



THE HOPE REPORT

LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SOFIA'S HOPE

SUMMER 2020 EDITION

Supporting South Florida Childhood Cancer Families Through COVID-19

The pandemic has tested our community over the last few months in a major way—and it showed how well we could adapt to the “new normal” while providing immediate and critical support to childhood cancer patients and families. As they say, “necessity is the mother of invention” and at Sofia’s Hope, we sprang to action by providing the following services, thanks to YOU:

- While physical events were cancelled from March 12th onward, we now offer art program staples: **Claymation Station** group activities and **Healing Arts** one-on-one sessions virtually. The 2020 art program is graciously funded by The Kirk Foundation. Their support is invaluable to the continuation of ongoing programs and we could not be more grateful!



How’s it going? In the words of warrior mom, Catherine Worner:

“I want to thank you for doing the Zoom class with the kids and for providing kits too. It was so therapeutic for my daughter, Molly, and for her 5 siblings to create with clay together. I know it was wonderful for the kids you taught. It does not just help pass the time; creating gives life purpose, something difficult to come by when stuck in bed, on a sofa, or in a hospital bed. It is so hard for kids who have limited mobility or lack of energy to find something to do that is not on a screen. Thank you for providing a creative outlet.”

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2020 Week of Hope is Bigger, Longer and Virtual

As a dedicated Sofia’s Hope supporter, you know the drill: Week of Hope is a time when our community comes together to support children who are currently facing a childhood cancer diagnosis. During the week we host the annual Wine & Cheese for the adults and Reason to Run 5K for kids and kids at heart. In light of the pandemic we are switching gears and turning these beloved community events into a virtual bonanza!

Wine & Cheese: An Online Auction, is an opportunity to shop for the cause from the comfort of your own home. No cocktail attire here as you peruse categories like travel, art, jewelry, outings and experiences, pets, sports and more. The auction will run several days with a (ssshhhh!) sneak peek on Thursday, October 29th and the official launch Friday, October 30th through November 1st.

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Letter from the President

Dear Friend,

I am very proud to present “The Hope Report”, our inaugural printed newsletter. This semi-annual piece allows us to expand the reach of our message and share additional insider information about upcoming events, family programming and more.

COVID-19 has definitely shaken up our outlook for 2020. Nonprofits have scrambled to cancel or postpone events, there is even more competition for grant support, and overall giving is down. Here at Sofia’s Hope, we are not immune to the affects this pandemic has reverberated throughout the community. But not all is lost—to the contrary, this pandemic has allowed us to flex our creative muscle and work with partners to shift programming activities to go virtual or proceed with limited contact to keep families safe. Family programs are only made possible by each and every one of you, as donors large and small have come forward to impact children with cancer. Fundraising is more important than ever, and this village has shown its true colors of compassion, kindness and hope.

There is much work to do, but we are making our way together. Since inception, Sofia’s Hope has provided approximately \$300,000 in support to the childhood cancer community through the mission of funding research on late effects of chemotherapy, raising awareness about childhood cancer, robust patient and family programming throughout the year.

In Sofia’s name, we stand alongside the almost 16,000 children diagnosed each year, and fight childhood cancer with HOPE. It takes a village and we are glad you are a part of ours!

Best regards,

Mark Blanco

Marta Blanco
Founder & President



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Supporting South Florida Childhood Cancer Families Through COVID-19

