



# THE HOPE REPORT

LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SOFIA'S HOPE

SUMMER 2022 EDITION

## First International Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Conference Slated for October 21-22 in Cincinnati

It is with great pride that we announce the First International Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Conference is slated for October 21-22, 2022. The meeting, which is jointly sponsored by the Cincinnati Children's Heart Institute, Oishei Children's Hospital/Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, University at Buffalo, and Sofia's Hope Inc. will be held in Cincinnati, OH at The Westin.

The purpose of this first-ever conference is to bring together thought-leaders, practitioners, and advocates in the field of pediatric cardio-oncology for a uniquely focused session. Topics to be covered include:

- Emerging therapies in pediatric cardio-oncology, including ICI, targeted therapies, CAR T-cell
- Approach to therapy in patients with cardiotoxicity
- Cardiometabolic syndrome and cardiovascular risk factors in survivors of pediatric cancer
- Cardio-protective strategies in cancer therapy
- Surveillance for cardiotoxicity
- Case presentations and patient discussion with experts in the field of cardio-oncology

The Steering Committee is world renowned and comprised of nationally and internationally recognized leaders in cardio-oncology. We anticipate attracting 150-200 participants from the international community of pediatric cardiologists and oncologists, nurses and advanced practitioners, pharmacists, trainees, and patient advocates. There are sponsorship opportunities available to support this effort. For more information, please visit: <https://www.cincyhearteducationseries.org/cardio-onc>



## Let's Send South Florida Medical Staff to Cincinnati

As the First International Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Conference comes into full focus this October, our attention turns to how to support local medical professionals gain the critical knowledge in the field of pediatric cardio-oncology, and we need your help.

Our goal is to send twelve (12) local medical professionals to the conference. These front-line nurses, nurse practitioners, clinicians, survivorship specialists and/or physician assistants are critical to the care of our little warriors but may not always receive the funding necessary for annual continued professional education.

The field of pediatric cardio-oncology is quickly emerging in its prominence and the conference course directors Dr. Steven Lipshultz and Dr. Thomas Ryan are the world's leading authorities. This conference will be one for the records in terms of expanding and advancing the research in this space. We need to ensure the medical community in our own backyard is part of this sentinel moment.

Two scholarships will be provided to each partner hospital, and we are looking to raise approximately \$4,000. To make a gift, please scan the QR code.



Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

As summertime draws near, it's incredible to consider that things are looking closer to normal with each passing day. COVID remains a topic of interest with over 45,000 cases being reported in the US daily. However, as we reach "herd immunity" of those diagnosed coupled with vaccinations and boosters, it seems the town is bustling with activity.



While mask mandates have been widely lifted, it's a good moment to consider that masks are part of the arsenal of our little warriors. The mask is an effective tool to keep germs and infections at bay. And when our kiddos are in the midst of treatment a simple cold, much less COVID, can create major problems.

We here at Sofia's Hope have always leaned on our hospital partners for guidance, and we are excited to report that in-hospital visits are slowly resuming for Healing Arts and ClayWorld. We hosted our first in-person field trip to Zoo Miami—the first one in two years' time, and it was a wonderful day for kiddos, families and volunteers alike.

Our services are in hybrid mode and flexible to reach families and their levels of comfort—Healing Arts and ClayWorld are also accessible online; as is quarterly Zoo Miami educational outreaches; summer camp is virtual; and Study Buddies remains an online resource.

That's what we do in this community—each and every day, we carve out a small space for HOPE by making sure South Florida families know they are not alone in their childhood cancer journey. It takes a village, and we are glad you are part of ours.

Handwritten signature of Marta Blanco.

Marta Blanco  
President & Founder

Sofia's Hope Is Looking for Office Space

Sofia's Hope is looking for donated office space in the South Miami area. Gigi de Troyban, commercial realtor, is donating her time to help find us a new space, so any leads of possible locations or folks to talk to will go a long way. Please email Marta at info@sofiashope.org with any referrals or information.



