

# FUND NEWS

*Empathy. Understanding. Hope.*

12th Annual Newsletter • 2019



## Oh, How We've Grown!

It has been 12 years since Forrest Spence passed away and his legacy was born through the founding of the Forrest Spence Fund. We have been honored to listen, love, encourage and support families for these 12 years and we continue to be amazed at how the Fund is growing and adapting to the needs of families with critically or chronically ill children throughout the region.

Our goal has always been to help as many families in crisis as possible. Yet, we are still astonished at the growth we have experienced and the changes we have been able to make; they surpass even the lofty expectations we set forth during our early years. In 2007, we launched by delivering care baskets to families with a child hospitalized at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis. Today, these care packages travel to families across the Mid-South and the scope of our care has expanded in ways we could not have imagined in 2007.

The four main pillars of our mission are individual family assistance, institutional support, counseling provision, and grants. We have experienced staggering growth in every one of these four areas. The need is clearly great, and not just in the Memphis area. The Fund has moved into Nashville and Chattanooga as well, and the response has been incredible.

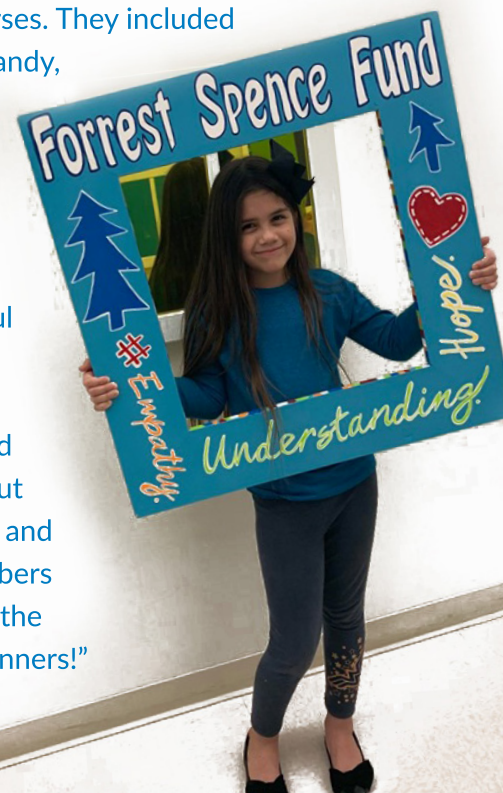
Since we began tracking family numbers in 2011, the families in our care annually has increased from 1,571 to over 11,449 in 2019. Overall, the Fund has provided 64,000 forms of individualized support to families in need in its lifetime!



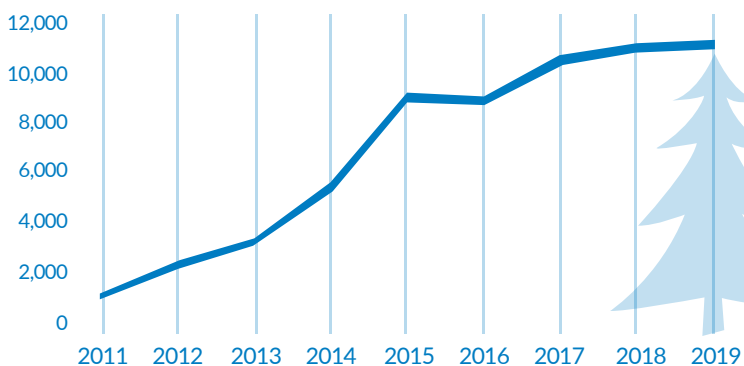
Le Bonheur nurse and FSF supporter, Jay Johnston, has watched the FSF transition from a dream at Forrest's bedside to what it is today...

"The FSF began with small cellophane 'goody bags' for parents and nurses. They included a piece or two of candy, a package of gum, a pencil and a sticker. Now, the goody bags have become

incredibly useful care packages with lots of essentials and we feed about 300 parents and family members a month at the monthly dinners!"



### FSF INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT: 2011-2019



Judy Weatherly, a long-standing FSF volunteer, reflects on the past 12 years...