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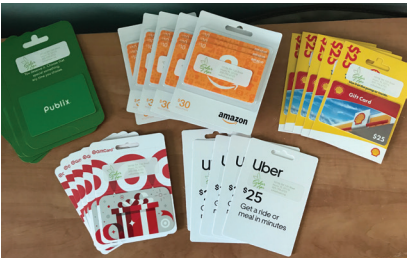
- Newly Diagnosed Family Kits and Adopt-an-Animal Zoo Miami crates remain steady and well-utilized offerings at all four South Florida childhood cancer hospitals: Holtz Children’s Hospital and UM/alex’s place, Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital, Miami Cancer Institute at Baptist Health, and Nicklaus Children’s Hospital. Our friends at The Awesome Foundation provided a grant to help us purchase much-needed items such as reusable adult and child masks, and hand sanitizers.
- We asked the Sofia’s Hope family for help recruiting masks and shields, and you answered the call! To date we have received 400 masks and 86 shields, thanks to the support of Julie Jeffries (Not Your Momma’s Vegetables), Manny Vigil (MWL Engineering), Lorena Clavijo (ICON Group Engineers), Stephanie Harris Perez (Little Palms Press) and the Alfonso and Phinney families! These vital PPE (personal protection equipment) items have been distributed across partner hospitals.
- Not only do families deal with the emotional duress and physical challenges of cancer, oftentimes this is all coupled with financial hardship as well. Multiply these “normal” issues with COVID-19 and it’s a recipe for disaster. Our Treasured Moments gift card program provides some respite as we offer families gift cards to underwrite basic necessities such as food, groceries and transportation. Social workers are given these cards in order to directly qualify families with hardship and distribute as needed. Last year we provided over \$6,000 in gift cards. To date we have already awarded over \$5,000 in gift cards, and the requests have not stopped.

Over the past couple of months, we asked you to dig deep and donate to this year-round program. Spotlight Miami kicked things off and provided a grant to help us through the year. THANK YOU to the following supporters who donated toward gift cards:

Ana Becerra	Berti Castiel	Robert Kinnion
Lourdes Alfonso	Mirta Chediak	Steve Lewis
Jennifer Allen	Cisco Matching Program	Martha Mackle
Lisa Altarac	Paola Consuegra	Linda Martinez
Erin Bauer	Eduardo Cosio	Jennifer Murphy
Manuel Beltran	Maria De Pool	Gloria Prado
Ingrid Bernal	Shannon Dearcos	Carolina Rionda
Jose Blanco	Mary DeCicco	Rafael Rodriguez
Carlos Blanco	Viviana Diaz Balsera	Sandra Rojas
Melinda Bruna	Kathy Doherty	Marilyn Ruiz
April Carlson	Cristina Espinoza-Alguera	Nuria San Juan Guerra
Sandra Carrera	Amparo Fernandez	Geri Schimmel
Lillian Castaneda	Marlén Gonzalez	Melissa Wetzal
Tanya Castaneda	Brenda Hilsberg	

We are still accepting donations for this program as we need all of the help we can get! If you would like to make a donation and support a childhood cancer family in need, please visit www.sofiashope.org.

COVID-19 has changed everything from the way we work, go to school, and live every day. Cases are on the rise once again in sunny South Florida. While the future remains uncertain, one thing is for sure, and that is that we will be here every day to continue the fight against childhood cancer with HOPE.



Special Message from Sofia’s Hope

The death of George Floyd has brought us to a tipping point of civil unrest, and rightly so. Sofia’s Hope is all about love, hope and making a positive difference in the world ...supporting all families with a child with cancer regardless of skin color, gender, or economic status.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Horsing Around at Whispering Manes

This year's Spring Horse Camp was held in February at Whispering Manes with 13 patients ranging in age from 2 to 16 years old. Everyone had a great time and as one of the parents said, "it's so nice to be outdoors and getting out of our routines."

Fast forward to summertime and we got the OK from Whispering Manes to proceed with a COVID version of Sibling Horse Camp. We are moving with great caution adhering to social distancing measures and required use of masks. And instead of a half day camp, siblings are invited to learn horsemanship and to groom and receive a private riding lesson. Sessions began on July 8th through July 29th at 1:30 and 3:00 PM.

Are you a childhood cancer family who would like to receive updates on all Sofia's Hope family programs? Please send us a quick note at info@sofiashope.org and we will make sure you receive future emails.



Families Go WILD at Zoo Miami

On Thursday, March 5th (Sofia's birthday) we hosted over 20 families at our Spring 2020 Field Trip to Zoo Miami ...it was our biggest group yet! Zoo Miami educator, Sabrina, toured us through the Asia area with focus on the Dinosaurs LIVE exhibit which was a huge hit with the little ones. Patients and families then had the opportunity to feed the camels! At the end of the day, all patients and siblings were given their souvenir Adopt-an-Animal with gift certificate for FREE annual Zoo Miami family membership, so they can go back and enjoy all the fun the zoo has to offer.



