



CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

HONORING CHILDHOOD CANCER PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

FEATURING

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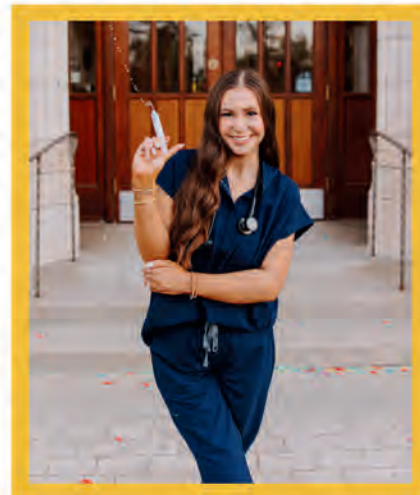
Save The Dates

From Patient to Pediatric Oncology Nurse

A Long-Term Survivor's Full-Circle Journey Of Hope And Purpose by Caroline Wilbur

My name is Caroline Wilbur, and I am a childhood cancer survivor. At 16 years old, I was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma in my right leg—a moment that instantly turned my world upside down. Yet even in the hardest days, I discovered light in the kindness and encouragement of others. From the very beginning, Candlelighters walked alongside my family and me, offering practical resources and emotional support that reminded us we weren't facing this journey alone.

This past May, I visited the MD Anderson pediatric clinic for my routine yearly scans, which came back completely clear. My PA informed me that I have officially graduated to the "survivors clinic," a goal I had set my sights on since I rang the bell in 2020. This month, I celebrate an incredible milestone—five years cancer-free. In the childhood cancer world, that number means more than just time passed; it's a symbol of hope, resilience, and the possibility of building a bright, full life after cancer.



Life after cancer has had its ups and downs—truthfully, I never imagined I would even get the chance to experience it. Shortly after finishing treatment, I enrolled at the University of Oklahoma, and it felt so sweet to have moments of normalcy again. But just six months after ringing the bell, I began having pain in my hip, and my mind immediately went to the worst possibility—that my cancer had returned. It was a fear I carried almost constantly in those early days. Thankfully, it wasn't cancer, but I was diagnosed with a complication called Avascular Necrosis in both hips. Over the next couple of years, I endured three surgeries in an attempt to repair them, eventually leading to full hip replacements on both sides. By the age of 20, I had undergone three joint replacements—far from what I had pictured for my future. Still, every challenge was made easier by one unshakable truth: I was cancer-free. That knowledge gave me the strength to face each obstacle and reminded me that life after cancer, while imperfect, is still a gift worth fighting for.

Cont. on Page 4

INFORMATION CENTER

CANDLELIGHTERS

CHILDHOOD CANCER FAMILY ALLIANCE

2025 Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Kris Vallee - Interim President

Alex Newton - Treasurer

Scott Newell - Secretary

Katie Stanton - Immediate Past President

Lisa O'Leary - Advisory Board Chair

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FUN WALK

Saturday, September 6th

LIGHTS OF COURAGE

Thursday, October 23rd

FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL

Sunday, October 26th

HOLIDAY ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM

September - December

HRP'S ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Tuesday, November 18th

Parent Support Group Meetings

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

IN-PERSON ON TUESDAYS @ 11:00 AM IN THE PEDI DOME

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE EMAIL

YUVI SIFUENTES: YSIFUENTES@CANDLE.ORG

TEXAS CHILDREN'S CANCER CENTER

IN-PERSON ON TUESDAYS @ 1:00 PM

IN THE WEST TOWER 7TH FLOOR FAMILY ROOM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE EMAIL

LINDA PENA: LPENA@CANDLE.ORG

New! SPECIAL TOPIC SUPPORT CALLS

VIRTUAL @ 12:00 PM VIA VIDEO CALL

OPEN TO FAMILIES AT ALL HOSPITALS - TCH, MDACC, CMHH

September 17, 2025: LONG TERM SURVIVORS

December 17, 2025: BEREAVED FAMILIES

CANDLELIGHTERS OFFICE STAFF

Lynn Wheeler | Executive Director | lwheeler@candle.org

Kelsey Tarpinian | Associate Director | kelseytc@candle.org

Carly Bradshaw | Programs & Communications Director | cbradshaw@candle.org

Paige Glover | Development Director | pglover@candle.org

Elizabeth Haines | Senior Director of Grants | ehaines@candle.org

Hannah Belk | Special Events Manager | hbelk@candle.org

Sydney Osterhaus | Office Manager | swilliams@candle.org

12919 SOUTHWEST FWY, SUITE 100, STAFFORD, TEXAS 77477

OFFICE: (713) 270-4700

PARENT CONSULTANTS

CANDLELIGHTERS STAFF WHO HAVE ALL PERSONALLY
BEEN THROUGH A CHILDHOOD CANCER JOURNEY

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

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TEXAS CHILDREN'S CANCER CENTER

Linda Pena

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Opal Goodman

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Maria Pena

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MEET OUR PARENT CONSULTANTS!

Appointment days are chaotic, and many families have only connected with our Parent Consultants via email and phone. So, here are the faces to look out for when you're visiting the hospital! We are grateful that our partner hospitals have welcomed our Parent Consultant staff members and recognize the benefits of the peer-to-peer support they provide to families on their childhood cancer journey.

What is a Candlelighters Parent Consultant?

PARENT CONSULTANTS ARE CANDLELIGHTERS STAFF WHO HAVE WALKED THIS SAME ROAD

They stood by their children as they fought childhood cancer, and now they are here to stand with you.

They provide daily emotional, educational, & practical support filled with words of hope, gestures of kindness, knowledge, and an understanding that can only come from someone who has walked in your shoes.

HOW DO PARENT CONSULTANTS HELP FAMILIES?

The Parent Consultant Program was developed to directly meet the needs of families being treated at our partner hospitals - to inform them of potential community resources and provide assistance through Candlelighters. Each Parent Consultant knows what it's like to be the parent of a child with cancer. They provide emotional, educational, and practical support to families of children being treated at The University of Texas MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital, Texas Children's Cancer & Hematology Center, Texas Children's Hospital West Campus, Texas Children's Hospital The Woodlands, and Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital.

Some examples of the emotional and practical support Parent Consultants provide childhood cancer families daily include:

- Parking Assistance
- Weekly Support Group Meetings
- Hospital Meal Passes and Meal Delivery Assistance for Caregivers
- Gas & Grocery Store Gift Cards
- 1-on-1 Emotional Support
- Invitations to free family events (for the whole family!) hosted by Candlelighters

Keep an eye out for our Parent Consultants at your hospital! They can't wait to meet you!

