

Shadow Buddies

By Linda Cruse and Molly DeCoursey

Photos Courtesy of Shadow Buddies



Marty Postlethwait, Founder and Executive Director of Shadow Buddies, knows first-hand the positive impact her foundation has on children and families. Her son, Miles, was born premature with midline congenital birth defects.

Miles has undergone dozens of surgeries and treatment procedures. Her life of mothering him was filled with endless days and nights in hospital rooms, doctors' offices and recovery waiting rooms.

When Miles was four, she met him in the recovery room after a particularly long surgery. She leaned over him, whispering his name to wake him, to let him know she was there and loved him. She asked him again and again if he was okay, but in his drugged half-sleep, she didn't know if he could hear her.

Then a movement caught her eye: his thumb, poking up from beneath the white sheets. It was his answer to her whispers, his sign to her that he heard her and that, yes, he was okay.

Thumbs up. Everything was okay.

And so, it became their sign, and now it's the sign of the Shadow Buddies, their trademark. Every child who owns a Buddy carries a reminder of Miles' hope and positivity that everything will be okay. "Having the opportunity to take a situation in our life and turn it around to help others, has truly been a blessing for me," said Marty.

Mission of Charity and Hope

The Shadow Buddies Foundation is a children's charity 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 their 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." Marty said, "We want children to understand that it's OK to be different and their Buddy will always be by their side."

The mission of the Shadow Buddies Foundation is to provide emotional support for severely ill children. The Kansas City charity programs provide this support through the education of children and adults regarding illness, disability, or medical treatments. The Shadow Buddies Foundation accomplishes this mission through unique educational and charitable programs designed to enhance the lives of children and adults while increasing compassion and understanding of diversity and taking suggestions for new buddies. In pursuit of that mission, the foundation will continually raise funds, develop new programs, and build relationships between organizations with complementary goals. In short, their primary focus is supporting the children through charity and education. Marty adds, "Our Shadow Buddies provide the much needed hope, love and joy to medically challenged children."

Local, National and Global Impact

Shadow Buddies was started in Kansas City in 1995. Locally they visit hospitals, like Children's Mercy and University of Kansas Health Systems, with Chiefs players Tony Gonzalez and Travis Kelce. Shadow Buddies has grown immensely to now have a national and global impact, shipping Buddies all over the U.S. and the world. More than one million children have enjoyed the comfort of their buddy. Shadow Buddies also plans a Fantasy Flight with their partner, United Airlines, to the North Pole during the holidays for terminally ill children leaving from the Kansas City airport. "Having a child born with congenital birth defects, truly makes you take each day one day at a time and not for granted," said Marty.

24th Annual Benefit Dinner: The Crown Jewels of Kansas City

Join Shadow Buddies on September 20th for its 24th Annual Benefit Dinner at the Doubletree by Hilton in Overland Park. This year's theme is "The Crown Jewels of Kansas City." The largest fundraiser for the year, the event is hosted by Matt and Amanda Belser, Sporting KC Ambassadors. Cody Holycoke, KMBC 9 news anchor, is the emcee. Entertainment will be provided by Missy Koonce. Please help the organization make it a great success and spread joy to children who need it most.

Reach Out to Shadow Buddies

Help them bring awareness of various conditions to the public and bring hope and comfort to sick or disabled children. You can volunteer as an individual, an organization and/or donate. Support Shadow Buddies charity by calling The Shadow Buddies Foundation at 913-642-4646, donating online or visiting www.shadowbuddies.org.

