Summer 2021 Newsletter | Volume 26

# Friends of Kids with Cancer... be kids!

# FRIEND TO FRIEND

IN THIS ISSUE:

BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT HAPPY RETIREMENT MARGIE MEET THE NEW FOKWC TUTORS

# WE ARE

Friends of Kids with Cancer is devoted to enriching the daily lives of children undergoing treatment for, and survivors of, cancer and blood-related diseases. **Our mission is to be an advocate for these special kids** and provide them and their families with the Educational, Emotional and Recreational support needed as a result of the long hours of chemotherapy, illness, and isolation.

Think

Our Educational Programs engage our patients' minds and enhance their self-esteem.





Our Emotional Programs instill confidence in our patients and help form therapeutic relationships, which assist in releasing built-up emotions.





Our Recreational Programs keep smiles on our kids' faces every day dispite their illnesses.

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Kim Wisdom, Volunteer and Events Coordinator

Sharon Roth, Office Coordinator

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# A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Hello, my name is Scott Biermann. I was first introduced to this wonderful organization 10 years ago by Joe Curotto to volunteer on the development and finance committees. Over time, I was elected to the board and now have the honor and privilege to serve as Friends of Kids with Cancer Executive Board President for 2021-2022. I look back over the years and realize the profound impact this charity has had on my life and the lives of our patient families and their children undergoing cancer treatment. We are truly a family and cherish the closeness of our board of directors and the relationships we have developed with our donors and volunteers. One of our board members summed it up perfectly at a recent meeting by stating "I came into this organization thinking I could make a difference in the kids' life, but inevitably, they are the ones that made a difference in my life".

With half of the year over, it's a good time to reflect on our accomplishments and what's to come for the remainder of the year. We've had a busy spring and summer hosting numerous virtual fundraisers including trivia, walk with friends, and a very successful golf tournament. We celebrated the retirement of our long-time programming coordinator and board member Margie Sedlack and welcomed our newest staff member Kim Wisdom. Brandy is activity looking for a staff marketing and communication specialist and development coordinator position. Fall looks to be shaping nicely as Young Friends continues to be creative in their fundraising efforts and we finalize Art from the Heart and the Fashion show. I personally want to recognize our amazing staff and volunteers for all their hard work delivering unwavering patient support while working long hours remotely from home and office. It's a remarkable testament to their passion, creativity, and dedication that FOKWC hasn't missed a beat while we continuing to face ongoing covid concerns and adhering to our precautionary group gatherings policy. I also wanted to thank our sponsors and donors. I'm always amazed at the generosity of this great community. All money raised through events and donations stay in St Louis allowing us to support local hospitals and clinics, patients, and families

Lastly, thank you for allowing me to serve alongside so many wonderful people this year. I truly appreciate your support and encouragement. I look forward to any ideas or feedback you may have as we look towards the second half of the year.

Gratefully yours,

Scott D. Biermann Board President

### MEET OUR NEWEST Staff Member, Kim!

Meet Kim, Friends of Kids with Cancer's new Volunteer & Events Coordinator! She earned a bachelor's in Human Services from Fontbonne University and graduated from Lindenwood University with a master's in Nonprofit Administration. She is a seasoned volunteer and served FOKWC as a member of the Trivia Night Planning Committee. She is passionate about supporting Friends' mission through volunteer and fundraising efforts. "This is a



dream job for me. I've been a supporter for many years, and I am proud to now work for such a remarkable organization." Kim and her husband, Jesse, have two sons, who play for St. Peter's Hockey Club. Together, the Wisdom family loves traveling, playing with their dogs (a Boxer and a Great Dane), and cheering on the St. Louis Blues!

Interested in volunteering or fundraising for Friends? Contact Kim: kim@friendsofkids.com

# COMMUNITY Partner **Spotlight**



The owners and employees of Fresh Air Heating & Cooling have been fundraising for an impressive 13 years, raising more than \$60,000 for Friends of Kids with Cancer, and we are grateful for their ongoing support! Let's learn more about this amazing company from Co-Owner, Katie Sinn...

# When and how did your company first learn about Friends of Kids with Cancer?

We first learned about Friends through the Bergamini family. Fresh Air is family owned. Our family (the Sinns) grew up going to St. Alban Roe where the Bergaminis also attended. They are a great family!

