



Circle of Care

for families of children with cancer

News from our Circle!

Summer
2020

4-CT awards important grant to Circle of Care COVID Relief Fund



COVID-19
Relief Fund

This \$150,000 grant from 4-CT towards our COVID-19 Relief Fund will allow us to extend our reach to **double** the number of families we serve, and increase the annual financial cap we provide per family.

We are so grateful for 4-CT's commitment to COVID relief by supporting the most vulnerable among us. This grant will go directly toward helping families already struggling with the high cost of cancer treatment and loss of work; ensuring their housing and food needs will be met. The COVID-19 pandemic is having a devastating impact on families living with cancer in Connecticut. COVID-19 has pushed working families to the edge, and this grant is earmarked specifically to reach those doubly impacted by the high costs of a cancer diagnosis and the economic fallout from COVID-19.

"Families of children with cancer are in a difficult situation that the COVID-19 crisis only made more critical. 4-CT is glad to be able to provide aid so that these families can focus on healing their children."



- Ted Yang, Co-Founder of 4-CT

In 2019, a staggering 50% of families with a child in treatment needed financial assistance to avoid personal economic collapse. Our partner hospital social workers at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital and Connecticut Children's expect that number to rise to 85% in 2020. We have already responded to requests for assistance which have increased by over 50% year to date. Thanks to 4-CT and other generous foundations who are stepping up to help this vulnerable population, our COVID-19 Relief Fund is just over 60% funded.



"We're here in quarantine..."

I just wanted to say thank you from the bottom of my heart. Ever since my daughter was diagnosed with cancer, Circle of Care has been there for me financially in ways I could never imagine. We love you guys and hope you stay safe and continue to do a great job with OTHER families with kids battling this monster..."

- Nevaeh's mom, Christina

"Social distancing is staying away from people - not your purpose"

Amit Kalantri, *Wealth of Words*

A Message From The Liz's



Dear Friends,

We sincerely hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy.

The first half of 2020 has not been what any of us expected. The COVID-19 outbreak has changed everything about the way we live, work, and play. The economic and emotional repercussions of this isolation are taking their toll on everyone- especially on families who have a child living with cancer. As feared, it is hitting hard.

As our communities re-open, many will be left behind without the resources to rebuild their lives- all while caring for a sick child. Experience has taught us that when catastrophe strikes, 80% of the funding is needed during the recovery period- usually after supporters have moved on to the next crisis. The families in our circle are facing months without income while still caring for a sick child who requires lengthy, expensive medical treatment. Many are also facing a nearly impossible choice: if they go back to work outside the home, they risk exposing their immune-suppressed children to a life-threatening virus- but the loss of income places the security and well-being of the entire family at risk.

Imagine this happening to your family:

On March 26th, at the outset of the pandemic, an 8-year-old, John* was diagnosed with Leukemia. Because his diagnosis was delayed, he suffered immediate and severe complications. His heart was so enlarged, he needed blood transfusions to replace platelets and red bloods cells but also required Leukocytapheresis to remove all of his white blood cells, and he was put on dialysis to support his failing kidneys. During this, his family was separated due to COVID-19 regulations only allowing one parent to stay with him in the ICU. Since then, every hospital visit for chemo comes with a COVID test before he can "go upstairs." Often, a one-hour visit turns into an entire day. They cannot eat hospital or take-out food for fear of contamination. Friends cannot visit them at home or drop off meals. They are totally isolated at a time of immense anxiety. And, his treatment protocol will last until March of 2023.

Circle of Care stands committed to the health and well-being of the children, families, staff, and volunteers in our communities. We are incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support offered to us during these challenging times. Our staff is driven by the challenges our families are facing and are dedicated to easing their hardship. With you standing alongside us, we can continue to provide the critical financial and emotional support needed to keep families safe and stable- in their homes with food on the table.

As we all go through this next stage, please continue to take good care of yourselves and each other.

