



News & Updates

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Miracles Possible

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**It's not just about
the medicine! SM**



16 Years of
Service



Partnerships in Research

Mattie Miracle is celebrating its **17th year of service to the childhood cancer community**. Over the course of these years, **we have cultivated long-term and meaningful connections with supporters, clinicians, psychosocial researchers, and advocacy organizations**. It is thanks to these incredible partnerships that our vision for the Psychosocial Standards of Care became a reality and that we are able to effectively work on the implementation of these Standards at cancer treatment sites around the country.

The Psychosocial Standards of Care are Mattie's legacy. His life and cancer journey must serve a purpose and what better way to achieve this legacy than by helping to meet the psychological and emotional needs of children with cancer and their families. **The historic evidence-based Psychosocial Standards of Care are one of the most downloaded articles published through Wiley**. The Standards are designed to define what all children with cancer and their families should receive to optimally support their psychosocial needs from diagnosis, throughout treatment, into survivorship, or end of life and bereavement care.

To help accelerate the implementation of the Standards at treatment sites around the country, the iSTEPPP (Implementing the Standards Together: Engaging Parents and Providers in Psychosocial Care) project was created. This project is funded in part by a generous grant from the Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation. The iSTEPPP team is comprised of top psychosocial

Video

researchers ([Nemours Children's Health](#) & [The Center for Cancer Research, NIH](#)) and national advocacy groups ([Momcology](#) & [Mattie Miracle](#)).

Recently, this amazing partnership between researchers and advocacy organizations was acknowledged with a **certificate for a "Top Cited Article."** This commendation is given for a research paper that has received an **exceptionally high number of citations in other scientific publications, indicating a significant impact within the field of pediatric oncology.** The iSTEPPP research team published the top-cited article entitled, *Partnership With Patient Advocacy Organizations Improves Research Recruitment*. **The article highlights what happens when researchers and advocacy organizations unite, share a vision, and effectively work together.**



Spreading Hope Through Psychosocial Support.

SM



Walk for Miracles

In 2009, Mattie's support community hosted the Mattie March, an outdoor event to show their support for him and his family. From that successful event, the Mattie Miracle Walk was born. This year marks our **17th Annual Awareness Walk & Raffle**.

We are grateful to our steadfast supporters from all over the country who walk virtually with us and turn their towns Mattie Miracle orange. **Our Virtual Awareness Walk helps us generate funds to support Mattie Miracle's psychosocial programs and initiatives.**

Walk with us on May 17th (10am to noon, in your time zone). Participating in our virtual Walk is easy: All you have to do is WALK, SNAP, and POST from ANYWHERE!!!!

**Top walkers
have the chance
to win:**

**1st Prize: \$100 gift card
2nd Prize: \$75 gift card
3rd Prize: \$50 gift card**

WALK and track your steps (on May 17th, from midnight to noon in your time zone) using a step counter/activity tracker.

SNAP photos and take videos showing your Mattie Miracle ORANGE spirit and share it on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. Be sure to use #MMCFWALK.

POST a photo of you with your total step count by noon (in your time zone) to Mattie Miracle's social media accounts or email us. Remember to use the hashtag #MMCFWALK.

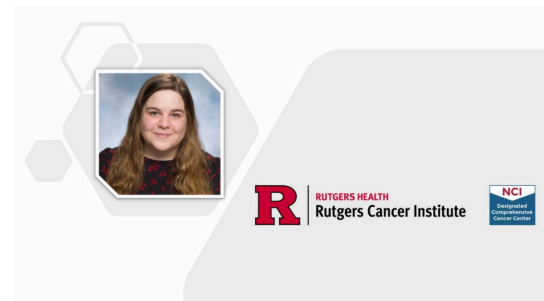
Click on the shoe to register, purchase raffle tickets, and make a tax-deductible donation to the event, a walker, or a team.



Supporting Innovation

Since 2018, Mattie Miracle has partnered with the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS), a professional organization committed to advancing the development and delivery of evidence-based psychosocial oncology care through research, practice, education, and advocacy. **Through APOS, Mattie Miracle has awarded over \$100,000 in early career grants.**

Dr. Christina Amaro is a Mattie Miracle grant recipient and *recently published the peer-reviewed article entitled, Exploring Preferences for a Digital Single-Session Intervention for Adolescent Siblings of Youth With Cancer*. A childhood cancer diagnosis can be distressing for adolescent siblings. Research indicates siblings have an elevated risk for developing psychosocial issues. **Dr. Amaro's study gathered perspectives from adolescent siblings, parents, and professionals to inform the development of a digital, self-guided sibling intervention.**



We are honored to support Dr. Amaro's research and we invite you to read her published article.





