



FUND NEWS

Empathy. Understanding. Hope.

13th Annual Newsletter | 2020

STANDING STRONG IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

In a year full of uncertainty and strife, we have seen the power of hope. We have experienced many new challenges in 2020, but we have also seen the best in humanity as our community has shown up to keep our mission alive for the families that need it most.

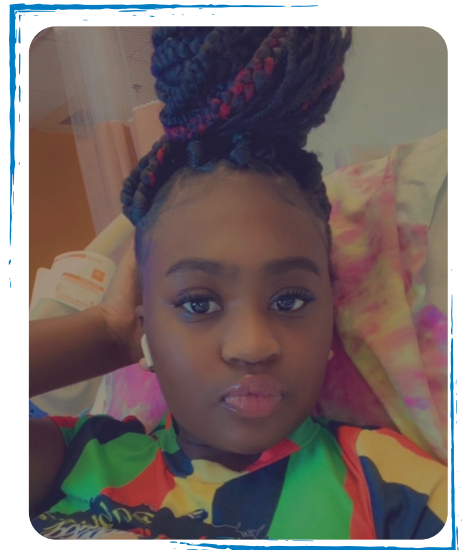
The pandemic has only increased the burden on families already facing childhood illness. The new reality has created more financial and emotional strain, with less available support. We have been working from a distance with the same energy and focus as we have every day for the past 13 years, reaching out to families with critically or chronically ill children.

Despite our inability to be physically present in the hospitals, we have made our regular monthly deliveries and we continue to assist families with financial, physical, and emotional needs. We are grateful to be a steady and consistent presence, and the cornerstones of our work continue to be individual family grants, benevolence payments, provision of bereavement counseling, family dinners, and institutional support.



Individual Family Grants

In January 2020, 15-year-old Triniah Maclin's heart was failing. She was admitted to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and she remained there for several months undergoing multiple surgeries and treatments while she awaited a heart transplant that came through in May. Throughout her journey, Triniah showed amazing strength, but it was a painfully taxing process for her and her mother, Tarmika. When Triniah was admitted to the hospital, Tarmika was working full-time as an LPN at a local retirement home, but when the Coronavirus hit, she lost her job. She was caring for a gravely ill child and her 3 other children alone, with no income. We were able to step in and provide the Maclin Family with a \$3,500 grant to help bridge the financial gap and allow Tarmika to be fully present for Triniah's post transplant care, which will include months of rehabilitation and appointments.



Benevolence Payments

Fourteen-year-old Angel Anderson has spent every day of her life battling Sickle Cell Disease. Angel is receiving the world's best medical care at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, but her illness still has a major impact. Angel's mother, Terri, works hard to care for her three children, and like so many others, the pandemic left Terri with limited hours at work. Terri was struggling to make ends meet and we were able to pay the family's utility bill for the month of June to ensure that their home remains a safe place to inhabit during this difficult season.



Bereavement Counseling

The pain of losing a child is unfathomable ... it feels impossible to process, and often leaves parents and families flailing. Bereavement counseling is a critical resource for families facing loss, and it often makes the difference between a family falling apart or moving forward. The Williford family lost their beloved daughter, Lucy, in 2017, and the grief has been unbearable much of the time since then. To help them pick up the pieces, we covered the cost for the Willifords to receive grief counseling from a trained professional. We are passionate about connecting families like the Willifords with proper grief counseling following the loss of a child. In 2020 thus far, we have been able to assist more than 40 families with grief counseling in the Memphis, Nashville and Chattanooga areas.

"When Leah and I unexpectedly lost our daughter, Lucy, in March of 2017, we were at a total loss for how life would go on normally. A few people offered their opinions to us that we should seek counseling, but we did not know who we should see, or even how to hold it together to make the phone call to schedule. It was all too overwhelming. Not long afterwards, Leah was approached by Brittany Spence, who let know us know that the Forrest Spence Fund offered to sponsor us for grief counseling with Lori Keith at the Christian Psychological Center. We just had to show up at our scheduled time. All of this was initially coordinated through the FSF, and then through us for our remaining sponsored meetings and those that we continued to have afterwards. Brittany set us on the right path on our journey of healing after loss." - Lucy's Dad, Judson

Family Meals

March 5th, 2020, was the last time we held an in-person family dinner at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. This is the first time in over 10 years that we have not hosted in-person dinners and we miss being with our families at these events! The dinners bring us so much joy and offer relief for families in need of a break, a wholesome meal, or a listening ear. We do not yet know when we will be able to host monthly dinners again in person, but we look forward to the day when we welcome families with open arms. Until then, families are invited to the hospital cafeteria for a warm meal provided by the Fund. This strategy is less personal than we like, but we are dedicated to ensuring families have access to wholesome meals while staying in the hospital with their child.



Institutional Support

Our friends in the medical community have also been hit hard by the Coronavirus. They are on the frontlines of this illness every day, putting their lives at risk to care for patients with excellence and compassion. The lifesaving work they do is to be commended year-round, but especially during a pandemic that places them in harm's way. To show our appreciation for their heroic work, we partnered with Chick-fil-A to feed these frontline workers. Over several weeks, we fed more than 700 staff members at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital a delicious meal and gave each person a FSF stress ball as a token of our gratitude.



