

The Shadow Buddies  
Foundation

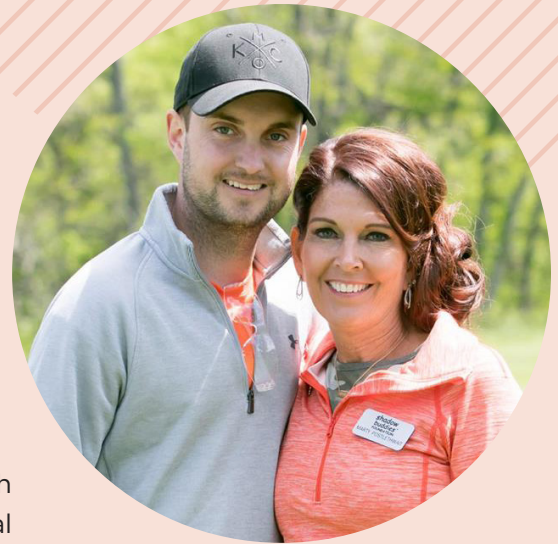
# 2023

*Annual Report*



[www.shadowbuddies.org](http://www.shadowbuddies.org)

# A Message From Our **DIRECTOR**



## *Marty Postlethwait*

As the mother of a child born with multiple congenital birth defects, I can personally speak to the importance of emotional well-being during the healing process. My son Miles, who is now 36, has undergone more than 50 surgeries; and together, we have spent countless nights in the hospital. I can attest that hope is a powerful antidote during uncertain and life-challenging times. It's essential to promote hope when dealing with fear and uncertainty that is brought on during major life changes at any age. The Shadow Buddies Foundations provides all the right tools to comfort and educate families going through a crisis situation. Our mission is to enhance the lives of families in communities, of all ethnic backgrounds and ages. When addressing the psycho-social needs of children and adults, our Buddies are supporting the well-being of individuals, and allow communities to have a hands-on teaching tool to elevate their level of care and treatment. Hope comes from the most unexpected sources. I remember the sheer joy I felt when, from beneath the hospital sheets, Miles' little thumb emerged to signal "I'm good Mom". "Thumbs up", he was saying, "it's going to be okay". And this was the inspiration behind the creation of our registered trademark.

Thanks to supporters like you, 2023 marked our 28th year providing "Miles of Smiles" and joy to children in need. It was a year like no other as we had to adjust to an ongoing pandemic; and be creative in raising funds so that we could continue to commit to our Shadow Buddies programs. We stand strong in our mission to provide Shadow Buddies to thousands of children and their families in need.



***"Shadow Buddies make great friends for the children and provide easy opportunities for medical play experience. These play sessions are very important for increasing children's feelings of control and understanding of unfamiliar, and potentially frightening, procedures."***

***—Kimberly Wallace  
Child Life Specialist***

***St. Luke's Regional Medical Center, Boise, ID***

***Over 2.2 million Shadow Buddies have been delivered over the past 28 years.  
Your support helps to build a stronger tomorrow!***

# Our MISSION

## *Our Mission of Charity and Hope*

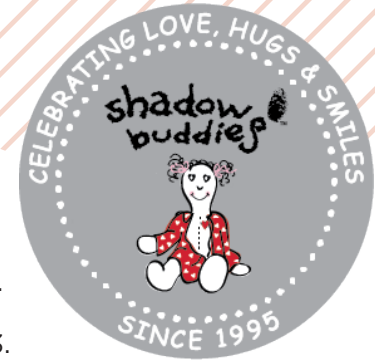
**The mission of the Shadow Buddies Foundation is to provide emotional support through education due to illness, disability or medical treatments. The foundation accomplishes this through unique programs designed to enhance the lives of children and adults. In pursuit of that mission, the foundation will continually raise funds, develop new programs and build relationships between organizations with complimentary goals.**

The Shadow Buddies Foundation is dedicated to providing support and knowledge to children with severe illnesses, disabilities, and going through a crisis situation. The Shadow Buddies' programs are the primary vehicle for acting on the Foundation's mission. Shadow Buddies are condition-specific "Buddy" dolls designed to be a friend, "just like me", to children enduring medical treatments or emotionally traumatic situations. The Buddies represent more than 36 conditions to date. Each Shadow Buddy serves to provide critical comfort to children in frightening and often confusing situations.

Crafted from muslin and carefully researched to represent a child's unique medical condition, each Buddy has a driven purpose to provide hope, love, and joy into the hearts of children and their families in need. Each year our goal is to deliver approximately 40,000 Shadow Buddies worldwide with 5,000 of the Buddies staying locally in Kansas City.



