'll be hosting two sessions of Sickle Cell Family Camp available to any child with SCD ages 5-12 and their immediate family members. Treatment for sickle cell has an estimated total lifetime cost of \$1 million with annual costs ranging from \$10,000-\$30,000. As with all our programs, Sickle Cell Family Camp will be free of charge so that families can bond without the burden of cost. Additionally, HIC will provide free transportation from area hospitals such as Hackensack or Newark Beth Israel so that transportation is not a barrier to entry. HIC will be one of the few organizations serving children with sickle cell in the Tri-State area, and we hope to offer sessions of Sickle Cell Summer Camp in the future.

## A Facility Worthy of our Campers

**Your donor dollars were put to good use** as we greatly improved our facility to better serve our campers! Thanks to the ACA NY & NJ Scott Ralls Fund, we converted an unfinished storage space into a movie theater/presentation space for our teen programs. Our friends at the GFYC Foundation funded the renovation of our campfire area, making the GOANDBEGREAT Campfire Circle a beautiful, accessible place for our campers to hang at night. Our longtime supporters at The Hyde and Watson Foundation awarded us with a grant to replace the decks and roofs on two of our log cabins, allowing us to replace the existing materials with beautiful tin roofing and Trex decking. We also introduced our campers to the exciting sport of Pickleball, a cross between tennis and ping pong, with a brand-new court at camp. We made several other less glamorous but equally important improvements such as repaving our roads, purchasing new kitchen equipment, and replacing the roof on The Andrew Michael Rec Hall. It's expensive to maintain and improve our fully accessible facility and we thank our donors for making it possible!



## Special Names for Special Places



**Thank you to Robert and Barbara McCurtain for naming our Rec Hall.**

One of our most important buildings will forever be named and referred to as The Andrew Michael Rec Hall in memory of our former camper Andrew Michael. We hope that his memory is forever honored with each camper who dances, plays, and performs in The Andrew Michael Rec Hall. We'd also like to thank Sharmon Simonetti for naming the Nature Center in memory of Deirdri J. Rowe, a special woman who loved nature and kids.

Thank you to the GFYC Foundation for naming the new campfire area the GOANDBEGREAT Campfire Circle! And last but certainly not least, thank you to the Ching/Winkler Family for naming our archery range. Rumor has it that the new name increases the Winkler kids' likelihood of hitting bullseyes!

# Outrunning Cancer

Childhood cancer survivors have an increased risk of chronic illness including frailty and cardiac/ pulmonary complications. Despite the risk of late effects, studies indicate that up to 52% of pediatric cancer survivors lead sedentary lifestyles. Thanks to the support of the Saucony Run For Good Foundation, HIC hosted Outrunning Cancer, a fitness program designed to inspire our campers to lead healthy, active lives. Campers spent five weeks participating in running clubs, lifting weights, meditating, dancing, doing yoga, learning martial arts, and playing sports. The program culminated in the Outrunning Cancer 5K and Fun Walk at camp. Campers shared their reasons for walking, with many inspired participants walking for themselves, their sibling, the HIC community, or a cure. Campers walked, ran, and jogged all over camp and received special medals for completing the program. Outrunning Cancer was an immense success; 96.3% of parents polled said their child with cancer was more active during camp than at home, and 88.9% said their child with cancer was even more active at home after attending camp!



## Volunteers and Donors

Volunteers are a special type of people. They serve our campers with love, grace, and humility. Please join us in thanking the following volunteers for their priceless contributions:

- |                     |                         |                      |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Dr. Sri Ambati      | Jack Herling            | Novartis             |
| Dr. Elyse Andrews   | Ella Isgar              | Theresa Pak          |
| Ritch Blasi         | Divij Jain              | Nishka Patel         |
| Zac Brower          | Janssen Pharmaceuticals | Gina Pisano          |
| Dr. Alex Chou       | Paulette Kelly          | Pam Salas            |
| Dr. Peter Cole      | Anna Kim                | Matt San Miguel      |
| Mario Crespo        | Dr. Andy Kolb           | Tommy San Miguel     |
| Grace Crockett      | Kathleen Landis         | Kristen Spence       |
| Carisma Darthard    | Lauren Landis           | Dr. Adit Tal         |
| Kellie Donovan      | Kerry Maleska           | Theresa Urban        |
| Nicole Gianatasio   | Dr. Laurie Malia        | Valley National Bank |
| Dr. Josh Gorlick    | Fabio Miyashiro         | Mandy Webster        |
| Dr. Richard Gorlick | Yvette Murillo          |                      |
| Emma Hastrup        | Irene Ng Swanberg       |                      |

