



*going to camp
scott-free*

TEXT BY CHRISTA GALA



SUMMER CAMP IS A RITE OF PASSAGE FOR MOST, BUT SOME KIDS NEVER GET TO GO. SCOTT-FREE HOPES TO CHANGE THAT.

SCOTT GRUDER WASN'T ONE TO TOOT HIS OWN HORN. HE ONCE PAID TO fix the broken car window of a grocery cashier, barely mentioning it to his wife Deborrah. The cashier was a single mom with two kids, one of which was very ill. Gruder noticed her leaving work one morning with plastic over the window. He asked her about it the next day and she said she couldn't afford to have it fixed. Gruder figured she had enough to worry about and called the glass repair shop himself.

Deborrah Gruder found this out after Scott's death four years ago. It didn't surprise her. The couple had a special passion for helping children. One Christmas, they found out five kids in Walnut Terrace weren't going to have a Christmas. The Gruders helped make sure that didn't happen.

"Children should be able to have Christmas," says Deborrah. "Children should not have to suffer for the decisions and actions that the adults around them have made."

And now, Deborrah Gruder is continuing her husband's generosity and modesty. This summer, June 5th, will be the inaugural fundraiser of Scott-Free, a nonprofit organization that will raise money to send kids to camp for free. The event will be held at Bev's Fine Art in Raleigh and will include a silent art auction, wine from local wineries and food from Bill Harrison of The Umstead. There will be live classical music and a jazz trio. Most services have been donated; all proceeds from ticket sales (\$60 each or \$100 per couple) will go to camp scholarships.

Like her husband, Deborrah Gruder is modest. She didn't want to call her non-profit organization the Scott Gruder Foundation. "He would have hated that and thought it sounded pretentious. Scott-Free is about helping children," says Deborrah. "It is done in memory of my husband because it was a vision of my husband, but it is about going forward with the vision of something he'd already incorporated in his life."

So far, Scott-Free is sending kids to NCSU baseball, soccer, tennis and basketball Coach's camps, as well as music camp at Brevard College. The challenge now is to raise the money. "It's wonderful and it's frightening," says Deborrah of the anticipation of the June 5th event. "I want to make sure that it happens because I do not want any of these children that we've identified to be disappointed."

Gruder has been asked why she doesn't raise money to feed and clothe the kids. The thought bothered her for a long while until she talked to a friend. And her friend's response, she thought was perfect. "She looked at me and she said, 'You know what Deborrah, if you ask 90 people I bet all 90 of them can remember a time in their life when they had an experience that impacted them, when they did something that was fun that helped them to grow and have value as a person, and I bet not one of them could tell you what clothes they had on or what they ate.'"

And that is why Deborrah Gruder wants to send kids to camp, "to be able to explore and discover the possibility of their own abilities." This year she'll send as many as she can; and in 2009, Deborrah Gruder's goal is to send twenty kids to camp – pun intended – Scott-Free. •

Support Scott-Free

WHEN: Thursday June 5th

TIME: 7:00-9:30p.m.

WHERE: Bev's Fine Art, Raleigh

TICKETS: \$60 each or \$100 couples

For more information: 846-7369