# 2023 Fact Sheet



- Founded in September 1995 and celebrated our 28th Anniversary in 2023.
- Started with 4 Shadow Buddies in 1995, there are now 36 Buddies in 2023.
- Shadow Buddies are for boys & girls and are available in light, medium, and dark skin tones.
- Shadow Buddies are in 178 hospitals, all 50 states, and 20 countries.
- 2000 Daily Points of Light Award; featured in *People* magazine, *Time*, *Woman's World*, 22 U.S. and 5 Canadian radio stations; and the featured story on the ABC talk show *The View* and NBC's *Today Show*.
- 2009 Midwest Top 50 CEO Most Influential Women of the Year; 2001 National Award winner of Women's Tylenol® - "Commitment to Care Awards" for Caring for Children, Dallas, Texas.
- Over 2.2 Million Shadow Buddies distributed to date.
- 1,550 Know Your Buddy Book™ programs distributed nationally - 412,000 children, siblings, teachers, and healthcare providers reached to date.
- 18,600 Shadow Buddy backpacks delivered to pediatric specialty camps.
- Shadow Buddies listed in the resource database of the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities in Washington D.C.
- Launched Pink Parties in 2010 - 23,550 pampered girls to date.
- Over 89,500 Tony Gonzalez Buddies distributed to children.
- Over 9,700 Tony Gonzalez Senior Buddies distributed to seniors.
- 17,500 Super Hero Buddies delivered to pediatric patients.
- Shadow Buddies teamed with Sporting Kansas City's Victory Project in 2014.
- Launched "Gus", a black Labrador therapy dog in 2023 - a partnership with the Johnson County, KS Sheriff's Department.
- Launched Courage Capes in 2019, and have donated 8,400 capes & masks to pediatric patients across the country.
- Introduced the Courageous Crew in 2020 - Fireman, Police Officer, First Responder, Physician/Nurse and Military Buddies and have distributed 5,000 to date.

***"A true hero isn't measured by the size of their strength, but by the size of their heart"***

**POPULATION SERVED**  
Caucasian - 23%  
Latino/Hispanic- 41%  
African American - 32%  
Other 4%

# Our PROGRAMS



## *Pink Parties*

Launched in 2010 at the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta-Scottish Rite, the Pink Party has become one of our most sought-after programs by Child Life Specialists and pediatric hospitals throughout the United States. We've been honored to partner with Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City and support the Great HeighTS Clinic by hosting three parties a year, pampering precious girls diagnosed with Turner Syndrome. In addition to Kansas City, Missouri, we host parties in seven other states. And we don't forget about the mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts, or any other caregivers who are always by the girls' side. They get pampered too! Our Pink Parties feature make-up application, hair styling, nail painting, and fun crafts. Each girl is given her very own Shadow Buddy wearing a tutu. With COVID restrictions lifted, we were thrilled to resume our Pink Party at the Great HeighTS Clinic in November 2023.



***23,500 girls have been pampered since 2010.***

## *Superhero Program*

In 2015, in celebration of our 20th anniversary, we launched the Superhero Shadow Buddy Program giving children the power of extra strength, courage, and love to fight their battles. Every Shadow Buddy that was delivered or donated, came with a Buddy-sized Superhero cape and mask. Through play-therapy we see how powerful it is for a child to have their own Superhero Buddy to help them get through tough days and treatments. Following our initial success, we were able to expand the Superhero Program to include the children themselves, giving them a child sized cape and mask to match their Buddy.

***17,500 Superhero Shadow Buddies have been delivered to young patients in the hospital.***

***8,400 child sized Superhero Capes and Masks have been distributed to children matching their Buddy since 2019.***



***"Sometimes, real superheroes live in the hearts of small children fighting big battles".***

## Summer Backpack Program

Each year, our goal is to provide 1,000 Backpacks to special need camps here in Kansas City and around the country. Shadow Buddies are donated to these camps as well to ease the first day jitters by welcoming the special campers. Endorsed by camp counselors and nurses at the camps, the Buddies are used to teach children about their medical condition and promote a positive self-image. Shadow Buddies Backpacks are loaded with all the camp essentials that include fun activities for boys and girls, toothbrush, comb, water bottle and of course, a specific Buddy for each camp! Their Buddy will be a year-long reminder of the new friendships they made at camp and of special memories that will last a lifetime. Funds raised from our Golf Classic and other private donations support our Backpack program.



**18,600 Shadow Buddy Backpacks  
have been delivered to camps.**



## Courageous Crew

In 2020, the Shadow Buddies Foundation introduced the “Courageous Crew” Buddies. Due to the COVID pandemic, these Buddies were launched at the perfect time to support frontline heroes. The five Buddies are a Police Officer, First Responder, Firefighter, Physician/Nurse, and Military/Veteran. These Buddies comfort the children of these public servants who are forced to be away from their families for extended periods of time. In addition, the frontline heroes can give these Buddies to children they interact with during traumatic circumstances. Our goal is to continue to highlight and expand this program for years to come. The “Courageous Crew” was instrumental in 2023 due to the affects on the ongoing pandemic.