Our biggest thanks to the following generous donors who opened their hearts to conduct a fundraising event that benefited camp:

- Behan's Public House
- James Bowers
- Callie Campbell
- Crystal Lake Adventures
- Friends at Greenstone
- Savannah Harvey
- Ron and Trish Iervolino
- McKinsey & Company
- Paolo Miyashiro
- Gianna Palermo
- Alex and Laura San Miguel
- Team Happiness Is Camping Runners
- Adam Varda
- Johnny Volpe
- Christian Wurtz



# Mission Accomplished

An amazing 75% of our campers' parents/guardians responded to our post-camp survey. The results of this survey speak to the wonderful work of our staff and volunteers and the effectiveness of our programs.

- **100%** of respondents rated their child(ren)'s time at HIC 5 out of 5 stars.
- **100%** said they would recommend HIC to another family of a child with cancer.
- **100%** said that HIC is "very important" to their family.
- **93%** believed that their child with cancer bonded with other children like them.
- **100%** said that their child with cancer felt accepted and understood while at camp.
- **93%** believed that their child with cancer felt more confident after attending.
- **100%** of families believed that it's important that siblings are allowed to attend as well, and 100% said their other child(ren) felt accepted and understood at camp.

"My daughter came home from camp feeling less sorry for herself and with much more confidence. She met new friends and saw what they were going through. Camp made her realize she's not the only one with lasting effects from cancer. This entire summer was exactly what our family needed."

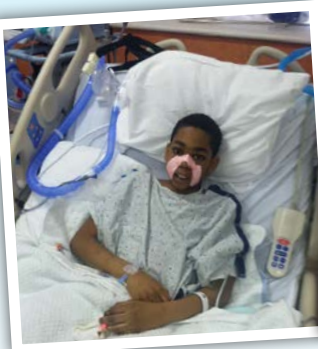
"Most of all, my kids loved the fact that nobody there was a stranger to cancer. Everybody knew what a port is, and my daughter was so happy that she didn't get strange looks or questions about her port marks or surgery scars."

"My son returned from camp with a whole new view and excitement for life. He called it the most fun he ever had in his life. It was life changing for him and for my family."

"HIC gave my son independence and a sense of responsibility. He returned home more confident, and he was able to make several new friends through the HIC experience. HIC made a huge impact on his life and I am deeply grateful."

## A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words

Camp generates so many smiles and happy moments that it's hard to imagine the hardships our campers have endured. The following pictures illustrate the agony of pediatric cancer treatment compared to the joy our campers experience while at camp.



# A Lifetime of Benefit

Summer 2022 marked the third time we've offered specialty teen programming for 16- and 17-year-old children with cancer and siblings. These programs are designed to improve the long-term professional, social, and educational outcomes for teen survivors of pediatric cancer. 2022 was our largest class in program history, with 14 individual kids accounting for 45 total camper weeks. College Prep Camp gave campers the opportunity to explore majors, meet with college admissions counselors, learn about financial aid, study for the SAT, and even tour the campus of Rutgers University. Thank you to Zac Brower for providing an admissions overview and to Mandy Webster for setting up our tour of Rutgers! Another big thank you to Tommy and Matt San Miguel for providing invaluable insight into college life and options. During the Counselor and Mentorship Program (CAMP), attendees participated in STEM workshops to generate their passion for these lucrative fields. They built robots, learned computer programming, and 3-D printed custom designs. Participants also learned basic life skills to promote independent living such as cooking and doing laundry. Thank you to Jack Herling for teaching us about personal finances! Finally, CAMPers participated in a modified HIC staff training program and served as "Counselors-In-Training," earning real working experience for their resumes.