# What does your relationship with FOKWC mean to your company?

Being able to support a child and their family when they are going through the unimaginable is our motivation. We are grateful that there are people in the world who are devoted to caring for children. The awesome doctors, nurses, and medicine do their part, but there is so much more to health and recovery. That is where Friends steps in, providing special gifts/adventures, tutoring, and support for parents and siblings. This all helps relieve stress and allows room for healing and happiness. We are happy to help support your staff and volunteers.

### How does your company raise donations?

Since 2008, Fresh Air has been donating \$10 for every new furnace or air conditioner we install. The most fun we have fundraising for Friends of Kids is the face painting and balloons! Pre-COVID we would rent a booth at the Wildwood BBQ Bash, hire balloon and face painting pros, and ask for donations in exchange for balloon animals and/or cool face paint. It's a fun way for Fresh Air to be in the community we serve but also raise funds for a great cause.



### Please tell us more about your company!

Fresh Air is a family owned heating and cooling business, started in 1987 by Mike and Meg Sinn. They have since retired and four of their five kids now run the business: Pat, Tim, Katie, and Kevin. Our warehouse is located in Chesterfield Valley, and we service homes in St. Louis and St. Charles Counties. "Bring Fresh Air into your home today!"

Website: www.iNeedFreshAir.com Facebook: freshairheatingandcooling Instagram: freshairstl



# MORGYN'S NEW ROLE AS PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Morgyn has been involved with Friends of Kids with Cancer since 2017. She began as an intern under the Communications Specialist and learned a lot about the charity and how it works during the semester she spent at Friends. She then came on as a full-time employee in 2019 as our Events & Volunteer Coordinator. In the role, she became very involved with the events and programming the charity provides to patients and their families. As she became more involved in programming, she could see how important Friends work is to families in the cancer community.

When the opportunity arose to move into programming, she realized that was something she would like to be more involved in. She loves helping the families and wanted to dive deeper into the work that makes the charity so amazing. She loves seeing the smiles that the charity provides for the families and being in the role would allow her to do that even more. She would be able to connect with families and be involved in more of the fun things that help kids with cancer...be kids. This year the Board of Directors decided to make the Program Coordinator a full-time position. This is such an exciting move for the charity because it means more time can be spent doing fun things for our treatment centers, building connections with families, and providing the support they need to get through their cancer journey.

"I am so excited to be in this new role and continue my passion for helping the families we serve. I am most excited to plan patient parties and events and to give them a safe place to come to just be kids."

### MEET OUR NEW SUPPORT GROUP SOCIAL WORKERS

Our names are Josie Arens and Breanna Colombo, and we are excited to be joining Friends of Kids with Cancer as additional support for your families. As social workers, supporting our community is important to us—which is why we are looking forward to developing new programs for your children and families, as well as revamping the children's support groups we currently offer. As we join the FOKWC family, we wanted to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and give a brief overview of the work we will be doing here.

I'm Breanna! I am extremely excited to be joining the amazing Friends of Kids with Cancer team and working to support you in any way I can! I graduated from the University of Missouri- St. Louis with a bachelor's degree in Social Work. During this time I was able to join FOKWC as a practicum student and could not pass up the opportunity to connect with you all again. I cannot wait to work with you and your families!

And I'm Josie! In spring of 2021, I got the opportunity to work with FOKWC as a practicum student while studying at Fontbonne University for my Bachelor of Social Work degree with a certificate in the Expressive Arts Therapies. Since then, I have been working towards my master's degree in Social Work at Saint Louis University. Over the past few years, I've had the opportunity to facilitate support groups for children who are grieving the death of a loved one, help develop school-based support sessions using expressive interventions, and more. Friends of Kids with Cancer has a special place in my heart, and I am beyond grateful to have the opportunity to continue my involvement here in this new role!

While we are still in the development stage for many of our plans, our ideas include incorporating some fun, therapeutic elements into support groups through activities focused on expressing emotions, managing social interactions, and navigating challenges specific to the mission of Friends of Kids with Cancer. We also want to make sure that you-the caregivers-are supported, so we hope to act as resources to recognize potential challenges your children may be facing and to guide your families through conversions or activities that aid in the healing process. And, of course, fun is a top priority. Our goals include developing new programs that allow for connection, healing, and a whole lot of joy!