SERVING TEXAS CHILDREN'S CANCER CENTER FAMILIES



LINDA PEÑA

lpena@candle.org

¡Se habla Español!



OPAL GOODMAN

ogoodman@candle.org



MARIA PEÑA

mpeña@candle.org

¡Se habla Español!

SERVING MD ANDERSON CHILDREN'S CANCER HOSPITAL & CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL HERMANN HOSPITAL FAMILIES



YUVI SIFUENTES

ysifuentes@candle.org

¡Se habla Español!

[continued from Cover] When I arrived at OU, I joined a sorority and quickly found the kind of deep friendships I had dreamed about since I was a little girl. Today, those same friends will be standing by my side as bridesmaids in my wedding. College also brought me another unexpected gift—meeting my now-fiancé, Ethan. Our paths first crossed during my freshman year when my sorority and his fraternity were paired for homecoming. We were required to spend a certain number of hours each week working on the homecoming float, and one Friday evening, as we decorated side by side, we struck up a conversation that lasted for hours. From that night on, the rest was history. Nearly four years later, we're preparing to say "I do" on September 13th of this year!

During treatment, I formed a special bond with my nurses at MD Anderson. They were my safe place in the worst season of my life—offering encouragement, compassion, and the kind of love I didn't even know I needed. On the days when I received bad news or simply felt overwhelmed, they were there to listen, comfort, and remind me that I was not alone.

When it came time to consider my future after college, there was only one choice in my heart: I wanted to be a nurse. My sophomore year at OU, I was accepted into the nursing program, and from day one, I knew this was my calling. Whenever people asked what kind of nurse I wanted to be, my answer was always the same—pediatric oncology. Some told me it might be too emotional or difficult, while others said it would be the perfect fit. And they were all right—it can be sad and difficult at times. But I also know firsthand the power of having someone by your side who understands, encourages, and loves you through the hardest days. I want to be that person for my patients, because I have walked a road similar to theirs.



This past May, I graduated from OU's Nursing School with honors, and today I'm living my dream as a nurse on the Pediatric Hematology and Oncology unit at Oklahoma Children's Hospital. Cancer may have taken a lot from me at 16, but I've taken so much of my life back. In a way, I'm even grateful for my cancer journey, because without it, I wouldn't be where I am today, using my story to bring hope, strength, and light to others.

If you are reading this as a patient, sibling, parent, or a friend walking through the darkness of a childhood cancer diagnosis, I hope my story reminds you that there is life after cancer—and that it can be filled with love, purpose, and joy. The road may be hard, and it may not look exactly the way you imagined, but it can still be so, so beautiful.

Congratulations, Caroline, on reaching such incredible milestones! Your resilience, compassion, and dedication will inspire hope in countless patients and families walking the childhood cancer journey!

30 *days of honoring* CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH *in September!*



Be Aware & Know the Facts:

- 1.** Candlelighters supports 5,551 childhood cancer families annually
- 2.** Childhood Cancer is the #1 cause of death of children by disease
- 3.** 80% of childhood cancer families face financial hardships
- 4.** 47 kids in the US are diagnosed every day with a form of childhood cancer
- 5.** 1 in 4 elementary schools has a student who has or had childhood cancer
- 6.** The average age of a child when diagnosed with cancer is 6 years old

Support Candlelighters Families by Collecting & Donating:

- 7.** Grocery Gift Cards
- 8.** Restaurant or UberEats Gift Cards
- 9.** Gas Gift Cards
- 10.** Target or Walmart Gift Cards
- 11.** \$19 for one day of Hospital Parking
- 12.** Art Supplies/DIY Activities for Patients in the Hospital
- 13.** Travel-sized toiletries for unexpected hospital stays
- 14.** Kindles & Amazon Gift Cards
- 15.** Blankets, Cozy Socks, & Knit Caps

Connect With Us & Join Us!

- 16.** Follow us on Facebook & Instagram!
- 17.** Host a Facebook Fundraiser in honor of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
<https://www.facebook.com/fund/candlelighters/>
- 18.** Start a school initiative program at your school! Email hbelk@candle.org
- 19.** Subscribe to our Newsletter
- 20.** Join us at the FUN WALK on Saturday, September 6th at Terry Hershey Park!
- 21.** FUN WALK RAFFLE - Visit link: go.rallyup.com/candlelighters2025funwalk
- 22.** Join our Young Professionals Group!
- 23.** Sponsor & Attend our LIGHTS OF COURAGE Event on October 23rd
- 24.** Sponsor our Camp CLIFF weekend - Email cbradshaw@candle.org
- 25.** Sponsor a cancer family through our HOLIDAY ADOPT-A-FAMILY Program
Email cbradshaw@candle.org
- 26.** Volunteer your time at our office

Donate:

- 27.** Make a Tax-Deductible Donation to Candlelighters at www.candle.org
- 28.** Double your gift through your employer's Matching Gift program
- 29.** Your Talents: Photography, Graphic Design, Music, Kids Activities, etc.
- 30.** Items and Unique Experiences for our Lights of Courage auctions! Email pglover@candle.org

A NIGHT OF ELEGANCE, HORSES, AND HOPE

Pin Oak Charity Horse Show Treats Childhood Cancer Families And Honors Candlelighters

2025 brought another unforgettable season with the **Pin Oak Charity Horse Show** – a treasured tradition and long-time supporter of Candlelighters and childhood cancer families.

Our families were treated to nights full of delicious dinners and treats, thrilling competition, and joyful memory-making. Among the many highlights were Candlelighters patient and mom duo **Maggie and Meagan Ponshock**, who joined Program Director Carly Bradshaw and her daughter, Noah, at the **Hildebrand Family Grand Prix Night**. They toured the stables, met horses and riders, and even took a lap in the competition ring–fascinating and all! The night sparkled with excitement when they met the winning rider, Olivia Cliver, and her horse!

But the heart of the evening was the moving auction of “Cliff” – our hand-painted horse from the Camp CLIFF Family Camp Weekend. Covered in handprints and brought to life by artists **Tara Royer Steele** and **Danna Fox-Lynde**, Cliff raised \$7,500 to support the local Candlelighters programs.

Thank you to Pin Oak Charity Horse Show and your incredible riding community. Your support brings light and comfort to so many local families facing childhood cancer.



ONE SMALL INTRODUCTION CAN MAKE A BIG IMPACT!

How Your Workplace Can Make A Meaningful Difference

Candlelighters is honored to walk alongside families facing childhood cancer, offering comfort, connection, and hope every step of the way – through hospital visits, family events, and the practical support that helps lift burdens during the toughest of times. It's a privilege we hold close to our hearts.

