

CATHOLIC CHARITIES JACKSONVILLE CHRONICLES

FALL 2026



A Sweet Way to Get to Camp

Jacksonville Family's Cookie Business Raises Funds and Awareness for Camp I Am Special

Kyle Fitzsimonds has attended Camp I Am Special since 2018. He loves hanging out with camp buddies, dancing at the bubble disco, and, most importantly, baking cookies. While he doesn't do the baking at camp – it's how he gets there every year.

Kyle and his parents, Kimberly and Kelley, originally started baking together as a fun way to gather donations to pay for camp. What started as a fundraising hobby evolved into a family-run business.

"It grew into something else," said Kimberly. "We've helped pay for other campers' tuition and now we donate to charities close to our hearts."

From the Snack Attack (Kyle's favorite recipe from Food Network Magazine) to the Banana Crackle, each cookie sold brings Kyle one step closer to the place he loves most.

Camp I Am Special is a week-long camp designed to give children and adults with intellectual and developmental differences a chance to be exactly who they are with no limits and no labels. The playground, pool, talent shows, and activities offer opportunities for campers to try something new, cheered on every step of the way.

Campers leave with a newfound sense of confidence and independence. Kyle's transformation is why the Fitzsimonds have been passionate about not only raising funds to send him back each year but also helping others reap the benefits of Camp I Am Special. Today, the family takes orders online and sells them at the West King Wednesday market. And for the past two years, Kyle's CAMP Cookies has been the featured dessert for the Catholic Charities Jacksonville's Black & White Soirée fundraiser.

Summer may be over, but Kyle's cookies – and donation collections – keep going all year long. You can order cookies or just donate to Kyle's CAMP Cookies via its Facebook page. **You can also always help send someone to Camp I Am Special by donating at [CCBJax.org](https://www.ccbjax.org).**



Kyle enjoys sharing his cookie recipes with friends, neighbors, and camp supporters.

Turning Life Experience into Job Opportunities

Navigating today's job market is tough for anyone, but it's especially difficult for individuals changing careers or looking to re-enter the job force.

It's a challenge Catholic Charities Jacksonville sees every day, and it's why we've partnered with United Way to support people in their quest for jobs. United Way of Northeast Florida serves as a hub for community resources, connecting neighbors with services from rent assistance to food pantries. Now, the organization has a new resource to help their clients: Catholic Charities' resume review program.

The program is especially helpful for people like Luke*, who applied to dozens of jobs and didn't get a single interview. Fortunately, United Way referred Luke to Catholic Charities. There, resume reviewers helped Luke translate his experience more effectively to showcase what employers value.

"Luke had the work ethic and the experience; he just didn't have a resume that showed it," said Greg, a volunteer with the resume review team. "Once we helped him tell that story, the calls started coming."

Since his resume review, Luke has had three job interviews. Partnerships like this give job seekers a real chance to thrive in the community.

If you'd like to provide support for those seeking work in our community, please give at CCBJax.org/donate. Anyone can get resume assistance at CCBJax.org/resume-review – no referral needed.

*Name and photo have been changed for privacy.



Letter from the Regional Director

Dear Friends,

I'm pleased to share that our strategic planning process is complete, and I'm truly excited by the results. After listening to our community and carefully testing ideas, we identified several new programs that are both deeply needed and sustainable. Those plans give us a clear, practical roadmap for serving more neighbors with stability and dignity.

This summer's Camp I Am Special session was a beautiful reminder of why we do this work. Watching campers laugh, learn, and belong at camp filled our team with gratitude and renewed purpose. This success — powered by devoted staff, volunteers, and generous donors — shows what is possible when a community comes together.

As we move into this next chapter, our commitment remains unchanged: to stand with families facing financial pressure, strengthen housing supports, and grow our food pantry so no one goes hungry. Your continued support makes these efforts possible.

May we always make space for one another, welcoming every person as beloved and letting compassion shape the work of our hands and choices of our hearts.

Thank you for making a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Eileen Seuter
Regional Director
Catholic Charities Jacksonville

Other Ways We Help



Our Weekend Backpack Hunger Program fed 400 local children throughout last year, providing them with meals on Saturday and Sunday.



Our Share Your Blessings Christmas Drive provides holiday cheer for families in need. **Last year, we distributed gifts to 920 kids.**



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PLEASE HELP US TRANSFORM LIVES BY GIVING TODAY!

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