



# THE HOPE REPORT

LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SOFIA'S HOPE



SPRING 2025 EDITION

## Introducing an Evening of Hope

Join us for a night dedicated to bringing hope, support, and change for children battling cancer. Our inaugural Evening of Hope will be held on Thursday, May 1st at 6:00 PM at the UM Newman Alumni Center, in Coral Gables. Enjoy our new, elevated look, incredible food, drink, live music trio and inspiring moments while making a difference and bringing hope where it's needed most.

We'd like to thank the team at It's My Party and The Event Group Design & Décor, who bring the vision of an Evening of Hope to life. They have truly captured the overall theme for an enchanted experience and have been hard at work behind the scenes. We hope you'll enjoy the difference firsthand on May 1st! Your attendance helps Sofia's Hope provide critical programs and support to families facing childhood cancer.

Evening of Hope tickets are only \$150 per person or \$250 for a 2-ticket bundle. Scan the QR code to get yours TODAY! If you're interested in aligning your company or family with this delightful evening, please call our office at (786) 730-4545.



Dr. Steven Lipshultz, MD, FAAC, FACA

## Celebrating the Champions of Hope

We are also honored to introduce Champions of Hope, a prestigious recognition celebrating individuals whose unwavering commitment, passion, and advocacy have made a profound and lasting impact in the childhood cancer community. This award shines a light on those who go above and beyond — whether through fundraising, advocacy, or emotional support — showcasing the power of compassion in the fight against this disease.



Dr. Thomas Ryan, MD, PhD

This year, we are proud to recognize Dr. Steven Lipshultz, a pioneer in pediatric cardiology, and Dr. Thomas Ryan, a leader in cardio-oncology. These Champions of Hope embody the passion, commitment, and resilience needed to bring real change to the childhood cancer community. Join us as we honor their incredible contributions on Thursday, May 1st!

## Evening of Hope Exclusive Getaway Raffle!

Dreaming of a tropical escape? Now's your chance...for just a \$100 donation, you could win a 4-day/3-night All-Inclusive getaway to a stunning Sandals or Beaches Resort! Winner chooses a luxurious adults-only stay for two at any Sandals Resort (valued at \$3,054) or a family-friendly stay for four (two adults & two children under 15) at any Beaches Resort (valued at \$4,158). Every entry supports Sofia's Hope patient and family programs. Get your chance to win today before tickets sell out by scanning the QR code. There are only 50 tickets available for this exclusive raffle! Winner will be announced live on May 1st at the event. Winner does not need to be present to win.



*Sandals* | *Beaches*

## Letter from the President

Dear Friend,

Did you know that April is officially Hope Month? Everywhere I look, hope is in the air:

- At the Heroes Unite picnic where 10 childhood cancer organizations joined forces to support warriors and their families.
- In the overwhelming response to our scholarship program, with a record-breaking 300+ applications for our six annual warrior and sibling awards.
- As we prepare for our Evening of Hope, channeling bold elegance and unwavering energy to showcase how we fight childhood cancer with HOPE.



“Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up.” – David Orr

I love this quote because it embodies what we do every day. It takes a strong village to stand tall, support every step, and turn hopes into reality. That’s why I’m thrilled to share that our Sofia’s Hope team is growing! Please join me in welcoming these incredible ladies to our mission:

Lynnette Brown – Accounting Coordinator  
 Emiliana Lovera – Social Media Coordinator  
 Leah Blanton – Reason To Run 5K Race Director  
 Mayra Hernandez – Auction Coordinator

At the same time, it’s bittersweet to say goodbye to Sofia Settineri, our former Programs Coordinator. She has accepted her first nursing job at UF Health Shands in Gainesville, and while we will miss her, we couldn’t be prouder. We wish her nothing but the best in this exciting new chapter!

And as we celebrate Hope Month, please know that our team also celebrates you. Through your support — whether by standing with our kids and families or contributing to our programs — you give us hope every single day.