As we look ahead to Fun Walk and Childhood Cancer Awareness Month this September, we invite you to help us continue this work – simply by connecting us with your workplace!

Did You Know? Many companies want to support causes their employees care about! From matching gifts and sponsorships to volunteer days and workplace giving, one introduction can make a big difference and an even more meaningful workplace!

- Here are a few ways you can help:
- Ask your employer if they offer matching or community support.
 - Connect us with someone in HR, leadership, or outreach.
 - Share your Candlelighters story at work – especially with your Fun Walk team!

Reach out to Development Director, Paige Glover
at pglover@candle.org to get your workplace involved!



A SUMMER OF SERVICE AND SMILES

Intern Maddie Newell Leaves Her Mark On Candlelighters



As summer winds down, we bid a warm “see you later” to our incredible Summer Intern, [Maddie Newell](#). From the moment Maddie stepped into our office, fresh off her role as a Camp CLIFF Counselor, she brought with her a spirit of compassion, energy, and dedication that perfectly reflects the heart of Candlelighters.

Over the past few months, Maddie immersed herself in the day-to-day work of our nonprofit, always showing up with a smile and a willingness to learn. Whether supporting events, serving families, or helping behind the scenes, Maddie approached every task with grace and enthusiasm. Her presence made a lasting impact on both our team and the families we serve.

A proud Dawson High School graduate and current Texas A&M University student, Maddie is entering her sophomore year with plans to become a pediatric nurse—an incredible next step that speaks to her heart for helping children and families.

Though her internship has come to an end, Maddie will always be part of the Candlelighters family! We are already looking forward to seeing her again as a future Camp CLIFF Counselor and ongoing advocate for childhood cancer families. Thank you, Maddie, for an unforgettable summer!

HOW YOU CAN VOLUNTEER WITH CANDLELIGHTERS!



SCAN THE QR CODE TO
COMPLETE OUR VOLUNTEER
APPLICATION FORM!

- 1. YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP:** Support the Candlelighters mission through fundraising and volunteer activities while participating in social and professional networking opportunities through the Candlelighters YPG!
- 2. CAMP CLIFF ('Children Loved in Families Forever'):** Become a counselor or help with games & activities to provide families with a fun weekend away from cancer.
- 3. SUMMER SURPRISES:** Hand out toys & treats or oversee a craft with childhood cancer patients and their siblings to bring them some summer fun.
- 4. FUN WALK:** Raise funds with a walk team, help run activities, or man the food or raffle booths during our fun event that kicks off Childhood Cancer Awareness Month!
- 5. FALL FESTIVAL:** Oversee an arts and crafts station or interactive game booths for childhood cancer families to enjoy during this family-favorite fall event.
- 6. ADOPT-A-FAMILY:** Sponsor families by providing new, wrapped gifts from their Wish Lists or host a toy drive or gift card drive for families during the holidays.
- 7. OFFICE PROJECTS:** Help our staff organize supplies, enter data, prepare mailings, and so much more at the Candlelighters office... we're pretty fun & love visitors!

CHEERS TO THE 17TH ANNUAL MARGARITA TASTE OFF

A Day Of Sunshine, Sips, & Astral Tequila – All In Support Of Childhood Cancer Families

The 17th Annual Margarita Taste Off, held on Saturday, April 12th, was a lively daytime celebration in support of Candlelighters, and it did not disappoint! With tickets selling out ahead of time, nearly 900 guests turned out to enjoy a fun-filled afternoon of tasting margaritas, enjoying delicious food, fundraising, and of course voting on their top three favorite margaritas from the day! We raised an incredible **\$104,000** for local families facing childhood cancer and were excited to crown crowd-favorites **Ambriza Social Mexican Kitchen** as this year's winner!

Seventeen top Houston-area restaurants competed head-to-head, serving up their most creative margaritas made with **Astral Tequila**, along with tasty bites to wow the crowd. From spicy and smoky to fruity and fresh, the margaritas were as unique as the restaurants themselves—each bringing flair, flavor, and heart to the event.

Guests also enjoyed refreshing beer tastings from **Austin Eastciders**, **No Label Brewing Company**, and **Shiner Beers**. Throughout the day, attendees took part in exciting activities including a mystery wine pull, a diamond tennis bracelet raffle sponsored by **Diamonds Direct Houston**, and a bustling silent auction. Music by **DJ Big John** kept the vibes high and the crowd moving and grooving.

With colorful décor and photo opportunities by **Party Jess Productions** and **Patton Productions**, the venue looked as vibrant as the drinks being poured. **Kirby Ice House – Memorial** once again proved to be the perfect setting, offering plenty of shade, a spacious lawn, and outstanding hospitality.



We want to give a huge thank you to our incredible restaurants that participated this year, the generous in-kind donors and event sponsors who made this year unforgettable, and every guest who joined us to make this year's Margarita Taste Off one to remember! Your support of this event will help Candlelighters continue to serve local childhood cancer families with love and care. Special thanks to the **Candlelighters Young Professionals Group** for their passion and dedication in planning yet another fun event, and to our rockstar volunteers who helped bring those plans to life! We're already counting down the days until next year's 18th Annual Margarita Taste Off, scheduled for **Saturday, April 18, 2026**. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details!

2025 Participating Restaurants



1ST PLACE: AMBRIZA SOCIAL MEXICAN KITCHEN

CILANTRO'S COCINA

DAILY GATHER

DISH SOCIETY

EIGHT ROW FLINT

EL TIEMPO CANTINA

FEDERAL AMERICAN GRILL

GAZEBO SEAFOOD HOUSE

GUARD AND GRACE

JUAREZ MEXICAN RESTAURANT

KAZZAN RAMEN & BAR

KIN DEE

THE ORIGINAL NINFA'S

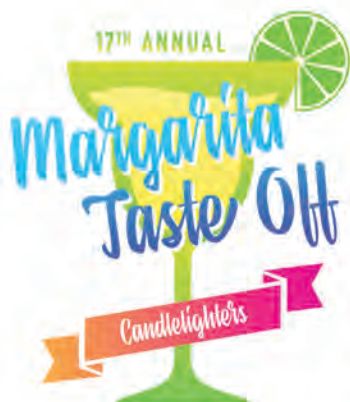
SALT & SUGAR GASTRO BAR

STATE FARE KITCHEN & BAR

TEXAS TAMALES COMPANY

THE TUCK ROOM

Thank You Sponsors!



