



20 Years



Together, side by side

Circle of Care
for families of children with cancer

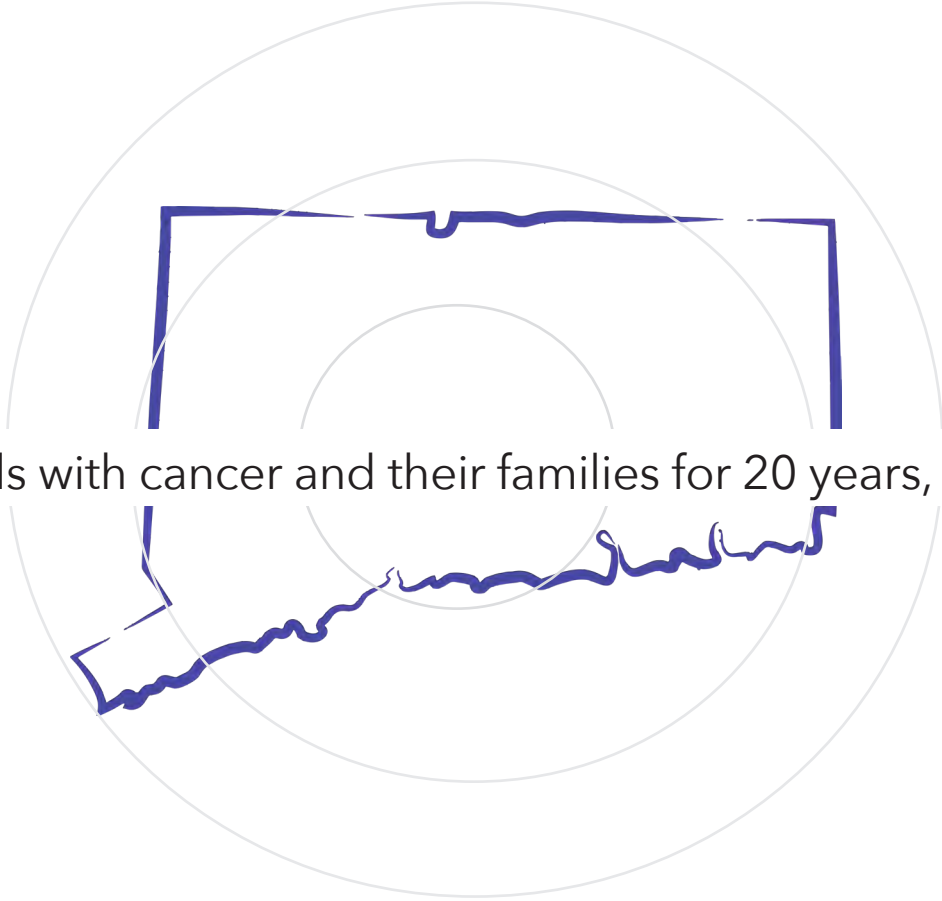
Annual Report FY 2024
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



Our Mission: For 20 years, Circle of Care has provided practical, emotional, and financial support to families of children, adolescents, and young adults facing a pediatric cancer diagnosis.

We believe that the path to healing extends beyond medicine, and we offer services tailored to address the distinct and demanding non-medical challenges families encounter throughout their entire journey with pediatric cancer.





Helping kids with cancer and their families for 20 years, close to home.

Serving Connecticut, Westchester County New York, Western Massachusetts



Liz Salguero and Liz Vega
Co-Executive Directors

Dear Friends...

As we celebrate 20 years of supporting families of children with cancer, we are deeply grateful for the generosity and compassion of our donors and volunteers. What began as a grassroots effort has grown into a community that has served thousands of families across Connecticut, Westchester County New York and Western Massachusetts. We've provided critical financial assistance, emotional support, and practical resources to families in need. Our 20th Anniversary Gala this past year was a powerful reflection on the impact we've made together.

In 2023, we were honored with national and local recognition for our unique approach to family-centered care. Our efforts to address the needs of families through our many programs and services have continued to grow, bringing hope and stability during their most challenging moments. As we look ahead, we are excited to continue expanding our services, with your partnership making all the difference.

Liz S + Liz V.



*Liz and Dawn with Camila, 5K Champion, at our 20th birthday celebration.
March 2024*

Celebrating 20 Years...