Field trips and horse camps are made possible through the generous support of the Miami Cancer Institute at Baptist Health. Not only has MCI sponsored these programs for the past two years, their support has enabled us to expand programming year-over-year. THANK YOU for your partnership!

Inaugural International Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Conference Update

Sofia's Hope spearheaded the creation of the first-ever International Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Conference Update, in conjunction with Dr. Lipschultz/University of Buffalo and Cincinnati Children's Hospital, originally slated for October 23-24, 2020. In consideration of COVID-19 pandemic, we decided to postpone the conference to 2021. We are excited to announce the new dates are set for May 7-8, 2021. The conference will be held at the Westin Cincinnati, Ohio. For more information, you may visit www.sofiashope.org.



2nd Annual Sofia & Gabriela Blanco College Scholarships Awarded

This year we received about 120 applications for our Sofia and Gabriela Blanco College Scholarships—triple the number of submissions last year. Thanks to all who applied and to our Review Committee for reviewing and identifying this year's recipients. New recipients receive a \$2,000 allowance for tuition or room/board and a laptop. Past recipients receive the full \$2,500 allowance and Honorable Mentions receive a laptop. All laptops are provided by our friends at R2 Unified Technologies. Please join us in congratulating the 2020 Scholarship Winners:

Sofia Blanco Patient/Survivor Scholarships

Emily Calabro – Auburn University
James McCoy – Florida Atlantic University
Genesis Saenz – Florida International University
Honorable Mention: Benedict Eberhagen – University of Central Florida

Gabriela Blanco Sibling Scholarships

Connor Fritsch – California State University, Fresno
Jaiden Price – Binghamton University
Allison Van Beveren – Texas A&M
Honorable Mention: Bridget Cannon – St. John's College



Honorable Mention: Benedict Eberhagen



week of
Hope

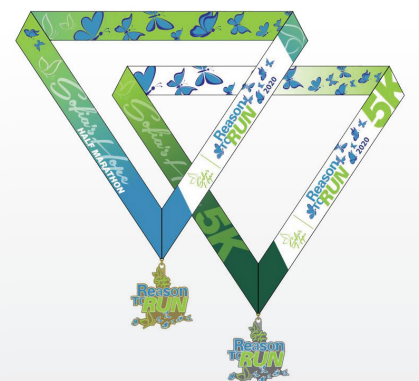
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Reason to Run: Sofia was just 13 years and 1 month of age when she passed away. She is our Reason to Run, and in this special year of hosting a virtual event, in its 13th year, we are adding a half marathon (13.1) component in her honor.

So, this is how it works: we will kick off the Reason to Run in September during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and keep up registrations through Week of Hope on November 7th. Walk or run anytime to achieve 5K or 13.1 status. Tag Sofia's Hope through your miles at @sofiashope and earn your swag (medal and custom Sofia's Hope Reason to Run mask).

Last year Week of Hope raised nearly \$100,000 and these dollars fund our family programs, scholarships and research. It's a tall order, but our goal is to make this happen again in 2020. So, what can you do to help? We have sponsorship opportunities that include supporting the events and programs directly, so email us at info@sofiashope.org for more information. Also, mark your calendar and stay tuned for info on how to register and get started. It's going to take a massive online effort to reach our goal, but together we can do it...with hope!



IN THE COMMUNITY



3rd Annual Kickin' It 4 Cancer Kickball Tournament a SUCCESS!

We had the biggest turn out ever for our 3rd Annual Kickin' It 4 Cancer Kickball Tournament, with over 70 students registered and seven teams. Competition was fierce as the all-girl Kickin' It team gave the Riviera and Phinney teams a run for their money.

