



## Beat Retreat 2014



**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE 2016 BEAT RETREAT PLEASE CLICK ON THE "BEAT RETREAT" MENU.**



The Beat Retreat was yet again a GREAT SUCCESS! 2014 camp brought back all the oldies and more newbies. This year we had five brand new campers which brought our total higher than 2013. It seems we just can't keep people away...bigger and better every year! "Christmas in September" was a great success, with the traditional Christmas dinner, desserts, and the old man Santa showing up with gifts. Skit night was fantastic, hilarious, and so much fun.



Each year we choose a camper who has shown the best participation and achievement at camp, and award them with the "Toby Award". This year our awardee was Chris, the brother of Joe - our winner last...yes brothers both with congenital heart problems.

Overall, the Beat Retreat Camp 2014 was the best of the best. Not one single person wanted to go home, and many asked for a week long camp. Now it's time for our traditional "Winterlude", but this year in Niagara Falls in February 2015 for a long weekend. The more we are together to enjoy each other's company, laughter, and stories the better we feel about ourselves.

Our aim is to offer Beat Retreat camps in other provinces, so that other adults with CHD can get together to share experiences, information, and offer support. Not only is the camp a great peer group, it's educational. This year three CHD nurse practitioners attended as well as a psychologist from the Toronto adult CHD program. They were there to answer our questions (see the Q&A), provide support, and act as a valuable link between our daily lives and medical care. We always REALLY appreciate the time and expertise they share with us; we really do feel like we're not alone - we're a healthcare team!

We are trying to raise funds so that we can offer the Beat Retreat in venues across the country. If you can help, we'd appreciate it.



Here are some testimonials that we received in September after this year's camp. You can decide for yourselves whether the Beat Retreat is worthwhile. We think it is!

*I wasn't sure what to expect. I loved every second of camp. As I drove away I just wanted to turn my car around and relive the weekend over again. I felt so welcome, like I was a long-lost cousin. Everyone has so much love for everyone! I can't wait for next year! It can't come fast enough.*

-Chelsea

*Thanks for the AMAZING time! I met some pretty fantastic people. Honestly I feel so much better about myself now. Can't wait to come for the full weekend next year!*

-Lizzie

*What another awesome year, and to see our small original group to grow to over 30 is incredible! Who knew that when we all started out in this life with a hole in our heart that it would be filled with such love, comfort, support and friendship from others just like us. The best part of camp this year for me was meeting all the new folks and of course an awesome night of euchre! But more important was the welcoming by all the new faces - it's like coming home to my extended family. You guys did a great job!*

-Doug

*"CCHA's Beat Retreat camp has been a wonderful connection to many young adults who like our daughter Shannon live with congenital heart disease. Through the power of the camp Shannon now has friends like her to share stories and support each other on this lifelong journey."*

-Gord and Dale

*At the age of 62 I stumbled across a Facebook page about tetralogy of Fallot, the birth defect I've lived with my whole life. Through that I found a posting about the Beat Retreat, a program run by the CCHA. At the Beat Retreat I was able to finally talk to others about our survival and difficulties we had faced growing up. I was the second oldest camper and was hearing stories and advice from my peers aged 22-68. When I hopped into the car on Thursday I was driving into uncharted waters. When I was driving home Sunday I felt like a member of a much larger family. Thank you guys, thank you Beat Retreat, and thank you CCHA!*

-Bruce

For more information about the Beat Retreat, please contact Toby at [thebeatretreat@cchaforlife.org](mailto:thebeatretreat@cchaforlife.org) or [info@cchaforlife.org](mailto:info@cchaforlife.org). We also have both a [CCHA Facebook page](#) and a Beat Retreat page (if you'd like to be invited please contact Toby at [thebeatretreat@cchaforlife.org](mailto:thebeatretreat@cchaforlife.org)). You can also follow us on [Twitter](#).

Update: The Beat Retreat camp wins \$1000 Wildcard Prize in the Aviva Community Fund! thank you everyone for participating!