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Charity Proposal

PEDIATRIC CANCER PATIENTS ARE ALL OF OUR CHILDREN

Cancer doesn't discriminate. Cancer doesn't care where you live, if you have money, or what color your skin is. Cancer is an equal opportunity disease that strikes at will. Cancer is particularly devastating when it targets children. According to the American Cancer Society, nearly 10,000 children under the age of fifteen will be diagnosed with cancer in the United States in 2023 (Key Statistics for Childhood Cancer). A fraction of them will not survive. Advances continue to be made in cancer research and treatment, but even one child lost to this insidious disease is one too many.

Approximately 1040 American children under the age of fifteen are expected to die from cancer this year (Key Statistics for Childhood Cancer). Children are our most precious resource. Childhood cancer isn't something that just happens to other people. It is everyone's problem. We can make a difference by funding critical research, clinical trials, and donating to the care, treatment, and comfort of affected children.

According to the National Cancer Institute, the most diagnosed pediatric cancers are leukemias, brain and central nervous system tumors, and lymphomas (Childhood Cancers). Much progress has been made in the areas of treatment and survival rates. However, one in five children in the United States will not win the battle (About St. Jude). The numbers are bleaker in impoverished countries where four in five children do not survive pediatric cancer (About St.

Jude). St. Jude has teamed up with the World Health Organization to provide access to treatment worldwide to children from low to middle income families (Team). Our donations support research teams working hard to find cures for not just various forms of pediatric cancer but also other catastrophic illnesses in children.

The financial toll that a catastrophic disease can take on a family is exponential. One in five children newly diagnosed with childhood cancer are already living in poverty (The Economic Impact of Childhood Cancer). Typically, parents and caretakers miss time from work, exhaust their benefits, and incur debt. At St. Jude, families are supported beyond just medical care for their sick child. Other services provided include covering expenses for housing, travel, and food. Psychosocial help for immediate family members, including siblings, is also provided at no cost. (About St. Jude). By donating to St. Jude, we can help to make sure that children receive treatment without putting their families into financial ruin.

ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL IS PIONEERING SURVIVAL

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is a state-of-the-art facility located in Memphis, Tennessee. The hospital was founded by entertainer Danny Thomas in 1962. Soon to be a new dad, he was struggling to find work, so he made a vow to the patron saint of hopeless causes, St. Jude Thaddeus. That vow was, "Show me my way in life, and I will build you a shrine." Success found Thomas, and he kept his word in St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (About St. Jude). St. Jude has developed treatments that have improved the overall survival rate of pediatric cancer from twenty percent to eighty percent over the course of the sixty plus years it has been in operation (About St. Jude).

“Families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing, or food, so they can focus on helping their child live, regardless of the duration or the cost of care” (Why support St. Jude). The average treatment for pediatric cancer costs somewhere in the vicinity of \$425,000. Housing, travel, and food are not included in this figure. Some patients’ care exceeds \$1 million at St. Jude. More than half are underinsured or uninsured (About St. Jude). Additionally, many health insurance policies will not cover treatments at a research hospital because they are considered experimental in nature. That’s counterproductive since we can’t find cures for these diseases without experimenting and conducting clinical trials.

Another aspect of the cancer battle that isn’t talked about enough is the social isolation that children in the hospital experience. Cancer does more than ravage the body, it creates and exacerbates depression, loneliness, and despair. These kids are often disconnected from family and friends and miss out on important milestones. St. Jude makes sure to incorporate vibrant celebrations into the care of their patients with birthday parties, holiday gatherings, graduations, and even a “no more chemo” party for patients who finish a course of treatment (Celebrating at St. Jude). Maintaining some sense of normalcy and fostering joy is vital for our youngest cancer warriors.

WE CAN HELP

In our day to day lives, most of us are unaffected by childhood cancer. It’s not in our face challenging our children to a fight. But that is the reality for thousands of families here in the United States and many more globally. St. Jude operates almost exclusively on donations from people like us. They are committed to providing world-class, cutting-edge care to pediatric cancer patients while simultaneously supporting their families so parents can focus on getting their child well. Some of the brightest and most innovative doctors are conducting research and

clinical trials that result in cures, and more and more children are surviving cancer. There are many ways that we can support St. Jude Children's Hospital. Some of these options are personal one-time donations, recurring monthly donations, school fundraisers, sports fundraisers, and even donations through wills and trusts. Just a small donation can make a difference in the life of a child that is battling pediatric cancer. Can the children count on your support?

Works Cited

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Appendix