“What the Fund has accomplished over the past 12 year is truly amazing. The comfort they bring, compassion they show, bills they pay, meals they provide along with countless items they purchase for children, families and even hospitals is priceless. Many, many needs are met, and lives are touched. The impact of the Fund truly cannot be measured In times of trouble, heartbreak and celebration, they are there! The FSF staff

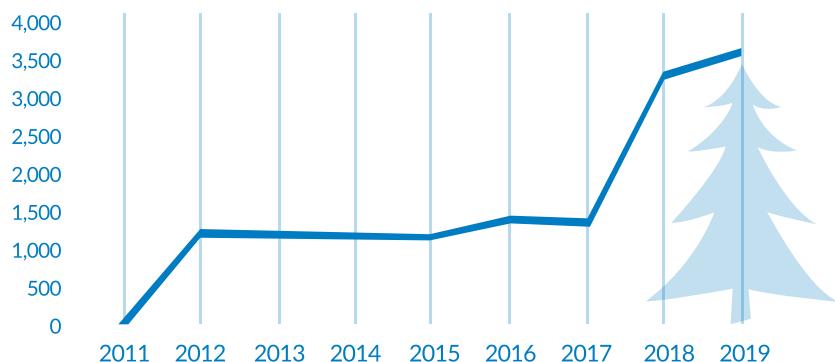


works tirelessly to make everything happen! And, as a volunteer, I am so thankful to be a part of an organization that stays focused on its mission and I am excited to see how the Fund is expanding to other cities, helping more families who are going through one of the hardest times of their lives.”

We look ahead to 2020 with joyful anticipation, and with goals of unveiling new programs and continuing an excellent quality of care as we seek to reach even more families throughout our communities.

**We hope you will continue to join us on this journey!**

### FSF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT: 2011-2019



“We see people in the midst of suffering and crisis find the light of hope and support through the work of Forrest Spence Fund. When families are in need, FSF shows up in real, tangible ways with financial resources and practical items that help them meet their basic needs. Your support speaks to families in the hardest moments, ‘I see you. You are not alone.’ Over and over again, your gifts remind our families that love surrounds them and will always find them right where they are.”

- Rev. Amanda Borchik, MDiv, BCC, Staff Chaplain, Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt

# How to Get Involved

Make a difference in your community! Volunteering for the Forrest Spence Fund is a wonderful way to get involved, support families and see first hand the difference you are making in the lives of others.

Veteran Forrest Spence Fund volunteer, Cerita Payne, is dedicated to supporting children and families who have been impacted by childhood illness, "I love volunteering for Forrest Spence Fund!!!! I enjoy greeting the patients and families with a smile at the family dinner at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. FSF cares about families who need support when their child is sick." Join Cerita and the Forrest Spence Fund volunteers in a mission based on service and compassion.

## Volunteer at a monthly dinner:



Each month, The Forrest Spence Fund provides a meal to families who have a loved one hospitalized at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis. You can volunteer as an individual, or make it a group outing with friends, co-workers, church groups, etc. We need warm and welcoming people to set up the dining room, serve food, clear tables, refill drinks and help with children's crafts and activities. This is an easy way to jump right in, with no ongoing commitment necessary. Many volunteers report that they enjoy meeting the families we serve in person and hearing their stories.

## Serve on A Committee for Forrest Spence Fund Events:

The Forrest Spence Fund hosts exciting fundraisers throughout the year. Each event has a dedicated committee of volunteers working together behind the scenes to plan, execute, and engage the community. We are always looking for people with a heart for service and head for event-planning to help with the annual Forrest Spence 5k and Spring for

Forrest Cocktail Party and Auction in Memphis, the No Show Ball in Memphis and Chattanooga and Friends for Forrest in Nashville.

These events make our mission possible, and each one has grown to be a beloved event within the community.



## Assemble Care Bags:

This is another wonderful opportunity for a group. There are opportunities to financially sponsor a block of bags, assemble the bags, or both!

