



FUND NEWS

Empathy. Understanding. Hope.

10TH ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

How We Help



For ten years, the Forrest Spence Fund has provided countless forms of support to critically and chronically ill children and their families across the Mid-South and beyond. We are acutely aware of

the hardships that come along with serious pediatric illness, and have walked with hundreds of families as they have struggled under the strain of caring for a critically or chronically ill child. Our mission remains to help the families of critically and chronically ill children via four main avenues of support: individual family needs, institutional support, counseling, and financial grants.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS:

Meeting the individual needs of families is how the Fund began, and will always be at the heart of what we do. We believe in the power of relationship, and that is where it all begins... introducing ourselves to families in the hospital, getting to know them, and tailoring care to meet their specific needs. We work closely with hospital staff who refer families to the Fund who are struggling to make ends meet. Some of these families receive care bags which are packed with carefully selected items for both the hospitalized child and their caregivers. They are age and gender specific, and the items included are snacks, toiletries, vending machine quarters, plush comfort toys for the ill child, and other specially selected items. The bags also include information about the Forrest Spence Fund, ways that we can help, and how to connect with us.



We provide assistance in customized ways that address the specific challenges facing them at that time. Often when addressing the needs of families, the main concerns are staying together, being able to visit the ill child and the complications that come along with long hospital stays, and having a secure home. Therefore we often provide transportation solutions and cover the cost of utility bills, phone bills, rent and/or mortgage payments, meals, baby supplies, or in-home changes that must be made in order for ill children to be able to return home.

I really do appreciate everything Forrest Spence Fund did with my rent. I have barely been working since my daughter was diagnosed with cancer and to step in and pay a large chunk of it for my family without asking any questions is a gift. I thank everyone for having a caring and loving heart. - Tina Wilson, mother of Jalisa

(article continued on the inside pages)



The Forrest Spence Fund has supported us throughout my daughter's illness over the past few years. They helped us keep our house with financial support, helped us eat while in the hospital when we didn't have a dime to our name, and offered volunteers to come talk to us during some of our darkest hours. Being able to talk with them and lean on them helped me through the toughest time of my life. We will forever be grateful for this wonderful organization for their help and support. - Chasity Jacobs, mother of Lani

The backbone of our Individual Needs Program is relationship. We believe this is the most effective means of support for suffering families, and the best way for us to pinpoint needs and serve families most effectively. Executive Director Brittany Spence visits Le Bonheur Children's Hospital once a week to meet with families of hospitalized children. During these visits, Brittany listens to the families' stories and holds their hands as they experience the ups and downs of having a critically ill child. Brittany offers the valuable emotional guidance of someone who has walked in their shoes, and works to connect families with one another, to build a network of support.

Families who have experienced the indescribable pain of losing a child often feel called to give back to the institutions that gave them so much during their child's illness. To honor these grieving families and their children, we created the Giving Back Program. The purpose of this program is to help bereaved families heal through building a legacy for their child. In short, we bring their vision

for celebrating their child's memory to life and help them give back in a way that is meaningful and beneficial to others. Thus far, that has been sponsoring warm meals at the hospital for other families, providing items like mobiles and developmental toys to the hospital, and giving their child's favorite stuffed animal or comfort item to other hospitalized children. Our goal with Giving Back is to help families heal, while honoring their child and those who cared for him/her.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT:

To ensure that we are reaching as many families as possible, we not only provide support directly to the families, but also to the institutions that care for them. The partnerships that we have with hospitals not only make us more aware of the challenges facing the families they serve, but allow us to be a part of the system and change the experience of families who spend days, weeks and months in the hospital.

We donate needed non-medical items, provide snack bags during long and unexpected clinic waits, donate books to NICU Units for mothers to use, and the list is always growing. One of the ongoing services we are able to provide within the walls of the hospital is a free family meal for anyone who has a loved one hospitalized at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis. These dinners have festive themes, fun activities for siblings, and a compassionate atmosphere. Our goal is for every family to leave feeling listened to, served, cared for, and nourished in body and spirit.

The Forrest Spence Fund is a true blessing to so many of our families here at Le Bonheur. Along with assistance of meals, toiletries and fuel costs, Brittany and her staff offer kindness, encouragement and a shoulder to lean on during the stressful days here in the ICU. - Jay Johnson, Pediatric Intensive Care Unite Nurse

Working alongside the Child Life Department at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital has been a valuable partnership as we seek to serve both families and patients. The Forrest Sibling Playroom was designed, built and funded by the Forrest Spence Fund in 2011 in partnership with the hospital's Child Life Department. We are proud of the service it provides to parents who need to

be with their sick child, but also need a secure, happy place for their other children to play. Since its opening, the Playroom has been a haven for over 1,600 children.