Child Life Corner with Adina Levitan, CCLS

Supporting Children Throughout the Cancer Journey (Part 4: Relapse & Supporting Wishes)

A cancer diagnosis can feel like the end of the world. **It is especially devastating when a child experiences a relapse—it can feel as though the world is ending a second time.** A cancer relapse may occur during active treatment or after treatment has ended. It means cancer has returned or is progressing in a way that is no longer responsive to chemotherapy. Relapse in childhood cancer is serious and is a leading cause of death. **Survival rates vary widely depending on the cancer type, timing, and site, with studies showing 30–60% of children can survive certain relapses.**

Certified child life specialists understand the emotional weight of the word relapse, and they respect and support children and families where they are emotionally. While procedural support and medical play continue, **the focus often expands to include legacy building, memory-making, and supporting end-of-life wishes.** This may involve connecting families with organizations, like Mattie Miracle, to grant Wishes that provide meaningful experiences to help maximize quality of life.

Children with cancer and their families bravely face and endure treatment because the goal is to find a cure. **Unfortunately, one in seven children with cancer in the United States do not survive.** It is a challenging transition for children and families to go from finding a cure to facing end-of-life decisions. **End-of-life planning can involve conversations about how the child wants to die, where they want to be, preferences for memorials, and decisions about personal belongings.** While not legally binding, these discussions can be deeply meaningful. They are not rushed, rather, they are thoughtfully integrated over time through ongoing relationships with the child and family, in collaboration with the broader medical team, including nurses, physicians, and social workers.

Legacy building centers on therapeutic interventions that give a child space to decide how they want to be remembered and what mark they want to leave on the world. Legacy building can also reflect a child's wishes for their family or community, either after their death or during their lifetime, even in cases where a terminal outcome is uncertain. This might include organizing a toy drive, starting a nonprofit, recording a song, or writing a book. Often, a cancer diagnosis brings clarity to families on what feels most important. For some, this means giving back in ways that mirror what supported them during treatment—such as donating toys or supporting psychosocial care and research, as seen with initiatives from the Mattie Miracle Cancer Foundation. Others may focus on art, community support, or creating spaces for healing. Not every family chooses this path; some prefer to move away from their cancer experience entirely. There is no correct approach—only what aligns with each family's values.

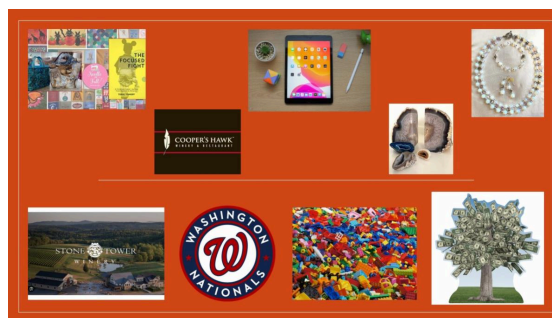
Within the scope of child life, **memory-making emphasizes the importance of creating meaningful keepsakes for families.** These may include handprints, molds, charms,

photographs, recordings, locks of hair, artwork, or personalized items like tie-dye shirts or pillowcases. For many, the process of creating these items together becomes part of the memory itself. For others, these items may feel too painful. Child life specialists assess each family's preferences with sensitivity, involving them in decisions and adapting accordingly. In some cases, when a child's condition does not allow for these items to be created beforehand, they may be offered after death.

Certified child life specialists draw on their psychosocial expertise and understanding of relapse, end-of-life care, grief, and bereavement to offer these interventions with care and precision. Their role is to ensure that support is delivered in a way that respects each family's emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs.

\$5 Raffle Tickets

Mattie Miracle's online raffle is open! **Tickets are only \$5.** We are featuring nine wonderful items. **All raffle proceeds go toward our fundraising goal, which enables us to support our programs and initiatives.** Raffle winners will be announced on Mattie Miracle's Facebook page at 12:30pm EDT on May 17th. Items will be mailed to our winners.



Great prizes, benefiting a great cause!

1. Nats Tickets
2. Apple iPad
3. Money Tree
4. Escape to Wine Country
5. Wine Club Membership & Tasting
6. Designer Quilt Creations
7. Jazz it up with Jewelry
8. For the Lego Lover
9. Ode to Geodes & Agates





Mattie Miracle Cancer Foundation
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