We can't thank you enough for inviting us to be a part of your journey and the family you've built here at Friends of Kids with Cancer. We are overjoyed to have the chance to spend this time with you, and we look forward to meeting everyone in the near future!

Sincerely, Josie Arens & Breanna Colombo

# HAPPY RETIREMENT TO MARGIE!

Margie Sedlack began her relationship with Friends of Kids with Cancer in 1995 when her daughter, Kelsey, participated in the Fashion Show. She quickly became a beloved volunteer buying and delivering toys for Cardinal Glennon's Toy Closet. "Friends is important to me, because I have seen them make such a difference in many patients and families lives during and after treatments," she explained. With a growing love for the organization, Margie joined the Board of Directors in 2005 and the staff in 2008 as Program Coordinator. Countless patient parties and memory makers later, Margie has begun the next chapter of her life: retirement. "Margie is always my voice of reason, and I have so much respect and admiration for her life's work. Her passion for our mission is incredible, and she will always be a fierce advocate for our kids and families. We miss working with her and are so grateful for how she paved the way. She deserves so much of the credit for the success and longevity of our programs and services," says Brandy Bimslager, Executive Director. While she remains a valued member of the Board, Margie will be doing a lot more traveling and spending quality time with her family. From all of us at FOKWC, we thank you for your years of service to patients and their families and for your continued passion for our mission of helping kids with cancer...be kids!



Margie with co-founder, Molly Henry Margie and Don Sedlack

# THANK YOU **Tom lynch!**

Tom Lynch, a longtime member of our Board of Directors, retired from board service in February of 2021. His time of service to Friends has been invaluable. Tom joined the board in 2003 and has served on many essential committees. He held the vital positions as board president, finance committee chair, and many others. His finance background and expertise has ensured the organizations remains fiscally responsible and always upholding fiduciary duties.

"I have cherished my 17-year association with Friends as one of the greatest honors I have had in my life. I have to thank my friend Jonathon Burke for getting me involved with the organization as the official griller at the Halloween party and then with his generosity of volunteering me to be on the fashion show committee. I am certainly not saying goodbye to the organization or my friends on the board, as I will still be attending some of my favorite events such as the fashion show, Art from the Heart, Golf tournament, trivia night and so many third-party events. As Jonathon has said many times, I came into this organization thinking that I could make a difference in the kids' life, but inevitably they are the ones that made a difference in my life, and so I have to thank each and every one of them. I came into an organization that was running on all cylinders and I leave with them purring along at even a greater speed, one that I know will propel you on to greater accomplishments and that is all due to the drive, creativity, and dedication of you, the board members, and the outstanding office personnel. Thank you all for the memories." - Tom Lynch

Tom's abiding love for the kids and families of Friends will never dimmish. He remains a steadfast supporter and advocate of our mission. We are glad that this is not goodbye, but more "see you later" for years to come!

We are sending Tom and his beautiful family lots of love and wishing everyone all the best. On behalf of the board, volunteers, staff and especially the families we service, THANK YOU for your long and loyal service.

" Tom Lynch's life has been defined by his honor, integrity, and passion. This was evident on the rugby pitch, in his work, with his family, and during his time on the FOKWC board. He will always have your back and he will never let you down. Cheers, JB" -Jonathan Burke, FOKWC Board Member and Friend



# GOLF RECAP

A thousand thanks to those of you who joined us for our 23rd Annual Golf Tournament and Auction at Whitmoor Country Club! **The support from our amazing sponsors and participants helped us raise a record breaking \$300,000!!** What a RECORD MILESTONE for this wonderful event! YOUR tremendous support is what allows us to continue our programs and services, not only in the present, but far into the future.

Despite heavy rain at breakfast and registration, everyone was all smiles and in good spirits. It was amazing to see how the weather decided to hold out for a fun day of golf. Over 288 golfers, volunteers, committee members and staff came out to brave the uncertain forecast and support our mission to *help kids with cancer... be kids*!

We wish to send a very special thanks to our **Honorary Chair, St. Louis Blues Captain- Ryan O'Reilly**, the Golf Committee Chairs-**Rick Lommel**, **Ryan Lommel & Bob Nuelle**, the Golf Committee, Golf Auction Chair-**Anne Royall**, and the Golf Auction Committee, and all our wonderful Volunteers. Your hard work and dedication to this event has made it a tremendous success! From our kids' hearts to yours, THANK YOU!

### THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!

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"It just means so much that people would give their money so little kids going through this could talk to someone about their feelings. Just the level of thoughtfulness and kindness that goes into that gift... it just gets me every time. We could never repay you but we are so grateful." — **The Brooks Family** 



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**Bronze Sponsors:** Castle Contracting, Incentive Concepts, Arch Material Handling, Insperity, UBS Financial Services, Inc., Southwest Oral Surgery, Merrill Bank, The Opus Group, Dave Sinclair-Ford, Kadean Construction

A VERY Special thanks to **Russo's Catering** and **Captiva Marketing** for your invaluable gifts to this event as well as to Friends, and to **Golden Oak Lending** for their generosity to help us reach our goal!

# fokwc golf tournament raises over \$300,000

BUICK |

# WALK WITH **A FRIEND**

During this year's Walk with a Friend event, more than 500 participants joined together virtually to walk/run in honor and memory of the brave kids and families battling against pediatric cancer. Over \$28,000 was raised for our programs and patient parties! Thank you to all who walked or ran their hearts out for our kids!













Justice



# THIRD PARTY EVENTS

# HOSTING A **Third Party event**

Every child with cancer deserves a life filled with fun, laughter, support, and days that feel just plain normal. By fundraising for Friends of Kids with Cancer, you can make a difference in the life of a child during their fight against this devastating disease. Third party fundraising events are initiatives by a business, organization, school, or individual to benefit FOKWC. Fun ideas include toy drives, sporting tournaments, and "dine and donate" nights at restaurants.

One shining example of a third party fundraiser is Hazel's Raffle 4 Charity, hosted by the Meisinger family in honor of their daughter, Hazel. This annual online raffle is perfect for craft beer enthusiasts and is presented on Kurt's Instagram page (@kindadrunkdad). This past March, Hazel's Raffle far surpassed their fundraising goal by collecting an incredible \$43,160 for Friends of Kids with Cancer!

For more fundraising ideas or to submit an application for a fundraiser already in the works, visit **www.friendsofkidswithcancer.com/thirdparty.** 

# HATS ON DAY



One of our favorite third party fundraisers, here at Friends of Kids with Cancer, is Hats On Day. Schools, businesses, and churches can participate in Hats On Day by making a donation (big or small) to wear a hat for the day. FOKWC provides everything you need: Hats On Day stickers, a guide with fun ideas, a promotional poster, and informational brochures. Just pick a date, collect money, and have fun!

FOKWC has received over \$24,000 in Hats on Day donations thus far in 2021. Imagine how much more can be raised for our Educational, Emotional, and Recreational programs once school starts again this Fall! To sign up as a host for your own Hats on Day, please visit www.friendsofkids.com/hats-on-day.

# KIDS HELPING **KIDS**

### MEET TEAGAN!

Teagan is a sweet and thoughtful 8 year-old, who was inspired to raise money when her 6 year-old cousin was diagnosed with leukemia. With a love and talent for drawing, Teagan sold her artwork and raised \$310 for Friends of Kids with Cancer. "I wanted to make kids, including Charlotte, who might feel down sometimes, feel much better," Teagan explained. She, along with her parents, dropped off the donation and took a tour of the Friends of Kids with Cancer office. As a token of our appreciation, Teagan was offered a gift from the Toy Closet, and she fittingly chose coloring books. Thank you, Teagan, for your beautiful act of kindness! by the price of the suite cancer to the suite

# TIME TERMORT

### MEET HAILEY!

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Hailey is a bright and beautiful 11 year-old, who is also a patient. Hailey and her mom, Brandi, made an impressive donation of \$600 in support of Friends of Kids with Cancer. Hailey earned that money by selling t-shirts of her own design and in her favorite color, yellow. "We had shirts made to show her how much support she has behind her and to help your organization for helping our family so many times," Brandi explained. While in the office, they took a tour, and Hailey picked out a slime kit from the Toy Closet as a thank you gift. She left us with her personal motto, "Live life to the fullest and never give up!" Hailey, you are truly an inspiration!