*Name changed



"It's a beautiful feeling knowing that there are people like you all in the world that strive to add light to a situation that brings so much fear."

- Nathan's mom, *Rossana*

Our Promise to the families in our Circle:



A roof over their heads...



the lights always on...



food on the table...



transportation to the hospital...



and the means to get there.



Joseph's Story

Joseph was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2018. He endured chemotherapy for almost two years following his diagnosis. Joseph relied on his father, Frank, to care for him at home while his mom continued working. They quickly learned the impact of shifting from dual to single income, and Joseph's family was in danger of losing their home on multiple occasions throughout his treatment and recovery. Your support of our Financial Assistance program kept a roof over their heads.



"We do not know what would have happened to our family, home, and lives if Circle of Care did not reach out to us with financial and emotional support when they did."

- Frank, Joseph's dad

Meet our Tammi!

If you stop by our barn, you're likely to see the bright and smiling face of Tammi Small. Tammi brings 25+ years of serving the community, and provides us with a multi-faceted perspective as our Director of Programs and Events. Tammi is the face that greets the families at our events, our liaison with hospital staff, and the heart and soul behind our valued programs for families facing a childhood cancer diagnosis in Connecticut.



First VIRTUAL 5K crosses state lines!

Our first ever virtual CARE to Run 5K was a major success! We had 575 participants from across 17 states who walked, ran, rowed, and pedaled in their neighborhoods, homes, backyards, and local trails. Over \$35,000 was raised in donations alone.

We were overwhelmed by the level of community support generated by this event, from people who live near and far. Especially Kiara who recently moved back to Wisconsin after completing treatment for a spinal cord tumor. Kiara's tumor has been stable for the last year, but it has affected her walking. So, she rolled along on her bike while the rest of the family jogged.



"We will ALWAYS be grateful to Circle of Care and appreciate more than words can say what they did for us."

- Kiara's family

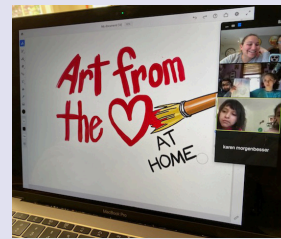
Keeping In Touch...

Helping find your calm.



Our free webinar for families, volunteers, donors, or healthcare workers in our Circle was our way to offer a deep cleansing breath. Hosted by Stephanie Delfonzo, a holistic practitioner with 25 years experience in integrative hypnosis, coaching, and author of "Goodbye Anxiety Hello Freedom"

Art From The Heart (at home!)



Art From The Heart at Home, a five week virtual art program, for families in our Circle with children ages (5-10). Art From the Heart founder, Karen Morgenbesser, and

her daughter Kimberly guided the participants in a "draw along with me" story time that was carried out over a Zoom video chat.

Keller Williams shares our story

This year, Keller Williams Prestige Properties again selected Circle of Care as beneficiary of their RED Day annual day of service dedicated to Renewing, Energizing and Donating to local communities. We are grateful to Keller Williams for sharing our story and spreading the word of our programs and services to reach the far corners of the state.



... and a special hospital visit!



In May members of The Childhood Cancer Alliance of CT dressed up and took our cheer to go show our support - at a distance - to patients in our pediatric cancer hospitals.

“I don’t wish this disease on anyone, but if you have to endure it, I wish for you to have Circle of Care by your side.”

Jeff Kimball CEO United Way Coastal Fairfield County



The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased the number of families seeking our support, creating a surge in demand of financial need.

In the first five months of 2020, we have already assisted the total number of families served during the full year in 2019.

Your support of our COVID-19 relief fund will guarantee we never have to turn a family away.



How You Can Help... even at a distance!

Donate: No donation is too small- every dollar goes to immediate and direct support to CT families in treatment.

Share: Follow and share our posts on social media- help spread awareness about our cause!

Care: Subscribe to our e-newsletter on our website to stay informed of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

thecircleofcare.org



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