With gratitude,

*Marta Blanco*

Marta Blanco  
 Founder & President



## Thank You Jorge & Linda Martinez!

Last fall’s 17th Annual Reason to Run 5K Presented by Nicklaus Children’s Hospital was an incredible day, complete with wonderful weather, tons of families, and a great Finisher’s Festival. We raised nearly \$80,000 — a new record! Save the date for the 18th Annual Reason to Run 5K Presented by Nicklaus Children’s Hospital on Saturday, November 8, 2025, at Deering Estate.

And it is also the end of an era — Sofia’s Hope Board Directors and Race Directors, Jorge & Linda Martinez, stepped down at year’s end. It was an incredible gift to work together one last time, raise so much for our warriors and families, and to showcase that the race they created 17 years ago is in good hands. We are grateful to Jorge and Linda for all their work and support over the years, and for their faith in who we are and what we do.

## Sofia’s Hope Board of Directors

Marta Blanco  
 Founder and President

Jamie Doherty  
 Vice President

Linda Villena  
 Treasurer

Andres Hidalgo  
 Secretary

Mariana De Michele, M.D.  
 Medical Advisor

Sandra Berenguer  
 Board Director

Sandra Bruno, M.D.  
 Board Director

Cindy Lopez  
 Board Director

Silvia Stazio  
 Board Director



## Connect with us:

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## 2024 at a Glance

OVER **3,500** FAMILIES SERVED

**\$43,300**  
 IN GIFT CARDS  
 11% ↑ vs 2023



**34**  
 TREASURED  
 MOMENTS  
 Patient Wishes Granted



### PROVIDED:

**1,931**  
 ART PROGRAM  
 PARTICIPANTS

**18**  
 American Girl  
 +  
**25**  
 BUILD-A-BEAR  
 EST. 1997

**130**  
 ZOO PARTICIPANTS  
 (Virtual and Field Trips)

**45**  
 RIDERS  
 at Horse Camp

**130**  
 KITS  
 for Newly Diagnosed  
 Families

**89**  
 Adopt-an-Animal  
 Care Packages  
 WITH  
 Zoo Miami  
 Family Memberships

**55**  
 Tinez Farms Field Trips

**8**  
 Brave Styles

### 2ND INTERNATIONAL PEDIATRIC CARDIO-ONCOLOGY CONFERENCE:

**102**  
 Attendees

**10**  
 Countries  
 Represented

**13**  
 Sessions



Scan to see sessions online

THANK YOU!



**8,208**  
 FOLLOWERS  
 2,902 5,192 114



**\$37,000**  
 IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**105**  
 MEMBERS



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Heroes Unite Superhero Picnic

Last month Sofia's Hope hosted the first-ever Heroes Unite Superhero picnic at AD Barnes park with over 60 families in attendance, alongside these nine fellow local childhood cancer organizations:

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Forza Stefano Charitable Foundation      | Miggy's Gift         |
| Fight Like A Kid                         | Mystic Force         |
| Jessica June Childhood Cancer Foundation | Oliver Patch Project |
| Live Like Bella                          | Sebastian Strong     |
| Sunrise Day Camp – South Florida         |                      |

At check-in families received a goodie bag, plus fun sunglasses, fans, and bubbles for the kids. There was a magic show, storytime with princesses, several art & crafts tents, face painting, balloon artists, pony rides, DJ, bounce house with slide, superheroes with their cars and MORE! Lunch consisted of Happy Meals, pizza, drinks, and shaved ice courtesy of LCL and Montes McDonald's, Pizzarello, and Kona Ice South. We couldn't have had better weather or a better time. We are grateful to all who donated their time and services and to our partner organizations who came together in the name of childhood cancer. #TogetherWeCan

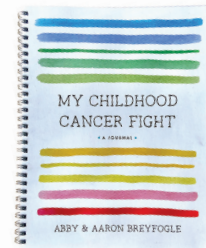


## Newly Diagnosed Family Kit Updates

As of January, Sofia's Hope is adding the "My Childhood Cancer Fight" journal to all Newly Diagnosed Family Kits. Designed by Abby and Aaron Breyfogle after the diagnosis of their identical twins with acute myeloid leukemia in 2015, the journal is designed to make it easier for patients and families to track symptoms, chart treatment plans, maintain calendars, etc. Its journal pages allow patients and caregivers to document milestones, their emotional journey, and more.

