



## News & Updates

November 2025 | Volume 16 - Number 9

### Upcoming Activities

December  
Annual Drive

April  
Toiletry Drive

May  
Awareness Walk

**About Us**  
Spreading Hope  
Through  
Psychosocial  
Support <sup>SM</sup>

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**Support**  
Help Make The  
Miracles Possible

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## Thanks & Gratitude

Mattie Miracle learned first hand the importance of community support and generosity when Mattie was in cancer treatment. Mattie's parents received food, snacks, and drinks daily for 14 months from friends and family. They realized that these gifts were vital to maintaining their basic needs and enabled them to care for Mattie by his bedside.

Based on these learned experiences, **Mattie Miracle operates five Snack & Item Carts at hospitals in Washington, DC, Baltimore, MD, and Bethesda, MD.** Our Carts, in many cases, serve as the primary resource for families to access snacks, candy, drinks, and toiletries. **We have been told that our Carts are a lifesaver to families, many of whom are stunned that these items are provided to them for free.** Families are inundated with the care of their children in the hospital and are unable to meet their own basic needs. Our Carts provide this much needed psychosocial support.

Mattie Miracle relies on the kindness and generosity of our supporters to help us stock our five Carts. **This year thousands of dollars of items were donated to the Foundation.** In the spirit of Thanksgiving, we are grateful to our supporters for standing behind our psychosocial mission.

**It's not just about  
the medicine!<sup>SM</sup>**



**16 Years of  
Service  
Video**

**Our Carts score a  
10 out of 10  
by patients and families!**



**Spreading Hope Through Psychosocial Support.<sup>SM</sup>**

## **Funding Innovative Research**

Mattie Miracle is honored to partner with the Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses and annually award evidence-based practice grants. These grants are designed to help implement the Psychosocial Standards of Care at treatment sites across the Country.



  
**JOHNS HOPKINS**  
SCHOOL of NURSING

### **Congratulations to Dr. Mary Jo Gamper**

**Dr. Mary Jo Gamper was awarded \$4,700 to support the study, E-Communication Between Pediatric Caregivers & Healthcare Teams: Quality/Equity on Satisfaction.** The primary goal of Dr. Gamper's project is to systematically examine a critical yet understudied component of care: electronic communication (e-communication) between pediatric caregivers and pediatric oncology healthcare teams. While asynchronous communication tools such as secure patient portal messaging, text messaging, and e-mail are now integral to care coordination, their quality, equity, and impact on caregiver

experience remain poorly understood.



## Child Life Corner with Adina Levitan, CCLS

### Play is the Language of Children

There is a quote that I love that has been one of the guiding principles for my work as a child life specialist, “Play is not a distraction from learning, it is the work of childhood,” often attributed to Fred Rogers. Simply put, **children learn how to make sense of the world through play**. Children learn valuable physical, emotional, and cognitive skills through play. **Play is integral to childhood and is woven into the many ways that children grow and learn from gross motor play at playgrounds to fine motor play with small manipulatives**. The developmental stages of play reflect how children learn to interact with their peers and develop social-emotional skills and awareness. **When children play with different materials and toys, they gain mastery and understanding of new concepts**.

I recently listened to a webinar from a child life specialist who has built international child life programs. She visits countries and communities where resources, specifically toys, are scarce. Children in these areas play with sticks and leaves and somehow turn them into dolls, towers and so much more. When this child life specialist visits for surgical programs, she brings toys and items for the children to learn about what to expect, manipulate materials, and gain a sense of familiarity. She shares how she encourages staff to play with the children as a way to build trust. **Play is the language of children. This is why it is so important for children to see themselves, and their cultural, religious and personal experiences through their toys**.

Over the last few weeks, I was delighted to receive many messages from friends and family expressing excitement over an MRI Lego set that was being featured across news outlets. **A small subset of children receive MRIs, as they face the uncertainty of hospitalization, scans, and tests. It is not to be taken lightly when children need a thirty-minute to hour-plus long scan to determine what is happening in their bodies**. That is why this Lego set has been “building” such excitement. **Children in the hospital setting can now play, practice, and prepare using this Lego MRI set that helps them explore their experiences through a familiar toy**.

Many children with cancer require MRIs to determine the location, growth and hopefully lack of tumors in their body. **“Scanxiety”** is a term often used to describe the fear that parents have as they wait for their children's results and this term also applies to the fear that children have as they lay still in a small, loud machine for an extended amount of time. **Playing with the Lego MRI helps to reduce this anxiety, engages children in their experiences and for some children, reduces the need for sedation, which has many benefits**. Seeing such a toy from a large, recognized brand helps to spread awareness of the medical and psychosocial issues of children with cancer. The Lego MRI kit illustrates the inclusive and therapeutic nature of this toy and serves as a



## Celebrating 16 Years!

On November 2, 2025, Mattie Miracle celebrated its 16th anniversary! **We are the only national non-profit dedicated to psychosocial support, awareness, advocacy, and funding innovative psychosocial research for childhood cancer.** We are grateful to our sponsors and supporters for making the Mattie Miracles possible.

### Together we have:

- Raised over \$1.8M for childhood cancer.
- Supported 38,000 children with cancer and their families.
- Awarded \$200,000 in innovative research grants.
- Published the Psychosocial Standards of Care & Toolkit.
- Funded 6 child life professionals.
- Granted \$65,000 in M&M Wishes.
- Awarded \$19,000 in Therapy Grants.
- Donated millions of pieces of candy, snacks, & toiletry items to hospitals.



## Delivering Cheer

Mattie Miracle operates **five Snack & Item Carts**, two at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital (Washington, DC), two at Children's Hospital at Sinai (Baltimore, MD), and one at NIH's

Clinical Center (Bethesda, MD). **Our Carts meet the needs of over 2,500 families a year**, and provide nutritional snacks, candy, toiletries, drinks, and wellness items free of charge to families.

Last week, **donated candy and snacks were delivered to hospitals to help provide support and cheer to families as we enter the holiday season.** We thank our supporters for making these Mattie Miracles possible.



Mattie Miracle Cancer Foundation  
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