A COMMUNITY OF HELPERS

In March, the familiar dynamics of volunteering, doing hospital work, fundraising, and operating a non-profit changed dramatically. We reached out to our incredible community across all social media platforms and we were overwhelmed by the response! You generously shared your time and your resources, and together we have touched hundreds of lives impacted by childhood illness this year, despite the pandemic. One of the many ways you helped was through purchasing food items and packing hundreds of snack bags for families at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, as well as for outpatient clinics in Memphis, Nashville, and Chattanooga. Volunteer families like the Rossetti's worked diligently to fulfill this need and in all, over 1,000 snack bags were delivered! We have provided Unit Appreciation Bags to hospital staff for years, and knew that this year was certainly not a time to slow our efforts!

Responding to our call for help, volunteers purchased items, made tags, and packaged the bags safely from home. Volunteers also packaged 700 stress balls that we gifted to every staff member at Le Bonheur, along with a hot meal from Chick-Fil-A. We were thrilled to deliver the bags, gifts, and meals to thank the pediatric healthcare workers who give so much of themselves; it was only possible on this scale because of our incredible volunteers!

Under normal circumstances, the Forrest Spence Fund "Comfort Cart" rounds the halls of Le Bonheur



offering free essentials to hospitalized children and their families. When the hospital had to close to volunteers, the ability to continue the Comfort Cart service became impossible. However, with the help of our volunteers, we packed more than 180 individual bags of essential items, enough for each occupied patient room at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. This donation met a huge need for those unable to leave the hospital due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In short, our donors, volunteers, and community supporters rose to the occasion. We have not had to say

"no" or cut back on our services this year. With your help, we did the exact opposite and offered more forms of support to families and hospital staff. You have given hands and feet to our mission through your time and the financial



contributions you have made. The cancellation of our fundraising events that provide our yearly budget was daunting to say the least, but you have continued to give, even in unsteady times. Your financial contributions are our lifeline and we are especially grateful for your generosity in 2020 as we continue to address the challenges facing vulnerable families in this uncertain season. Though we do not yet know what 2021 will hold, we look forward to another year of service with you by our side! From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.



As our Level IV NICU at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital has grown to 119 beds, so have the developmental needs of our smallest patients and their families. The Forrest Spence Fund has been an essential source of support in attaining items that have helped our babies have normal stimulation, socialization, and play opportunities- especially if their parents were unable to be present at bedside because of COVID-19. These items include Mamaroo swings, Lullavibes, Mirrors, CD players and music, and books, which are all utilized and coveted by our families and NICU staff to support the social and emotional needs of our infants. We could not function at the level we do without the generosity and support from the Forrest Spence Fund- our babies, families, and staff thank you with grateful hearts! - Katy Hoskins, Certified Child Life Specialist, NICU, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt



When I drop off the snack bags for patients and families, the receptionists who receive the bags are always filled with excitement! One specific time, the receptionist mentioned how much the families love having a little bit of comfort when their child is having a meltdown in the waiting room. - Emily, Junior League Family Resource Center, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt





...We knew we wanted to love on our local healthcare heroes, and the Forrest Spence Fund was our first call... When I called Abby and Brittany and shared that we would like to provide some meals to the Le Bonheur staff... we quickly had a plan by the end of that call to provide meals and a thank you stress ball gift to the entire staff of Le Bonheur. We cannot speak highly enough of the leadership team, volunteers, mission, and impact that the Forrest Spence Fund has in the Mid-South. We know that whenever we partner with them that whatever we do is serving the greatest need. The fact that they are boots on the ground always listening to the spoken and unspoken needs of the patients, administration and staff at Le Bonheur is exactly how we were able to perfectly execute such a grand goal and why we are honored to serve beside such a great community partner. We are excited to continue to find ways to serve together and look forward to the day when we can walk the halls of Le Bonheur again. - Kimberly Carlson, Area Marketing Director, Chick-fil-A Mid-South

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Are you looking for a great way to be involved in your community while remaining socially distant? The Forrest Spence Fund has several opportunities to give back from afar. Make a difference for children and families impacted by childhood illness, as well as the institutions who care for them, by volunteering for the Forrest Spence Fund. All of our volunteer activities are appropriate for any age, so make it an event for the entire family, volunteer for service hours or give back with your place of work.

Package Bags:

Each month, the Forrest Spence Fund fills hundreds of bags for families and medical staff throughout the Mid-South. Create and package goody bags for medical staff, snack bags for families in outpatient areas throughout the hospital and essential bags for families whose children are hospitalized on an inpatient unit. This is a wonderful hands-on activity for families, groups and those who love to get their creative juices flowing.

Assemble Care Bags:

Care bags are given to children who are experiencing an especially long or difficult hospitalization. Collect and/or purchase items to fill care bags and assemble the bags. We provide the bags and a list of items for each bag and you do the rest! These bags allow you to put your own spin on things and give each bag a personal touch.