ALEX & ARON WILL

NELSON FAMILY FOUNDATION



THE O'LEARY FAMILY



BONNE VIE TRAVEL

TOMMY & NANCY POYNTER



BRACEWELL

FARCIERT-CASTAÑEDA FAMILY

SANDY & KEN KANTOR

THE MEADOR FAMILY

SCOTT NEWELL

CHOEUN NGEP

WGA CONSULTING ENGINEERS



AUSTIN EASTCIDERS

PARTY JESS PRODUCTIONS

NO LABEL BREWING COMPANY

SHINER BEERS

COMPUTRODE, LLC
VALHALLA FOOT & ANKLE SPECIALISTS PLLC

J.RILEY CREATIVE

KIM BENOIT

HIGGINBOTHAM

JIM AND ALYCIA LEATHERBY

THE MARIN FAMILY

THE TARPINIAN FAMILY

RICHARD & IRENE WANG

BIG LEAGUE MOMENTS FOR AN ALL-STAR PATIENT

Candlelighters And The Space Cowboys Celebrate Landon Freeman And His Victory Over Cancer

In a heartwarming collaboration, the [Astros' Triple-A Affiliate Sugar Land Space Cowboys](#) and longtime Candlelighters sponsor [Constellation Energy](#) treated childhood cancer families to a special night at the ballpark! On May 2, 2025, the Space Cowboys generously donated more than 375 tickets to their home game against the Round Rock Express, along with parking passes, concession and gift shop credits, and access to the group picnic area seating in left field for all families in attendance.

The storm clouds were rolling in, but families arrived early and were enjoying all of the fun attractions that Constellation Field has to offer. Early arrivals received a fun giveaway bobblehead, and Candlelighters staff warmly greeted families and handed out this year's special Candlelighters baseball t-shirts. Families indulged in classic ballpark treats like hot dogs, pretzels, peanuts, and Cracker Jacks, while kids ran around and delighted in the space-themed playground and splash pad.

This year's pre-game highlights belonged to 10-year-old [Landon Freeman](#) of Tomball. Landon recently completed an intense seven-month battle with Stage 4 Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and Secondary HLH, and met Candlelighters Parent Consultants through his time at the hospital. Before his diagnosis, Landon was a passionate baseball player, serving as a catcher and first baseman with SKSA 12U and the Texas Elite Lobos. Off the field, Landon enjoys building with Legos, swimming, biking, playing video games, participating in Cub Scouts, coding, robotics, and creating shark-themed artwork.

Before the big game kicked off, Landon and his family enjoyed a tour of the ballpark, and he even participated in warm-ups and batting practice with the team! He knocked three pitches out of the infield, and his family was delighted to watch him enjoy being a kid and playing baseball again. After hanging out with the team down on the field, Landon was escorted to a press conference with local media, Candlelighters staff, and his family, where [General Manager Mickey Storey](#) officially signed Landon "The Landolorian" to a special 1-day contract with the Space Cowboys! He posed for photos, talked with the news outlets, and excitedly received his custom jersey, complete with his baseball nickname and lucky number.



For Landon, this night was more than just a return to the ballpark – it was a celebration of his resilience and grit. Landon took to the mound to throw out the ceremonial first pitch, and then, surrounded by roaring cheers from the crowd, in a powerful and emotional moment at home plate, [he rang the victory bell](#) – a tradition that marks the end of cancer treatment, the resilience of the fighter, and hope for the future. Hundreds of spectators joined fellow Candlelighters families in honoring this milestone, celebrating the end of Landon's cancer treatment and the start of a bright new chapter.

Candlelighters is immensely grateful to Constellation Energy, the Sugar Land Space Cowboys, and the Houston Astros for their unwavering support of the childhood cancer community and all of the ways that we serve patients, siblings, and families. Their generosity enables us to provide these priceless experiences to childhood cancer families at no cost – moments that create core memories, and bring hope, joy, and community when they're needed most.

THANK YOU SUGAR LAND SPACE COWBOYS!



FROM RELAPSE TO REMISSION

RJ And The London Family's Story Of Strength And Perseverance by Ebony Kankam London

September will always hold a special place in my heart. It is the month of my wedding anniversary, my dad's birthday, the start of football season, Candlelighters Fun Walk, Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, and, ironically enough, the month my son was both diagnosed and relapsed with a cancer diagnosis.

Last September, just days after RJ joyfully crossed the finish line at the Candlelighters Fun Walk, we learned that his cancer had returned. RJ was first diagnosed with Alveolar Rhabdomyosarcoma at just two and a half years old. He fought bravely, battled through treatment, and we celebrated every treatment milestone as a victory. But nothing could have prepared us for last September, when, at 4 years old—just shy of turning 5—he relapsed. The timing was gut-wrenching. One moment, we were surrounded by cheering supporters and survivors at the Candlelighters Fun Walk, celebrating RJ's triumph over cancer, and the next, we were back in the hospital, hearing the words no parent wants to hear again: "The cancer is back."

This time, everything was different. RJ was older and more aware of what was happening. He had questions, he had more palpable fears, and he had opinions. As a mother, it was heartbreaking to watch him process it all—knowing too much, yet still being so small. And to top it all off, I found out I was pregnant with my third child.

Navigating cancer treatment is already a full-time job, but doing so while growing a new life inside me was a challenge that tested every fiber of my being. There were days I would cry in the car after hospital visits, letting the weight of it all finally release after holding it together in front of RJ. There were nights when I would lie in bed, my belly full of kicks from our new baby, praying that my son would be here to meet his sibling. Every appointment, every scan, and every round of chemotherapy came with a mix of anxiety, exhaustion, and hope.

By the grace of God, and with the strength of our family holding us up, our medical team, and community behind us, RJ is now cancer-free!

Today, RJ is thriving. He's playing baseball, making new friends, and starting kindergarten. His laugh is louder, his steps are lighter, and his spirit is stronger than ever. Watching him run the bases, helmet on and eyes full of determination, brings tears to my eyes—not from sadness, but from awe at his resilience.



Childhood Cancer Awareness Month is more than just a gold ribbon or a cause to our family—it's a reminder of how far we've come and how much more still needs to be done. It's about honoring the fighters, remembering the angels, and supporting the families still in the trenches. I share our story to shine a light on the real stories and faces behind the statistics. Behind every gold ribbon is a family like ours and a child like RJ—who dreams of hitting home runs and being a big brother, not of hospital beds and chemo drips. This September, we wear gold for RJ and every child like him.

WHAT FAMILIES REALLY NEED: A CANCER SUPPORT GUIDE

Essential Tips And Heartfelt Advice From Parents Navigating Childhood Cancer

When a child is diagnosed with cancer, life changes in an instant – not just for the patient, but for their entire family. Hospital visits, treatments, unexpected overnight stays, and constant emotional strain quickly become part of daily life. For families walking this path, small comforts and thoughtful acts of support can make all the difference.