**5,000 Courageous Crew members have been  
delivered since 2020, including 1,500 in 2023.**

***Children need more than medicine to get well and the Shadow Buddies are a wonderful part of the non-prescription portion of healthcare that helps heal young minds and hearts.”***

**—Kristie Rogozinski  
Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, Orlando, FL**



# Our EVENTS



## *Magical Flight to the North Pole*

In December, some Christmas magic helped over 50 terminally ill and medically-challenged children receive airline boarding passes with the destination being the North Pole. Accompanied by a parent, these special children boarded an airplane and were greeted by the pilot and his flight crew specially dressed for the occasion. The flight took off and flew around the city for 45 minutes while other family member and countless volunteers waited for the children to land and enter the “North Pole” — a winter wonderland in a separate location of the terminal. They were greeted by professional sports team mascots, choirs, superheros, and princesses. Santa made a grand entrance with his motorcade and Secret Service. Lots of goodies to eat, activities, and excitement for the entire family was provided for this special holiday event. Each child, and their siblings, received a huge bag of toys from Santa and a special Shadow Buddy that had been wrapped with love, and donated from businesses in the community. The North Pole and Holiday Hugs toys that are provided to medically-challenged children were made possible by our wonderful volunteers, staff, board members, and community partners. We are very grateful for our new partnership with Delta Airlines, who sponsored the 2023 Magical Flight.

## *Holiday Hugs Program*

In October of each year, we kick off our annual “Holiday Hugs Toy Drive” that provides thousands of toys, Shadow Buddies, and dinner to hundreds of Kansas City metro families. The toys are distributed to families, shelters, and other like-minded non-profits that are passionate about helping medically-challenged children and families in need during the holidays. We adopt close to 600 families in our community to provide gift bags of toys and goodies. In 2023 we once again had such an overwhelming response from our Board Members and community businesses, that we were able to donate additional toys to stock the shelves of other agencies in our community. This year we truly sprinkled lots of magic and granted holiday wishes to children all across the Kansas City area.



**Over 27,400 families have enjoyed our Holiday Hugs Programs in Kansas City. 1,500 Children with the Fantasy Flight to the North Pole.**



## Annual Benefit Gala & Auction “Scoring A Victory For Children”

Since 1996, Shadow Buddies - “Scoring a Victory for Children” has proved to be our largest and most successful fundraiser of the year. Proceeds from the evening’s event allow our Foundation to nurture current programs while also providing funds to develop new ones to fit the needs of the kids and seniors we serve worldwide. Each year brings a new and exciting theme to our fall event, so we encourage everyone to come “dressed to impress” for the Gala. Our live and silent auctions, along with the great food and entertainment, are sure to guarantee our guests a memorable evening. Each year the Miles Award is presented to a deserving Individual, Board Member, or Volunteer in our community. The Miles Award that stands for: **M**AGNIFICENT - **I**NDIVIDUAL - **L**ENDING - **E**XTRA **S**MILES and is named after co-founder Miles Postlethwait. We celebrated our 28th Annual Gala in 2023, at the Marriott Hotel in Overland Park, KS. With our hosts comedian David Naster and radio personalities Ponch & Nikki from 99.7 The Point, we raised over \$100,000 to help spread “Miles of Smiles”! Make sure to save the date for our 29th Annual Gala which will be held on Thursday, September 19, 2024.



**Over the past 28 years, we have raised over 1.4 million dollars for our programs from our Annual Gala**



## One Lap of America

We have been honored to be selected as the Charity of Choice for the racing Team of Scott Donaghue and Jay Dee Krull as they compete in One Lap of America. They drive through several states and numerous racetracks, covering over 4,750 “Miles for Smiles”. Pledges of at least 1 penny per mile (\$50.00) are made for this amazing event. 100% of all monies pledged go to the Shadow Buddies Foundation.

**Over the last 4 years, their efforts have raised over \$35,000.**

***“There is much more involved in treating children than just a hospital bed and some medicine. In many cases, it is the prayers and thoughtfulness of people ... and your “Buddies” are just the right ingredients for a medical cure.”***

**—Ouida Gnall**

**St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital, Memphis, TN**





## Shoot for the Kids – A Clay Target Event

Launched in 2016, the “Shoot for the Kids” clay target event is one of the most thrilling events put on by the Shadow Buddies Foundation. Each year, teams from around the Kansas City metro area come together to raise money for our “Courage Capes – Capes for Kids” program. Our goal is to raise \$40,000 to support medically-challenged children battling life-threatening conditions and going through various medical treatments. Our “Courage Capes” provide children with a child size Superhero Cape and mask, and allows them to do play therapy to become the hero they truly are, while battling their medical condition. This is a sell-out event and a great day of food, friends, and fun on the course.

