

ANNUAL
REPORT

2018

SPECIAL BUDDIES FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN

shadow
buddies
FOUNDATION

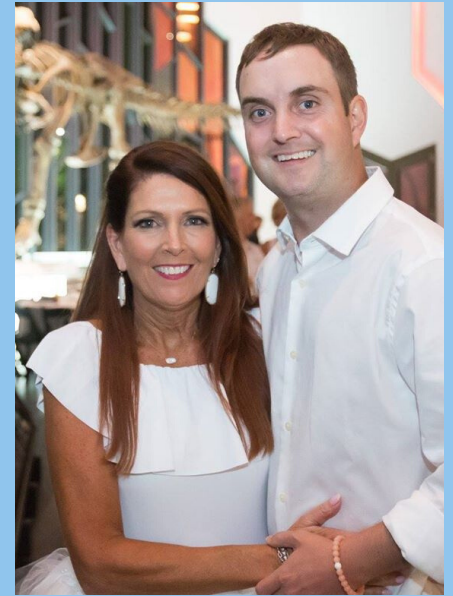


A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Treatment options and hospital facilities are becoming increasingly more sophisticated. With each passing year in the United States, children and adults have access to more effective treatments and better medications. The good news is that more patients are surviving diseases, injuries and conditions that were previously incurable. The bad news is that these patients rarely receive treatment for the psychological and emotional effects of undergoing the challenge of illness.

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 has undergone more than 42 surgeries, and together, we have spent countless nights in the hospital. Despite his trials, Miles has maintained a sunny, positive outlook on life, even when life wasn't easy for either of us. Every parent of a medically challenged child shares that moment of feeling out of control of the situation, and I will never forget mine. Miles was four, and after a very difficult surgery, I found myself hovering over his still body, desperate for a sign that he would be okay. Hope comes from the most unexpected sources, and I remember the sheer joy I felt when, from beneath the hospital sheets, his little thumb emerged to give me the all-clear. Thumbs up, he was saying, it's going to be okay.

Thanks to supporters like you, 2018 marked another successful year of providing hope and joy to children in need. We hosted a number of great events, including our successful 23rd Annual "Wild at Heart" benefit gala. We are proud to continue our mission of charity and hope! As always, our supporters make all the difference to us. We hope that you will continue working with us on our mission to provide Shadow Buddies to all children who need them in the coming years!



OUR MISSION OF CHARITY AND HOPE...

The Shadow Buddies Foundation is dedicated to providing support and knowledge to children with severe illnesses and disabilities. The Foundation accomplishes this through unique programs designed to enhance the lives of children and adults by fostering compassion and awareness of differences with our line of 31 condition-specific "Shadow Buddy" dolls. Crafted from muslin and carefully researched to represent a child's medical or emotional condition. Shadow Buddies offer seriously ill or medically challenged children the companionship of a friend "just like me." Each year we deliver approximately 40,000 Shadow Buddies worldwide with 5,000 of the buddies staying here locally in KC.



OUR PROGRAMS...



PINK PARTY

Launched in 2010 at the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta-Scottish Rite, the Pink Party is quickly becoming one of our most sought after programs by Child Life Specialists and pediatric hospitals throughout the United States. Currently Pink Parties are being held in Kansas City and hosted by numerous sponsors such as Sporting KC. Each year we continue to host parties in seven different states across the country. The day is all about pampering girls who are in the hospital or receiving treatment in outpatient facilities. We don't forget about the mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts or any other caregiver who are always by the girls side, they get pampered too! The pampering includes a makeup station, a hair and wig station, as well as a nail polish station! Each girl is given her very own Pink Party Buddy complete with a pink tutu handmade by our wonderful volunteers! To find out more about the Pink Party program, please contact Marty Postlethwait at marty@shadowbuddies.org or (913) 642-4646

HOLIDAY HUGS

In October of each year we kick off our annual "Holiday Hugs & Toy Drive Program" that provides toys, Shadow Buddies and dinner to hundreds of Kansas City metro families. We team up with local businesses and restaurants to collect toys for the holidays that will then be distributed to local families, shelters and other like-minded non-profits that are passionate about helping children. As part of the toy and gift distribution, The Shadow Buddies Foundation staff along with the board of Directors and volunteers visit a Kansas City shelter to make dinner, hand deliver the toys and spend time with the children and families utilizing the services of the chosen organization. If we are lucky, Santa himself will stop by to surprise the kids!