We recently asked parents what they wish they had during hospital stays at the beginning of their childhood cancer journey and what advice they would offer to others. Their answers were practical, heartfelt, and deeply human. Whether you are looking for ways to help, or a fellow parent facing a new diagnosis, this wish list may be a helpful guide.

PACKING ESSENTIALS FOR HOSPITAL VISITS

- Healthy snacks and meals: Nutritious options for both kids and parents are hard to find in hospitals.
- Toiletries and personal hygiene items: Toothbrushes, shampoo, deodorant, and personal detergent are a must for unexpected overnight stays.
- Comfortable clothing and extra outfits: Accidents and long stays happen – parents suggest packing at least two sets of clothes.
- Slippers or comfortable shoes.
- Phone chargers - bonus points for extra length!
- Pillows and blankets from home: Comfort items can bring a sense of peace in an otherwise sterile environment.
- Mattress topper or air mattress: Hospital beds or cots can be tough on parents who stay overnight.

COMFORT AND DISTRACTION FOR PARENTS

- Headphones and earplugs
- Eye mask, blanket, or fan: Sleep is rare – making rest as comfortable as possible is crucial.
- Journals: For notes, questions for doctors, or emotional processing.
- Books and coloring supplies: Something simple and creative can help pass the time.
- Inspirational cards or notes: Uplifting words can carry heavy hearts through hard moments.
- Entertainment subscriptions or devices: Roku sticks, e-readers, or portable games help during long hours in waiting rooms.

THINGS TO BRING FOR KIDS

- Tablets, fidget toys, and small LEGO sets: These provide hours of quiet distraction.
- Stuffed animals and cozy blankets: Comfort from home makes unfamiliar spaces feel a little safer.
- Lollipops or comfort snacks: Help ease nausea or create moments of joy during treatment.
- Board games and activity books: Especially helpful during all-day clinic visits.
- Teen-specific items: Teens have different needs and tastes – age-appropriate distractions matter.
- Window markers: Letting kids decorate their hospital room windows can be a mood-lifter.

EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Connection with other parents: Talking with someone who “gets it” is invaluable. A buddy system or family mentor program can help.
- Time-fillers for caregivers: Activities like puzzles or books help during hours when your child is resting.
- Encouragement and reminders for self-care: Parents often prioritize their child so much that they forget themselves. Gentle reminders and small comforts help.
- Wish for hospital amenities: Many parents longed for spa-like spaces or even a quiet room to rest and feel human again.

THIS IS WHERE CANDLELIGHTERS SHINES!

How Friends, Family, and Candlelighters Can Help

Sometimes, the simplest gestures are the most meaningful. Bring a meal. Send a thoughtful note. Pack a clinic bag. Fold a load of laundry. Take a sibling out for ice cream, host a playdate or sleepover, or cover carpool. And always remind parents that it's okay to take care of themselves too.

Families facing childhood cancer are often too overwhelmed to ask for help – but they need it more than ever. This wish list is more than a collection of items; it's a roadmap for showing compassion during life's most challenging moments. At Candlelighters, we understand because we've been there. Together with friends, family, and our caring community, we're here to lighten the load, provide comfort, and ensure no family walks this journey alone.

2025 FUN WALK | SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH

Taking 5,551 Steps To Honor & Support Childhood Cancer Families



Each year, the **Fun Walk** helps us kick off Childhood Cancer Awareness Month as we gather together to raise awareness and funds for all the ways Candlelighters serves childhood cancer patients and their families here in the Houston area. We'll be celebrating and continuing fundraising efforts all month long, so **it's not too late to join us!** Here's how you can be a part of the Fun Walk movement, regardless of whether or not you can attend on Saturday, September 6th!

1. **MAKE A DONATION!** All donations made throughout the month of September will be matched up to \$60,000! **CLICK HERE:** <https://2025funwalk.funraise.org/>
2. Take the pledge to **WALK 5,551 STEPS IN SEPTEMBER** (about 2.5 miles) - **one step for each Candlelighters Family!**
3. **CREATE A FACEBOOK FUNDRAISER** (easily connect your Fun Walk page!) and help by sharing our mission AND fundraising efforts with friends, family, and colleagues!

OUR GOAL IS TO RAISE \$260,000 THIS YEAR, AND WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

Funds will go towards daily support, free programs, and services for local childhood cancer families. **CANCER DOESN'T STOP** and neither will we! We can't wait to see what we will accomplish together!

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 FUN WALK SPONSORS!



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: [HTTPS://2025FUNWALK.FUNRAISE.ORG/](https://2025funwalk.funraise.org/)

2025 FUN WALK FUNDRAISING TIPS & IDEAS



ONLINE FUNDRAISING TIPS

1. Register online at <https://2025funwalk.funraise.org>.
2. Once registered, utilize your Fundraiser Page to:
 - **Personalize** your Page with photos, WHY you're walking and WHAT donations will go towards
 - **Email and text** friends and family your unique URL using the "SHARE" button
 - **Connect to a Facebook Fundraiser** (Settings --> Connections) - this enables the Fun Walk site and Facebook to link, making it easier to receive donations from Facebook friends!
3. **Make specific asks:** 19th day of the month ask for \$19 to pay for one day of hospital parking, 5-year cancer survivor ask for \$50, etc.
4. Studies show it takes on average **3-7 "asks"** for someone to donate - we all need reminders!
5. **Donation Squares:** Head over to our Facebook page to find our Donation Squares Board for you to use to "sell" donations! The number claimed = donation amount!
6. **Sell Something:** T-Shirts, Hats, Bracelets, Cookies, Tamales, Lemonade - you name it, we've seen it all! Whatever you can get your hands on, sell it to make some extra funds for your Walk Team!

ONLINE WALK RAFFLE

Check out our Virtual Raffle, benefiting the 2025 Fun Walk! Purchase your tickets to win: 10-Nights in Antigua, a Space Cowboys Suite, a Galveston Getaway, Museum Tickets, Kemah Boardwalk Family Fun Pack, Kendra Scott Jewelry, Santa's Wonderland Passes, SeaWorld Tickets, and more!

FUNDRAISING AWARDS

Rookie of the Year - Top Fundraising First-Year Walk Teams

- Community, Corporate & Family

Top Fundraising Teams

- Community, Corporate & Family

Top Facebook Fundraisers

- Community, Corporate & Family

SPECIALTY AWARDS

Best Team Name

Largest Team

Best Team T-Shirts

- Corporate
- Family
- Community

Awards are given out on walk day and are based on LIVE fundraising totals from the Fun Walk website as of Saturday, September 6th at 10:00 AM.

