



DECEMBER ■ 2014

THE CHARNA RADBELL FOUNDATION

Charna's Kids Club



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2014 Team Leadership Award Recipient

Charna's Kids Club Sibling Support Program strives to provide a safe, recreational, and therapeutic play space for the well siblings of our inpatient pediatric population at the NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital.

Recognizing that the journey of the young patient's well sibling is a unique and important part of the entire family's healing process, it is the mission of Charna's Kids Club to provide support strategies for these children. These therapeutic and guided strategies are developed in close collaboration with the Social Work and Child Life departments. Our Program Coordinator and staff members implement these therapeutic strategies which help the entire family, especially the school age siblings, in coping with the hospitalization of their brother or sister. Some of these strategies include expressive activities, group peer support, field trips, and special events.

Hospitalized children who are under strict isolation precautions are provided with specially designed creative projects and toys geared toward helping them to cope with their feelings and to feel more empowered. These therapeutic strategies are individually planned according to each child's emotional needs, developmental stage, and cultural background. To facilitate the expression of their feelings, Charna's Kids Club Sibling Support Program provides ample and diverse tools such as art materials, musical instruments, and dramatic play items.

For the second year in a row, Charna's Kids Club received an award for its efforts. We are honored that, in February, our Program Coordinator and social worker, Alice Bergmann, LMSW, received recognition for her extraordinary leadership in fulfilling the mission of Charna's Kids Club. In partnership with other healthcare professionals, Alice Bergmann received the **2014 Team of the Month Award**. To read more about this award turn to page 3.



IT'S A FACT:

CHARNA'S KIDS CLUB INFLUENCE

**Our mission
is making a
global impact....**

Charna's Kids Club has received international recognition from hospital administrators around the world. Healthcare professionals from foreign countries such as China, England, Thailand, and many others have visited our "home away from home" with the intention of establishing a similar program within their own hospitals. They have demonstrated a special interest in the following events and accomplishments of our unique therapeutic sibling support program.

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

In partnership with the Ronald McDonald House Hospital Outreach Program, "Charna's Kids" have attended various events throughout the year. These included a fun day at Rye Play Land, a Carnival Block Party, and a fantastic Super Hero Day. Representatives from the New York Police and Fire Departments and the Coast Guard were present to congratulate the children for being the real Super Heroes in this world. It is they who are fighting life-threatening illnesses alongside their siblings.

CHARNA'S KIDS CLUB ORIGINAL JOURNAL

This journal was authored by our very own staff members and is intended for hospitalized children who are under strict isolation protocols. Because of its successful therapeutic benefits, it has been distributed throughout the entire hospital. It is used as a tool to empower these young patients and their siblings.

MEET THE COMPOSER

In conjunction with a Broadway composer, children who are affected by illness are given the opportunity to write a song. This song is uniquely created just for that child, and it is performed by the composer at a special assembly at the Ronald McDonald House. "Charna's Kids" have experienced great joy, honor, and a sense of validation through this program.

SUMMER SIZZLE CELEBRATION

6th Annual

A SPECTACULAR EXTRAVAGANZA, HONORING THE PATIENTS, SIBLINGS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Over 200 people participated in this year's festive annual Summer Sizzle Celebration, and our traditional "Charna's Kids Have Talent" showcase was the most anticipated and special highlight of the event.

A remarkable moment of the day was when an alumna of Charna's Kids Club sang for us. Earlier this year she had performed at the legendary Radio City Music Hall! We are so proud of her for both her talent and her commitment to entertain the children each and every year.

This year's Summer Sizzle event also featured dance performances by Starlite Studio of the Bronx, Abada Capoeira NYC, and the group, Kid Glyde and the Dynamic Rockers.



Craft tables included our creative DIY button making extravaganza, flip flop photo frames, and family photo booth.

For the sixth year in a row, our event was MC'd by the fabulously talented Mario Calderon. His dear friend, DJ X-ray of Malka Entertainment, provided the dance mixes. A special thank you goes to Mario Calderon's entire family.

Their wonderful love, support, and participation help to make this annual event spectacular. We are also grateful to all of the performers and volunteers who give their time and talent to make this event possible.

This celebration, and reunion for so many families and alumni, means the world to us.

From the bottom of our hearts,
we thank you!



2014 Team of the Month Award



In February of this year, staff members of Charna's Kids Club Sibling Support Program were recognized for their integral roles within a team of professionals who provided exceptional care for a young inpatient and his family. Everyone within this group received The Team of the Month Award which was presented at the NewYork-Presbyterian Key Personnel Meeting.

This award honors a team of employees from several departments within the hospital network: the NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, the NYP / Columbia Residency Program, the Ambulatory Care Department, and the Lang Scholar Program.

All together, these employees demonstrated excellence in their teamwork and communication skills during a time of crisis which impacted an entire family within our Washington Heights community. During this extraordinarily difficult time, this outstanding, multidisciplinary group of employees and healthcare providers worked together

for the benefit of this patient. While some of them had never even met prior to this incident, they provided the best support possible for the patient's family, friends, and the greater NYP Lang Youth community. It was their compassion, unrelenting determination, experience, and first-rate expertise which allowed them to quickly form a comprehensive and successful treatment plan for this young patient.

