

Make-A-Wish Foundation:
Where Wishes Come True, Miracles Follow

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We all know Make-a-Wish Foundation grants wishes for sick children, but can it improve their health, too? Their mission to "enrich the human experience" might be even more successful than we had previously thought. Seven years ago, the group began a study to explore the

By Meg Grasmick

ago, the group began a study to explore the physical, emotional, and social impacts on the children and their community. The findings reveal some compelling evidence. As co-founder and former CEO Denise Bar-Aharon was known to say, "While doctors give the medicine, Make-A-Wish gives the magic."

Initially, there were questions concerning just how the foundation's work impacted the children and their community. This study proved that children see huge improvements in their mood, perspective, and strength. Siblings feel more connected to their family and supported by the community. Parents like you experience higher levels of hope and happiness and lower levels of fear and anxiety. They find that once their child's wish is granted, he or she is less likely to be stressed and more likely to engage socially.

Most encouraging of all is the data that shows children whose wishes are granted develop a unique resilience. They not only become more willing to undergo difficult procedures, but also more optimistic about the outcome. They and

their families are revitalized with a new sense of strength. The child feels an increased sense of autonomy and energy. All of this can lead to an improvement in their health and the return to a sense of normalcy, something from which the whole family can benefit.

Outside of the family, many more are affected positively. Volunteers, for example, have a particularly unique takeaway. Seeing the positive impact they can have, participants are struck with compassion, a renewed faith in the goodness of others, and a refreshed dedication to helping those in need. They are grateful and want to do more to help other children and families. What a beautiful chain reaction!

If you would like to make your child's wish come true, don't hesitate. Most parents who believe their child wouldn't qualify in fact do. You don't need a genie, but you do need a doctor's referral. Children between the ages of 2 and a half and 18 are eligible. Whether it's a royal sweet sixteen, a "patient to pilot" transformation, or meeting an Animal Planet star, Make-A-Wish Foundation has the tools and resources to give a gift to your child that they otherwise would never have thought possible.



www.wish.org

coolkidscampaign.org

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TOSE AND SELECTION OF THE HOSDITAL

There are so many people in the hospital certified, willing, and ready to guide your child through their journey to recovery. It may be overwhelming and even a bit confusing to remember everyone's name and role, but familiarity with the types of people you will encounter eases feelings of bewilderment. Plus, your kid would probably like a brief explanation of who the heck is coming in their room all the time. At least when they're home, they know who to yell at for barging in! At the hospital, doctors, nurses, and specialists are 'the usual suspects' waiting at the door.

Two of the most common doctors you will interact with are the attending physician assigned to care for your child and the doctor on call, who is there when your regular doc is not available. More often than not, there is a whole team trained in different areas working together to treat your child. You may also come across a hospitalist, who is 100% in-hospital, or a physician assistant (PA for short) who works in congruence with the doctor. By a different token, others are doctors in training, such as medical students or residents.

Nurses come in many forms as well. You will certainly have an oncology nurse and potentially an oncology nurse practitioner, who is observed by the first. After the doctors and nurses come the other specialists, a slew of 'ists' including but not limited to oncologists. (The tongue twisters strike again!) An oncologist is a doctor whose speciality is in dealing with a particular type of cancer. Your child will also certainly have a social worker and a child life specialist who are there to help them through emotional and social challenges.

We hope that this guide makes the process of learning who's who in the hospital just a little bit easier. Tell your child to think of the hospital as a big house where everyone's job is to take care of them when they're not feeling well. And what is it for you? Well, it can be a place to make friends who strive to be just as invested in your kid as you are.

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Tips for Teens

By Meg Grasmick

This one is written for the teenagers. We'll level with you, the teenage years can be some of the most challenging and transformative years of your life. No pressure, though! It is a time when you will learn about yourself in new ways and develop socially. Needless to say, cancer brings a new set of things to learn from. Fortunately, there are concrete ways to manage the changes and take control where you can. We have advice to impart on just how to keep healthy relationships with parents, siblings, friends, teachers, and classmates (and how to think about school at this time).

PARENTS

When it comes to dealing with cancer, who better than your loving parents to be the most active people in your life? But while you are eternally grateful, you might also be frustrated that the diagnosis, and now your parents, have taken away some of your autonomy. This is not intentional on your rents' part. They love you so much and want to see you healthy again, and for them that means taking on as much of your health management as possible. We have some suggestions for how to be proactive here. For example, let them know when you want to be by yourself. Tell them you will set reminders on your phone for your meds every now and then. Explain that you will take over scheduling appointments for a day. Writing down goals for yourself is always a good idea, and making lists of the good and bad changes can lift your spirit. But don't go too crazy with it! Save your scary ambitious side for when you're back at school killin' the game!