PRIZES

- Raise \$100+ and earn a Walk T-Shirt!
- Raise \$1,000+ and earn a Candlelighters insulated tumbler
- Family Team Why I Walk Yard Signs

Fun Walk Questions?
Please contact: walk@candle.org

2025 FUN WALK VIRTUAL RAFFLE: [HTTP://TINY.CC/FWPRIZES](http://tiny.cc/fwprizes)

SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Join Us in the Fight Against Childhood Cancer!

Are you ready to spark change and make a real difference in the fight against childhood cancer? Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Family Alliance is thrilled to share our School Initiative Program, and we're inviting YOU to be a part of this exciting journey!

What is the School Initiative Program?

The school initiative program is an engaging way for schools and their students to come together in support of families battling childhood cancer. By participating, you'll not only help raise vital funds but also create awareness and cultivate a sense of empathy and unity within your community.

Why Participate?

- Educational Value: Empower students with knowledge about childhood cancer and the significance of helping others
- Community Engagement: Strengthen connections and create lasting memories by working together towards a common goal
- Skill Development: Provide opportunities for students to lead and organize events, enhancing their leadership and organizational skills

How Can You Get Involved?

1. Organize Sales Events: From bake sales to school carnivals, there are many creative ways to raise funds and have fun!
2. Plan Spirit Days: Host themed days such as "Caps for Candlelighters" or "Crazy Hair Day" to encourage participation and donations
3. Run Friendly Competitions: Engage your students with Penny Wars or staff vs. student games, turning friendly competition into impactful fundraising
4. Create Your Own Campaign: Design unique fundraising activities that resonate with your group and maximize your impact!

Ready to Make a Difference?

Getting started is simple! Contact Hannah Belk, our Special Events Manager, at hbelk@candle.org or call (713) 270-4700 for more information!



A HOME RUN DAY AT DAIKIN PARK WITH HRP

From The Stands To The Heart – A Day Full Of Baseball And Belonging

This summer, Candlelighters families joined our incredible friends at [Houston Relocation Professionals](#) (HRP) for a day that truly knocked it out of the park! Thanks to the generosity of HRP and their sponsors, families facing childhood cancer enjoyed a much-needed break from hospital visits, treatments, and daily challenges to soak in an afternoon filled with laughter, connection, and baseball magic.

From the crack of the bat to the roar of the crowd, the excitement was electric as our Houston Astros took on the Philadelphia Phillies at the newly renamed [Daikin Park](#). Families were treated to premium seats with fantastic views, a delicious catered lunch, and a shopping spree at the Astros Gift Shop—turning a simple game day into an unforgettable memory.

For some families, this was their very first Candlelighters event, opening the door to new friendships and a supportive community. For others, it was an opportunity for kids to catch up and parents to reconnect. Laughter echoed through the stands, and the joy on the faces of parents and children alike was a beautiful reminder of why these special days matter so much.

These are the moments Candlelighters strives to create—where families can focus on being together, making memories, and feeling celebrated. We are deeply grateful to HRP for making this day possible and for continuing to stand alongside our families every step of the way.



LOCKED, LOADED, AND LIGHTING THE WAY

A Record-Breaking Day of Competition, Community, and Compassion for Candlelighters Families

On Friday, May 9th, the community came together in a powerful show of support at the [5th Annual Break A Clay for Candlelighters](#) clay shooting tournament, held at the [Greater Houston Sports Club](#). With a record 236 participants filling nearly three full courses, the event was full of energy from the first shot to the final tally!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our competitors, sponsors, and supporters, this year's event [raised an amazing \\$153,000](#) – funds that go directly toward programs for children and families impacted by cancer.

The day started with a few raindrops, but the clouds quickly cleared, making way for a beautiful spring afternoon perfect for sporting clays, friendly competition, and good company. Attendees enjoyed a full day of exciting target games, a hearty barbecue lunch from the [Planet Texas Barbeque Cook-Off Team](#) and [Ditta Meat Food Service Company](#), and a competitive silent auction packed with vacation packages, golf outings, local brews, a Blackstone Grill, and much more!

During lunch, guests heard from [Candlelighters Dad, Chip Probe](#), who shared the emotional story of his daughter Dylan's battle with cancer. His heartfelt words reminded us all why we come together—to bring light, support, and hope to families facing the unimaginable journey that is childhood cancer.

As the competition wrapped up and scores were tallied, attendees kicked back with cold drinks provided by [Maker's Mark](#), [Tito's Handmade Vodka](#), [St. Arnold's Brewing Company](#), [Karch Brewing Co.](#), and [PepsiCo](#).

First Place was awarded to Team Peyton, with Dennis Toland, Thomas Nasser, Nyal Witham, and Kenneth Wells! Second Place was claimed by Team Action Gypsum, featuring John Renken, Cameron Bayer, Richard Jatzlau, and Israel Flores. Third-place honors went to Team Yellow Jacket, with members Sarah Bosenbury, John Kaiser, and Tanner Paxton. As for individuals, the Top Shooter Award went to John Renken, followed by Dennis Toland in second place and Kelbie Dunlap in third place. The Flurry competition prize was awarded to Team Peyton, who brought home some well-earned bragging rights!

We want to thank our incredible [Co-Chairs, Jeff McNamara and Brendan Gilbert](#), and honorary "team coordinator", Christina Garcia, for their time and effort in planning this record-breaking event. Special appreciation goes to WellBoss, our Presenting Sponsor, for their unwavering support. We offer our deepest gratitude to all of our generous sponsors, auction donors, in-kind supporters, and volunteers who helped make this event such a success!



Save The Date!

We hope this fun and impactful event continues to grow! Save the date for the [6th Annual Break A Clay for Candlelighters](#) tournament, scheduled for [Friday, May 8th, 2026](#). For more information on sponsorship and reserving a team, please reach out to Development Director, Paige Glover, at pglover@candle.org.

THANK YOU BREAK A CLAY EVENT SPONSORS!

Presenting Sponsor:



Gold Sponsors:



Silver Sponsors:



ETHOSCAPES



FIRST
HORIZON



CHRIS JOSEPH



Honors Teams:

FERGUSON WATERWORKS
INTEGRITY PUMP & EQUIPMENT
KEARNEY, McWILLIAMS & DAVIS, PLLC
KIRKSEY ARCHITECTURE
LINK STAFFING
PSA LIGHTING & CONTROLS

PREMIUM OILFIELD TECHNOLOGIES
ROB BARR
RAY & ASHLEY SINKIEWICZ
SCHOELLER BLECKMANN ENERGY SERVICES
TELIOS
TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA
YELLOW JACKET OIL TOOLS

Food & Beverage Sponsors:



SUNSHINE, SMILES, AND SUMMER SURPRISES!

