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Phillies' pitcher partners with Fernside programs

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A local agency's summer camps for grieving children are getting a boost through a new partnership with the Moyer Foundation, started by Philadelphia Phillies pitcher Jamie Moyer and his wife, Karen.

Fernside: A Center for Grieving Children, an affiliate of Hospice of Cincinnati, has had a summer camp for children since 1989. It began offering a teen retreat in 2000.

Fernside executive director Vicky Ott says those free programs will be strengthened, thanks to the partnership with the foundation, which will grant the Blue Ash-based agency \$100,000 over 10 years to operate what will be called Camp Erin-Cincinnati.

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Visitors at Fernside's camp for grieving kids participated in a shaving cream fight during their stay in 2006.



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The Seattle-based Moyer Foundation, which began in 2000, has raised more than \$14 million for nonprofits that support children in distress. The first Camp Erin opened in Everett, Wash., in 2002. Now 18 camps exist in 12 states. The goal is to fund camps in all Major League Baseball cities by 2012.

Camp Erin is named for Erin Metcalf, a Woodinville, Wash., teen who died of liver cancer in 2000. The

Moyers met her and her parents at a Make-a-Wish dinner in 1998.

Bereavement camps offer many of the activities of traditional summer camps, but also include grief counseling, education and emotional support.

"Hopefully, our camp will grow, both in participants and volunteer interest, so we can serve every grieving kid out there who may not have heard of us already," Ott says.

"The camp is such a special experience. We've had people say it's really life-changing for their kids."

Bitsy Hatteberg, wife of Reds first baseman Scott, has led efforts involving the Reds Community Relations department and wives of other Reds players to raise funds for the project. The Hattebergs will present a \$30,000 check to Camp Erin-Cincinnati before tonight's Reds-Phillies game at Great American Ball Park.

The Camp Erin-Cincinnati teen retreat is today and Saturday at Joy Outdoor Education Center in Clarksville. The camp for children ages 7-12 will be July 24-27. For information, call Fernside: 513-745-0111. For information about the Moyer Foundation: <http://www.moyerfoundation.org/>.

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