We're also adding Soph Sewss port pillows to our kits. They attach to a seat belt to provide cushion between the port and the seat belt, making car rides more comfortable for patients. Plus, at the suggestion of a patient's mom, we have added a box of latex free gloves to the kits. They are helpful in protecting parents from residual chemotherapy, especially when changing diapers, etc.

A special nod of thanks to our Newly Diagnosed Family Kits Presenting Sponsor, Miami Cancer Institute, for supporting this effort.



## Sofia's Hope Awarded Golden Grant

We are thrilled to announce that Sofia's Hope was awarded a \$5,000 grant from McDonald's Golden Grants Program in support of expanding our art program in Broward and Palm Beach counties!

Thanks to this generous funding, we will grow the program to reach even more children and families affected by childhood cancer. As a result, last November art monthly sessions began at the hem/onc clinic at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital and in February at the unit/infusion area. And starting in March monthly sessions began at Broward Health. We are grateful to Nailed It DIY and ClayWorld for growing with us and, of course, to McDonald's Golden Grants, for this opportunity!



## The 2nd International Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Conference - A Success!

It's been two years since the first pediatric cardio-oncology conference, so in November 2024 Marta Blanco, our President, and Mariana De Michele, MD, Board Member/Medical Advisor, arrived in Cincinnati in anticipation of a conference complete with thought-leaders and change-makers. They were met with over 100 healthcare professionals registered from 14 states across the US and Jordan, Switzerland, Austria, Brazil, the Netherlands, and Germany to boot!

Marta led an advocacy session entitled, "Survivor Voices: Living with Cardiac Late Effects and Unmet Needs". Panelists Ania Buchacz, Peter Wolf and Kerri Beckett, MD shared their experiences and highlighted the issues faced by childhood cancer survivors receiving appropriate cardiac care, even as physicians. This was just one of 13 sessions available over the two-day conference.

The conference's objective was to share the latest and greatest advancements in the pediatric cardio-oncology field and provide solutions that medical professionals can offer today to protect the hearts of our warriors. Marta noted, "It was humbling to hear many attendees say they were taking all they learned back to their institutions and making changes on how they handle their patients' care." Mission complete!

Thanks to the panelists and to all on the Steering Committee who put together an incredible agenda, bringing so many experts together in one room. And thanks to Nicklaus Children's Hospital for supporting the conference and our pediatric cardio-oncology efforts!



# ADVOCACY

## Advancing Pediatric Cancer Care in Florida and Beyond

Florida's leading pediatric hospitals — Nicklaus Children's Hospital, Wolfson's Children's Hospital, Nemours Children's Hospital, and Johns Hopkins All Children's — are spearheading a transformative initiative during the 2025 Legislative Session. Their mission is to elevate Florida's pediatric cancer care to the highest standards by 2029. By advocating strategic policies and increased funding, they aim to ensure that every child can access life-saving treatments within our state, eliminating the need to seek care elsewhere. Sofia's Hope is proud to join this important effort by adding our logo to their letter of support for Florida legislators.

Also, Sofia's Hope recently entered into an MOU with fellow cardio-oncology-focused organization, International Cardio-Oncology Society of America (IC-OS) to reaffirm a collaborative partnership for the collective advancement of cardio-oncology. Marta Blanco currently serves on the IC-OS Board of Directors, including committee work to advocate for pediatric patients. She noted, "It's a big commitment and one I take seriously as the sole voice at the table for our children."



# IN THE COMMUNITY

## RSM Power of Love Campaign

For a second year in a row, RSM Miami chose Sofia's Hope as their charity of choice for their annual Power of Love Campaign. Throughout August and September, they raised funds through happy hours, auction, staff donations and a volunteer day at Zoo Miami. All funds were matched by the RSM Foundation resulting in a donation of nearly \$24,000 in support of our programs. In two years, RSM Miami has raised over \$50,000!! Thanks to Isa Sierra, and Leah Englehart for spearheading the 2024 campaign and to everyone who supported their efforts!!