Soaking Up Every Moment Of Fun, Friendship, And Joy At Candlelighters' Summer Celebration

We couldn't let summer slip away without hosting our hallmark Summer Surprises Party for cancer patients and siblings! Held in July in the Branches building of St. Luke's United Methodist Church, the event was bursting with energy as Parent Consultants and Candlelighters staff eagerly welcomed families for a day of laughter, bonding, and pure enjoyment.

As families strolled through the festive, balloon-filled entrance, they were greeted by a lively [Sugar Land Space Cowboys](#) booth with their cosmic canine mascot, [Orion](#), and fun giveaways, ushering everyone straight into an energetic celebration! [DJ Cara with Dreamland Entertainment](#) kept the vibe alive with the season's hottest tracks while hosting exciting minute-to-win-it and karaoke games. Kids lined up for transformative face painting by [Texas Wonder - Face Painting, Balloons & More](#) after mingling with the likes of Tinkerbell and Jasmine. Families also had the chance to get creative at various craft tables – making fabric and beaded bracelets and keychains, decorating summer seashells, painting squeegee art, and threading bead pets!



Another highlight of the day was the opportunity to design and paint a custom tile for a special Candlelighters project, which will be unveiled at our upcoming Lights of Courage event! Eventgoers will have the unique opportunity to bid on a custom bench featuring this year's tile artwork. Friends of Candlelighters, [Ascend Performance Materials](#), brought engaging STEM activity boxes, guiding attendees as they built cool wooden and light-up contraptions! [Wally's Balloons N'More](#) also wowed guests with their intricate balloon twisting, adding yet another layer of fun to the celebration.



The party was also packed with generous giveaways! Families left with custom Candlelighters blankets (thanks to dedicated volunteers with [Southwest Airlines](#)) and Candlelighters swag. Each child teamed up with a volunteer from [Adam's Angels Ministries](#) to pick their favorite toys from a bountiful selection, thanks to generous toy drives held citywide.

The amazing team from Kendra Scott also brought their [Kendra Cares Mobile Color Bar](#), offering all childhood cancer patients and siblings in attendance the chance to design custom jewelry pieces with their favorite color gemstones—everyone was ecstatic to show off their creations! As the event wrapped up, families visited our friends with [Oler Relocation](#) to pick up their Chick-fil-A lunches and the adorable, delectable summer popsicle stand, fully donated by [Event Catering Houston](#)!

We were honored to continue our mission of supporting cancer families with this exciting event. A heartfelt thank you goes out to our incredible sponsors, volunteers, and vendors who made the day so special. Special thanks to our host, [St. Luke's United Methodist Church](#), and the [Branches](#) team, along with our presenting sponsors [Adam's Angels Ministries](#), [GEODIS](#), and [OlerRelo](#). We are also grateful to our in-kind sponsors: Ascend Performance Materials, Dreamland Entertainment, Event Catering Houston, Fairest of All Parties, Kendra Scott, Patton Productions, and Wally's Balloons N'More.

And a huge thank you to all the volunteers from Adam's Angels, Ascend Performance Materials, Gandy Ink, GEODIS, Kendra Scott, National Charity League Brightstar Chapter, National Charity League Memorial Chapter, OlerRelo, Holly Holmes, Jodi & Art Vasquez, Kaitlyn Baertlein, Kendra Benoit, Lauren Technik, Michele Williams, Sophie Sullivan, Tyler Wheeler, and Will Barr. Your efforts helped us create a day of joy and escape for our childhood cancer families. Without our sponsors and volunteers, these events would not be possible. We hope this treasured tradition filled everyone's last bit of summer with excitement and joy!



AN UNSTOPPABLE SPIRIT, AN EVERLASTING IMPACT

Honoring Team ReJoyce For 16 Years Of Compassion And Commitment To Families In The Fight

This year marked the final Weekend of Hope and Washer Tournament hosted by the remarkable Team ReJoyce – and the impact they've made will be felt for years to come. For the past three years, their tireless fundraising efforts have directly supported Candlelighters and the families we serve, bringing light, hope, and relief during some of the darkest moments a family can face. This year, they raised \$21,130 to support Candlelighters and our families!

What began in 2009 as a simple washer tournament in their father's backyard, with just a handful of teams, grew over 16 unforgettable years into a beloved community tradition. Along the way, Team ReJoyce raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for cancer charities, answering the call to "come together to fight for those dealing with the burdens of cancer treatment, to ignite hope for the afflicted" – and they did so with heart, passion, and the same unstoppable spirit that has defined them from the very beginning.

Candlelighters is forever grateful for Team ReJoyce's commitment, compassion, and unwavering belief that no family should fight cancer alone. Their legacy will shine brightly in every parking pass provided, every family meal shared, and every joyful memory made possible because of their support. Thank you, Team ReJoyce, for everything – you have made an everlasting difference, and we will carry your light forward!



Thank you, Stevenson Family, for all of the love, energy, and funding that you have poured into the local cancer community! Candlelighters is honored to have been part of your story!

BACK TO SCHOOL BLESSINGS FOR PATIENTS AND SIBLINGS

Candlelighters Partners With Pillars In The Community To Help Children Return to School

Candlelighters would like to extend heartfelt thanks to our incredible community partners for their generous support and commitment to making this back-to-school season brighter for children with cancer and their siblings.

Thanks to the support of RiverKids Pediatric Home Health, Amegy Bank, and many donors who purchased supplies off our Back to School wish list, we successfully packed and distributed 180 fully stocked backpacks for children with cancer and their siblings! These backpacks, filled with age-appropriate school supplies for both pre-school and elementary school, were delivered just in time to help ease the transition back to the classroom.

Texas Children's Hospital's goal was to collaborate with several childhood cancer organizations and local educational resources to not only meet the material needs of these young students but also to offer a powerful reminder that our community stands behind them. The support from our partners ensures that every child can begin the school year with confidence, dignity, and the tools they need to succeed.

Volunteers, staff, and partner representatives gathered to sort, pack, and personalize each backpack with care. Laughter, teamwork, and a shared sense of purpose filled the room. From crayons to calculators, every item was thoughtfully chosen to help kids head back to school with a newfound excitement. This is especially needed after most children have been in homebound school or with in-hospital tutors while on active treatment. It was a beautiful reminder of what can be accomplished when a community comes together. Thank you to everyone who made this initiative possible!



AmegyBank®



FUND PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR CANCER FAMILIES



Family Programs & Parties

GOAL: \$15,000

Our calendar is filled with meaningful programs that provide direct, practical, and emotional support to families when they need it most – from our Summer Surprises Party to our Bell Ringing In A Box kits (packed with party supplies to celebrate the completion of treatment!) and our Back-To-School Backpacks initiative to support inpatient students – your donation will go directly to supporting families! These programs are only possible because of people like you who choose to make a difference.

