

News & Updates

April 2024 | Volume 15 - Number 4

Upcoming Activities

May 19
15th Annual
Virtual Walk

About Us
Spreading Hope
Through
Psychosocial
Support SM

Learn

Support
Help Make The
Miracles Possible

Donate

CFC #59853

Giving

*It's not just about
the medicine!SM*



Come Walk with Us

On May 19th, Mattie Miracle will be hosting its 15th Awareness Walk. Being a virtual event enables our psychosocial message to reach far beyond our National Capital Area. **The goal is to have participation from all 50 States and to raise \$100,000.** Our Virtual Awareness Walk helps us generate funds to support Mattie Miracle's psychosocial programs and initiatives.

Walk with us on May 19th (10am to noon, in your time zone) and help us turn your neighborhood **Mattie Miracle ORANGE!** Participating in our virtual walk is easy: All you have to do is **WALK, SNAP, and POST** from ANYWHERE!!!!

- WALK and track your steps (on May 19th, from midnight to noon in your time zone) using a step counter/activity tracker.
- SNAP photos and take videos showing your Mattie Miracle ORANGE spirit and share it on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. Be sure to use **#MMCFWALK**.
- POST a photo of you with your total step count by noon (in your time zone) to Mattie Miracle's social media accounts or email us. Remember to use the hashtag **#MMCFWALK**.
- The top registered walkers with the greatest number of steps will win a prize.
- Rewards for participants who raise \$1,000 or more for the Foundation.

Top walkers have the chance to win:

- 1st Prize for kids/teens: \$100 gift card
- 1st Prize for adults: \$100 gift card
- 2nd Prize: \$75 gift card
- 3rd Prize: \$50 gift card

Register, purchase raffle tickets, and make a tax-deductible donation to the event, a walker, or a team.



Spreading Hope Through Psychosocial Support. SM



Co-Founder Reflections

Mattie Miracle was created and incorporated in the State of Virginia on November 2, 2009. This was only two months after Mattie died at age seven. Mattie's 14 month journey with Osteosarcoma, enabled me to understand that **Childhood Cancer is NOT just about the medicine.** Within months of starting treatment, Mattie developed clinical depression, anxiety, and medical traumatic stress. The horrors of seeing my child transform before my eyes will remain with me forever. **I take the lessons learned from our family's childhood cancer journey, to guide me as the leader of Mattie Miracle.**

Over the last 15 years, **I am deeply proud of the fact that we have changed the landscape of childhood cancer.** When we began advocating on Capitol Hill in 2010, psychosocial care was not on anyone's radar scope. After hosting the first ever Psychosocial Symposium on Capitol Hill in 2012, in which we invited the top psychosocial clinicians and researchers in the Country, we set in motion the vision for the creation of evidence based Psychosocial Standards of Care.

I am grateful for so many things, such as being connected to the top psychosocial minds in the country, collaborating with other outstanding childhood cancer non-profits to improve the quality of psychosocial care, and of course for our supporters. **With your generosity we have been able to support countless Mattie Miracles over these 15 years, through direct psychosocial support,**

Child Life Corner with Adina Levitan, CCLS



We welcome Child Life Corner to our newsletters. Each month you will hear from Mattie Miracle's Child Life Specialist, Adina Levitan. Adina will highlight topics, issues, and share stories from a child life professional's lens. Given the vital role child life plays in a child's medical and psychosocial journey, we are proud to feature this standing column.

Putting the Child Back in Childhood Cancer

Child life specialists have their “approach” or flavor to how they support children in the hospital. This is guided by our education and experience however each child life specialist will provide interventions differently. **My approach has always been to include as much silliness into the hospital room as possible.** This may mean I am cleaning up a mess at the end of an intervention or play session, but I feel this is worth it if it gives my patient the opportunity to be a child and experience a bit of normalcy within a hospital setting. **Here are some examples of how distracting, fun, and silly activities can enable children to be themselves and, in the process, help them gain control over their environment.**