SUMMER BACKPACK PROGRAM

Each year, we provide more than 1,000 Backpacks to special need camps around the country. Shadow Buddies are used at specialty camps to help 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 image. Shadow Buddies Backpacks are loaded with camp supplies, fun activities, and of course, a condition specific Shadow Buddy! Each child takes a Buddy home and has something to share with the family and friends. A year-long reminder of the new friendships they made at camp!

RESCUE BUDDY PROGRAM

The Rescue Buddy entails supplying a Buddy to every child who comes in contact with EMS personnel through illness, injury or who are simply scared due to the emergency situation. The rescue workers use the Buddies to extract information from the child and help explain the extent of the injury/illness. They also use the Buddy to give the child reasonable expectations of what will happen upon arrival to the hospital. The Rescue Buddy will provide comfort, act as a companion and a partner that understands what they are going through. The Rescue Buddy comes with a soft blanket to help comfort that child. The Buddies quickly calm the child and allow them to focus on their Buddy which makes it easier for the EMS to make their assessment. Overall, the workers feel that the Rescue Buddy gives them a unique tool to improve pediatric care right from the beginning.





FANTASY FLIGHT

Many kids dream of traveling to the North Pole to meet Santa. In 2018, Shadow Buddies partnered with United Airlines to host the first Fantasy Flight since 2001. In December of 2018, 50 terminally ill and medically challenged children received their boarding passes to take part in this magical day. The children boarded a United Flight, and flew to the "North Pole" where they were welcomed by Santa and Mrs. Claus themselves! The terminal they had recently departed from was transformed into a Winter Wonderland where professional athletes, mascots, superheros, and princesses were there to greet them! They celebrated with fun festivities, games, crafts and where given Christmas presents from Santa! Each toy that was provided for the children was donated through the numerous toy drives hosted by Shadow Buddies leading up to the event. The "North Pole" and holiday magic was made possible because of our wonderful vounteers, staff, board members, and an amazing partnership with United.



SUPERHERO PROGRAM

In 2015, The Shadow Buddies Foundation celebrated their 20th anniversary and commemorate 20 years of spreading "Miles of Smiles" to children everywhere, we launched the Super Hero Buddy program. Every Shadow Buddy delivered, donated, shipped and ordered came with a Buddy sized super hero cape and mask. Working with children for so long has taught us how important it is for a child newly diagnosed with an illness, living with a disability or experiencing an emotional situation to feel like a Super Hero. In our eyes, they are real super heroes! The Super Hero Buddy program was so successful that we decided to expand the program into 2016 to incorporate the children who are also going through various treatments.



WILD AT HEART

Our 23rd Celebration "Wild at Heart - A Safari Adventure" held at the Double Tree by Hilton was a huge success! The Shadow Buddies Foundation raised over \$40,000 to help spread Miles of Smiles! We can't thank those who participated enough for the continuous support to our foundation! A special thank you to Klein & Walker Orthodontics, as well as Hollister Inc. and all of our sponsors and volunteers. Our dear friend and Shadow Buddies Lead Volunteer of 2018, Carrie Molz, recieved the Miles Award. We truly miss her friendship and the tremendous impact she had on our community. Tickets are on sale now for our 24th Annual "An Evening with KC Crown Jewels" on Friday, September 20th 2019. This year's event will be helt at the Double Tree by Hilton in Overland Park. We welcome back our co-hosts Matt and Amanda Besler. Don't miss our silent & live auction and other surprises we have in store! Save the date and purchase your tickets at Shadowbuddies.org



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