

# The Shadow Buddy System.

“I really wish I had a friend that was just like me.”

That simple sentence, from then-6-year-old Miles Postlethwait, kick-started Shadow Buddies, a Lenexa, Kansas, based organization that has now touched the lives of more than a million kids around the world.

Miles was born prematurely with mid-line congenital birth defects and underwent so many surgeries that mom, Marty, says the family lived in the hospital for the first five years of his life. It was during a day home from school when he made that fateful wish for a friend that reflected his own medical conditions.

“We sat down and created these buddies, and he said, ‘Yes, I would love a buddy that has a scar from open heart surgery,’ I would love a buddy that has an ostomy,’ and ‘I want something that I can hold onto when you and dad can’t be there,’” Marty says.

That was nearly 24 years ago, and “we never looked back,” she adds.

The “buddies” were stuffed figures that reflected real medical conditions. After designing some prototypes, Marty found support through community resources and launched Shadow Buddies, an organization dedicated to providing support and knowledge to children with