As part of this team, Charna's Kids Club Sibling Program staff members provided support to the patient's extended family members and friends during visiting hours. Our care and concern for

this patient continued in the following weeks as well. Our staff members generously provided their time and resources to the greater Lang community, mentoring their staff and students on the use of our therapeutic materials. Then, they were able to provide ongoing support for this patient and his close friends, siblings, and his family.

Congratulations, team!



A Safe Place To Feel

CHARNA'S KIDS CLUB IS A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN FEEL SAFE, VALUED, AND LOVED.



Charna's Kids Club addresses the emotional needs and interests of school age siblings of young patients. It creates a safe and caring environment in which the well siblings can continue to develop and thrive in spite of the hardships they are experiencing due to their sibling's struggle with a devastating illness. This is very important as these children, alongside their parents, are usually witnessing the physical decline of their siblings.

Our highly specialized staff members support these siblings throughout every step of this emotionally difficult journey, utilizing therapeutic, recreational, and multidisciplinary activities such as **Emotional Bingo**, **Wiggle Giggles**, **the Wisdom Tree**, and **All the Apples in My Tree**. These activities teach children how to recognize and verbalize their own emotions and to develop empathy for others that might be exhibiting pain, anger, or frustration as well. Siblings also learn

that their feelings are normal and that they are not alone. These are often the first steps in learning how to develop coping skills, work through problems, and ask for help when needed.

More specifically, **the Wisdom Tree**, a favorite among the siblings, is a community art project which is a metaphor for the cycle of life and its different seasons. The therapeutic benefit for the entire family is to understand a medical illness, family dynamics, loss, and any changes in family roles. In tandem with this activity, the children build a sense of family unity when presented with the task of creating a rooted family tree. This art project, **All the Apples in My Tree**, gives the children an opportunity to visualize all of the different relationships in their own lives. This therapeutic activity fosters a sense of control, stability, and unity in an uncertain and changing environment.



Honoring Charna

Charna Radbell was a vibrant and wonderful young woman who, in the prime of her life, lost her courageous battle with colon cancer. Understanding and recognizing the challenges of fighting a life threatening disease, Charna was always very concerned with the welfare of others. It was her vision to help many people of various ages, races, and economic backgrounds. Even in her final days, it became her mission to bring sunshine into the lives of children suffering with serious illnesses, especially the well siblings of a patient who would feel "forgotten" during such difficult times.

Charna recognized the value of such support which included the well being of the entire family. Before she passed, Charna established the Charna Radbell Foundation to spread hope and sunshine to all those who would come to Charna's Kids Club. Today, Charna would be so proud that her niece, Morgan Rabin, and her godchildren, Julia, Kristen, and Pamela Ornorato, are honoring her legacy with their commitment to the foundation's mission. Their participation, along with the generosity of others, continues to help thousands of families each year.

The impact of Charna's Kids Club has far exceeded our expectations, and we have been humbled by this journey and the families which we serve. The Almonte family (pictured below), in particular, has graciously shared with us their own experience with Charna's Kids Club. Sebastian Almonte, a school age sibling of a young inpatient, has frequently participated in events and programs at "The Club" since 2008. He believes that "the extra attention, love, and special care for his feelings, and how they help families feel comfortable" has given him the ability to support his sister, Itxell, every step of the way throughout the years.

With full hearts of love and smiles on their faces, the Almonte family touches the lives of every person they meet at the hospital. Giselle and Bolivar Almonte, Sebastian's parents, are active members of the hospital's very first Family Advisory Council for the spanish speaking community. In their own time of need, they continue to give back to other families who need support. We believe this amazing family has become the real life "Super Heroes" which Sebastian likes to draw while coping with his feelings. They are the perfect incarnation of the foundation's mission. What a wonderful way to honor Charna Radbell and her legacy.

**"When I see my dreams and wishes
on the tree, I see me. I'm important, too!"**

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Your generous donation is now even more important! Due to the success of our program and the need from our families, our services are now available **SEVEN DAYS A WEEK**.

Remember, we provide and sponsor ALL of the supplies, services, catering, activities, special events, and the salaries for our Program Coordinators and staff members. We would be especially grateful for your continued support.

Please make a generous donation to Charna's Kids Club today. We can't think of a more meaningful time of year to make this special gift. It would mean so much to the children during this holiday season.

Best wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy and healthful New Year!

WE LISTEN. WE ACT. WE CARE.



What the Kids are Saying:

**"WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT AND
THAT'S OK."**

**"I LOVE TO PLAY 'WIGGLE
GIGGLE!' IT ALWAYS MAKES ME
LAUGH."**

**"I HAVE FEELINGS, TOO. AND
WHEN I CAN DRAW THEM I CAN
TALK ABOUT THEM."**

**"AT 'THE CLUB,' I CAN TELL MY
STORY AND PEOPLE LISTEN."**

**"I'M ONE OF A KIND, JUST LIKE
A SNOWFLAKE."**

**"SOMETIMES I DON'T
KNOW HOW I FEEL,
BUT THE 'FEELING
FACES' HELP ME
FIGURE IT OUT."**

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VISIT US ON FACEBOOK, TOO!

**"MY SISTER BATTLES CANCER
EVERY DAY. I MADE THIS BADGE
OF COURAGE FOR HER."**