



# THE HOPE REPORT

LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SOFIA'S HOPE

FALL 2024 EDITION



2nd International  
Pediatric  
Cardio-Oncology  
Conference



The 2nd International Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Conference is scheduled for November 8th and 9th in Cincinnati, Ohio and our President, Marta Blanco, and Board member and Medical Advisor, Mariana De Michele, MD, will be in attendance. Both are looking forward to the Welcome Reception hosted by the International Cardio-Oncology Society (IC-OS) and to attending the Keynote session, the seven focus blocks, lectures and the abstract presentations. Topics to be covered include:

- Emerging therapies in pediatric cardio-oncology, approaches to prevention, surveillance, and therapy in patients with cardiotoxicity;
- The role of national and international learning collaboratives in pediatric cardio-oncology;
- The role of exercise in mitigating cardiometabolic and cardiovascular risk factors in survivors of pediatric cancer;
- The social determinants of outcomes in cardio-oncology;
- Living with cardiac late effects and patient education;
- Strategies to prevent and mitigate cardiotoxicity;
- Case presentations and patient discussion with experts in the field of cardio-oncology



Ms. Blanco will also be a session leader for the focus block entitled *Survivor Voices: Living with Cardiac Late Effects and Unmet Needs*, scheduled for the first day of the conference. To check out the full agenda and register, please visit [www.cincyhearteducationseries.org/cardio-onc](http://www.cincyhearteducationseries.org/cardio-onc) or scan QR code.

The last of the webinars leading up to the conference, *"Advocacy in action"* and *"Cardio-Oncology Program development for pediatric cancer patients and survivors across the lifespan"* are scheduled for October 1st and 9th, respectively, at 10am. For links to previous webinars and to register, please visit [www.heartuniversity.org](http://www.heartuniversity.org).

## Advocacy at Work

On Thursday, July 25th, Sofia's Hope President, Marta Blanco, was one of three presenters in a webinar hosted by IC-OS entitled, *Feeling Unseen and Unheard: Patient and Caregiver Experiences in Cardio-Oncology*. The purpose of the webinar, led by pediatric cardiologists Josh Mitchell, MD and Kyle Yoo, MD, was to highlight the difficulties patients and caregivers encounter when trying to obtain care related to heart issues caused by their cancer treatment and to provide a way for healthcare providers to truly embrace patients and caregivers as part of their team.

Ms. Blanco was joined by Peter Wolf, childhood cancer survivor, and Kerry Skurka, healthcare provider and caregiver who shared instances in their journeys when they were dismissed either because healthcare provider was not aware of the connection between cancer treatment and cardiac effects and/or believed they are so rare it wasn't what was happening.



## Letter from the President

Dear Friend,

Sofia's Hope is dedicated to raising awareness about childhood cancer year-round, and in September during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month we always GO GOLD!



A heartfelt thank you to all who attended and supported our 11th Annual Wine and Cheese event on April 25th, helping us celebrate over a decade of fighting childhood cancer with HOPE! Your presence and contributions made all the difference.



We're thrilled to announce that we raised approximately \$50,000 to support our patient and family programs, as well as our research initiatives. Your generosity knows no bounds, and we couldn't be more grateful.

We always talk about how it takes a village, and this feels ever-present today. With this in mind, I'm so very honored to share that Sofia's Hope, along with seven other local childhood cancer organizations have come together to create a special picnic celebration and remembrance for families. Our goal is to bring together the childhood cancer community under one united banner to provide our families with a special experience. All Miami-Dade and Broward childhood cancer families are invited, and this Heroes United event is scheduled for Spring 2025. More details to follow.

I am grateful for you and for all in the community who support our mission!

Best regards,

Marta Blanco  
Founder & President



### Introducing Newest Board Member: Cindy Lopez

Since 1989, Cindy has been the owner/operator of LCL Food Services, with 25 McDonald's restaurants in South and Central Florida as well as in The Keys. Cindy, a native of Miami, is of Cuban descent. She is married and a mother to three children, with three grandchildren. Welcome aboard!!!!