## The Most Magical Place on Earth: A Letter from a Parent

*I've reflected on the fact that this time last summer I didn't even know that Happiness Is Camping existed. We watched our son become very ill, get diagnosed, and then battle to stay alive in ICU for two months.*

*We were given the fliers for camp, and he was totally against going at all. Eventually the hospital staff convinced him to go, but I still never truly thought he would attend. He became nervous the closer camp got because he'd never been away from home on his own before. The night before camp he was praying that his COVID test would be positive so he wouldn't have to go.*

*5 days later upon his return I had a child back so full of life, excitement, and happiness. He talked about so many friends that I couldn't keep up with all their names. For me, the fact that he couldn't wait to get in the car for the second session was honestly priceless. He went outside his comfort zone on so many things. He said he still has more to do and to learn, but the beaming smile on his face in so many photos was the highest reward a parent can ever get, especially after all these kids go through.*

*I can't imagine the kind of organization that's needs to be done to run this type of camp, but I do know it takes very special people to bring smiles like that to faces who have experienced pain that most of us can't even imagine. I can't believe how much he grew as a person during 3 camp sessions.*

*I now not only know what Happiness Is Camping is, but I've experienced how special it truly is!!! In the words of my son, "Mom, it's just a magical place and everyone is so nice! Please don't be offended but it's the best fun I have ever had."*

*We owe you all so much for creating this magical place where our kids get to be kids and just be normal for a while. That was evidenced by a boy who didn't want to get on the bus. Have an amazing year, and we look forward to being back next summer.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Laura San Miguel, RN, PNP,  
President

Beth Fuchs,  
Board Treasurer

Julie McMahon,  
MSN, RN, CPNP-AC, CPON  
Secretary

Alexander Chou, M.D.,  
Medical Director

Peter Cole, M.D.,  
Medical Director

Richard Gorlick, M.D.,  
Medical Director, Emeritus

Jenna Kelly,  
MSN, RN, ACCNS-P, CPHON,  
Nursing Director

Yvette Murillo,  
APN, RN, MSN, FNP-C,  
Nursing Director

Charles Callari

Cody Hennelly

Maureen Hussey

Paulette Kelly  
MSN, APRN-BC, FNP

Laurie Malia, D.O.

Rosanna Ricafort, M.D.

Crystal Rodriguez

Thomas R. Whelan, C.P.A.





# Beyond the Camper: Serving the Entire Family

In our post-program survey, 100% of parents whose child attended Summer Camp said that Happiness Is Camping is “very important” to their family. We sat down with Kathleen and James, the mother and brother of a camper named Patrick, to find out exactly how HIC impacts the families we serve. Patrick first came to HIC in 2016 and has attended in-person or virtually every year since. Patrick’s brother James first attended HIC in 2019 as a member of the Counselor and Mentorship Program and has worked as a counselor since 2021.

## Kathleen and James, what does HIC mean to your family?

**Kathleen:** “From my perspective as a parent, Patrick’s cancer diagnosis, treatment, and recovery all were just the beginning of our family’s journey. Patrick faced many secondary issues including ongoing health problems, hearing loss, seizures, as well as social and learning challenges. James was there for Patrick all along the way but needed his own support from a community that understood the impact on the sibling. Happiness Is Camping welcomed Patrick and James with a big embrace, giving them an incredible experience alongside a community of friends, campers, and staff that understood what they were going through. I cannot put into words what HIC has given to Patrick, James, and our family.”

**James:** “While we’ve been to many different camps and organizations that see it as their mission to serve children with cancer in all capacities, HIC has always stood out. There’s just something about the purity of the experience, the love that everyone shares, and the break it provides from the ‘real world’ that sets it apart. HIC has become an integral part of Patrick’s (and our whole family’s) identity, which is reflected in our daily experience at home. We wouldn’t change it for the world.”

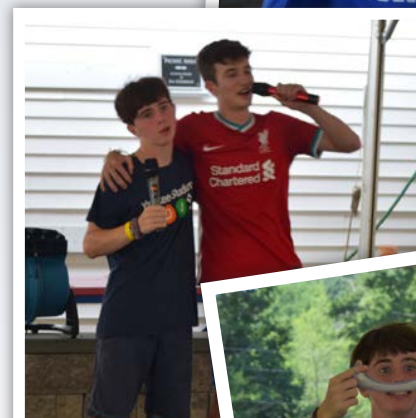
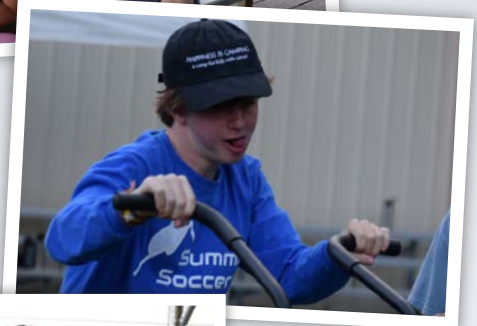
## Kathleen, as a parent, do you notice a change in Patrick before, during, or after camp?