SiBLiNGS

Now onto those pesky brothers and sisters (just kidding). What changes can we see here? Well, they are feeling a bunch of new emotions, too, and most of them come from how much they care about you. They might feel that your parents are less available and that they don't know how to help. Let them know that they don't have to treat you differently. Keep them close, because they understand you in a way that your parents don't. They can calm your nerves, bring on a smile, and fill you in on what you're missing (or not missing too much) in school.

FRIENDS

Your friends are your rock-solid foundation when you are at school during the week. Even if you aren't seeing them everyday anymore, they don't have to disappear. Things may be complicated with them in a different way than with your family. They really want you to get better, but they're also unsure of how to act—more so than your sibs. They may tip-toe around your illness and keep distant because they think you have too much on your plate. If you feel they aren't including you, it might be because they're a little intimidated by the situation. If this is the case, reach out to them.

There's nothing better to take your mind off of how you're feeling than spending time with friends, and they will get more comfortable once the ice is broken. Part of breaking that ice is telling them about what you're going through, but what you say may differ depending on if it's your best friend or your acquaintance—and that's okay! You can also tell them the best way to keep in touch with you. Once you are better, you may be attracted to different friends for new reasons, as you want to be surrounded by people you can relate to.

SCHOOL

Speaking of changes with friends, what about changes at school? Whether you will stay in or take off depends entirely on how you are feeling. Your parents will talk to the school about the potential for flexibility within your attendance or limiting your class schedule. You can always visit school for a half day and walk in with a friend. The two biggest challenges may be sharing your story with friends and staying on top of homework. But remember, you can always ask your parents or teachers to help with the articulation; and as far as homework goes, it is not the priority anymore. Try your best, but give yourself grace. You do you!

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Gear Up for Awareness Month!

By Meg Grasmick

September will roll around before we know it, which means, yes, sadly summer is ending. But something else is almost upon us, and that's Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Despite the evident and formidable presence of this health issue in our world, it is surprising how many are uninformed. Some do not even know that cancer can affect children, and others may be more focused on National Cheeseburger Day in the month of September. But we must show people that the 30 days dedicated to improving the cancer epidemic are far more important than a side of fries.

Raising awareness is important because, for those of us dealing with a diagnosis, the struggle does not end after September. The blessing here is family, the core of society. We see everyone get involved, from siblings shaving their heads, to others showering the family with thoughtful messages, letters, and acts of kindness. Being open about the need for awareness can grow your support system even more, because when people are aware of the facts, then they know that this is an issue worth rallying around.

Integral to raising awareness through productive conversation is nurturing a sense of hope. We all must sustain and feed our faith, reminding ourselves of it everyday. There have been incredible medical advances over the past few decades, and there should never be a moment when we relinquish our positivity. Childhood cancer has seen improved rates of survival, with more children surviving and living longer and healthier lives than in years past. Knowing the risks is important, but knowing you have faith is more important.

Historically, important figures have helped keep spirits high when regarding this issue. While in office, George H.W. Bush dedicated October to pediatric cancer awareness back in 1990, and 22 years later Barack Obama did the same for September. These leaders gave emboldened and stirring speeches on the issue, demonstrating compassion and inspiring hope for thousands. They recognized the diligence of those who ceaselessly strive to find a cure, and those of us who care

for and stand alongside children in this fight for life. One small step for politicians—one giant step for our little tikes! Learning that this issue has been brought to national attention in recent years might encourage people to pay attention.

Then people may wonder: How can I get involved? The old-fashioned advice for how outsiders specifically can contribute to the awareness initiative in September is essentially "donate your money." However, they can just as easily, for example, support businesses that are working with Alex's Lemonade Stand. These companies have raised millions, some by only asking for \$1 in donations Pretty easy, huh? Better yet, they can contact senators or get involved with Kids v. Cancer, which makes it super easy to get into "the politics of it all."

These are good ideas to share for awareness month, but you want a fun way to show your support, too! We recommend getting outside. Ask someone to help you start a team for a walk for cancer, such as St. Jude Walk to End Childhood Cancer, or one hosted by CureSearch for Children's Cancer Research. Rather than preparing months ahead of time for a marathon, friends and family can sign up for an invigorating two or three-mile walk with you. You can rally support for such an event by engaging in social media. Or, just for fun, use #ShowYourGold and upload a picture of your child with a superhero filter, courtesy of St. Jude's website.