***Proceeds from our “Shoot for the Kids” event has allowed over 29,000 children to benefit from our “Courage Capes” and masks program***



## Birdies, Bogies & Buddies

Teeing off in 2009, “Birdies, Bogeys and Buddies” Golf Tournament has become one of the most popular tournaments in the Kansas City area. The funds raised from the tournament benefit the Shadow Buddies Foundation Summer Backpack Program that supports medically-challenged children attending specialty camps and summer youth programs through the Armourdale Renewal Association. The event is hosted by local Kansas City favorites and professional athletes such as Tony Gonzalez, Matt Besler, and Ryan Succop. Golfers enjoy a day filled with lunch, cocktails and a silent auction.

***18,600 Backpacks have been donated to specialty camps in Kansas City.***



## Pickleball Tournaments

This is a fun way to raise money for Shadow Buddies and we have had such good results because of the faithful Pickleballers and their dedication to helping with spread the word about Shadow Buddies. We’ve been doing this for 7 years and always fill up our tournaments in record time. **To date, we have raised over \$18,000** for the Shadow Buddies Foundation programs. The love of the game and the great heart of our followers allow us to reach families and children who are going through tough times. A big thank you to Crystal Ansley and John Ploehn for all their dedicated efforts each year.



# 2023

## Board Members

### *Board of Directors*

**Marty Postlethwait**

Chief Executive Officer / Co-Founder

**Scott Donaghue**

Board President  
Retired

**Wendy Diskin**

Board Vice President  
Re/Max State Line

**Sandra Watts**

Secretary  
Rouse, Frets, White, Goss, Gentile, and  
Rhodes, P.C.

### *Board Members*

**Tanner Burns**

Young Adult Advisory President

**James Butler**

Wallace, Saunders, Austin, Brown & Enoch

**Tyler Cordel**

Hallmark Cards, Inc.

**Jean Hansen**

Umbrella Managed Systems

**Robert Hellweg**

Aristocrat Motors

**JayDee Krull**

Garmin, International

**Michelle Pool**

Terracon

**Travis Richey**

Richey Real Estate Group

**Clay Roberts**

Turner Construction

### *Board Advisors*

**Beth Foraker**

Retired Shadow Buddies Employee

**Greg Hellbusch**

Turner Construction

**Anne Peterson-Brunk**

Anne Peterson Productions

**Miles Postlethwait**

Shadow Buddies Foundation

### *Honorary Advisors*

**T.J. Carrie**

Indianapolis Colts, NFL

**Tony Gonzalez**

NFL Hall of Famer

**Khiry Shelton**

Sporting KC, MLS

# Major SPONSORS

99.7 The Point

Affinity Group Osage

Allied Construction

Anne Peterson-Brunk Foundation

Aristocrat Motors

Blue Cross Blue Shield Kansas City

Capitol Federal Foundation

Central Bank of the Midwest

City of Olathe

David Shapiro Family Fund

Delta Airlines

Diamond Direct

Diamond Financial

Dr. Michael Klein, DDS

Edgemoor -Clark Construction

Evardy

Family Investment Center

Garmin International

Henderson Engineering

Hollister, Incorporated

JC Nichols Trust Foundation

JE Dunn Construction

KC Exotic Car Club

Kelly Construction

Kendra Scott

Late Entry Motorsports

Long Motor Company

McCown Gordon

MDRT Foundation

MTS Trucking

National Charity League

Oak Star Bank

OHM

Ponch & Nikki

Pratt Industries

Prime Investments

ProDesign Contractors

Purity Wellness Center

Scheels

Seal-O-Matic Paving

Sporting Kansas City - Victory Project

Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation

Umbrella Managed Systems

Walmart Foundation & Employees

Wallace, Saunders, Austin, Brown & Enochs

*“Life’s Journey is better with a Buddy by your side.”*

***“This Foundation provides comfort, emotional support, and education to both children and families during difficult times, which is an incredibly important component to caring for our patients and their loved ones.”***

**—Jenny Inghram  
Relational Marketing Manager  
The University OF Kansas Hospital**



The Shadow Buddies Foundation  
14700 W. 107th Street, Suite 100  
Lenexa, KS 66215  
Phone (913) 642-4646 | Fax (913) 642-4233  
buddies@shadowbuddies.org

[www.shadowbuddies.org](http://www.shadowbuddies.org)