Ms. de Troyban is qualified with over 33 years of experience in all sectors of real estate, business brokerage and consulting, and finance industries. Aside from a business owner, she is a wife and mom, and actively involved in several ministries and community service organizations, that personally touch her heart and the community's, Sofia's Hope being one of them. We are grateful to Gigi for her help!

Sofia's Hope Board of Directors

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An Appreciation of Wine & Cheese, and YOU

Sofia's Hope 9th Annual Wine & Cheese: An Online Auction Presented by the **Miami Cancer Institute** was held April 27th thru May 1st and featured a silent auction, live streaming, and a virtual wine appreciation class.

The auction boasted over 90 items from entertainment to jewelry and fine goods, to hotels and restaurant packages and more. Live streaming featured Sofia's Hope founder and president, Marta Blanco, and snippets from the medical team and families of Nicklaus Children's Hospital sharing their appreciation of the Sofia's Hope community.

The wine appreciation class, hosted by Wines for Humanity was held Thursday night on April 28th and was included for both sponsorships and HOPE Sponsor ticketholders. Participants received a special delivery of three full bottles of wine shipped to their front doors. The night-of instructor and wine connoisseur Dana Lee Csutoros, Senior Wine Advisor, skillfully led us through wine education and appreciation indeed. It was a Happy Hour from the comfort of our homes and all in the name of childhood cancer.

Overall, we raised \$35,000 and it is thanks to a few groups. First, let's acknowledge our event sponsors and community partners:



Finally, to our HOPE Sponsors, and everyone who donated goods or services toward the auction, to those who made a donation toward the effort and to all to participated in the silent auction itself, THANK YOU. We appreciate you.

Save the Date for Reason to Run 5K

Save the date for our 15th Annual Reason to Run 5K on Saturday, October 29th at the beautiful Deering Estate. Event founders and Sofia's Hope Board Directors, Jorge and Linda Martinez, work tirelessly every year to make the event bigger and better—and this year is already shaping up to be outstanding.

The event includes a timed 5K with official t-shirt and custom medal, and a finisher's festival brimming with free snacks and lite bites, community partner booths, music, games, raffle, photo booth and more.

Stay tuned for more details. If you are interested in sponsoring this event, please reach out to info@sofiashope.org.



Here's a shout out to our **HOPE Sponsors:**

- Belen Astudillo
- Sandra Berenguer
- Carlos Blanco
- Ruth Bohorquez
- Jordan Cassidy
- John Engler
- Gilbert Chediak
- Mirta Chediak
- Margarita Garcia
- Jessica Jones
- Ana Kokenge
- Cynthia Lopez
- Marmol Export USA
- Hector & Ariella Midolo
- Laura Peredo
- Gloria Prado
- Julianne Portuondo
- Jose Restrepo
- Sergio & Aslynn Tigera
- Elsa Romero
- Mimi Marquez
- Linda Martinez
- Carmen Perez
- Mary Lou Schwitalla
- Victoria Tercilla
- Melissa Wetzel
- Ziad Khatib





# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## ANNOUNCING: Sofia's Hope Program Coordinator

We are proud to announce we recently hired a Program Coordinator. Jennifer Allen, former Board member, long-time Sofia's Hope supporter and riding coach to both Sofia and Gabi, is now a key member of our team, working closely with our President, Marta Blanco.

*"While hard to let go, our growth demands we expand the team. Jennifer's help will allow me to focus on other areas of the organization while still being involved in program development. Looking forward to working with her."*

Marta Blanco, Founder & President

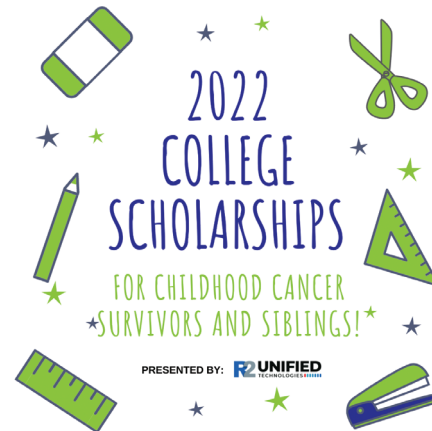
Jennifer is responsible for managing all patient and family programs including logistics, communications, staffing activities, volunteers, etc. Welcome aboard, Jennifer!