The medical staff at our partner hospitals work tirelessly on behalf of their young patients, and we launched our Unit Appreciation Program in 2010 to give back to them and encourage them in their daily work. Each month, a different department within the hospital receives our Unit Appreciation bags. Every member receives treats and a note of appreciation. It is the institutional staff members who work around the clock with patients and their families. They offer hope, they comfort them on their hardest days and celebrate with them on their best days. Our appreciation for what they do and how they fight for the lives of the young people in our community runs deep.

I cannot even begin to express how important the Forrest Spence Fund is to Le Bonheur and specifically the Child Life Department. It is because of the Forrest Spence Fund that we are continually able to provide opportunities for play, diversion and continue a child's development through their stay at the hospital. Forrest Spence Fund helps us support not only the child, but also support the entire family when they need it the most.
- Kathryn Young, Certified Child Life Specialist at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital



The Forrest Spence Fund generously paid for twelve weeks of professional counseling after I lost my infant son in January of this year. Counseling has provided a place to pour out my broken heart and receive guidance on this grief journey. I would not be where I am today without professional counseling, and I'm forever grateful to the Forrest Spence Fund for alleviating this financial burden. - Margo Allgood, mother of William Hunter, who passed away in 2017

COUNSELING:

The loss of a child is one of life's most difficult experiences. A healthy grief journey is critical for the survival of the family, and a dedicated support system is crucial in that process. For many grieving families, however, this simply is not possible, is not known, or is simply too overwhelming during such a difficult time. To help families get the lifeline they need in times of grief, we connect them with professional counselors and pay 100% of the cost of their therapy.

The Forrest Spence Fund helped my family in numerous ways. Our son Ethan was a patient in the PICU at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. While he was there we were gifted meal vouchers, gift cards to help pay for our daughter's school supplies and clothes and a financial grant. The financial grant helped us out tremendously with bills we were behind on and the remaining money helped us bury our baby boy. We are so thankful for the Forrest Spence Fund and could not have made it without them. - Jacqueline Tye, mother of Ethan who passed away in 2016

GRANTS:

In line with our understanding that every family experiences unique strains during a child's hospitalization, we offer personal grants of up to \$5,000. Families in need can apply for a grant, and to date over 60 families have been given the gift of financial support.

Did you know...We're on the move!

The Fund has expanded into THREE new hospitals and two new cities this year!

We've expanded!

It has been a year of wonderful growth at the Forrest Spence Fund and we are thrilled to announce three new institutional partners.

At the beginning of 2017, we expanded our services to include Memphis' own St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, where our focus is meeting the non-medical needs of families facing a pediatric cancer diagnosis. Families from the Midsouth and all over the world find themselves in Memphis to access the top-notch care at St. Jude, and with that comes a myriad of stresses and strains at home. So far we have been able to help with mortgage and rent payments, car repair bills, utility bills, and phone bills to keep loved ones connected, and we look forward to an ongoing relationship with St. Jude and its families.

We are also pleased to announce that the Forrest Spence Fund has moved into two new cities this year! Early in the year we launched our mission within the halls of Nashville's Monroe Carrell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, and in October we met with the administrators of Children's Hospital at Erlanger in Chattanooga, and added them to our list of valued partners. We are beyond grateful for the trust that these incredible institutions have placed in us, and we look forward to knowing and working with families in the Nashville and Chattanooga regions. At both Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital and the Children's Hospital at Erlanger, our services include institutional help, individual help, and counseling provision.

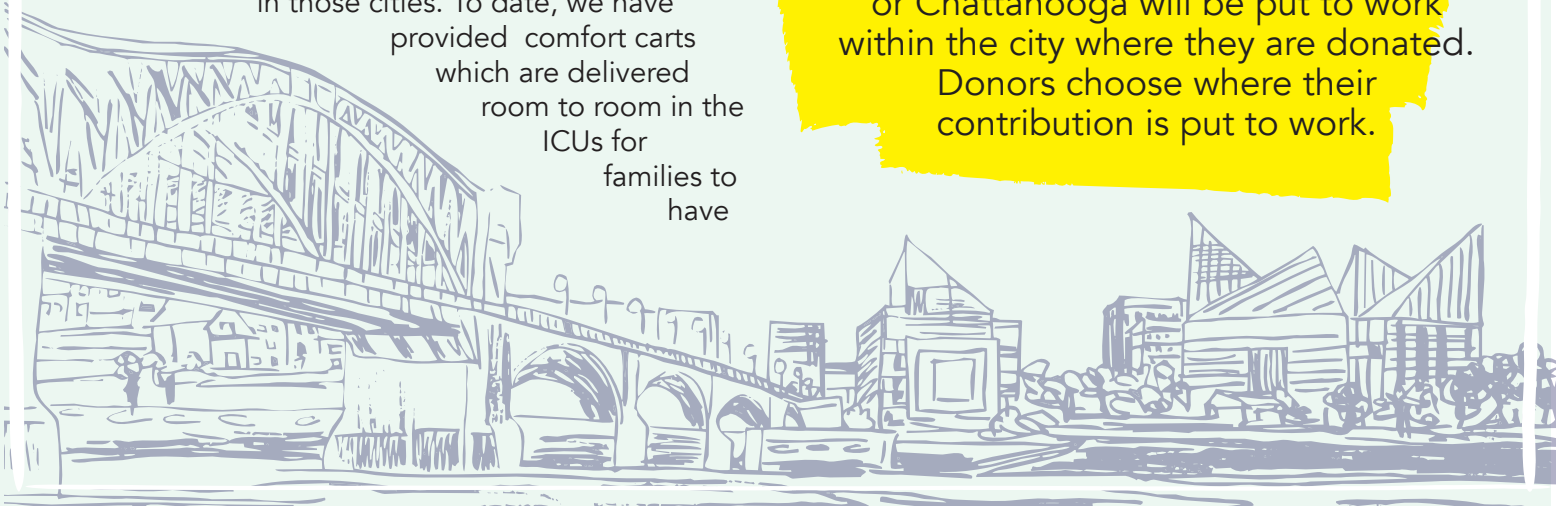
Our long-term goal is to also include individual financial grants, once the needed support is raised in those cities. To date, we have provided comfort carts which are delivered room to room in the ICUs for families to have