Teagan Wash

# MEET OUR **NEW TUTORS**

# **CURTIS WARREN, MA EDUCATION**

### **Educational and Professional Background:**

Curtis Warren recently joined the FOKWC team as an academic tutor. He moved from Kalamazoo, Michigan to St. Louis to be closer to his son, daughter-in-law, and grandson. Unfortunately, he lost his wife of 40 years to cancer in 2019. Curtis is an experienced K-16 educator with over forty years of professional experience in the field of education, including traditional K-12 education, special education, higher education, and adult and alternative education. He also has successful professional experiences in the human services field.



Curtis is currently completing a doctorate degree (Ed.D.) in education through Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in education and social sciences, as well as his postgraduate studies in special education, educational leadership, evaluation and research, were completed at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Curtis received his Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in sociology, anthropology, and education, along with a teaching certification from Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His current credentials include a Continuing (Permanent) Michigan Secondary Teaching Certificate and a Master Social Worker License (L.M.S.W.).

### **Educational Philosophy:**

"My strong belief is, it is imperative that educators at the K-12 level get to truly know their respective students and their academic and emotional needs. This can be accomplished through dialogue and planning with the students, parents, and collaboration with other educators and support teams. Once plans are designed, educators must put them into action immediately, as well as review their accuracy and effectiveness on a continuous basis. They must continue to develop these plans for the best student achievement results possible throughout a given academic year. My philosophy also applies to the human services profession, and professionals administering support services, whether working with youth, adults, families or other individuals."

### Favorite Quote:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead, American Cultural Anthropologist | 1901 - 1978

# **KATHY GAVIN, MA EDUCATION**

Kathy enjoys engaging in learning activities with children of all ages. Mrs. Gavin has taught in both private and public-school settings. Her teaching experiences have included working as a Science Specialist, Gifted Educator, STEAM Facilitator, Classroom Teacher, Learning Support, Orton-Gillingham Reading Specialist, Private Tutor, Virtual Tutor, and Advocate for Unique Learners.

Her educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Education with a Major in Special Education, a Master of Arts in Education with advanced coursework in Science and Reading, and an additional Certificate in Teaching Gifted.

As a facilitator of learning, she believes that it is important to establish a relationship of mutual respect with her students. Her interactions with learners are based on best practices and each learner's unique profile of strengths, challenges, and interests.

Personal hobbies and interests include family, outdoor activities, camping, hiking, kayaking, nature duty, turning pieces on a wood lathe, and projects that involve making or re-purposing interesting items.



# **CAROL AUSTERMAN, MA EDUCATION**

Carol's passion for learning and calling to be an educator began in childhood and never wavered. After graduating from the University of Missouri-Columbia with certifications in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, she enjoyed teaching 2nd, 3rd, and 5th grades in the Northwest R1 School District. Motivated by the desire to help others, she later earned a MEd in Counseling with emphasis in Elementary School Counseling at the University of Missouri-St. Louis in 1996. In her role as Guidance Counselor at Murphy, Wren Hollow, and most recently Ross Elementary Schools, Carol continued to learn, teach, guide and advocate for all.

After retiring, or as she likes to say "rewiring" and pursuing volunteer and artistic interests, Carol is very excited and proud to now be a part of the Friends of Kids with Cancer team as an Educational Tutor. Her educational philosophy and mission of positivity overlap based on the belief that learning should be engaging, relevant, motivating and designed for each individual to achieve their personal best.



# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Educational programming at Friends of Kids with Cancer is expanding exponentially! For the past year, our partnership with Miriam Learning Center has been a wonderful resource for our patients and siblings in need of tutoring services. Sessions have been held virtually to keep all parties safe while continuing to address educational needs. To align with our ongoing vision of providing educational support in the clinic setting and to utilize our FOKWC office space to its full potential, an educational committee was formed to pursue the hiring of tutors. Once the carefully crafted job description was finalized, candidates were interviewed, and we are thrilled to share that we have three new tutors contracting with Friends of Kids with Cancer. Kathy will be spending her time at The Costas Center at Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital and the Mercy Kids clinic, in addition to providing 1:1 tutoring sessions. Curtis joins us to work 1:1 with the middle school and high school students (hello higher level math!), and Carol will be spending time motivating and educating elementary through middle school students. All tutors will be engaging with students 1:1 in the way that feels most safe and beneficial for our learners and their caregiversvirtually and in-person at the FOKWC office.

