
News & Updates

January 2024 | Volume 15 - Number 1

Upcoming Activities

April
Toiletry Drive
[Amazon Wish List](#)

May 19
15th Annual
Virtual Walk



New Year Miracles

Each December, Mattie Miracle invites you to support our Annual Drive. In 2023, our supporters collectively donated **\$14,000** to the Annual Drive. We are deeply grateful to have the generosity of our steadfast supporters who are willing to stand behind our psychosocial mission. This is our 15th year of service to the childhood cancer community, and we are thankful to you for making the Mattie Miracles possible.

Over the last 15 years, together we have:

1. Raised over \$1M to fund our psychosocial programs.
2. Supported 38,000 children with cancer.
3. Funded 6 [child life specialists](#).
4. Awarded \$165,000 in psychosocial [research grants](#).
5. Published the first evidence based [Psychosocial Standards of Care](#).
6. Sponsored the publication of the [Matrix and Guidelines](#) to help implement the Psychosocial Standards of Care.
7. Awarded 17 [M&M Wishes](#).
8. Funded 3 [Therapy Support Grants](#).
9. Operated 4 Snack and Item Carts, servicing over 2,500 families and delivering 26,000 snacks to in-patient families.
10. Launched a non-profit research partnership with [The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation](#) and [Momcology](#). We are grateful to the B+ Foundation for their \$115,000 grant in support of our innovative implementation research project.
11. Introduced [House Resolution 262](#).

About Us
Spreading Hope
Through
Psychosocial
Support SM

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Support
Help Make The
Miracles Possible

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CFC #59853

[Giving](#)

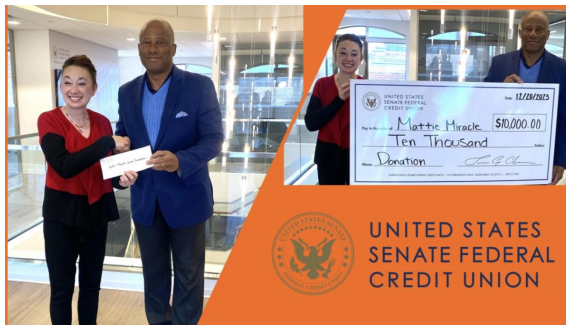
**It's not just about
the medicine!™**

12. Added Psychosocial Language to the STAR Act (signed into law, June 2018).

Click the heart for a listing of our supporters.



Spreading Hope Through Psychosocial Support.™



Our Community Partner

In December of 2022, the United States Senate Federal Credit Union (USSFCU) reached out to Mattie Miracle. The Co-Founders of the Foundation were requested to meet with the President and CEO, Tim Anderson. Mattie Miracle quickly learned that **USSFCU is a bank with a heart, who cares about making a meaningful impact on the community.**

The USSFCU experienced the death of several colleagues to cancer and their Board wanted to acknowledge this great loss by supporting the work of a reputable non-profit in the community. **We are grateful that USSFCU chose to partner with Mattie Miracle two years in a row.**

On December 20, 2023, Mattie Miracle accepted a **\$10,000 check** from Tim Anderson. We are grateful to partner with a bank that values the health, well-being, and quality of life of children with cancer and their families.

**Child Life Corner
with
Adina Levitan, CCLS**



We welcome Child Life Corner to our newsletters. Each month you will hear from Mattie Miracle's Child Life Specialist, Adina Levitan. Adina will highlight topics, issues, and share stories from a child life professional's lens. Given the vital role child life plays in a child's medical and psychosocial journey, we are proud to feature this standing column.