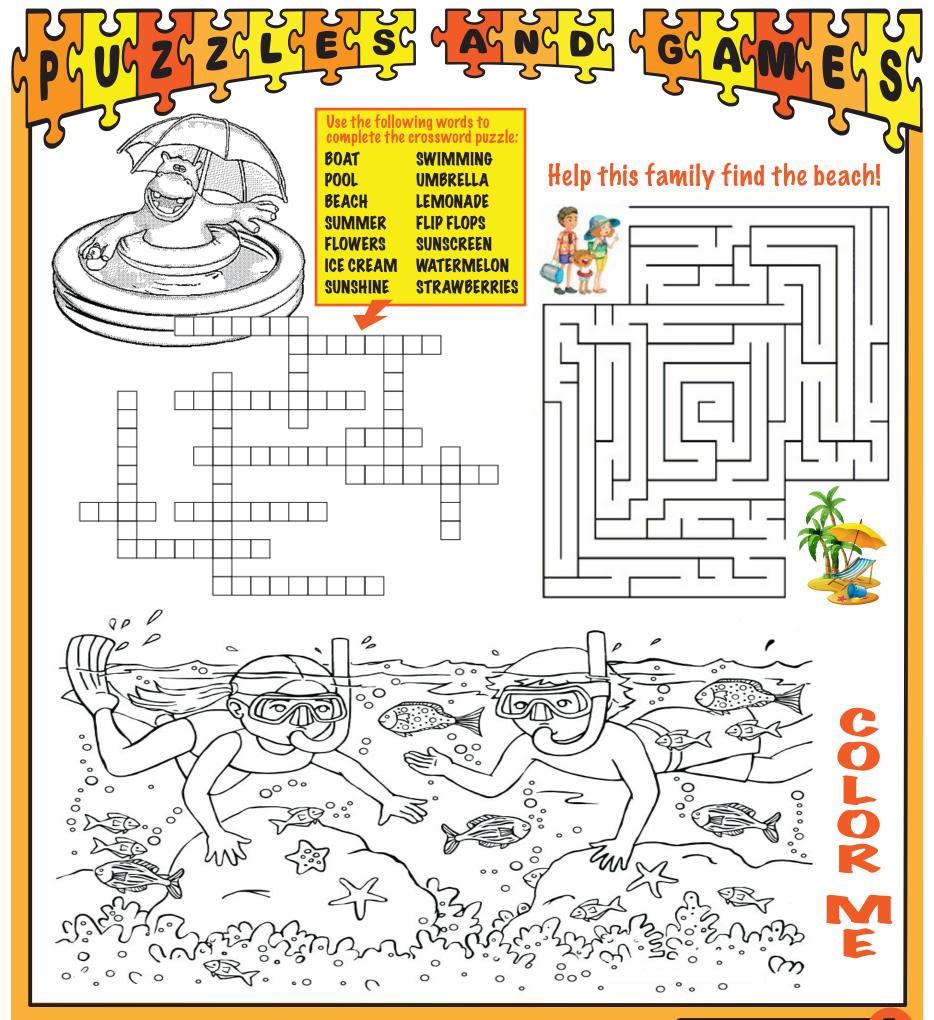
With all of the amazing opportunities for involvement considered, patients and survivors, families and friends, healthcare professionals, scientists, volunteers, politicians—and well, ordinary people!—can all share the burden in the fight against pediatric cancer. September is a month for raising awareness, and it is for everybody.

Let's kick cancer's butt!!

And with all of this work ahead of us, who has time for cheeseburgers, anyway?

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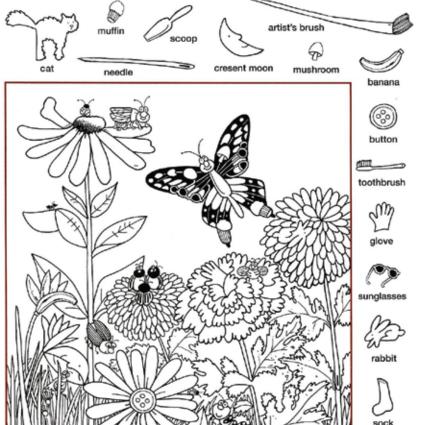
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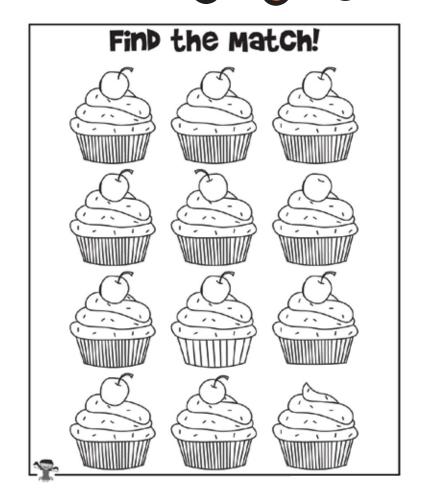