## Congratulations to 2022-2023 Scholarship Winners!

This year we received over 150 completed applications for the Sofia's Hope Scholarship Program which provides scholarships to childhood cancer patients/survivors and siblings. Recipients receive a \$2,000 allowance for tuition/room and board, plus a laptop. Three recipients for each scholarship were named, plus an Honorable Mention (HM) who receives a laptop. Our thanks to the Review Committee and to **R2Unified Technologies** for providing the laptops.

Sofia Blanco Scholarships	Gabriela Blanco Scholarships
Preston Kilzer	Jeremy Lejeune
Emma Harrison	Laneah Hunker
Michael O'Keefe	Nicholas Wesoloskie
Alyssa Beggs HM	Charlie Schwartz HM



### SOFIA'S HOPE NEW CONTACT NUMBERS:

Sofia's Hope Main #: (786) 730-4545

Jennifer Allen, Program Coordinator: (786) 730-9405

Marta Blanco, Founder & President: (786) 730-9440



## UPDATE: Art Programs Returning for In-Person Events

As the world returns to the days before COVID, so do the hospitals we support, albeit cautiously. In March our art therapist, Eliane Cristian, went back to MCI for a special Spring Break event and is now scheduled to return monthly. Ms. Cristian is also scheduled for an in-person visit to NCH at the Michael Fux Center in June. She continues her virtual sessions but is thrilled to be meeting and supporting patients in-person. And in May, ClayWorld returned to NCH after over two years away! Jorge Cruz, owner of ClayWorld, said "going back felt so good...being able to interact with the kids again was amazing!". Thanks to **The Kirk Foundation** for their ongoing support of the art program!



## Field Trip to Zoo Miami in April

It's hard to believe it's been over two years since our last in-person field trip to Zoo Miami, but we are back! On April 7th, Sofia's Hope hosted 13 families, almost 50 people, for a fun day at the zoo. The zoo educational team gave us a guided tour of the Africa Exhibit, we fed the giraffes, and later fed ourselves lunch at the Oasis Café. Afterwards the families enjoyed the zoo on their own and left with their souvenir Adopts. Our thanks to the **Miami Cancer Institute** for their sponsorship of the program!



## Our Support Continues to Expand

Starting this February Sofia's Hope is supporting families facing a childhood cancer diagnosis through Vitas Healthcare. We provide ClayWorld clay kits, Adopt-An animal crates, Holiday gift bags and more. Families will also be able to register for our virtual programs including art therapy, summer camp, visits to the zoo, etc. As always, patients and siblings are always welcome. A nod of thanks to Maria Maggi, previously Child Life Specialist at NCH for reaching out to us and bridging this partnership!





# IN THE COMMUNITY

## A HEAT Celebration

Serendipity is thought to be a fortunate accident; it's when you find good things without looking for them. And that's the only way we can explain how Sofia's Hope was able to get floor seats to the March 26th Heat game for a deserving family.

Lucca got his wish of celebrating not only his birthday but also his soon to be end of treatment with his favorite team!! Thanks to the **Miami Heat Organization** for their donation and support of Sofia's Hope. His smile says it all!



## Thank You Early Childhood Center!

Earlier in the year an NCH nurse practitioner connected us to the **Early Childhood Center** in Coral Gables who wanted to host a fundraiser in honor of a student childhood cancer warrior. It was our joy and privilege to be present at their Parade and cheer these kids on. They raised approximately \$6,000 in support of our patient and family programs! We cannot fight childhood cancer alone so it's partnerships like this that make all the difference.