**Kathleen:** “Now as an 18-year-old, Patrick is 16 years free from cancer. The summers and year-round programs he spent with HIC were fundamental to his post-treatment growth and development: socially, physically, and emotionally. Not only was HIC a place of fun and escape, but it was also a refuge of happiness, acceptance, development, and maturity for Patrick. The whole environment of HIC created by the staff, campers, and community allowed Patrick to feel happy, secure, and accepted. Looking back at his early years at HIC versus today, he truly blossomed as a camper and an adult. The thoughtfulness behind all the programs, from the camp itself to the college prep/senior camper experience and young adult weekend, are incredibly impactful for Patrick, James and all the campers. We are so grateful for the love and community of HIC.”

## James, what does it mean to you as a sibling to have the opportunity to join Patrick at HIC and see what he’s like at camp firsthand?

**James:** “While I’ve always loved my brother dearly, seeing him at camp made me appreciate him and his unique experience

in an entirely different way. The blessing of uniting children and families who have dealt with cancer in some fashion gives them what they may not have in the ‘real world’ ---visibility and relatability. Patrick’s time at Happiness has given him some of his best memories, and I’ve shared lovely moments with him that would not be possible elsewhere. Whatever we are dealing with on the outside, we leave it at the door. Camp is as much a place for pause and respite as it is a source of love and unbridled joy.”





62 Sunset Lake Road  
Hardwick, NJ 07825

**Non-Profit Org**  
**US Postage**  
**PAID**  
**Permit 782**  
**Bellmawr, NJ**

## Naming Opportunities

*You can leave a lasting legacy and further our mission by pledging your support to a building or designated space at Happiness Is Camping. Your gift presents a unique chance to be permanently recognized at camp.*

*We encourage our donors to take advantage of these opportunities, either through an outright gift or through a gift that is pledged for up to five years. You may also choose to honor a family member or friend through a naming. The impact of your gift will last more than a lifetime!*

Naming of the Camp	Please Inquire	Swing Shed	Named
Infirmary	Named	Pool Pavilion	Named
Kitchen/Lodging Main Lodge	\$350,000	Playground	Named
Africa Camper Cabin	\$40,000	Outdoor Basketball Court	Named
Asia Camper Cabin	\$40,000	GaGa Pit	Named
Australia Camper Cabin	\$40,000	Beach Volleyball Court	Named
Europe Camper Cabin	\$40,000	Campfire Circle	Named
North America Camper Cabin	\$40,000	High Ropes Course	\$15,000
Swimming Pool	\$50,000	Pickleball Court	\$20,000
Gymnasium	Named	Archery Range	Named
Gramercy (4 Cabins)	\$100,000	Climbing Tower	\$10,000
Arts & Crafts Loft	\$50,000	Zip Line	Named
Recreation Hall	Named	Lakeside Amphitheater	Named
Game Room/Teen Lounge	Named	Giant Swing	Named
Nature Center	Named	Pool Cabin Cabana	Named
The Barn	\$20,000	International Village	Named
Administrative Building	Named	Picnic Area	Named

## How You Can Help

Donate online at  
[www.happinessiscamping.org](http://www.happinessiscamping.org)

Make a memorial or honorarium  
donation for a friend or family member  
Give an in-kind gift from our Wish List

Select Happiness Is Camping as your  
charity on [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)

Rent our facility

Invite us to speak at your next function

Pledge a monthly donation

Send a child with cancer to camp with  
a "campership"

Camp naming opportunities

Employer matching gifts

Donate stocks or bonds

Leave a legacy

Host a fundraising event

Corporate sponsorship

Volunteer at camp

Attend our annual benefit

Join our TCS New York City  
Marathon team

Join our United Airlines NYC Half team

Register for our Virtual Walk for  
Happiness

Purchase a 50/50 ticket

## FOLLOW CAMP ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Website: [www.happinessiscamping.org](http://www.happinessiscamping.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/hicnj](http://www.facebook.com/hicnj)

Instagram: [@happinessiscamping\\_nj](https://www.instagram.com/happinessiscamping_nj)

Twitter [@HIC\\_NJ](https://twitter.com/HIC_NJ)

Snapchat: [@HIC\\_NJ](https://www.snapchat.com/add/HIC_NJ)