Zelie & Andy Pforzheimer
2024 Gala Chairs

This year's gala, Kaleidoscope: Colors of Courage, was a celebration of our milestone anniversary, raising essential funds to ensure that no family faces this journey alone.

For 20 years, Circle of Care has been a lifeline for families navigating the unimaginable challenges of childhood cancer. We are grateful that our experience and approach to care have earned us the reputation as a premier provider of family support in our region. To date, we have been able to assist over **3,600** families with programs and services that meet the unique needs and challenges of their child's diagnosis - every step of the way.

Our model of care is centered around three critical areas of support: emotional, practical, and financial. We work closely with medical professionals to build strong hospital partnerships and form personal connections with families. Through community engagement and volunteer support, we offer a holistic network that empowers families to face challenges confidently, knowing they're never alone.



Over **85%** of families in our Circle faced a financial crisis during treatment last year.

Providing support where it's needed most:



“We are currently living with one income and 12 in the house. Anything and everything we receive is not only needed but truly appreciated.” - A mom in our Circle



In 20 years we have given **\$2.8M** in direct financial assistance to families

Amplifying Our Voice - to Amplify Our Mission



Our approach to family-centered support has earned us national and local recognition, solidifying our role as advocates and leaders in the childhood cancer support community.

The Cancer Community (C2) Awards

In 2023, our Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director, Liz Salguero, was honored with AstraZeneca's prestigious C2 Catalyst for Care Award at The Cancer Community Awards ceremony in Gaithersburg, MD.

The C2 Awards celebrate the innovative individuals and organizations dedicated to making a difference for those living with and affected by cancer. The Catalyst for Care award recognizes those who are working to transform the experience for people navigating cancer.

This national recognition highlights our ongoing commitment to making the cancer journey manageable for the families we serve. The award included a generous grant, allowing us to expand and reach even more families in need.



Leading the way in care, compassion, and hope.

Moffly Media's Light a Fire Awards

Since 2007, the Light a Fire awards have honored exceptional people in the community who, through their volunteer work, go above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of others. Ten community leaders are selected and celebrated each award cycle.

Liz Salguero was the recipient of the Best Friend to Families Award from Moffly Media's 2023 Light a Fire Awards. She also received this award 10 years ago. This honor underscores Liz's unwavering dedication to ensuring the sustainability of Circle of Care, creating a lasting legacy.




Light a Fire 2023
A CELEBRATION OF GIVING



32% of the families we support needed help putting food on their table while in treatment.



Meeting Basic Needs...

The financial strain of a cancer diagnosis impacts every part of life, from overwhelming medical bills to essential needs like keeping food on the table. By meeting these critical needs, we provide families with stability and peace of mind, allowing them to focus on caring for their child without the constant worry of missing a meal.

Last year, we provided **\$62,000** in food assistance for 180 families

Our *Thanksgiving* ensures no family has to worry about food for their holiday so they can focus on spending time together.



Families in our Circle have received over **\$258,000** in food assistance to date



Our 5K Celebrates 10 Years

Our annual CARE to Run 5K is a community event that unites families, friends, and supporters to champion our mission. Each year, participants come together to run, walk, and raise awareness for the unique and ongoing challenges families with cancer face.

Each year, we introduce a family in our Circle to our participants to give the family an opportunity to share their story, and our community some extra inspiration.



Liz Salguero presents Camila's family - 2024 5K.

"I was completely surprised by how much Circle of Care wanted to help... It started with a care bag on that first day... They also gave us gift cards to pay for our gas for all those trips to the hospital." - Camila's mom

Meet Camila: Our 2024 5K Champion

Camila was diagnosed with cancer at just 18 months old, leading to her immediate admission to Yale New Haven Children's Hospital. The sudden shift upended her family's life, forcing both parents out of work and leaving them without a stable income. Our programs and services are here to support families like Camila's, who face mounting expenses from treatment costs and reduced income—all while focusing on their child's healing.





Our 2024 Education Award Recipients

Empowering Young Adult Futures...

Our programs and services support childhood cancer patients up to the age of 26. Our AYA (Adolescent/Young Adult) programming provides unique opportunities for those ages 15 and up.