## Vilomah Award Presented to Our President

On April 5th our President and Founder Marta Blanco was honored with the Vilomah Award by Commissioner Raquel Regalado. This award is given to parents who have been inspired by the loss of a child and taken action to positively influence the community. Ms. Blanco is grateful to Commissioner Regalado and humbled by this recognition. Many thanks to Amanda Maldonado for introducing Ms. Regalado to Sofia's Hope.



## Bieber Birthday Celebration

John Engler first contacted Sofia's Hope after Googling South Florida childhood cancer foundations. He was looking to donate four tickets plus Uber gift card, food, and beverages to the April 13th Justin Bieber concert to a child facing a childhood cancer diagnosis and we delivered. Working with Child Life at UM/alex's place we offered the tickets to Yaren who was celebrating not only her birthday but her cousin's, too. They had a "unbieleberble" time!!! Thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Engler for making this possible.



## Social Media Milestone!

In early April, Sofia's Hope reached 2,000 followers on Instagram and we continue to expand our reach. We appreciate all who follow us and help spread the word on our mission, programs and events. If you don't yet follow us, now's a great time start! Check us out at <https://www.instagram.com/sofiashope/>

## Mother's Day Boost

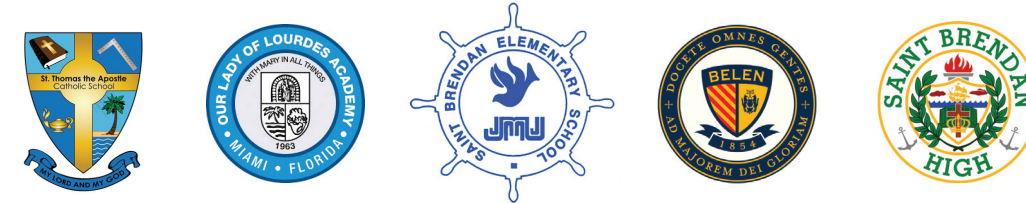
Monish Budhrani, owner of Pandora at London Square and Southland Mall, generously donated three (3) Moments Snake Chain Slider Bracelets along with \$50 gift cards to celebrate three amazing Momcologists for Mother's Day.

These moms deserve to be acknowledged for all they do for their child in treatment as well as the siblings and entire family. We see you, we support you, we are here for you!



## Strong School Support Continues

We want to thank the following schools for their support this year. It is only because of their help that we can make children in our community facing a childhood cancer diagnosis feel loved and cared for. Together students and families from these schools have donated almost 150 gift bags, 100 arts & crafts kits, hundreds of dumplings, tissue boxes and fun band aids as well as small toys for clinic Treasure Chests. We have also received trial size toothpaste and tissue packs, lotion, and toothbrushes for our Newly Diagnosed Family Kits. THANK YOU to all who participated in their school's projects.



## DOCTalk Returns

With COVID we put our DOCTalk series on hold for a better time. When we learned of the Caring for Kids Symposium co-hosted by Miami Cancer Institute and Nicklaus Children's Hospital, we immediately joined the ranks to become a Prime Exhibitor. At the symposium, which took place on Friday, April 22nd, leading experts from the top local and national cancer care institutions reviewed the latest technologies and therapeutic approaches to challenging clinical problems and focused on evidence-based approaches to the special physical, emotional and psychological needs of pediatric cancer patients and their families. We were quite proud to have been a part of this great event!





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## Join Heroes of Hope Today: Become a Hero for Children Fighting Childhood Cancer

Heroes of Hope is a giving circle who stand hand-in-hand with Sofia's Hope to support the meaningful work of providing resources and help to childhood cancer patients and their families. With a monthly gift of only \$10 or more, Heroes of Hope donors make an impact year-round.

Since we started in 2019, Heroes of Hope have contributed over almost \$60,000. These dollars have made the difference as we have expanded our reach into Broward and Palm Beach counties, added scholarships and doubled down on our commitment to families through Treasured Moments.

We can only make this happen together. Join us.

Scan the QR code to get started today.

Let's stand together to fight childhood cancer with HOPE!