*"Sofia's Hope mission aligns perfectly with my personal values and professional goals of serving my community by improving and enhancing the lives and well-being of children. I first was introduced to Sofia's Hope in 2018 and since then have seen the amazing progress made in not only supporting the children and their families with their programs but also in creating awareness of pediatric cardio-oncology. I look forward to working with the team to move the mission forward."*

Cindy Lopez

### 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 Bruno, M.D.  
Board Director

Sandra Berenguer  
Board Director

Cindy Lopez  
Board Director

Jorge Martinez  
Board Director

Linda Martinez  
Board Director

Silvia Stazio  
Board Director



Connect with us:

Sofia's Hope, Inc.  
13131 SW 132 St., Suite 105,  
Miami, FL 33186  
Direct: 786.730.4545  
www.sofiashope.org

@sofiashopeofficial

@sofiashope

@sofiashopeNPO



Presented by



**Join Us** for the 17th Annual Reason to Run 5K Presented by Nicklaus Children's Hospital on Saturday, November 2nd to run (or walk) through the gorgeous Deering Estate area and at the Family Festival overlooking Biscayne Bay, where runners/walkers will enjoy food, drinks, music, activities, and MORE!

Virtual participants will walk or run anytime/anywhere between October 26th – November 2nd, tagging Sofia's Hope using @sofiashope. All participants, whether in person or virtual will receive official race swag: official race shirt and medal.



Official Race Shirt & Medal

**Let's Help Each Other** Participants are encouraged to start a fundraising page or join a team fundraiser. Everyone who raises \$100 will automatically receive a refund of their registration fee!



**Packet Pick-Up** will be at the Florida Blue location across from The Falls (8895 SW 136 Street) on Friday, Oct 25th from 3pm-7pm & Saturday, Oct 26th from 10am-3pm. Packets can also be picked up the day of the race starting at 7am at the Start line near the entrance to Deering Estate. See you there!

**Register Now** Online registration is OPEN, and we will accept registrations until the start of the race. Prices increase by \$10 each on Friday, November 1st at midnight so the sooner you register the better. Please use QR code to register NOW.



#### RACE FEES

Adults: \$35

Children (under 18 yrs): \$30

### CALLING: Childhood Cancer Warriors

All local childhood cancer warriors and families are invited as our guests to enjoy a day of wellness, sun and fun. We want to show these families that there is an entire community walking alongside them and fighting childhood cancer with HOPE!

Warrior families interested in setting up their FREE registration, please email us at [reasontorun@sofiashope.org](mailto:reasontorun@sofiashope.org). A VIP tent will be at the Family Festival to welcome you with special treats and extras!

*"We are thrilled that Nicklaus Children's Hospital is joining the Reason to Run 5K as the Presenting Sponsor! This partnership really demonstrates our shared commitment to the health and wellness of families in our local community."*

Jorge and Linda Martinez, Race Directors



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Welcome, Sofia!

Join us in welcoming our newest team member, Sofia Settineri. Sofia will be our Program Coordinator, working closely with Nataly Prieto, our Program Manager. Sofia is not only a recent nursing school graduate but a childhood cancer survivor and one of the first recipients of our college scholarships. We are excited to have her join our team!!!



*“I am honored to give back to the mission that supported me. My childhood cancer journey and involvement with Sofia’s Hope have highlighted the crucial need for advocacy and support for childhood cancer. I’m proud to be part of this incredible team at Sofia’s Hope.”*

Sofia Settineri

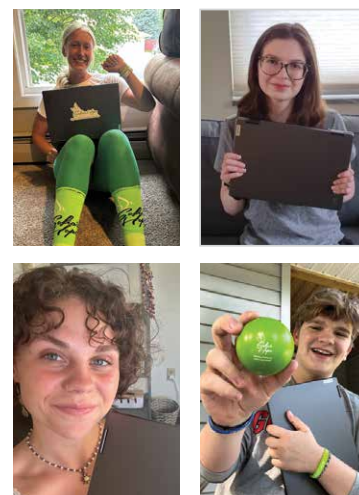
## 2024-2025 College Scholarship Recipients

This year we had 445 students register to apply for one of our scholarships, a 40% increase from last year. More than half completed their applications and were considered by our Review Committee. Since each application must be scored by three members, they had to review between 88 and 90 applications each.