## Amazon Donation in Honor of 2/15 International Childhood Cancer Day

A huge THANK YOU to our friends at Amazon Miami Regional ACES and DCI9 for their incredible generosity! We met at their DCI9 facility on Friday, February 21st to meet the team and hear from Ken Wallace, who was instrumental in this support. Their \$3,000+ donation of essential items will make a meaningful impact on the children and families we support. Together, we're bringing hope and comfort to those facing childhood cancer.



## 4th Annual Childhood Cancer Awareness Parade

On March 12th our President Marta Blanco was at the Early Childhood Center (ECC) in Coral Gables for the 4th Annual Sofia's Hope Childhood Cancer Parade. Along with the annual parade, the ECC community raises funds in support of our programs (\$3,300+ this year!). For every \$25 donation, families received an entry to win 4 Heat tickets for the March 23rd game. Thanks to the Oskin family for their continued support of this fundraiser by donating the tickets and to all the families who participated.



## Inaugural Swing with Purpose Event Benefiting Sofia's Hope

Save the date! The BR + A Consulting Engineers Miami office has chosen Sofia's Hope to benefit from their Inaugural Swing with Purpose event on Friday, June 13th at Top Golf, Doral. Local rep, Sindy Perez, researched a number of charitable organizations, but once she learned of Sofia's Hope, our mission and impact, she was hooked! Sindy shared that her family was affected by cancer, and she and her colleagues really wanted to find a local charity making a real difference in the lives of warriors and families.

Thanks to Sindy and the entire BR + A Consulting Engineers Miami team and looking FORE-ward to a wonderful event.



## Grateful for Our Community: Schools Making a Difference!

Sofia's Hope is incredibly fortunate to receive ongoing support from local schools. In the past few months, their generosity has made a meaningful impact on the children and families we serve.

Ransom Everglades Middle School once again sold Valentine's Day grams in support of Sofia's Hope. Led by JP Arrastia, English teacher and long-time supporter of Sofia's Hope, they were able to raise an amazing \$1,200+ in support of our programs.

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Student Council led their annual Valentine's Day drive, inspiring families to donate essential items for our Newly Diagnosed Family Kits, as well as treasure chest toys, LEGO sets, fun band-aids, tissue boxes, Play-Doh, Squishmallows, and more. Thanks to their generosity, we filled three cars to the brim with donations for hospitals and clinics!

Students and families of St. Brendan's Elementary once again made Sofia's Hope the focus of their holiday service project. They donated travel-size toiletries for our Newly Diagnosed Family Kits, as well as UNO cards, fun band-aids, DumDum lollipops, Squishmallows, pop-its, sticker books, and other fun surprises for children in treatment.

With all these incredible donations, we are well-prepared for the year! THANKYOU to every student, family, and school administrator who made this possible—you are truly bringing hope and joy to children facing cancer.



## Be Mine Raffle!

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Be My Valentine Raffle last month. We SOLD OUT and raised \$2,500 toward our mission work. The winner, Lindsey G., was announced live on Instagram on February 7th...Congratulations!



**BECOME A HERO OF HOPE  
And fight childhood cancer  
with HOPE, all year!**





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## Help Us Spread Hope!

Sofia's Hope is on a mission to fight childhood cancer with HOPE, but we can't do it alone! You can help us make an even bigger impact simply by following and sharing our mission on social media.

Follow us to stay updated on events, stories, and ways to support children and families affected by childhood cancer. Your engagement helps us reach more people who can join our cause!

 <https://www.facebook.com/sofiashopeofficial>  
(Make sure you're following our new page!)

 <https://www.instagram.com/sofiashope/>

 <https://x.com/sofiashopenpo>

Every like, comment, and share brings more awareness to the fight against childhood cancer. Let's spread hope together!

**Do you want to  
receive our monthly  
Hope Report via email?  
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and sign up**