## Other Ways to Be Involved:

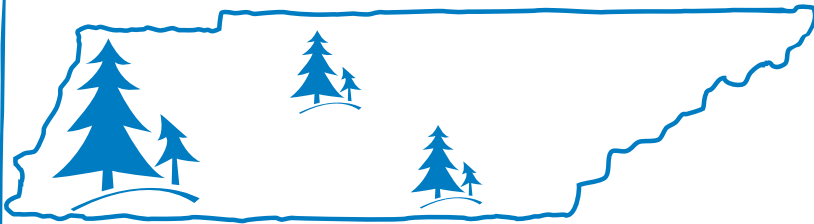
- Compile Unit Appreciation bags for hospital staff
- Compile snack bags for our Heart Project
- Host a drive to collect gifts for our Christmas Toy Drive
- Make no sew blankets for our care bags
- Donate items for our NICU Development Center
- Host a drive to collect books for our Books for Baptist Program or PICU Library
- Donate items from our Wishlist
- Donate items for our Bereavement Carts
- Collect travel size toiletry items for our Comfort Carts



To volunteer please email our Program Director, Abby Cooley, [abby@forrestspencefund.org](mailto:abby@forrestspencefund.org)

# New Programs Extend Services Across

2019 has been a year of growth, and with that we have been able to expand the range of services offered in all three cities the Fund calls home. We are thrilled to add these avenues of care, and have seen already the lasting impact they have on families in times of need.



## Le Bonheur Children's Hospital Memphis



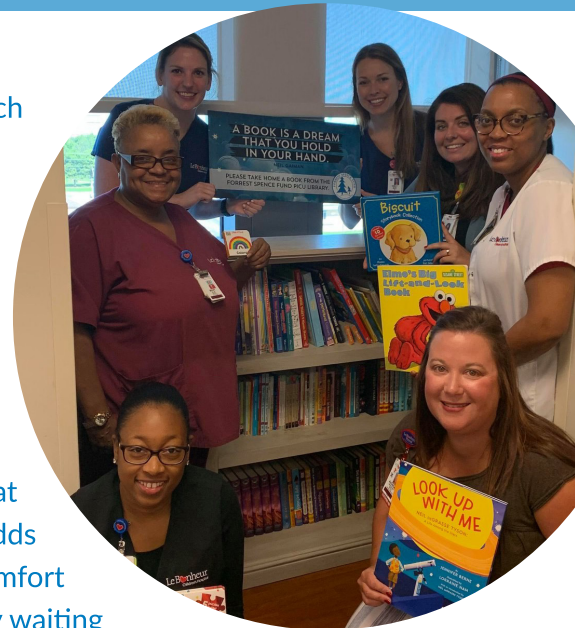
### PICU Library

The Forrest Spence Fund focuses on the health and well-being of the entire family. When a child is hospitalized in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), it is incredibly difficult for the entire family. The PICU Library is a safe space that normalizes the environment for all family members. Here, healthy siblings can select books to read and enjoy during their extensive waiting time, and caregivers can select books to read to their hospitalized child. Our intent is that the books then go home with each child for him/her to enjoy for years to come.

"The PICU Library is such a gift to our families!

The books fly off the shelves and bring siblings, parents, and patients great joy. It also adds a level of comfort to the family waiting room. I have seen many grandparents entertaining siblings in the waiting area with books, and many parents reading to their children at their bedside. It is such a wonderful and simple gift that brings a ray of sunshine to our sometimes-dismal unit."

- Andrea Orman, PICU Clinical Director, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital



### NICU Development Center

To help NICU babies thrive and meet vital developmental milestones, we created the NICU Development Center at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. The items in the Development Center are hand-selected by NICU therapists and Child Life Specialists and purchased by the Fund. Medical professionals can select any item from the Center to support each baby in his/her development, based on their unique needs.



# TENNESSE

## Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

Nashville

## Children's Hospital at Erlanger

Chattanooga

### Grants

Having a critically or chronically ill child often places an unbearable financial strain on a family.

When these tenuous times occur, we are able to provide

personal grants to families at risk through our Grant Program. This

program has been operational in Memphis since 2013 and we

have seen it offer a lifeline of security at

just the right moment, time and time again. In January

of 2019, we implemented the Grant Program in both

Nashville and Chattanooga. For parents like Bethany

and Nate Ellis, whose son, Ethan, was cared for at

Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt,

these grants are a stabilizing force during a time of chaos and tumult.



"The grant we received from the Forrest Spence Fund is a tremendous help as we prepare to bring our baby home, and we are so appreciative.

Having a baby in a critical medical situation for a long time is a hard thing in itself to go through.

Then facing the unexpected expenses that accompany your child's medical condition can be overwhelming. It is such an amazing thing

to see the Fund reach out to help families in

these difficult circumstances." - Bethany Ellis



### Bereavement Cart

The thought of losing a child is unimaginable, a nightmare no one plans to walk through. To support families when the unthinkable happens, we created the FSF Bereavement Cart to be a resource for families anticipating the loss of a child. The cart is available any time, and is filled with items that bring comfort to families during their most painful moments.