BIRLAINS



FIND THE HIDDEN PICTURES







See how many words can you make out of: TROPICAL ISLAND

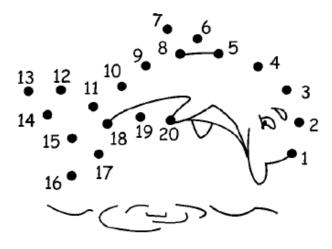
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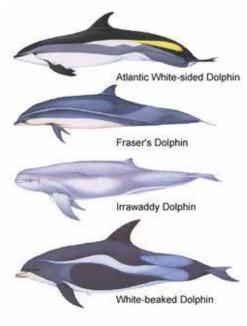
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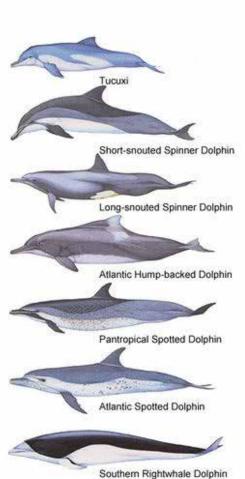
ALL ABOUT DOLPHINS

- Most dolphins live for between 20 and 90 years
- Dolphins can live in all different parts of the world. They live in both cold and warm water and some types even live in rivers.
- Dolphins have very large brains and are considered to be very Intelligent.
- Dolphins can communicate with other members of their pod by using clicks, whistles and squeaks.
- They can also use a special form of sonar called "echolocation" to find food.

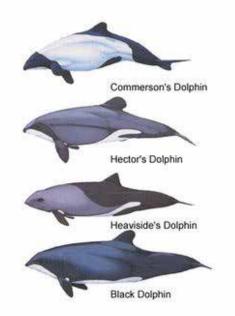
CONNECT THE DOTS











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RYDYDYEYS





BODY IMAGE & CHANGE

By Meg Grasmick

Body image is often viewed as an "adult" concern, as we are consistently reminded of our lowering metabolism, motivating us to make changes in diet and exercise. However, a child undergoing chemo will experience changes in these areas as well, and they might give themselves a hard time about it. Amid all the possible sources of discouragement surrounding changes in the body, there are concrete ways to limit the negative effects and make some positive change as well. In fact, there are even benefits to the situation.

Besides hair loss, skin and weight are the primary actors in this visible bodily change. These problems come from the radiation. There may be irritation in a variety of forms, including redness or rashes. To increase comfort, soft cotton clothes and a prescription ointment from a doctor can help manage symptoms. To prevent infections, make sure that products for skin and hair, such as lotion and sunscreen, are mild. Showers should be warm, not hot. Don't share makeup with your child, as this can put them at a greater risk for infection. Vigilance is key!

Weight change can also be expected, which can go in either direction depending on the medication. To cope with these changes, encourage your child to eat several mini-meals throughout the day. Going out shopping for new clothes can be a fun distraction. A new style produces increased self-confidence.

Physical changes from treatment often have more of an effect on how your child thinks they look than how they actually do. So, now's the time to get creative and change the narrative surrounding what they see. Point out that weight change is not forever, and it's worth the sacrifice in order to fight the illness. More often than not, after treatment, these issues go away.

It is hard for anyone to lose control over their body, but there are silver linings to focus on here. You get a new perspective on what is worth worrying about, and what is 'extra.' There is a sense of bonding between you and your family, friends, social workers, and other hospital staff. You gain gratitude for the love and support you receive and resilience every step of the way.

Allow your child's own steps to be small and according to their energy level. Help them set goals for physical activity, even if it's just a walk around the hall. Encourage a new hobby, in art, music, or whatever they like. Every bit of confidence-building helps, and engaging in activities can also be an opportunity for bonding and staying engaged. Cancer can ignite a sense of strength and love of body. Beauty never looked so strong.