what they need, meal vouchers, educational materials to explain diagnoses, staff appreciation bags, and 40 Week Bags that have development toys that are given to preemie babies who have been in the hospital 8-16 weeks. It's a way we help the family celebrate the milestone of reaching 40 weeks. We were thankful to be able to hit the ground running at Monroe Carell with counseling provision, finding quality professional counseling for grieving families and covering 100% of the cost and we are eager to launch this at Erlanger in the very near future.

Did you know...you can CHOOSE.

Funds donated in Memphis, Nashville or Chattanooga will be put to work within the city where they are donated. Donors choose where their contribution is put to work.





How to...

GET INVOLVED

We offer many opportunities for people of all ages to volunteer, and we welcome your involvement!

Here are some ways that you can make a difference:

SERVE AT A MONTHLY FAMILY 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.

ASSEMBLE CARE BAGS:

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

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 a head for event-planning to help with the annual Forrest Spence 5K, the Spring for Forrest cocktail party and auction, or the No Show Ball. These events make our mission possible, and each one has grown to be a beloved event within the community.

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
- Host a drive to collect books for our Baptist NICU Reading Program
- Host a Lemonade stand and donate the proceeds to the Forrest Spence Fund
- Encourage friends to donate items from our Wish list in honor of your birthday
- Collect essential items for Comfort Carts
- Donate items from our Wish list

To volunteer, please email our Program Director, Abby Cooley, abby@forrestspencefund.org.

Stay up to date:

Follow us on social media to learn about current volunteer needs and daily happenings with the fund.



[forrestspencefund](https://www.facebook.com/forrestspencefund)



[forrest_spence_fund](https://www.instagram.com/forrest_spence_fund)



[forrestspence5k](https://twitter.com/forrestspence5k)

How to Give

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There are two easy ways to make a financial donation. The fastest way is to visit www.forrestspencefund.org and contribute via the "Donate" tab. There you can make a general donation or select a specific item, such as a family basket, a \$25 gas card, or a meal voucher. New this year, you can also select the city to which you would like your donation allocated. Memphis, Nashville, and Chattanooga will 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 to the address listed below, and specify a city in the memo line. Regular monthly donations are always welcome and may be stopped at any time.



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.

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

by the numbers:

31,551 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

16,903 various forms of Institutional/Hospital Support – including fulfilling wish lists of much needed items such as play mats, DVD players, bouncy seats, game systems, sound machines, swings, and crib mobiles along with our Hospital Programs such as Unit Appreciation, Comfort Cart, Snack Bags, and 40 Week Bags

122 Patients and their families received free third party counseling

\$160,000 total funds awarded to families through financial grants



"We happily give to the Forrest Spence Fund each year because we know that our money is almost instantly put to real-deal use in the life of another parent who is struggling and facing some of their darkest days. We believe God is near the broken-hearted, that He cares deeply and specifically for them, and we want to equip the Fund to come alongside those people who are so very important to Him and make a difference... a tangible, real, keep-the-lights-on and keep-hope-going kind of difference."

- Anonymous donor, Knoxville, TN



We know that where you donate is a big deal. There are many voices, many wonderful choices, and we don't take that lightly. At the Forrest Spence Fund, we have a daily commitment to make the most of every dollar that is generously given, and believe that by truly getting to know each family and their specific challenges, we are able to identify areas of need with laser focus, cutting out waste and making the most of our efforts, and your dollars. 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 2017, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Bottom line: your generosity makes our mission of love possible.

The Forrest Spence Fund
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Memphis, TN 38177

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NO
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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Get ready to go nowhere!



SPRING
For
FORREST

COCKTAIL PARTY & AUCTION

FRIDAY, APRIL 6

MEMPHIS CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



SAVE-THE-DATE • 11TH ANNUAL FORREST SPENCE 5K
SATURDAY, AUGUST 25

WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG