



# CELEBRATING A MOMENTOUS YEAR

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS IN OUR 30th YEAR OF SUPPORTING FAMILIES

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## LIGHTS OF COURAGE

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER



We are thrilled to share the incredible success of our Lights of Courage event held on Thursday, October 26th at the Houston Polo Club. Thanks to the unwavering support of our community, including our generous Sponsors, Table Hosts, Shining Opportunities Donors, Live Auction Donors and Bidders, Raffle Ticket Purchasers, and Vendors, we successfully raised an astounding \$500,000!

This year's event was a resounding success, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to YOU!

The 2023 Lights of Courage event, orchestrated under the dedicated leadership of Chairs [Katie & Bobby Stanton](#) and [Maggie & Rob Vermillion](#), surpassed all expectations. Their efforts, alongside the Host Committee, Raffle & Auction Auxiliary Committee members, and our incredible Board of Directors, not only ensured a beautiful evening, but also marked it as a record-breaking fundraiser.

Despite the unpredictable and rainy weather that day, the clouds parted and the sun came out just in time to welcome the 420 attendees to The Houston Polo Club. The evening was filled with inspiring stories of courage, strength, and hope shared by our honorees, reflecting the journeys of countless other children facing or who have faced childhood cancer. We were excited to honor our founder's son, Eric Helmreich in special recognition of our 30th Anniversary this year. (See pages 5-8 for these inspiring stories!)

Guests were welcomed by a professional polo player, enjoyed melodious tunes by local guitar artists Guillermo, and savored signature cocktails from [Tito's Handmade Vodka](#), [Maker's Mark Bourbon](#), and [Don Cosme Tequila](#). Festivities included yard games, a live auction preview, photo booth, and an exciting raffle, all preceding a memorable three-course dinner from [Masraff's](#).

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# INFORMATION CENTER

## CANDLELIGHTERS

CHILDHOOD CANCER FAMILY ALLIANCE

### 2023 Board of Directors

#### OFFICERS

Katie Stanton - President  
 Jenna Jackson - Vice President  
 Alex Newton - Treasurer  
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 Aron Will - Immediate Past President  
 Linda Evans - Co-Chair Advisory Board  
 Lisa O'Leary - Co-Chair Advisory Board

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 Parsley, Sheryl Rapp, Dr. Sheila Rice, Michele Stoll Mitchell, Kay  
 Watson, Lynn Wilson, Ellyn Wulfe

## CANDLELIGHTERS STAFF

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 Kelsey Tarpinian | Associate Director | [kelseytc@candle.org](mailto:kelseytc@candle.org)  
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## UPCOMING 2024 EVENTS

### RODEO COOKOFF FAMILY EVENT

Saturday, February 24th

### YPE & CANDLELIGHTERS CRAWFISH BOIL

Friday, March 22nd

### 16th ANNUAL MARGARITA TASTE OFF

Saturday, April 6th

### SUGAR LAND SPACE COWBOYS FAMILY EVENT

Friday, April 19th

### BREAK A CLAY FOR CANDLELIGHTERS

Friday, May 10th

### FUN WALK

Saturday, September 7th

### Parent Support Group Meetings

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS ARE IN PERSON & VIRTUAL

### MD ANDERSON CHILDREN'S CANCER HOSPITAL & CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL HERMANN HOSPITAL

EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 11:00 AM  
 TO RSVP AND GET THE LOCATION, PLEASE EMAIL  
 YUVI SIFUENTES: [YSIFUENTES@CANDLE.ORG](mailto:YSIFUENTES@CANDLE.ORG)

### TEXAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

TUESDAYS/WEDNESDAYS AT 1:00 PM  
 TO RSVP AND GET THE LOCATION & DATE, PLEASE EMAIL  
 LINDA PENA: [LPENA@CANDLE.ORG](mailto:LPENA@CANDLE.ORG)

## PARENT CONSULTANTS

### MD ANDERSON CHILDREN'S CANCER HOSPITAL & CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL HERMANN HOSPITAL

Yuvi Sifuentes: [ysifuentes@candle.org](mailto:ysifuentes@candle.org)

### TEXAS CHILDREN'S CANCER CENTER

Linda Pena                      Maria Pena  
[lpna@candle.org](mailto:lpna@candle.org)                      [mpena@candle.org](mailto:mpena@candle.org)

### FAMILY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Opal Goodman: [ogoodman@candle.org](mailto:ogoodman@candle.org)

(Continued from cover) New this year, was an exciting Jewelry Pull where guests purchased a chance to win a STUNNING diamond and sapphire pendant necklace valued over \$9,000 and generously donated by Sangeeta Sethi with [Private Jewelry Concierge](#). This year's Live Auction featured extraordinary items generously donated, such as a stay at the Amangiri resort, a private home in San Miguel de Allende, Mauna Lani Resort in Hawaii, 15-Year Family Reserve Pappy Van Winkle, Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Bachelor Gulch, a trip to Montage Big Sky Resort in Montana, and a custom White Gold, Sapphire, Diamond, and Tanzanite Necklace designed by childhood cancer families at [Jianna Jewelers](#). We could not have done it without our [AMAZING Auction and Raffle Auxiliary Committee](#). [Beth Guinn](#), [Jenna Jackson](#), [Kris Vallee](#), and [Tiffany Wong](#) deserve special commendation for their dedicated efforts in curating such exceptional items that raised more than [\\$128,000](#) for our childhood cancer families!

Our heartfelt thanks go to Candlelighters mom, and Fox 26 News Anchor, [Melissa Wilson](#), for graciously serving as our evening emcee. Melissa, a mother of childhood cancer survivor, Caleb, shared how Candlelighters provided invaluable support to her family during her son's leukemia battle, and fearlessly guided us through our event.

A touching moment unfolded as another Candlelighters mom, [Brooke Raish](#), shared her family's journey with childhood cancer, providing an opportunity for guests to raise their paddles and make direct donations to our mission. Brooke's powerful testimony, along with the Honoree videos and stories shared, inspired over \$105,000 in direct donations to Candlelighters programs and services—a testament to the incredible impact of our collective efforts.

[Dr. Doug Harrison](#), of MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital, and [Dr. ZoAnn Dreyer](#), of Texas Children's Cancer Center, presented our 2023 Honorees with their awards. Their stories of courage and hope are highlighted on pages 5-8.

Special thanks to Jenna Jackson and the talented videographers and editors at [P+R Productions](#) for once again producing our Honoree videos. To view this year's Honoree videos, please visit: <http://tiny.cc/CandlelightersYoutube>.

Your continued support and dedication to our cause make moments like these possible. We are immensely grateful for your role in making the Lights of Courage event a beacon of hope for children with cancer and their families. We are already planning in order to continue this momentum into next year!

## 2023 LIGHTS OF COURAGE HONOREES

Katia Ajoku – On Treatment Honoree

The Montemayor Brothers – Sibling Honorees

Eric Helmreich– Childhood Cancer Survivor Honoree

Nathaniel Foster – In Loving Memory Honoree



## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE CANDLELIGHTERS MISSION

Hero Sponsor: The Stanton Family

Courage Sponsor: Christy & Webb Jennings

Honors Sponsors: Jenna Jackson & Brendan Gilbert and Friends,  
The Gayden Family Foundation, The Guill Family, Mary & Ken Helmreich,  
Rodgers World, LLC, Swanson Family Charitable Fund





# LIGHTS OF COURAGE: CELEBRATING 30 YEARS





# LIGHTS OF COURAGE ON TREATMENT HONOREE

Katia Ajoku's Story | Written by Cruz Carrete, Katia's Mother



Katia's journey began January 27, 2022. We got up and ready for school like any other day. During her time on the playground, Katia decided to play "Superman" and jump off the back of a bench. When she landed, something went really wrong, but we did not know it at the time. I took her to an emergency room where they did x-rays and said everything was fine; however, my daughter was not fine.

After days of lingering symptoms, Katia's father insisted they check for internal bleeding. They did an ultrasound and sent us in an ambulance to the pediatric hospital downtown. After further CT scans, labs, and treatment for an infection, they sent us home and said Katia had been internally bleeding but everything was better now. They said they would watch the hematomas she had for the next couple of weeks until they resolved. They mentioned a biopsy for those, but changed their mind because they were sure the masses were just hematomas.

Doctors continued to follow-up until April, when they finally told us Katia MIGHT have cancer. They needed to do a biopsy to confirm so we were then transferred to MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital. It was a whirlwind as we met with an oncologist, had a biopsy, and did port placement surgery, all within days. After preliminary results, Katia began chemotherapy. She was officially diagnosed with Stage 3 Wilms Tumor and began treatment on May 20th (three days before her 4th birthday).

Katia endured 6 weeks of chemo, a complete removal of her right kidney, seven rounds of radiation, and then was switched to a more aggressive chemotherapy regimen based on the final outcome of her tumor analysis. She had ruptured a tumor (or tumors) when she fell and the cancer had potentially spread in her body and "seeded." The next months would be extremely challenging for us. We have no family in the Houston area, so I had to stop working to take full-time care of Katia and of her sister Kamila.

Katia had her last chemotherapy treatment on January 26, 2023! After a few more scans, she was able to have her Bell Ringing Ceremony, signifying the end of her cancer treatments, on April 7, 2023!

Katia's scans and follow-ups continue to look clear. I am grateful to the people and the organizations that were able to help us financially and emotionally through Katia's journey. Candlelighters provided both practical and emotional support that I didn't even know I would need. Our Parent Consultants, Yuvi and Jaynie, were always available when I needed their support. Knowing that I could lean on a parent who had gone through a similar journey was so comforting.



LEARN MORE ABOUT KATIA'S JOURNEY HERE:

<http://tiny.cc/LOC2023-Katia>

# LIGHTS OF COURAGE SIBLING HONOREES

The Montemayor Family | Written by Silvia Montemayor, Mom to the Montemayor Brothers

God started working in my life when my mom was diagnosed with cancer in 2015, and then passed away in 2016. Three years later, my husband, Rubén Montemayor, was diagnosed with cancer. The doctors said that it was too advanced and there was no cure. He proceeded to get chemotherapy for three months, but it didn't work. The cancer continued to spread and there was no more they could do, so they sent him home to hospice. We ended up finding another oncologist who prolonged his life for eight more months. Rubén, my husband, passed away on December 29, 2020.

Four months after Rubén passed away, my youngest son, David, started having a stomach ache. I took him to the doctor five times in 2 weeks. We finally went to the hospital on May 16, 2021, for severe stomach pains. The doctor thought it was a stomach virus, it turned out that he had intussusception, a life-threatening illness that occurs when a portion of the intestine folds causing an obstruction, and he needed emergency surgery. They operated on David and the surgeon came out to deliver more bad news. It was worse than they thought and they told me my sweet boy had cancer. I felt hopeless.

David came out of the operation intubated and sedated for 5 days and with a bag to use for the bathroom, which they also told me he was going to use for life. I declared that my son was going to walk out of the hospital and that we were going to go to church to give his testimony!

His brothers, Josue and Rubén, were by his side the whole time. After watching their grandmother, and father pass away from cancer, they were determined not to let cancer claim their brother too. They made sure he knew he wasn't alone and tried to keep life as normal as possible. Candlelighters was there for my boys. We attended events that helped distract from the reality that our family was facing. Rubén said that, "Candlelighters helped me by showing me that there's a lot more that life has to offer and that there's not just bad going on in life."

The doctors told me that the process was going to be long and difficult. We had been through so much after losing my mom and husband, but thank God, David was confirmed healed on July 28, 2021. The doctors were amazed at how fast everything happened. My son no longer has cancer and is in remission! He rang the bell on August 9th!!! God is a God of miracles!!



WATCH THE MONTEMAYOR BROTHERS VIDEO HERE:

[http://tiny.cc/LOC2023\\_Montemayor](http://tiny.cc/LOC2023_Montemayor)



# LIGHTS OF COURAGE CHILDHOOD CANCER SURVIVOR HONOREE

Eric Helmreich | Written by Mary Helmreich, Eric's Mom, and Founder of Candlelighters

As Candlelighters celebrates its 30th Anniversary, it's only natural to reflect on the fact that nearly 35 years ago, my son, Eric Helmreich, was diagnosed with AML leukemia less than two weeks after his second birthday. Eric's prognosis was bleak and he was a very sick baby with high fevers, but remarkably went into first remission and stayed there.

Due to his type of leukemia, Eric qualified for an autologous bone marrow transplant, meaning since he remained in remission, he could be his own bone marrow donor. He was the first bone marrow transplant at Texas Children's Hospital, and number nine across the entire country. His transplant was a success, an amazing miracle of medical

science and faith. As it turned out, this life saving treatment made it a viable option for other children and adults with cancer, and has since changed the game for treatment plans and survival rates.

This year, Eric will soon celebrate his thirty-seventh birthday with his wife Rebecca and 22 month old son Hunter, who was born five days before his "Dada's" birthday. Eric is mindful that his own son is approaching the time when he was diagnosed and what that means to all parents and families who experience childhood cancer.

Eric was raised under the Candlelighters umbrella. My husband and I, alongside several other childhood cancer parents from the Texas Medical Center founded this much needed organization so many years ago. Eric was often at my side at the early family-oriented and fundraising events.

We started by becoming active in Candlelighters parent support group outreach and activities, and were approached by a small core of parents who together, took the next step forward by incorporating a 501(c)3 non-profit. The goals were to provide emotional, educational, and practical support to all childhood cancer families, including bereaved families. Above all, the underlying mission was to provide hope and let others know they were not alone. I am so proud that 30 years later, Candlelighters has stayed true to our founding vision, yet has grown into what they are today, continuing to provide hope and daily support to thousands of childhood cancer families.

Eric enjoys a wonderful life of achievements and successes. His health and well-being follow-ups with Texas Children's Cancer Center into adulthood kept him on target. He likely is a charter member of Dr. Dreyer's Long Term Survivor Program! Candlelighters played a critical role in Eric's overall development, and likewise Eric's crucial role in the founding of Candlelighters.

The Helmreich family is deeply grateful and humbled by all who contribute to the success and achievements of Candlelighters mission ensuring no parent, child, or sibling, has to face childhood cancer alone.



WATCH ERIC'S VIDEO HERE: [http://tiny.cc/LOC2023\\_Eric](http://tiny.cc/LOC2023_Eric)

# LIGHTS OF COURAGE IN LOVING MEMORY HONOREE

Nathaniel Foster | Written by Becky Foster, Nathaniel's Mom

Nathaniel Lee Foster was born to his young parents, Becky and Nathan, as a symbol of their determination to stay together in the face of adversity. Born one month prematurely, Nathaniel defied the odds, emerging as a healthy and robust baby boy. His birth marked the beginning of a lifelong journey that would test his strength and courage in unexpected ways.

At the tender age of two, Nathaniel embraced the role of being a big brother when Jonathan Foster came into the world. Their bond grew stronger with each passing day, as Nathaniel watched over his younger sibling with unwavering love and care. However, at the age of five, Nathaniel's life took an unexpected turn. He began to experience weight loss, muscle weakness, recurring fevers, joint pain, and unexplained bruises. These alarming symptoms led to a series of misdiagnoses before he finally found his way back to his pediatrician, a journey complicated by the family's temporary relocation to Austin, Texas, where Nathan was pursuing his college degree at the University of Texas.

In Angleton, Texas, the heartbreaking truth was revealed: Nathaniel was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL.) This life-altering diagnosis shattered their plans to return to Austin as a family, as they had to remain in Houston for months while Nathaniel received treatment. Despite facing cancer at the tender age of five, Nathaniel exhibited a remarkable sense of bravery. He wore his diagnosis like a badge of honor, often insisting that his mother share his condition with strangers. He would tap on her leg while she conversed with cashiers, saying, "Tell her I have cancer, Mom." This openness and courage would define Nathaniel's journey as he continued to inspire those around him.

Their return to Austin brought them into contact with Candlelighters, a beacon of support for families confronting childhood cancer. Nathan, Nathaniel's father, found solace in connecting with other fathers facing similar challenges and forged lifelong friendships with many of them.

Nathaniel's treatment journey was marked by moments of respite and joy, particularly when he welcomed a new sibling, Zayne Foster, into the family in 2004. Nathaniel wholeheartedly embraced his role as a big brother, protecting and cherishing Jonathan and Zayne with all his heart. His love for his siblings was evident when he bravely saved Jonathan from a dangerous fall through ice on a river.



However, the resilience of this young warrior was put to the test again at the age of eleven, when he experienced a relapse. This time, the family was living in Fort Worth, Texas, and the battle against cancer resumed. Nathaniel's involvement with Candlelighters took on a more active role as he sought to alleviate the financial burdens faced by his family. He made it his mission to help defray the costs of parking for the countless clinic visits, a gesture of love and determination that inspired everyone around him.

During hospital stays, the Parent Consultants from Candlelighters became cherished visitors, offering gifts to Nathaniel and his mother to ease their journey. These gifts, ranging from gas cards, to snacks and activities, not only alleviated practical concerns but also brightened their days and helped pass the time during hospital stays.

In the end, Nathaniel's journey ended where it began, in a hospital room, but surrounded by the love of his family. He took his last breath in his mother's arms while she sang "You Are My Sunshine," at the age he wished to remain forever – thirteen. Nathaniel's life was a testament to the power of courage, resilience, and love in the face of adversity. Throughout his battle with leukemia, he inspired those around him, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him. His story reminds us that even in the darkest moments, there can be moments of light and hope, and that the love of family, and the support of organizations like Candlelighters, can make all the difference in the world.

WATCH THE FOSTER FAMILY'S VIDEO HERE: [http://tiny.cc/LOC2023\\_Nathaniel](http://tiny.cc/LOC2023_Nathaniel)



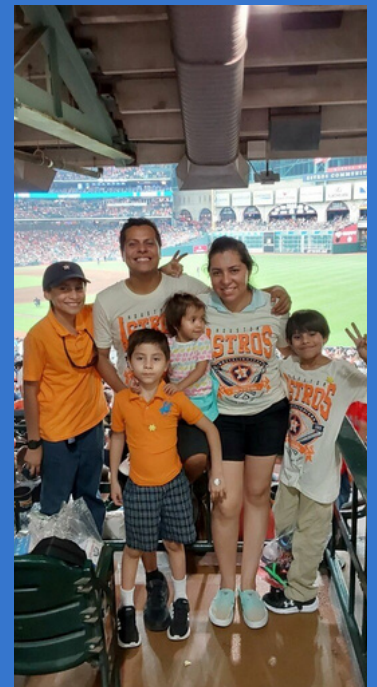
# ASTROS KNOCK IT OUT OF THE PARK

## Space City Shows their Support of Childhood Cancer Families

The Astros kept us on our toes this year with TWO amazing games dedicated to Childhood Cancer Awareness on September 8th and 9th! Yes, you read that correctly – it was the same weekend as our Fun Walk! Embracing the whirlwind, we were honored to be chosen to partner with them and help spread the word about the work our organization is doing for the childhood cancer community.

We had the privilege of inviting numerous families who sported matching Astros + Candlelighters shirts and enjoyed incredible seats to view the game from. We handed out brochures, pens, koozies, and other swag to all those who walked through “charity row” in the stadium, spreading the mission of Candlelighters. On the field, Candlelighters kiddos, [Ximena Jasso](#) was chosen to say “let’s play ball,” on Friday night and [Christian Garcia](#) represented us during Saturday night’s game!

[The Astros Foundation](#) has been a generous supporter of our organization for many years, and this year went above and beyond by awarding Candlelighters a **\$150,000** gift this year! Thank you to the whole Astros organization for your generosity, and recognition of our childhood cancer families. We are looking forward to being back at Minute Maid Park for the 2024 season!



# 2023 FUN WALK

## Step by Step: Uniting at Terry Hershey Park for a Purposeful Fun Walk!

On Saturday, September 9, 2023, Candlelighters held our annual Fun Walk at Terry Hershey Park! It feels like every year, this event grows in various ways, but this year we had our largest crowd ever! The event was a testament to the incredible spirit of our Candlelighters families, volunteers, community members, and corporate supporters, who all united to honor Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and commemorate the efforts of each individual's summer-long fundraising achievements. We felt the love from each of our walkers at the park, as well as all of the participants who walked worldwide to show their support for Candlelighters and childhood cancer families!

The Fun Walk, guided by the motto "Walking Alongside Childhood Cancer Families Every Step of the Way," served as a tangible representation of our daily mission to support this resilient community. Walkers embraced the challenge to take **4,837 steps on Walk Day, symbolizing each Candlelighters family served in 2023**. Through their steps, awareness, and fundraising efforts, we are proud to announce that the community raised over **\$261,000**, dedicated to funding our programs and services for childhood cancer families

A highlight of our event is the annual raffle, and we extend our heartfelt appreciation to **Jianna Jewelers** for their continued support as the presenting sponsor. Their generous donation of a stunning diamond and white gold tennis bracelet added an extra touch of sparkle to our festivities.

We were humbled to have had over **160 teams participate, including 22 corporate teams, 18 community teams, and a whopping 120 family teams!** The Fun Walk represents the daily walk of childhood cancer families: the path they are forced to take, the steps they must endure to survive, and the community that chooses to walk alongside them, holding hands, shedding tears, and lifting each other up along the way.

We are extremely honored that over 120 Candlelighters families accepted our challenge to participate in 2023. These childhood cancer families chose to support other families, regardless of whether they have met or not, regardless of if their children were treated at the same hospital, regardless of if their children have the same type of cancer - all because these families know that together, they can conquer anything!

*Thank You to our 2023 Fun Walk Sponsors!*





## MEMORIES FROM FUN WALK 2023!





# 2023 FUN WALK AWARDS

## Top Fundraising Corporate Teams:

1. Constellation
2. Team Weichert I Wayne Murray
3. First Horizon Bank

## Top Family Teams:

1. Ellen and Stan O'Neal Team
2. Team Ellie
3. Families Walking Together
4. Posey's Posse
5. Caleb the Brave
6. Caring Princess Camilla
7. Up & Atom
8. Team John
9. Team Andrew (Mathis)
10. TeamV

## Rookie of the Year Teams:

- Family: Team Ellie
- Corporate: Children's Memorial Hermann
- Community: Nice Ladies

## Top Fundraising Community Teams:

1. Jennifer Wilbur's Walkers
2. Nathaniel's Animals

## Best Team Shirts:

- Team Ace
- ABC13





# FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL FUN

St. John's School Students Got Creative For The Annual Fall Day Of Fun!

The Annual Family Fall Festival is eagerly anticipated by Candlelighters families every year! The event is organized with the help of 8th-grade students from **St. John's School** who work earnestly to plan and construct one-of-a-kind carnival stations to treat our families to a fun-filled day. This year, the air was full of fun tunes by a live DJ, and our families were geared up and ready for a day of fall festivities in their best Halloween costumes!



Candlelighters families were treated to an array of entertaining and interactive carnival-style games, offering kids the chance to compete for prizes, treats, and a few surprises – some stations even had a pie-to-the-face element for the hosts! Families also enjoyed snacks, freshly popped carnival popcorn, sweet treats, refreshing beverages, a big bounce house, and an inflatable obstacle course. The highlight of the day was a charming and competitive costume contest with fantastic prizes, alongside numerous thrilling door prizes up for grabs. A special note of gratitude goes to **Grant Prideco I NOV, a division of National Oilwell Varco**, for their generosity in providing eight bicycles to be given away to patients and their siblings through door prizes!

For over 20 years, the 8th-grade students at **St. John's School** have been the creative minds behind the Candlelighters Family Fall Festival booths. They invest months in planning, organizing, and setting up the event. This year's favorite booths included a water balloon toss, photo booth, putt-putt golf, spooky bingo, pumpkin painting, and so much more! Our families had a blast, all thanks to the hard work and kind hearts of the students at St. John's School! THANK YOU!



## HRP GOLF TOURNAMENT

We are thrilled to share the success of the Houston Relocation Professionals (HRP) Annual Golf Tournament, which took place on the picturesque greens of Wildcat Golf Course on Wednesday, November 15th. The weather was perfect, and the event was a complete sell-out, contributing to a fantastic day of golf raising an impressive **\$32,000** for our children with cancer and their families. Golfers enjoyed breakfast tacos, delicious BBQ from **Planet Texas**, a Bloody Mary Bar compliments of **Tito's Handmade Vodka**, specialty drinks and snacks on the holes, and more fun. Candlelighters has been honored to partner with HRP and be the beneficiary for 16 years. Candlelighters teen ambassador, Callie Moore, started the tournament with a symbolic tee off! Special thanks to HRP Golf Chairman, **Samantha Hoffer**, for making this year's tournament such an incredible success. Candlelighters is looking forward to another amazing tournament in the fall of 2024!

HRP has embraced the mission of Candlelighters with financial support, their commitment to the families we serve and their willingness to help our families in creative ways. One of the many projects they support is their annual holiday toy drive which donates thousands of dollars' worth of toys to our Adopt-A-Family and Summer Surprises programs. They also hold an annual Astros event in honor of Candlelighters to raise funds towards our mission. Thank you HRP for making such a difference to Candlelighters!



## SMILES FOR LIFE

In 2023, Montz & Maher Dental Group hosted their annual Smiles for Life fundraiser where 100% of every whitening treatment purchased went to charity!

Candlelighters was honored to have been chosen as their local charity partner again! Simply from whitening treatments, Montz & Maher Dental Group was able to donate **\$11,000** for childhood cancer families right here in Houston.

THANK YOU!

If you're thinking about whitening your teeth, stay tuned for the announcement of their 2024 campaign starting in March! Whitening treatments start at just \$200 and you'll be so happy with your pearly whites!

**MONTZ & MAHER DENTAL GROUP**

Locations in Pearland & Friendswood





*Thank You to This Year's Sponsors!*

# CANDLELIGHTERS CARES 2023

JANUARY



FEBRUARY



MARCH



APRIL



MAY



JUNE



JULY



AUGUST



SEPTEMBER



FIRST  
HORIZON

OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



Candlelighters.  
CHILDHOOD CANCER FAMILY ALLIANCE

DECEMBER



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CANDLELIGHTERS CARES AND BECOMING A SPONSOR,  
PLEASE CONTACT PROGRAM DIRECTOR CARLY BRADSHAW AT [CBRADSHAW@CANDLE.ORG](mailto:CBRADSHAW@CANDLE.ORG).



# GIFT CANCER FAMILIES A MAGICAL WEEKEND AWAY

## CAMP CLIFF FAMILY CAMP WEEKEND | FEBRUARY 16TH - 18TH, 2024

Camp CLIFF (Children Loved in Families Forever) is our weekend getaway for Candlelighters families. For over 20 years, we have been hosting this time away from the “cancer bubble” to relax, unplug, enjoy unique camp experiences, and connect with other childhood cancer families. After a three-year hiatus, we will be BACK IN ACTION from Friday, February 16 to Sunday, February 18, 2024 for our full family camp weekend at Camp For All in Burton, Texas! To pull this off, WE NEED YOUR HELP! By partnering with us as a Camp CLIFF Donor or Sponsor, you will be an integral part of providing life-long cherished memories for children with cancer and their families. Please see the sponsorship levels below and consider supporting this year’s Camp CLIFF efforts! THANK YOU!

<i>Camp Donor</i>	<b>\$100</b>	<i>HELPING PROVIDE A FUN CAMP EXPERIENCE!</i>
<i>Camper Sponsor</i>	<b>\$250</b>	<i>SENDS 1 CAMPER TO CANDLELIGHTERS CAMP CLIFF</i>
<i>Activity Sponsor</i>	<b>\$500</b>	<i>HELPS FUND EXCITING CAMP ACTIVITIES!</i>
<i>Bronze Sponsor</i>	<b>\$750</b>	<i>PROVIDE GAS CARDS SO FAMILIES CAN ATTEND CAMP</i>
<i>Family Sponsor</i>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<i>SENDS AN ENTIRE CANDLELIGHTERS FAMILY TO CAMP CLIFF!</i>
<i>Silver Sponsor</i>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<i>OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE BRANDED ITEM FOR CAMPERS</i>
<i>Gold Sponsor</i>	<b>\$3,500</b>	<i>SPONSOR A CAMP BREAKOUT ACTIVITY! *Logo at activity</i>
<i>Cabin Sponsor</i>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<i>SPONSOR A CABIN OF CAMPERS! *Logo on cabin signage</i>
<i>Sweatshirt Sponsor</i>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<i>PRINTING OF CAMP SWEATSHIRTS! *Sold!</i>
<i>Presenting Sponsor</i>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<i>ENSURING THE BEST WEEKEND EVER! *Logo at all camp activities &amp; dining hall</i>



You can contribute online here - <http://tiny.cc/fundcamp>

Contact Program Director Carly Bradshaw at [cbradshaw@candle.org](mailto:cbradshaw@candle.org) or 713.270.4700 with any questions regarding Camp CLIFF. All sponsorships and donations are 100% tax deductible. Thank you!





**KIRBY ICE HOUSE MEMORIAL**  
1015 GESSNER RD.

**SATURDAY**

**APRIL 06 2024**



**1:30 TO 5:30 PM**

*presented by*



It's almost MARGARITA TIME!

Reserve your tickets and sponsorships now  
for our 16th Annual YPG Margarita Taste Off!

Visit <https://us.givergy.com/2024TasteOff>



*Taking aim to help children with cancer and their families!*



Please join us for our Clayshoot:  
**Break a Clay for Candlelighters on**  
**Friday, May 10, 2024**  
at Greater Houston Sports Club

**Register your team today!**

<https://us.givergy.com/2024Clayshoot>

You won't want to miss  
this exciting event!  
Games, lunch, and more!

SAVE THE DATES



**YPE & CANDLE LIGHTERS**  
**CRAWFISH**  
**BOIL**  
**MARCH 22, 2024**  
**3-8 PM** 

**@ GOODE COMPANY ARMADILLO PALACE**  
**5015 KIRBY DR • HOUSTON**

# A REFLECTION OF 30 YEARS OF CANDLELIGHTERS

A Legacy of Support, Resilience, and Hope | Executive Director, Lynn Wheeler

This year was such a special milestone for Candlelighters as we celebrated our 30th anniversary and reflected on where we have been and look forward to where we are going! A lot has changed over the years, but we have remained, at our core, the same organization with a mission to provide emotional, educational, and practical support to childhood cancer families here in the Houston area. We have continued to grow as an organization and continuously try to improve the ways in which we serve families.

I'm proud that the most notable steadfast support since our organization's inception has been our amazing Parent Consultants. These strong, brave, women, also moms of childhood cancer warriors, are the heartbeat of Candlelighters. Childhood cancer remains a devastating reality to so many in our community, and these ladies have lived through it. They are a tangible beacon of hope for other families. They are able to create deep bonds and provide connection for other parents who just need to feel understood. Our commitment to staying true to our strong roots and mission, while showcasing how we've grown in the ability to support more families throughout the years, is a testament to where we are headed.

Over the past 30 years, our organization has made significant strides in raising awareness about childhood cancer and providing support to affected families. Our collaborative partnerships with our hospital partners – Texas Children's Hospital Cancer & Hematology Center, MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital, and Children's Memorial Hermann, have helped us reach more families every year. Even with the rising rate of Texas Medical Center parking, Candlelighters has continued to increase our support in this area and alleviate this financial stress for our families. Beyond providing hospital parking assistance, our focus on easing the emotional and financial burdens families inevitably face includes programs like Adopt-A-Family (holiday gift-giving for the whole childhood cancer family), Bell Ringing Celebration Kits, Camp CLIFF Weekend Family Camp, gift cards, fun free family events, memorial funds, support group meetings for parents, and so much more.

We have stayed true to our Founding Families' wishes, and we know there is always more work to be done! We will continue to listen to the needs of our families as the landscape around them changes, just as we've done in recent years continuing to provide support in spite of a global pandemic. We have the passion, dedication, and vision to provide impactful assistance in the lives of those facing childhood cancer.

I want to express my gratitude to the incredibly hard-working and dedicated Candlelighters staff, our caring Board of Directors, our kindhearted volunteers, and generous donors for your unwavering commitment to Candlelighters. Together, we will continue to grow and serve more families needing our help.

We are moving forward with determination and compassion with our original mission still ringing true today - that no family should have to fight childhood cancer alone! We are an organization founded by, and FOR childhood cancer families, and it is our greatest honor to live out this mission. Wishing us all a bright new year in 2024!



## 2023 AT A GLANCE:

5,022 total families served  
350 newly-diagnosed families  
1,015 families on active treatment



# RESOURCES FOR CANDLELIGHTERS FAMILIES

Candlelighters mission is to provide emotional, educational, and practical support to children with cancer and their families. If you are a family battling, recovering or bereaving from childhood cancer, or know a family on this journey, please share these resources both Candlelighters and other organizations in our community offer.

## CANDLELIGHTERS PROVIDES PRACTICAL SUPPORT IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Parking assistance at the Texas Medical Center
- Grocery store gift cards
- Meal passes to Texas Medical Center cafeterias
- Gas Cards
- Help with funeral expenses

## CANDLELIGHTERS PROVIDES EMOTIONAL & EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH OUR FOLLOWING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:

- One-on-one peer support from Parent Consultants (1 staff at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital and Children's Memorial Hermann; and 3 at Texas Children's Hospital)
- Support Group Meetings
- Newsletter
- Camp CLIFF (Children Loved in Families Forever) Weekend Family Camp
- Fall Family Festival
- Holiday Adopt-A-Family Program
- A Night at the Ballpark with the Sugar Land Space Cowboys, Triple-A Affiliate of the Houston Astros
- Many others throughout the year! Stay up-to-date on programs and events by joining our email list: <https://candle.org/subscribe-to-candlelighters> and newsletter mailing list, and by following us on Facebook: [Candlelighters Houston](#) and Instagram: [@candlelighters\\_houston](#)

## OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES FACING CHILDHOOD CANCER:

### College Scholarships

- Addi's Faith Foundation
- American Cancer Society
- Cancer for College
- Cancer Survivor Fund
- Childhood Brain Tumor Foundation/Brittany Truitt Scholarship
- Friends of Scott
- Houston Relocation Professionals
- Jack's Ride Scholarship Program
- Kidsrstrong2
- Kids 4 Kids with Cancer
- National Children's Cancer Society
- National Collegiate Cancer Foundation
- Northwestern Mutual – Sibling Scholarship Program
- Ruth Cheatham Foundation
- The Simon Cancer Foundation Scholarship Program
- Snowdrop Foundation
- The Sunshine Kids Foundation
- The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation
- The SAMFund for Young Adult Survivors of Cancer
- The Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults
- Tutorville

### On-Treatment Housing

- A Shelter for Cancer Families
- Chance for Hope
- Dan's House of Hope
- Halo House Foundation
- Joe's House
- Project Joy and Hope
- Ronald McDonald House
- The Ballard House

### Transportation Assistance for People with Disabilities

- Houston Children's Charity
- Houston Ground Angels

### Grief Support

- Bo's Place
- Project Joy and Hope

### Financial Assistance

- Heroes for Children Rent and Mortgage
- Houston Children's Charity Prosthetics
- Project Joy and Hope
- The Brent Event

*Thank you for celebrating Candlelighters' 30th Anniversary in 2023 with us!*



### *2024 Dates to Save!*

Camp CLIFF @ Camp For All in Burton, TX  
Friday, Feb 16 - Sunday, Feb 18, 2024

Rodeo BBQ Cookoff with Planet Texas @ NRG  
Saturday, February 24, 2024

YPE Crawfish Boil @ Armadillo Palace  
Friday, March 22, 2024

Margarita Taste Off  
@ Kirby Ice House - Memorial  
Saturday, April 6, 2024

Candlelighters Space Cowboys Night  
@ Constellation Field  
Friday, April 19, 2024

Tennis/Pickleball Classic  
@ Houston Racquet Club  
Sunday, May 5, 2024

Break a Clay for Candlelighters  
@ Greater Houston Sports Club  
Friday, May 10, 2024

Summer Surprises  
TBD - July 2024

Fun Walk @ Terry Hershey Park  
Saturday, September 7, 2024

Lights of Courage  
TBD - October 2024



Candlelighters Houston



[www.candle.org](http://www.candle.org)



[candlelighters\\_houston](https://www.instagram.com/candlelighters_houston)

**CANDLELIGHTERS CHILDHOOD CANCER FAMILY ALLIANCE'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO CHILDREN WITH CANCER AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

Candlelighters began in 1989 with two parent support groups from the Texas Medical Center: one at Texas Children's Cancer Center and one at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital. The parent group at Texas Children's Cancer Center sought formal incorporation, and in 1993 Candlelighters was legally formed. In the fall of 1993, they invited the parent group from the MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital to join them and the two organizations merged into one. The Parent Consultant Program was developed to directly meet the needs of families at the treatment centers and to inform them of potential resources. Our programs and services extend beyond the hospital walls with our Family Camp, Adopt-A-Family, Fall Festival, Candlelighters Newsletter, and other special events. Over the years, we have learned how critically valuable it is for our Parent Consultants to be able to directly impact families through emotional support, parking assistance, meal passes, gas cards, and more. It is our greatest honor and privilege to bring this type of comfort and hope to childhood cancer families.