Congratulations to all of this year’s awardees and a big thank you to the members of the committee for their dedication and hard work!

Sofia Blanco Childhood Cancer Warriors College Scholarship Recipients	Gabriela Blanco Childhood Cancer Siblings College Scholarship Recipients
Natalie Burraston (TX) Dustin Liang (MA) Ashtyn Schwartz (NE)	Eliana Boerner (OH) Jonathan Johansen (WA) Jenna Sobek (CT)
<b>Honorable Mention:</b> Samantha Witterstauter (AZ)	<b>Honorable Mention:</b> Kristine Marek (OR)

Next year’s application cycle opens January 1, 2025. For more information on eligibility and applying, please visit [www.scholarships.sofiashope.org](http://www.scholarships.sofiashope.org).



## Virtual Summer Art Camp

Early this summer we held our 4th Annual Virtual Summer Art Camp. As always Ane Guerrero, Camp Director, outdid herself creating the calendar. The week-long camp was jam packed with lots of fun and even educational activities. We had over 20 patients and siblings register. Thanks to Ane, the counselors, and The Kirk Foundation for making this another great year!!



## Summer Horse Camps

On July 30th and 31st, Sofia’s Hope held the last two horse camps of the summer. Both camps were held at Whispering Manes Therapeutic Riding Center and included lunch by The Big Cheese (Shout out!!) as well as riding, feeding the horses, painting the mini ponies, and a Nailed It DIY art project. All patients and siblings left with a fun goodie bag filled with souvenirs of their great day at the barn and mini-horse adopts courtesy of Zoo Miami Foundation. Thanks to the Miami Cancer Institute for being our presenting sponsor and to our volunteers for ensuring the days flowed seamlessly.



## Virtual Visit to Zoo Miami

During our latest virtual visit to Zoo Miami on Thursday, August 8th, patients and siblings learned all about crocodiles (not the same as alligators) from the educators at Zoo Miami Foundation. We had families from South Florida, as well as ones from across the state join us for a great time. Kim Williams from Nailed It DIY walked everyone through their crocodile themed art project. Learning and art...what could be better!?



## Brave Styles

Our Brave Styles partners and volunteers, Marthena and Sakhi, spent a couple of months balancing FIU medical school, interviewing participants, curating their style, shopping and getting it ready to send out. Thanks not only for all your help with this program but for your enthusiasm and love in doing so.

The participants received their gifts, were thrilled with what they were sent and enjoyed meeting their “stylists”. Thanks to Macy’s for helping to underwrite this program. We will be looking for new nominations in the Fall.



## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:



Please note, we have been locked out of our original Facebook page and unable to regain access.

Make sure to follow us on our new page to stay up to date: <https://www.facebook.com/sofiashopeofficial/>.

Thank you!

## THANK YOU!

Because of YOU this summer we were able to raise over \$10,000, including the matching by LCL McDonald’s! Sofia’s Hope can continue funding vital roles like the medical editor on Dr. Steven Lipshultz’ team at the University at Buffalo and the sponsorship of the 2nd International Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Conference. PLUS, this year we’re awarding additional funds to Dr. Lipshultz, allowing him to create the best Pediatric Cardio-Oncology Scholar Program in the country at the University at Buffalo!



# IN THE COMMUNITY

## NEW GoGold Ties

This year at the suggestion of Hubert Ramirez, student, golfer, and leader of the GoGold campaign at Christopher Columbus High School, we ordered new ties. Throughout the month of September, Hubert and fellow student, Joe Fernandez, will be offering the ties for a \$25 donation to Sofia's Hope in front of Bulding A, in the mornings before school. Please scan QR code to make your donation and a tie will be sent to you via USPS.

Thanks to Hubert, Joe and all the students and families at CCHS for their continued support.