# **SCHOLARSHIPS**

This year, eight scholarships were awarded to childhood survivors of cancer who are on their way to college. Each scholarship recipient wrote a short essay about their plans for college and beyond. Some of the intended careers include nursing, child life specialist, engineering, and working with animals, among others. The colleges that the recipients are attending include Murray State University, Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville, University of Dayton, Mississippi State University, and Missouri State University. Each scholarship recipient had memorable experiences with Friends of Kids with Cancer and are grateful for the support during their times of treatment and afterwards.

These scholarships are integral in helping survivors pay for college. One recipient shared that this money allows her to "fully live out my title as a survivor, by continuing my journey and being present for those still fighting to survive". Another recipient wrote about how Friends of Kids with Cancer helped him to "become more outgoing, open to growth, and loving", and how the scholarship will help him to keep alive the legacies of children who did not survive cancer without worrying about how he will pay for it. Each of the recipients is grateful for Friends of Kids with Cancer and is excited for the opportunities these scholarships are providing.





Carter Fortman



Gabby Soomro



Makenzie Pullen



Robert Dacus



Lizzy Edwards



Ryder Boles



Rachel Roth



Jessica Hicks

# MEMORY MAKER ANA GOES TO SCHOOL

Juliana, also known as Ana, is a full of life 3-year-old patient who loves anything and everything about school. She always talks about going to school and how much fun it is. Her mom was not sure if Ana would ever get to experience the fun of school. With the help of Friends of Kids with Cancer, Ana was able to get her perfect school day! Leading up the day Friends provided her and her sisters with new backpacks, school supplies and new outfits so they were ready for the day. Whenever Ana arrived to her "First Day of School" there were teachers and friends ready to greet her and make her feel welcomed along with decorations in her favorite color, purple.

When they arrived at school, it was a little overwhelming at first, but Juliana warmed up to everyone and started to have such a fun time. Ana and her 2 sisters spent a day at the College School where they sang songs, read books, made playdough, played with water beads, and learned how to write their name. Friends arranged for a photographer to document the day for them so they would be able to look back on this amazing day. There are many beautiful pictures of Ana, her mom and her sisters that will bring them smiles forever. After the school day a photobook was given to the family so they would always be able to look back and remember Ana's "First Day of School." The family had such a wonderful day, and they were able to make memories together that will last a lifetime.





Photos by: Jessica Mangus Photography

# SEASONAL **GIFTS**

Throughout the year there are so many exciting holidays and days to celebrate. Friends of Kids with Cancer tries to make these days fun for our patients and their families while they are staying in the hospital or visiting their treatment center. So far this year, Friends has done special gifts for Spring, Mother's Day and Summer.

Due to COVID-19 many of our families were unable to attend Easter Egg Hunts so we thought it would be fun to give them some eggs to do their own. Our bags included easter eggs filled with candy, bunny scratch art, slime eggs, cool stickers and other fun items. These special bags make the season more exciting and special especially during such isolated times. For Mother's Day many of our special Mom's received lotion and candles as a gift. Our moms spend so much time taking care of their kiddos and at the treatment centers, so we wanted to do something special to honor them. Our summer bags were filled with fun outdoor items such as bubbles, chalk, beach balls, sand buckets, sunglasses, color changing tumblers and more. We thought these items would help our patients and their families kick off the summer with some exciting things to do together. There will be many more treats and gifts send to our patients and families this year.



# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES OPEN BACK UP!

As Friends of Kids with Cancer re-opens our doors and slowly transitions back to inperson events, the need for volunteers continues to grow. Volunteer opportunities include running errands, delivering to treatment centers, and assisting in the office, as well as planning and executing our fundraising events. Volunteering at a special event is a fun way to connect with the organization and to directly impact the programs benefiting patients and their families. The safety of our patients, their families, and our supporters remains one of our top priorities, so FOKWC will continue to follow CDC guidelines for wearing masks and social distancing during volunteer activities.

If you would like to be "in the know" for upcoming opportunities, please join our email list at **www.friendsofkids.com/volunteer-form**. Thank you to all our volunteers, who continue to show their passion and dedication to FOKWC's mission! We'll see you soon!



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT CHRISTINE WILLIAMS

Christine is a weekly volunteer in the Friends of Kids with Cancer office. From running errands to restoring an antique dollhouse, Christine can do it all! She is willing to help the organization in any way she can, and the FOKWC staff appreciates her hard work! It is always a pleasure to see Christine's smiling face, and we are proud to introduce her in our Volunteer Spotlight...

