

Bead Soup



Camp Summersault



When Karen Braverman-Freeman became a volunteer at the Long Beach Cancer League in Southern California, she never thought she'd be using her beading skills to enrich the lives of children stricken with the disease. For one week every August on the grounds of Campfire USA in Long Beach, Camp Summersault is home to 100 kids, from the ages of 5 to 13, and their siblings. Sponsored by the American Cancer Society and a host of local businesses, volunteers like Karen make sure the focus is on fun. "When I heard about the camp," Karen says, "I immediately thought how much the kids would love beading. I packed up my materials and brought them to camp without a real game plan in mind. The class was such a success, we've made it a permanent event!"



An avid beader and professional costumer for the entertainment industry, Karen's passion for design turned to jewelry several years ago. "I used a lot of my extra beads and findings to teach that first class. As I suspected, all it took was one beaded necklace and a few boxes of beads, and everyone wanted to make one, even the boys. I realized that if I was going to keep doing this, I was going to need more stuff – a lot more." Karen took out an ad in *Bead&Button* last year in hopes of getting some bead support. "The response was overwhelming," she says. "Not only did I get some very generous donations, I connected with a lot of cancer survivors and people currently battling the disease who bead as a form of therapy."

Karen's class has been such a hit, this year she enlisted the help of local high-school student Keith Williams (pictured bottom left with Karen), who is also a volunteer. "It's been great for all of us," says Karen. "There's nothing like picking out beads or making a piece of jewelry to take your mind off everything else. Can you imagine what that means to a child with cancer?"

For more information on Camp Summersault or similar programs in your area, contact the American Cancer Society at 562-437-0792 or visit their website, cancer.org. If you would like to donate beads or supplies for next year's camp, please email Karen Braverman-Freeman at stepmomkaren@aol.com. Thanks to your donations and to volunteers like Karen and Keith, we can look forward to a lot more summers full of happy campers.