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By Meg Grasmick

Everyone knows that when you're sick, all you want to do is rest. But why not rest while letting your imagination run free, and engage your creative side? This might be a good way to broach the subject of art therapy with your child. Whether it be painting or drawing, getting into an art flow can benefit children socially, emotionally, and physically. Most do not understand the significance of art in a child's life, much less that of children who need it for healing. Better research and treatments in pediatric oncology are forthcoming, but we can't afford to wait around until they become a reality.

The benefits of making art are profuse. Group art classes mean that your child can be social with kids going through a similar experience and share what their artwork means to them. More importantly, there is a tangible emotional component. Art allows people to express their emotions, and when words don't do the trick, creating something special does. By engaging in art, children will experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression; and increased self-confidence and optimism. Since stress physically weakens the immune system, it is important to reduce it as much as possible.

De-stressing starts now. In a group setting, painting with acrylics or chalk is common, and the art therapist will teach techniques or give an assignment. Here at Cool Kids, we have a tried and true favorite: making slime. It is easy, and anyone can do it! Just grab a bowl and mix in four tablespoons of glue and two tablespoons of liquid starch (use this ratio if increase or decrease amounts). Then, pour in one to three drops of food dye,

and glitter if you'd like—but don't pour it out too fast! Once that's done, simply knead together the mixture and presto! You've got ocean slime, golden treasure slime, or whatever themed-smile you want!



Whether your child is creating art with family or new friends, channeling self-expression through art improves the brain's perception of pain. In fact, art itself is a form of meditation. It is a way to set aside thoughts on a journey that can be consuming at times. It puts them in community and in the moment. Art is productive and task-oriented; a way for your child to use their time to be kind to themselves.

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Thank you, Cool Kids Campaign!

Leaching your child go through what can only be described as an absolute nightmare, it is amazing to know that someone out there is thinking of these kids. Someone wants them to experience the simple things that every child should. Thanks to Cool Kids, my daughter has gotten to have things like movie nights without her helicopter Mom hoovering around her head. She has gotten one AMAZING birthday party (complete with princesses) and made new friends! Some of which, we discovered, go to the same summer camp! It helps a child bring themselves back into a community of children and caring adults. The perfect remedy for someone who has just gotten here in this life, and dropkicked not long after. Life is hard enough, but children should be cherished, encouraged and unconditionally loved. Especially while being poked, forced to take pills, come in for weekly check-ins, lose any sense of privacy or normalcy and lose their right to a basic childhood. I can't begin to imagine what it must be like to want to run and play, but be restricted. Must feel like being grounded, but the reason is unclear.

Cool Kids has reminded these kids that this unfair card they've been dealt, will not go unnoticed. These kids will be lifted high! They will be treated like a healthy child. Given memories besides a hospital. They are allowed to be themselves. They can just let go. They can scream, make a mess, be lazy and crazy, be goofy, make a craft, take a trip, eat some junk food, sit in a bean bag chair with no shoes and eat popcorn, ignore wearing a mask for an hour or two, not worry someone is staring at them for being thin, or pale or bald.

I firmly believe, when a child gets an opportunity like that, they remember who they are. Who they were before diagnosis. Before cancer stole what was rightfully theirs! Cancer may change a child's life inside and out, but it cannot take their spirit or their wonder. My daughter has been in remission since September of 2017. She will complete one more year of treatment and deal with the side effects along the way. But as she says whenever confronted with a tough situation. "I beat cancer, I can beat anything" I know that no matter what comes, Cook Kids will be there to help all children beat cancer simply by making them happy.

I know that if my daughter was left to sit and wait for this all to be over, with no where to go and nothing new to do, her prognosis might have been a little different. A child's resilience is magnified by support, love and compassion. All of the things Cool Kids stands for.

Thank you for all you've done for all of us in the Pediatric Cancer Community. And thank you for what you continue to do.

Mandy Burton, Evy's Mom

Children are at the heart of our care

From pediatric medicine to specialty care, the Herman & Walter Samuelson Children's Hospital at Sinai offers exceptional care and support for children and their families.

lifebridgehealth.org/childrenshospital







Learn About Our

Club House



Helping kids with pediatric cancer and their families is what Cool Kids Campaign is all about.

In our Learning Center, we focus on the academic, social and emotional needs of children living with cancer.

Our programs include one on one tutoring, Mommy & Me for the little ones with cancer, Super Sibs to focus on the issues of the siblings and a Teen Club for patients and survivors.

All Cool Kids Campaign programs are free to families and children living with (or survivors of) pediatric cancer.

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