Each year, we offer a monetary award to our AYAs pursuing higher education. This past year, it was granted to twelve remarkable students who have faced childhood cancer. These awards go beyond financial assistance – they embody the resilience, determination, and hope for a brighter future that each recipient carries forward.

Last year, we awarded **\$30,000** to support the futures of our AYAs



“As I pursue my goal of being on the front lines of healthcare, I will forever be thankful for those who were able to help get me there.” - Declan, Keynote Speaker



Since 2021, we have granted **24** Education Awards to AYAs



2023 New York City Marathon



Last year marked an exciting milestone as we became an official charity partner of the NYC Marathon.

Our team of 11 participants, from Connecticut to Washington, D.C., came together to raise critical funds in support of families facing childhood cancer.

Their collective effort brought needed awareness to our mission and strengthened the network of care for those in need.

Congratulations Team Circle of Care FINISHERS!



Gabriela Vega - Supporter



Carlos Vega - Consigli Construction



Our 2023 Porch Elves



"We started our holiday gift program in 2020 with a simple goal—to bring a little bit of extra joy and comfort to families dealing with cancer during the isolating, challenging time of COVID. It started small, but thanks to incredible support from local businesses, community groups, and our volunteer 'elves,' it's really taken off.

What began with 18 gift packages that first year has grown into 117 packages last season! Each one is hand-delivered to families' doors, showing them they're supported and loved."



Heather Stabinsky
"Binky the Elf"

Spreading Holiday Cheer

Last holiday season, we provided **117** families with gift packages, ensuring that those facing cancer felt the warmth and magic of the season even during their hardest times. Our close relationship with the families in our Circle allows us to put together each child's gifts with their favorite things in mind.



“Scarlett got admitted to the hospital a week and a half ago and we have been here since... We appreciate this so much, she’s over the moon!” - Brianna, Scarlett’s mom



Since 2020, our volunteer elves have delivered **311** holiday gifts



We're there on day one...

93 Bags of Love delivered
to newly diagnosed families

Our signature program, Bags of Love, provides a day of diagnosis care bag with essential resources like a toiletry kit and items that provide the comforts of home during the early weeks of a family's hospital stays.

This is often our first touchpoint with families, welcoming them into our Circle and ensuring they don't feel alone.



Our Resource Guide

The Purple Pages is an up-to-date resource guide that provides trusted information useful from the day of diagnosis to life after cancer and everything in between.



Zelie Pforzheimer, Tammi Small & Liz Salguero with our Bags of Love.



*We have delivered **1,870** Bags of Love to families in treatment*

Did You Know...

Circle of Care relies entirely on the generosity of our community. We do not receive federal, state, or municipal funding. Every dollar that supports our programs and services comes from donations from individuals, foundations, and corporate partners who believe in our mission. Our transparency and effectiveness have earned us trusted ratings from Candid and Charity Navigator, so every contribution is maximized to make a meaningful impact for families.



Spotlight: April & Michael Book



Michael & April Book, CARE to Swing 2024

For the past five years, April and Michael Book have been vital supporters of Circle of Care, dedicating their time, energy, and resources to further our mission. Their leadership in core fundraising events has been instrumental in expanding our reach and allowing us to support more families facing childhood cancer.

Since 2019, April has played a key role in developing our family information database. She increased her involvement by joining our Board of Directors in 2022. Michael's partnership with Lenox Advisors has strengthened our efforts, notably through securing a \$75,000 grant from MassMutual, which enabled us to extend our programs into western Massachusetts and assist families at Baystate Children's Hospital.

Their hands-on approach to our golf and gala fundraisers exemplifies their unwavering commitment, significantly enhancing our impact.



April Book, Kaleidoscope Gala



Kings Highway Elementary School



Wilton High School

COMMUNITY

Keller Williams Real Estate



Cider Mill Elementary School





Glenville School

Our Community Gives Back

When a child is diagnosed with cancer the entire family needs support. They need people to rally around them, to make sure they never feel alone.

We are grateful for the community we have built that is determined to spread awareness and generate support for the families in our Circle. From school “gold outs” and bake sales to bracelet making fundraisers and days of service, our supporters spread awareness about the needs of families in our region and are hands-on in making a difference.