Thanks to all who participated, to our partners including St. Thomas the Apostle, One Change, Miggy's Gift, Juice Plus and Kona Ice, to our speaker Alexa Rico, and our volunteers. Special shout out to the Gonzalez-Mir, Prieto and Phinney families for their help...without their support this event would be impossible!

Going Gold with Columbus

Christopher Columbus High School is again Going Gold for Childhood Cancer Awareness. Go Gold ties will be sold for \$20 online in the Fall but you can order yours today by texting "GoGold" to 91999. Last year we raised over \$3,500 through the support of CCHS families. Thank you to CCHS and their Principal, David Pugh, for their continued support of Sofia's Hope and, now sophomore, Max Fonseca for spearheading this effort.

New York Life Runs for Hope

In early June employees at New York Life Insurance Company lead by Loyda Molina-Pagan, New York Life Foundation representative in South Florida, walked or ran for 30 minutes in support of childhood cancer. For every employee that registered their exercise during the week of June 6th, \$9 were donated to Sofia's Hope. By the end over 100 employees registered and funds will be used to support our Treasured Moments Program. Thank you New York Life!!!

Sweet Hearts Look to Fall for Fifth Fundraiser

Nina Fonseca co-founded Sweet Hearts – A Bake Stand for Hope, three years ago and has, through four fundraisers during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, raised over \$25,000 in support of Sofia's Hope patient and family programs. Typically, Sweet Hearts would set up shop at L'Occitane en Provence at The Shops at Merrick park, but this year's efforts will be virtual! Stay tuned for all the sweet details.



Become a Hero for Children Fighting Childhood Cancer Join Heroes of Hope!

Heroes of Hope are members of a special giving circle who play a critical role in supporting children and their families in the fight against childhood cancer. They stand hand-in-hand with all of us at Sofia's Hope and work towards our mission to bring awareness and education that children die every day waiting for promising treatments, fund research as it relates to long-term effects (including prevention, detection and treatment), and provide patient and family programs that enhance the quality of life of children in the battle TODAY.

With a monthly gift of only \$10 or more, Heroes of Hope support Sofia's Hope and all of our work, making a difference year-round.

\$10 A week brings five (5) Newly Diagnosed Family Kits to help patients and families at the beginning of their cancer journey.

\$25 A quarter provides a child with an Adopt-an-Animal crate complete with stuffed animal, adoption certificate and free family membership to Zoo Miami.

\$50 A month helps support the important work of Dr. Steven Lipshultz, MD and advances in pediatric cardio-oncology research.

\$100 A quarter secures four (4) families in need of a helping hand gift cards for basic necessities, like food, transportation, medicine and more.

\$125 A month secures one (1) scholarship to either a survivor or sibling.

\$250 One-time gift provides a Treasured Moment to a family in need.

We are thankful we can provide these programs year-round, but doing so requires year-round support. That is why we would like to ask you to join Heroes of Hope this year! Recurring donors are the backbone that sustain our work. They make it possible for Sofia's Hope to work around the clock to ensure that any family that needs it, has access to our family programs that enhance the quality of life of children in the battle.

For more information or to sign up, please visit www.sofiashope.org and/or return the enclosed envelope.

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



"Raising awareness by donating to this heartfelt cause is something we are happy to do; knowing it will make a positive difference in someone's life. If what I donate can in any way prevent another child or his/her mom from suffering then it's been well spent!"

Marmelo-Hernandez Family



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AmazonSmile Goes Mobile

AmazonSmile customers can now support Sofia's Hope in the Amazon shopping app on iOS and Android mobile phones! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. Open the Amazon Shopping app on your device
2. Go into the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into 'Settings'
3. Tap 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the process



It's So Easy to Help Fight Against Childhood Cancer

Would you like to join the fight against childhood cancer?
Sofia's Hope can really use YOUR help to collect the following items:

- Fun Band aids
- Blankets
- Dum Dum Lollipops
- Masks
- Playing Cards
- Tablets
- Tissue Boxes
- Toiletries
- Small Toys
- Wash Cloths

Interested? We can provide tools to help the collection effort.
Please reach out at info@sofiashope.org.

Thank so much!