Trust and Rapport are the Foundation of Care

Every child life specialist knows that before we can implement any interventions, resources or coping plans, we must build rapport and establish trust. This is easier said than done in the healthcare setting. In some cases, we have mere seconds before a procedure or test is about to happen to establish trust and assure our patients that we will guide them through this unknown. In other cases, we have plenty of time as the child acclimates to their hospital room before invasive testing or procedures occur. Yet, every child is different. **Factors such as developmental understanding, ability to cope, family support, age and the impact of their diagnosis can enhance or inhibit their ability to trust yet another unfamiliar face in the hospital setting.** Whenever I enter a patient's room, I must quickly assess all these factors and determine the best and most supportive way I can build this elusive trust. **Without this trust my interventions and support will not go very far.**

It's with all this in mind that I met Anna, a four-year-old girl, who came to my unit shortly after having surgery to place a G-Tube. She had already undergone brain surgery at another hospital for her tumor and was coming to us to receive chemotherapy. She received the G-tube because the team was concerned she would not be able to maintain the necessary nutrients needed throughout her chemotherapy due to her age. When she arrived, I had already decorated and prepared several activities for her. For the next couple of hours, and in the days that followed, **I had one goal in mind: to gain this little girl's trust.** The best way I could think of doing this was to let her be the boss. Throughout our interactions I let her have full control of how we played, crafted, sang, danced, and communicated. She was in charge 100%. I visited daily and played endlessly as she acclimated to the hospital setting and over this period of time, she came to recognize that I was a friend to her. Furthermore, her mother and I built a trusting relationship where I was able to clearly establish my role in their difficult journey.

Anna was hospitalized for several weeks and had many ups and downs in her treatment. **I believe that the trusting relationship I built allowed me to support Anna in overcoming several huge hurdles during her admission.** One example that I recall was Anna had been in bed for several days. Her mother was hesitant to make her get up, however the medical team knew it was important for her to move around out of her bed. I came to Anna's room with a few items: a large bucket, huge syringes, and several plastic isolation gowns. Gently, I explained the activity to Anna and demonstrated what she would need to do. She lit up. Carefully she got out of bed and walked over to the bucket I filled with water. Together, while Anna stood, we drew water into the syringes and sprayed huge shots of water at her grandma who was wearing the plastic gown. For the first time in days, Anna was smiling gleefully while soaking her mother and grandma. I may have gotten a bit wet too! She was moving, laughing, and felt safe in her environment. I do not take for granted these moments as they can be hard

to achieve. I think of Anna and how miserable she felt during treatment: no one was allowed to talk in her room (the noise hurt her), she did not allow anyone to touch her G-Tube (I'll talk more about this in a subsequent column) and she was incredibly fearful overall (we worked on this continuously throughout her treatment). Yet, we had these small victories that carried Anna to the next day with confidence. A trusting relationship is critical to the success of any child life specialist's work. It forms the foundation upon which meaningful interventions and support can be built.

Our Spring Activities

Looking for ways to get involved with Mattie Miracle? Participate in our two upcoming virtual Community Events:

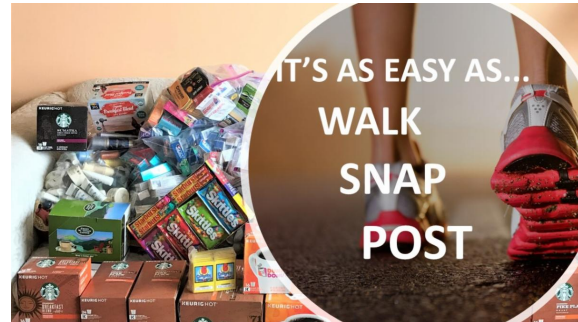
- 1) Toiletry Item Drive (April 8, 2024)
- 2) Virtual Awareness Walk (May 19, 2024)

Our April Toiletry Drive **helps to stock our free snack and item carts** at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital (Washington, DC), Children's Hospital at Sinai (Baltimore, MD) and The Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health (Bethesda, MD). Participating in our Annual Drive is easy. Check out our Amazon Wish List for specifics.

Don't miss our 15th Annual Virtual Walk, on May 19! The Walk raises funds to support our psychosocial programs and initiatives which assist children with cancer and their families.

Are you **interested in sponsoring our Walk** or want more information about creating a Walk team? [Contact us!](#)

Click on the image below for our Wish List.





Mattie Miracle Cancer Foundation
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