# How long have you been volunteering with FOKWC, and how did you get involved?

I have been volunteering at Friends for almost 4 years. I started right after my son was in the Fashion Show in November of 2017.

### What does volunteering at FOKWC mean to you?

Volunteering at Friends means that we get to give back to an organization that brought so many smiles to our warrior's face during his treatment. We also feel that paying it forward and being able to help pass on the smiles and love that we received during the most difficult time of our lives is the least we can do to honor our son and all kids that fight cancer.

### What is your favorite FOKWC activity or event?

We have several events that are family favorites! Our favorite patient family events are the Halloween party at Grant's Farm and the Winter party at Sports Fusion. Our favorite fundraiser to attend is the Fashion Show! We also volunteer at the fashion show, both of my girls have been model helpers. They loved that! We also have put a team together for Walk with a Friend for the past 4 years. Our favorite Covid-friendly events from the past year have been the patient family drive-in nights.





### Tell us something about yourself!

I have been married to Jason for 21 years, and I'm a mom to 3 amazing kids: Erin (18), Stephanie (16), and our warrior, Ryan (8). I was an art teacher for a long time and quit after Ryan's diagnosis in 2017 to stay home and take care of him. He rang the bell on 11-13-19, and now I like to focus on volunteering at Friends and spending as much time with my family as possible. I still love to make art, and I have found creative outlets in various ways. I make door hangers and signs for friends and family, and I am currently remodeling a huge doll house that someone donated to Friends. It was a little outdated, and I am trying to spruce it up to pass on some smiles. That has been a lot of fun. Most important, though, is my time with my family. We are so blessed, and we don't take one second for granted anymore.

Friends of Kids with Cancer has been a huge part of our lives as a patient family and beyond. I love the staff! Every time we go into the office we are greeted with hugs and smiles. I love my time in the office, making deliveries to the hospitals, and shopping for the patients. Thank you to all the staff at Friends and to everyone who donates their time and money to help pass on smiles. It made my son's battle a little easier when he had toys, snacks, and fun events to look forward to during his treatment.



We are young professionals and with the joys of childhood still fresh in our minds, we support Friends of Kids with Cancer in exciting and unique ways.

Our mission is to provide an enthusiastic and energetic base of young professional supporters and future leaders for Friends of Kids with Cancer.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Kristen Jones, President Jamie Ebel, Vice President Natalie Condon, Vice President Joey Venturella, Treasurer Danielle Pudlo, Secretary Kim Wisdom, Friends Liason

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE Young friends board

Like everyone else, the Young Friends of Kids with Cancer Board has tried to stay busy with virtual events until we can safely gather in person again. For the past year and a half, we have traded our big galas, like Voodoo in the Lou at The Fox, for virtual experiences that were so successful, we might see them on our future calendars! During the 2020 holiday season, we challenged our social media followers' creativity with the Deck the Doors holiday door decorating contest. We then began 2021 with a successful Sock It To Cancer sock drive, with Nike & Coca-Cola as corporate partners, and collected over 1,700 pairs of socks. Recently, we developed National Day Celebrations, where the YF Service Committee delivers treats to patients in our local hospitals, like yummy Hot Box Cookies in celebration of National Chocolate Chip Day. We are so grateful to everyone who participated and made these new events thrive, but we are thrilled that it is finally time for our first live event since early 2020!

Our 2nd annual Chip in for Charity fundraiser will take place on Sunday, September 19, 2021 at Top Golf in Chesterfield, MO. An afternoon of food, drinks, and friends, while raising money for awesome kids and their families, is what we have all been waiting for. Please keep an eye on our social media platforms for information on how to participate in this event. Thank you for your support in helping kids with cancer... be kids!

-Jamie Ebel



## YOUNG FRIENDS 2ND ANNUAL CHRISTMAS IN JULY TOY DRIVE



generous donation of 75 toys for our Toy Closet. In all, the toy drive brought in a total of 200 toys, games, and craft sets that will be delivered to patients in all three treatment centers. "As a young professionals' board, fond memories of our youth are fresh in our minds, so it's important for us to make sure these kids have positive memories during a challenging time. One simple way we can



ensure this happens is to fill the toy closets, so that they associate the hospital, not only with treatment, but with a little fun, too," said Eileen Sokolowski, member of the Young Friends' Communication Committee. While Christmas in July has ended for 2021, the need for toys is ongoing. **Visit the FOKWC Toy Wish List at https://a.co/b1CrMt7** to make a quick, easy, and very appreciated donation.