"For our families who are in the middle of heartbreak, the bereavement cart provides comforting items at arm's length. Sometimes, our hurting families don't even realize that these items are what they want or need, but when they see a specific item, they often cling to it from that point on as a way to cope. It is such a blessing to be able to have the Cart available for their use." - Heather Stargel, Parent Mentor at Children's Hospital at Erlanger

### Counseling

We meet families where they are, and sometimes that is in the midst of grief. Family members in grief need a safe space to process their complex emotions. Families in Nashville and Chattanooga who have suffered the loss of a child can now turn to the Fund to connect them with a licensed counselor close to their home. The FSF covers the cost for up to 12 counseling sessions for each family.

# THANK YOU!

THANK YOU to our incredible family of donors and volunteers who have loved and supported families in need this year. We are incredibly grateful for your donations of all kinds, in every amount. Our heart is to help families survive pediatric illness and weather the storm of grief, confusion, and fear. If you have given to the Fund and contributed to our mission of love in 2019, we thank you from the bottom of our heart.



“The Developmental Center has been such a blessing for our NICU babies and their families! We are so excited to be able to provide age-appropriate toys and other items that help our babies meet milestones and learn new things. It can also be an encouragement for families to focus on how their child is growing & developing during a challenging time. It has been great to see families get involved by swaddling their baby in a cozy blanket, introducing their baby to touch & grasp with a textured book, or feeding their baby tastes of baby food in a high chair.”

- Laurie Braswell, Occupational Therapist, Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital (Memphis)

64,000



Various forms of assistance for patients/families including rent/utility bills, new tires, car notes, phone bills, meal vouchers, gas cards, care bags, and purchases of items needed for the home.

14,000



Various forms of institutional/hospital support including fulfilling wish lists of much needed items such as playmats, DVD players, rocking chairs, bouncy seats, game systems, sound machines, swings, and crib mobiles along with our hospital programs such as Unit Appreciation and the Forrest Sibling Playroom

55



Patients and their families received free third-party counseling

\$337,000



Total funds awarded to families through financial grants



**NO**  
**SHOW**  
*Ball*  
 MEMPHIS  
 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8

*Get ready to go nowhere!*  
 \$100 INCLUDES DINNER FOR 4  
**DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR**



SIXTH ANNUAL  
**SPRING**  
*For*  
**FORREST**  
 COCKTAIL PARTY  
 & AUCTION  
 FRIDAY, APRIL 17  
 MEMPHIS CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

**NO**  
**SHOW**  
*Ball*  
 CHATTANOOGA  
 SATURDAY, MAY 9



13th Annual  
**FORREST SPENCE 5K**  
 Saturday, August 29




**FRIENDS** *for* **FORREST**  
 SEPTEMBER 2020 • NASHVILLE

The Forrest Spence Fund  
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Memphis, TN 38177

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The mission of the Forrest Spence Fund is to assist with the non-medical needs of critically or chronically ill children and their families.



Chattanooga is lucky to have an organization that serves families in need. The inclusion of all families regardless of diagnosis, insurance, or home address, families whose critically or chronically ill children receive care at Children's at Erlanger qualify for the support and resources offered by the Forrest Spence Fund. This need has been a missing piece until the Forrest Spence Fund, and I'm excited to see the Chattanooga community get behind such an impactful organization that touches lives daily.

- Ashley M. Allen, Family Advisory Leader,  
Children's Hospital at Erlanger

## How to Give:

There are two easy ways to make a financial donation. The fastest way is to visit [WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG](http://WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG) and contribute via the "Donate" tab. There you can make a general donation or select a specific item such as a care bag, counseling session, or a meal voucher. You can also select the city to which you would like your donation allocated. Memphis, Nashville, and Chattanooga each have their own operating budgets and donors can choose where to send funds from the online menu as well. You may also simply mail a check in the enclosed envelope and specify a city in the memo line. Regular monthly donations are always welcome and encouraged.

For more information or to set-up an ongoing monthly donation, email: [brittany@forrestspencefund.org](mailto:brittany@forrestspencefund.org).

[WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG](http://WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG)