Spotlight: The Theoharides Family



Phil, Lyla, & Kacky Theoharides

The Theoharides family has been a cornerstone of support, driven by their personal journey as parents of Lyla, a childhood cancer survivor. For nearly 10 years, Kacky has co-chaired our annual 5K fundraiser, significantly contributing to its growth and success. Their unwavering dedication to our mission was recognized when Lyla was honored as Champion at our 2023 golf outing, and they shared their family's story at our 20th Anniversary Gala.

Their children continue this legacy of service: Lyla now co-leads her high school's Circle of Care club, while their son August rallied his fraternity, Π KA, to fundraise and volunteer, and ran the NYC Marathon in support of us. Their other sons have organized "gold out" football games with us at their schools to raise awareness during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Their family strives to give back, fulfilled by their efforts helping other families just like them.



Lyla, our 2023 CARE to Swing Golf Champion.



Kacky with Lyla and friends, 2016 5K.

Celebrating moments that matter...

Birthdays during cancer treatment can feel different - sometimes with treatment or side effects requiring kids to be away from family and friends. Every child deserves an extra reason to smile on their birthday.



We surprised **112** kids with a birthday box for their special day

“Aliyah and I want to say thank you so much for the birthday gift. She loves it. She loves everything especially the chocolate chip cookie!” - Aliyah’s mom



Since the launch of our boxes in 2021, we have celebrated **381** birthdays



Lucas



Jasmine



James



Kimberly



Amaya



Willa

With thanks to our volunteer teams

*Dream Room Angels • Professional Women in Building
Wilton Re • Chloe Rabinowitz • William Pitt - Sotheby's
The Hartford • St. Luke Church • Rachael & Todd Turcotte*



Damian



Camryn



Leah



Kylie



Luke



Chloe Rabinowitz, team lead, in Willa's room.

Art From The Heart



Transforming Rooms - Transforming Lives

Our dream room makeover program transforms the bedrooms or playrooms of children into a personal oasis—a place to escape from the daily reality of doctor offices and treatment rooms.

In the past year, our volunteer teams have transformed **11 rooms** into spaces of hope and joy for kids fighting cancer

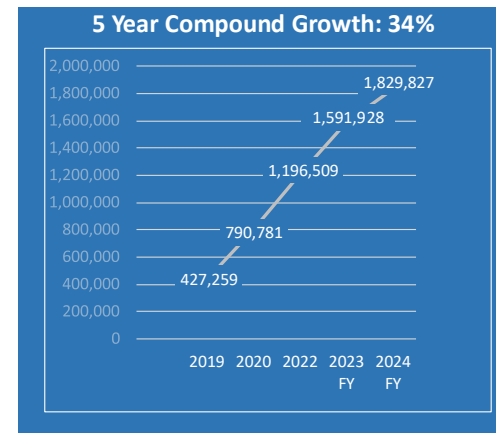


*Since 2005, we have transformed **179** dream rooms*

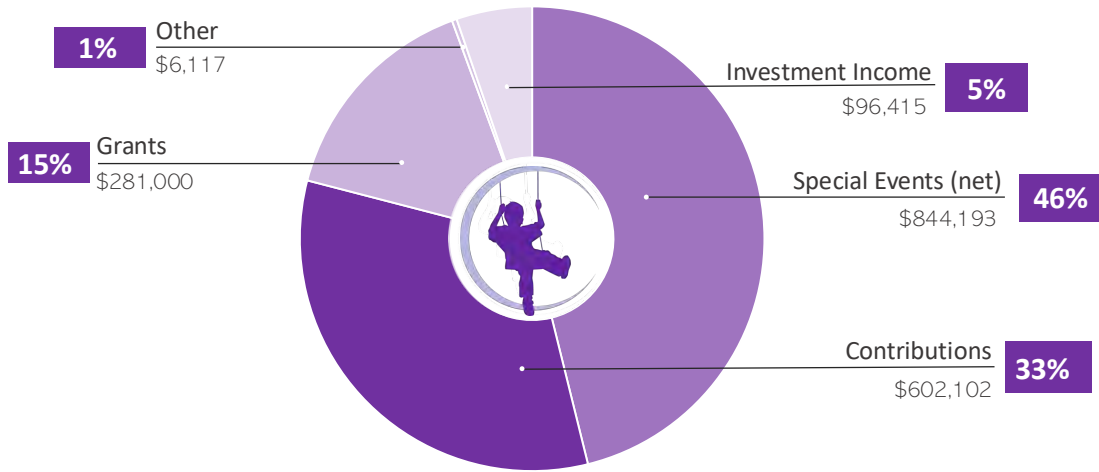
Financials

"We are so very grateful for Circle of Care and all you have done for our family! This is a tremendous help at a difficult time. We can't thank you enough! Thank you from our entire family!" - Remy's mom