# JOIN US FOR ART FROM THE HEART

Art from the Heart is a special fundraiser that auctions off artwork created by kids with cancer in St. Louis. Our art therapists at Mercy Children's Hospital, St. Louis Children's Hospital, and Cardinal Glennon work with patients throughout the year to create pieces for this event....pouring their hearts and souls into their masterpieces. 100% collected benefits Friends of Kids with Cancer. This year's event will be LIVE with a virtual option for bidding.

Tickets & Raffles Now Available! To register and bid, visit https://AFTH2021.givesmart.com

**Sponsorship Opportunities Now Available!** Call Friends of Kids with Cancer at 314.275.7440 or email **kim@friendsofkids.com** for more information.

**Special Thanks To Our Partner:** Mungenast Lexus of St. Louis



# 12th Annual Art from the Heart

**Date** September 30, 2021

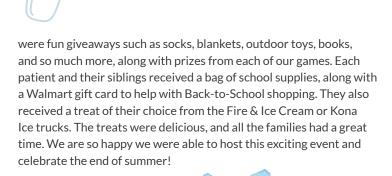
**Time** 5:30pm - 8:30pm

*Location* Mungenast Lexus of St. Louis with option for virtual bidding



# BACK TO **School**

Friends of Kids with Cancer hosts many fun events throughout the year for patients and their families. Our Back-to-School event is always a hit, and this year did not disappoint. Patients and their families socially distanced in the parking lot of the Friends of Kids with Cancer office to celebrate the end of summer and heading back to school. There were fun activities for the patients, which included a tie-dye station where they were able to dye a bandana to take home and a balloon artist who makes super special balloon characters. There





Thank you so much yor the gigt cortificate for Jace. He will use this for his living expenses in Common months. your assistance really helps ease our mind. Thank you for my gift carol! I bought an awesome lego Set that my daddy and 1 Weare with ongoing expenses. with Tace now in patient @ Stanford. a take 2-3 stept withelp. He came in unatole Cell full paragraph unet! Thankya Nalked 2 laps araind Tace, Roger + 00 Vear triends of kids with Cancer, Thank you for the love and support you've shown Levi and our family during his recent diagnois. The Thank you so much for this very generous scholarship I promise to use it and hope to make you provd ! I will continue to Strive for SUCCESS and look for word to the opportunities you have made quailable to me! This news is great, as I am finishing Chemo this week. Thank you for making my (ancer treatment as positive as it could have been! period. We hankful. Sincerely Family Jimmy Brannon

# **HONORARY & MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

### Honorary Donations

January - June 2021

ACBS Jonathan Schaben

Booker Barnes Pat Ciapciak

Beckham Bass Janet Bass

**Ryder Boles** Dexter School District R-11

Mary Cibulka Eaton Bussmann

Breanna Colombo Carroll and Joann Johnson

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# HONORARY & MEMORIAL DONATIONS

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### Memorial Donations January - June 2021

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Virginia B. Hrubes Richard and Linda Stein

Nicholas Hundelt Joan Hundelt

**Trevor Joerling** Carla Brakensiek Discovery Ridge Elementary

**Mildred Johnston** Michael and Jaqueline Karban

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Louis Ojile Mary Kim and James Ojile

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Melissa Quennoz Washington Chamber of Commerce

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**Robert Zucchini** Mary and Fred Drakesmith



16 Sunnen Drive, Suite 161 St. Louis, MO 63143 www.friendsofkids.org

# UPCOMING EVENTS

### SEPTEMER 19<sup>TH</sup> **Young Friends'** Chip in for Charity

Location: Top Golf

### SEPTEMER 30<sup>TH</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Art from the Heart

Location: Mungenast St. Louis

### OCTOBER 1<sup>TH</sup> **Nehring Blood & Toy Drive**

Location: Shrewsberry City Center

### OCTOBER 9TH Leukemia 24/7 Hosts **Todd Zick Golf Classic**

Location: Forest Park

OCTOBER 9TH **Bearded Villians Beard Competition** 

Location: Tin Roof

### **NOVEMBER 18TH - 20TH** Friends (of Kids) Giving **Campaign & Auction**

Virtual Event