Family Fall Festival

GOAL: \$5,000

The students at St. John's School host Candlelighters families for a day full of fall-themed fun! They create fun carnival games with loads of prizes, crafts & activities, a bounce house, costume contest, and so much more! The festival also includes raffle packages filled with toys, yummy treats, music, and lots of smiles. We are so excited to continue this tradition for one of our family-favorite events this year, but we need sponsors and donors to help us make it the most fun Fall Festival yet!



Thanksgiving Blessings

GOAL: \$16,000

Help us bless 320 Candlelighters families with grocery store gift cards this holiday season! When you have a child going through cancer treatment, your priorities change, and your focus shifts. Through the Thanksgiving Blessings initiative, our goal is to provide a meaningful gift so that a nice holiday meal isn't a financial burden or stressful for our cancer parents and to put a smile back on everyone's faces. With your help, Candlelighters will be able to expand the Thanksgiving Blessings program this holiday season!

Adopt-A-Family

GOAL: \$16,000

This program offers companies and groups the opportunity to interact with Candlelighters families and provide them with gifts for the holiday season. This program is heartwarming for both families and sponsors in celebrating the true meaning of the holidays. Spread cheer by adopting a family who may find the season especially difficult while coping with a child diagnosed with cancer or having recently lost a child. We will also be spreading holiday cheer by providing gifts for inpatient families!



SHARING STRENGTH AND DELIVERING COMFORT

Candlelighters Cares: Supporting Our Hospital Partners Who Support Cancer Families

Thank You to Our 2025 Candlelighters Cares Sponsors!



Candlelighters Cares is our monthly hospital outreach program that provides treats for the nurses, doctors, and staff who take such great care of our cancer families! We partner with local restaurants and businesses to spread joy to these healthcare heroes. For more information, contact Program Director, Carly Bradshaw, at cbradshaw@candle.org.



SAVE THE DATES

2025 FUN WALK

TERRY HERSHEY PARK | FREE REGISTRATION!

[HTTPS://2025FUNWALK.FUNRAISE.ORG/](https://2025funwalk.funraise.org/)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2025

HOLIDAY ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM

SPONSORS & COMMUNITY GROUPS BUY & WRAP GIFTS
FOR CANDLELIGHTERS FAMILIES

ACCEPTING FAMILY & SPONSOR APPLICATIONS IN SEPTEMBER

LIGHTS OF COURAGE

EVENING FUNDRAISING EVENT @ THE GOODMAN

[HTTPS://US.GIVERGY.COM/LIGHTSOFCOURAGE2025/](https://us.givergy.com/LIGHTSOFCOURAGE2025/)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2025

FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL

FREE FAMILY EVENT | FAMILIES MUST RSVP!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2025

CAMP CLIFF FAMILY CAMP WEEKEND

FREE FAMILY EVENT @ CAMP FOR ALL | FAMILIES MUST APPLY!

ACCEPTING FAMILY & VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS IN SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20 - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026

18TH ANNUAL MARGARITA TASTE OFF

FUNDRAISING EVENT @ KIRBY ICE HOUSE - MEMORIAL

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026

6TH ANNUAL BREAK A CLAY FOR CANDLELIGHTERS

FUNDRAISING EVENT @ GREATER HOUSTON SPORTS CLUB

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026

To stay current with Candlelighters programs and events, please make sure to follow us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/candlelighters

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
- Meal passes to Texas Medical Center cafeterias & Uber Eats gift cards
- Grocery store gift cards
- Gas gift cards
- Funeral expense support
- Toiletry Bags
- Thanksgiving Blessings

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

- One-on-one peer support from Parent Consultants (1 staff member at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital and Children's Memorial Hermann, and 3 at Texas Children's Hospital)
- Parent Support Group Meetings (Virtual & In-Person options - 1 for MDACC/CMH families and 1 for TCH families)
- Newsletter
- Camp CLIFF (Children Loved in Families Forever) Weekend Family Camp
- Houston Rodeo BBQ Cookoff hosted by the Planet Texas Cookoff Team
- Summer Surprises Party for patients and siblings
- Family Fall 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 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
- Ari's Bears
- Bags of Love
- Benjy Grinberg Scholarship
- Cancer for College
- Chalik & Chalik Injury Lawyers Cancer Survivors Scholarship
- Children's Cancer Cause College Scholars Program
- Childhood Brain Tumor Foundation
- Faith Hope and Love Jesus, Inc.
- Houston Relocation Professionals
- Izzy Foundation
- John Foy & Associates "Strong Arm" Leukemia Scholarship
- Lagman Foundation Second Chances Scholarship
- Lep Foundation CURE-Cancer Support Scholarship
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society for Blood Cancer Survivors
- Mesothelioma.com Scholarship
- Michael A. Hunter Memorial Scholarship
- My Hometown Heroes Scholarship
- National Children's Cancer Society
- National Collegiate Cancer Foundation
- National Grace Foundation
- Northwestern Mutual – Survivor & Sibling Scholarship Programs
- Patient Advocate Foundation
- Paul Bernot Memorial Foundation
- Project Joy and Hope
- Ruth Cheatham Foundation
- Silken Twine Sophie Malaviya Memorial Scholarship
- Snowdrop Foundation
- Special Love for Children with Cancer Kay/Moore Fund
- The Simon Cancer Foundation
- The Sunshine Kids Foundation
- The Valerie Fund Scholarship
- TutorVille Foundation

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 Medical Appointments

- Houston Children's Charity
- Houston Ground Angels

Grief Support

- Bo's Place
- Project Joy and Hope

Financial Assistance

- Addi's Faith Foundation
- Heroes for Children Rent and Mortgage
- Houston Children's Charity
- Project Joy and Hope
- The Brent Event
- The SAMFund for Young Adult Survivors of Cancer - Expect Miracles Foundation
- The Still Strong Foundation

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

9,550 KIDS under the age of 15 are expected to be diagnosed with cancer in 2025 in the U.S.

TEXAS accounts for 10% of all childhood cancer cases in the U.S., the 2nd-highest in the nation

1 IN 285 children in the U.S. will be diagnosed with cancer before their 20th birthday

4,454 HOURS of emotional support was provided to cancer families by Candlelighters in 2024

PARTNER WITH CANDLELIGHTERS TODAY TO MAKE A LASTING, MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY CHILDHOOD CANCER.



CHILDHOOD CANCER FAMILY ALLIANCE



Candlelighters Houston



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. 30 years later, we've added Children's Memorial Hermann to our partner hospital list, along with local Texas Children's Hospital satellite locations. 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.