Kayla is a four-year-old patient of mine who came to our hospital after months of nausea and vomiting and was found to have a brain tumor. She was started on an aggressive treatment that meant receiving chemotherapy in the morning in our clinic and then heading straight for radiation treatment at another hospital. This was done under sedation which meant she was unable to eat. Knowing this was an incredibly difficult expectation of a four-year-old, I sought out activities she could engage in that would be fully distracting, playful and silly! This resulted in hundreds of Orbeez (water beads) flying across the room as she gleefully dumped and threw them in every direction (Please note, Orbeez should be safely monitored as they can be very dangerous if ingested). **For her caregiver, he was amazed to see how a sterile hospital room could be made into a play space.** He laughed along as she mischievously scooped Orbeez across the room. **For Kayla, she was happily entertained and distracted, which enabled her to successfully complete her treatment that day.**

Max, a six-year-old boy, had been admitted after coming to the clinic in terrible condition. It was his birthday when he was admitted, and he was unable to enjoy his special day. I brought a huge piece of paper to his room and let him, and his sister go wild squirting paint filled syringes creating a beautiful art piece while also decorating the hospital walls too. He stood next to his bed for the first time in days, laughing as I rushed around trying to clean the walls (it was washable paint). His sister was so surprised at the opportunity to squirt paint across the room and Max laughed as I dodged flying paint.

Khloe, an eight-year-old patient, was stuck in the PICU while receiving her treatment that had to be closely monitored. Her team strongly encouraged her to get out of bed. I brought a giant coloring page into her room (think of it as big as a bed!) and filled paper plates with paint. Khloe and I held hands as she dipped her feet into the paint and danced across the paper creating beautiful colors and designs. Khloe loved feeling the paint as it squished between her toes. Her mother loved watching her dance freely.

I have always found that messy play resonates with patients, as it enables them to feel autonomy and control as they create, paint, and make a mess, in an otherwise sterile space. **This helps patients reclaim their childhood during cancer. As a child life specialist, I strive to put the child back into childhood cancer.**



Our Community Partners

We are deeply grateful to Client Solution Architects and The US Senate Federal Credit Union for being our Presenting Walk Sponsors. **Each of these sponsors generously donated \$10,000** to Mattie Miracle and we are grateful that they stand behind our psychosocial mission.

All of our **15 community sponsors** enable us to get closer to our \$100,000 financial goal! Together they have contributed **\$32,500** to this goal.

Keeping our Carts Rolling

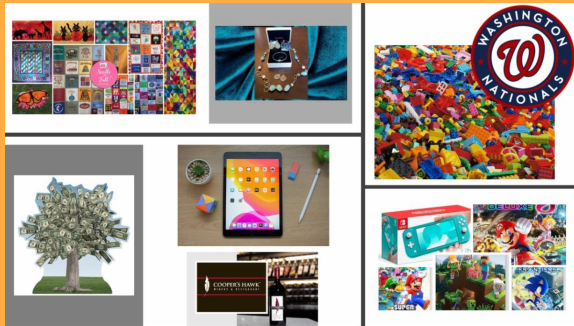
Our 13th annual Item Drive, in honor of Mattie's 22nd birthday, was a success. **The Foundation is grateful to all our supporters who donated countless toiletry items to stock our Snack & Item Carts** at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital (Washington, DC), Children's Hospital at Sinai (Baltimore, MD), and The Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health (Bethesda, MD).

Our Carts offer free items to over 2,500 families a year. We are honored to be able to provide psychosocial comfort and care through our Snack & Item Carts, and we are grateful for the generosity of our supporters.



Thank you

Chance to Win & Support the Cause



\$5 Raffle Tickets

Mattie Miracle's online raffle is open! **Tickets are only \$5.** We are featuring eight wonderful items. **All raffle proceeds go toward our fundraising goal, which enables us to support our programs and initiatives.** Raffle winners will be announced on Mattie Miracle's Facebook page at 12:30pm EDT on May 19th. Items will be mailed to our winners.

Great prizes, benefiting a great cause!

1. Nats Tickets
2. Money Tree
3. Apple iPad
4. For the Gaming Enthusiast
5. Wine Club Membership & Tasting
6. Designer Quilt Creations
7. Jazz it Up with Jewelry
8. For the Lego Lover



Mattie Miracle Cancer Foundation
is a GuideStar PLATINUM
Participant Charity



Find us on:
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