## 2nd Annual Round Up Campaign at The Big Cheese

In honor of Childhood Cancer Awareness month, our friends at The Big Cheese of Miami are asking their patrons to round up. Eat in or order for pick up or delivery, pay with your debit or credit card, and round up the total on your receipt to the nearest dollar. 100% of the proceeds will benefit Sofia's Hope, PLUS The Big Cheese will match, doubling your impact!

Thanks to William Archer and the entire team at The Big Cheese for their ongoing support.



## Charming Charms for Childhood Cancer

Throughout September, MCharms, an online boutique jewelery store, will be donating 20% of all its sales to Sofia's Hope. Their pieces are handmade, and designed by Monica Granados.

Ms. Granados, inspired by our mission, has created a special collection honoring those affected by childhood cancer. This collection will be modeled by three survivors: Alexandra Herrera, Mariana De Michele, and Sofia Settineri; and warrior sibling, Gabriela Blanco. To check out the pieces and learn more about these amazing ladies, please visit <https://mcharms.com/collections/sofias-hope>.



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



## RSM's Power of Love Campaign

We are thrilled to announce that Sofia's Hope has once again been chosen as the charity of choice for the Miami RSM's office Power of Love campaign! This year's team lead by Theresa Ramos also includes Isa Sierra and Leah Englehart who are hard at work developing a variety of fundraising events from a silent auction to a wine tasting, and more. All dollars will be matched by the RSM Foundation. Plus, through their employee volunteer program and RSM's Culture and Diversity Initiative (CDI) additional funds may be raised. Thank You, RSM!

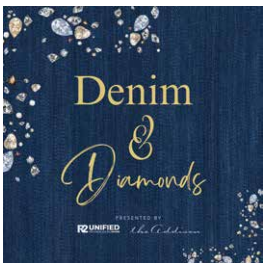


## Denim & Diamonds

The 7th Annual Denim & Diamonds event presented by R2 Unified Technologies and The Addison is scheduled for Thursday, September 26th at 6:30pm. This year's event promises another night of great food and drink, fun, entertainment, and philanthropy.

All proceeds from the event will benefit Sofia's Hope and help us continue to fulfill our mission. Tickets are still available for only \$150 each. To get yours, please scan QR code.

Look forward to seeing you there!



## KIDZ Medical Services + Sofia's Hope = Positive Impact

As Callie went through treatment for acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), she began to lose her hair. After someone would look at her sideways or ask what was wrong with her, Callie and her mom, Teresa, would sing, "Bald is beautiful. Bald is great. We spread love because there's no room for hate." Through Sofia's Hope hospital outreach and Treasured Moments partnership with KIDZ Medical Services, Callie received her very bald American Girl doll.

*"Though KIDZ is here to ensure that our young patients receive the very best medical treatments for their cancer diagnosis, we know how critical the psychological and emotional components are to their total care and healing. That's why we're so grateful to partner with Sofia's Hope. Their Treasured Moments is a special program that provides much needed support to these children during a very scary time, and to their parents who appreciate the smiles and hope gifted to their children."*

KIDZ Medical Services Chief Financial Officer, Lindsay Mendiola.



Teresa agreed, "Callie loved her bald American Girl doll. This doll helped reinforce our morning mantra that bald is beautiful." Through our partnership, we are making a real impact as we fight childhood cancer with HOPE. And Callie, who just turned 7, rang the bell last month signaling the completion of her treatments!



10106 SW 126 Street  
Miami, FL 33176

---

## Amazon Wish List

As you shop on Amazon, please consider taking a moment and adding a few needed items to your cart for our kiddos and families facing childhood cancer. Just search for Sofia's Hope Wish List under Your Lists > Your Friends. Purchased items will be delivered directly to our doorstep!

Prefer to shop locally? Here are other much needed items:

- Publix, Winn-Dixie, Target, Uber, Lyft, Amazon, Gas gift cards
- DumDum lollipops
- Fun band-aids
- Tissue boxes
- Kids stickers
- Travel size toiletries
- Squishy toys and Pop Its
- Small toys

Please reach out to [programs@sofiashope.org](mailto:programs@sofiashope.org) to coordinate drop off.  
Thank you so much!