Host a Drive:

We have a consistent need for various items that can be collected by our friends in the community. Set up a drive to collect new/unused books, travel sized essential items, gently used magazines and more. Encourage your family and friends, child's school, your office, etc. to get involved by donating these much-needed items to the FSF.

Other Ways to Get Involved:

- Collect or donate gifts for our Christmas Toy Drive
- Make no sew blankets for care bags
- Donate items for our NICU Development Center
- Donate items from our Wishlist
- Donate items for our Bereavement Carts
- Collect travel size toiletry items for our Comfort Carts

To volunteer and learn more about how to get involved, please email our Program Director, Abby Cooley, abby@forrestspencefund.org.



BY THE NUMBERS... Ways We Have Helped since 2011

69,246

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.

17,485

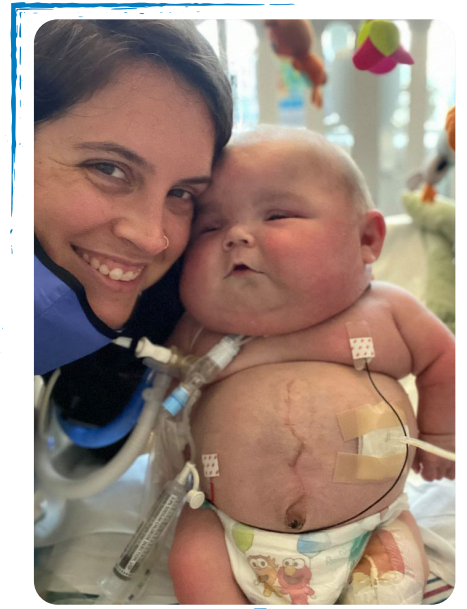
Various forms of institutional/hospital support - including fulfilling wish lists of much needed items such as playmats, bouncy seats, game systems, sound machines, swings, and crib mobiles along with our hospital programs such as Unit Appreciation, Comfort Cart, Snack Bags, NICU Development Center, Bereavement Cart and NICU Celebration Bags.

253

Patients and their families received free third-party counseling

\$462,000

Total funds awarded to families through financial grants



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

WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG



We really appreciate this soooo much. I was just on the phone with my utility company making payment arrangement and now I can pay in full. All my monthly expenses are paid. This is truly a blessing right on time. Thanks for everything you have done for my family! - Jessica Peggs, mother of Isaiah Dickens, Grant recipient

"For years, Forrest Spence Fund has graciously and generously donated and served dinner once a month to every family at Le Bonheur. When our hospital temporarily closed its doors to essential volunteers this spring to help minimize the spread of COVID-19, Forrest Spence Fund seamlessly found new and innovative ways to continue loving and supporting not just our patients and families, but our staff, as well. From catered meals and TLC appreciation bags for health care workers to meal vouchers and a monthly 'Night Out on the Fund,' where every family's cafeteria tab is paid, Forrest Spence Fund continues to shine a bright, loving light on Le Bonheur during a difficult season, and we could not be more thankful." - Allison Smith, Volunteer and Family Support staff, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital

I just wanted to say Thank You for all you do!! My daughter spent so much time in the hospital, and I did not want to leave her side. As a result, my job decided to let me go. She is my most important priority on this earth. I had no idea



how I would pay my rent this month, but your grant allowed me to pay my rent and take care of other necessities. Words can not express my gratitude. I pray that this foundation continues to help families in need during some of their darkest hours. Again I thank you!!! - Ava Rankins, mother of Amari Armstrong, FSF grant recipient, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital

A TENDER MOMENT



We were honored to fulfill an end of life request for longtime Le Bonheur patient, Evan Peterson. Evan was a huge Elvis fan, and as his family prepared to say goodbye, they wanted to bring his love of Elvis to life. Evan's social worker at Le Bonheur reached out to us to help make this final wish possible. Within hours, we were able to get an Elvis impersonator at Evan's bedside for a personal concert just for Evan and his family. Evan's grandmother, Edythe Hewsley, was blown away stating, "thank you more than I can express." We were honored to play a small role in Evan's final wish.

SAVE-THE-DATES ... for these FSF events in 2021

6th Annual No Show Ball Memphis – Saturday, February 6

7th Annual Spring for Forrest – Friday, April 9

The Children's Museum of Memphis

14th Annual Forrest Spence 5k – Saturday, August 28

Shelby Farms Park • Memphis, TN

3rd Annual No Show Ball Chattanooga – Fall of 2021

3rd Annual Friends for Forrest Nashville – Fall of 2021

The Forrest Spence Fund
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For the first time ever, we have a shortfall in our fundraising budget. We need to raise \$192,000 to achieve our 2020 goal. **PLEASE GIVE!**



HOW TO GIVE TO THE FUND



There are two easy ways to make a financial donation. The fastest way is to visit www.forrestspencefund.org and click the green donate button at the top of the homepage. 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.

WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG