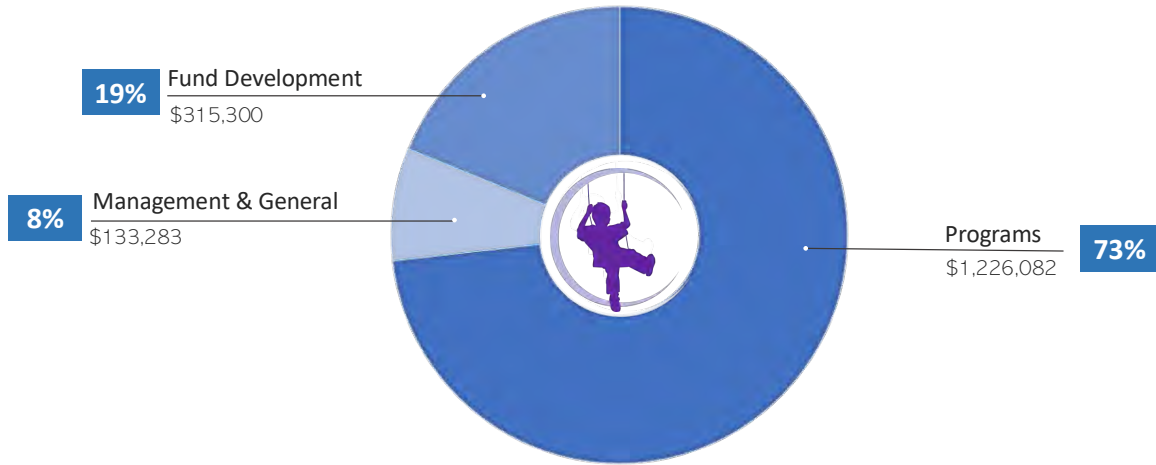
REVENUE – Source of Funds	
Contributions	602,102
Special Events Net	844,193
Grants	281,000
Other	6,117
<i>Investment Income</i>	96,415
TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT	\$1,829,827
EXPENSE – Use of Funds	
Program	1,226,082
Management & General	133,283
Fund Development	315,300
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$1,674,665
Net Assets	
End of Year	1,076,205
Beginning of Year	921,043
CHANGE NET ASSETS	\$155,162



Direct Program Services	
Financial Assistance	522,825
Other Programs	128,709
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSE	\$651,534



Revenue: **\$1,829,827**



Expense: **\$1,674,665**

Leadership

Liz Salguero & Liz Vega

Co-Executive Directors

Board of Directors

Officers

Ray Eckert

Board Chair

Liz Salguero

Founder

Dawn Ladenheim

Founder & Treasurer

Stacey Savas

Secretary

Directors

April Book

Missy Dorsey

Amy Gonch

Christina Hanna

Susan Kobylinski

Zelie Pforzheimer

Fred Podolsky

Jeffrey Salguero

Katarina Tchakarov

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Jeffrey Salguero

Director of Marketing

Tammi Small

Director of Family Programs

Heather Stabinsky

Sr. Specialist Marketing Communications

Maria Wilcox

Accounting & Finance Specialist

Lisa Williams

Development Manager

Our Partners

Our thanks and gratitude to our collaborators who are instrumental in helping ensure our programs and services reach families in need.

Partner Hospitals

Baystate Children's Hospital, MA

Connecticut Children's Medical Center, CT

Maria Fareri Children's Hospital, NY

Yale New Haven Children's Hospital, CT

Hospital Affiliates

Boston Children's Hospital

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital



Circle of Care is the proud founder of the Childhood Cancer Alliance of Connecticut, providing a collaborative network of organizations to ensure families have access to all available support in the state.



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Join Our Cause



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