ST. JUDE
inspire

SUMMER 2026

Madelyn's HOPE

Her parents gave to
St. Jude – then they needed
help for their child

Stronger together
During treatment, Jasmine
leaned on her mom and inspired
her in return

Mission-driven legacy
James R. Downing, MD, advanced
the understanding of pediatric
diseases at St. Jude

Harry's energy shines
After a second transplant,
he is treated for graft-versus-host disease

Journey OF HOPE

Ryan Trahan and his wife, Haley Pham, traveled across the United States for their “50 states in 50 days” challenge in the summer of 2025 to benefit St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital®. Their adventures captured hearts and raised more than $11.5 million in donations.

Just before the start of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and National Sickle Cell Awareness Month in September, the social media influencers visited St. Jude in Memphis, Tennessee, for the first time. There, they met with patients and their families. It was a dream come true for some patients, who had kept track of the couple’s journey through Trahan’s YouTube channel.

“Meeting him meant meeting someone who gives St. Jude kids like me hope,” said St. Jude patient Aylin.

Scan the QR code to see how Ryan and Haley raised $11 million for St. Jude kids.

FROM THE ALSAC PRESIDENT AND CEO

> *"I felt a sense of peace at St. Jude. We knew that it was the place that was going to heal Madelyn."*
>
> **– Brittany,** *Madelyn's mom*

At St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®, we see every day how hope and science come together to create something extraordinary: healing and unexpected joy.

Families like Madelyn's, who you'll meet in this issue's cover story, remind us why this mission matters so deeply. I'm struck by how this family's story begins with hope long before the diagnosis. When Matt first heard about children with cancer at St. Jude on the radio, he and Brittany signed up to become monthly donors, Partners In Hope®, never imagining they would one day need that same hope themselves.

Then came Madelyn's headaches and a brain cancer diagnosis.

Madelyn's care team at St. Jude combined genetic and clinical expertise to tailor her treatment just for her. This precision care is the future of medicine, and it's happening because of you. Your generosity helps ensure children like Madelyn get the chance to keep laughing with friends, picking out outfits that sparkle with personality and finding joy, even in the hardest moments.

On behalf of everyone at ALSAC and St. Jude, thank you for standing with our patients and families. Together, we are giving kids hope and healing – and that is the greatest gift of all.

With gratitude,

Ike.

Ike Anand
President & CEO, ALSAC
The fundraising and awareness organization for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

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Finding cures. Saving children.
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CONTENTS

You can help ensure families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food – so they can focus on helping their child live. Donate today at **stjude**.org/ImpactGiving

HOPE on the horizon

Teen faces cancer with the help of St. Judе.

By **Olivia** - ST. JUDE PATIENT

I was diagnosed when I was 13 years old. In August 2024, I found out I had acute myeloid leukemia.

I knew what leukemia was, but only vaguely. And I knew what St. Jude was, also very vaguely. I thought St. Jude was just a good hospital where kids who got cancer would go.

Then all of a sudden, I was one of those kids.

I quickly learned that the people at St. Jude are extremely nice and understanding, and there's a bunch of fun things that you can do there, although I didn't always feel like doing them. The chemotherapy made me feel bad. I also needed a bone marrow transplant, which meant a lot of time inpatient, and a lot of time kind of isolated after that while my immune system got up and running again.

During that part especially, I missed home a lot. I missed my animals the most.

We live on a farm, so I usually spend a lot of time outside. We have chickens and pigs, and we used to have goats. I play with my dogs and hang out with the farm animals. Or go down to the creek and just sit there for a while, thinking about whatever comes to mind.

We also have beehives, and my mom and I were learning to tend the bees, with matching pink beekeeping outfits. I love bees but they're a pain to work with. First of all, Tennessee summers are not very forgiving. Especially when you're in a full body suit with a mask. But during the 100 days after my bone marrow transplant, I probably even missed tending the bees.

No battle with cancer is easy. Mine was probably a little bit more relaxed than some others, though, because, I mean, it could be worse. It could be an even more rare type of cancer than it was. There might not have been a good medicine for my subtype. The bone marrow transplant might not have gone well. So, I just tried to focus on the positive. It's not that it hasn't been hard, just not as hard as a lot of the other patients have it.

It probably made me mature for my age because, well, a lot of kids don't have to deal with this. They don't have to deal with such imminent life or death experiences.

I still go back to St. Jude for checkups. It makes me feel grateful that they pay attention to every little detail and keep me coming back to make sure everything's good.

St. Jude is a really good place, and I hope you never have to go.

Your gift will help patients like Olivia get the chance to keep doing the things they love.
stjude.org/ImpactGiving

St. Jude patient Olivia receives a warm embrace from Oncology Department Clinical Fellow Eesha Zaheer, MD, during an appointment at St. Jude in June 2025.

Mission-driven Legacy

Through decades of leadership, James R. Downing, MD, advanced the understanding of pediatric diseases, accelerating discovery, innovative care and treatment access for children worldwide.

By **Ruma Kumar** - ALSAC

If you ask Dr. James R. Downing what he remembers from his first job on a Ford Motor Company assembly line 52 years ago, he'll tell you his ears sometimes still ring from the noise. But it was the work ethic that stayed with him — the idea that with raw materials and the right ideas, you can build something from scratch.

"That made me realize that if I'm going to be working the rest of my life, I'd better find something I enjoy," said Downing, who has served for 12 years as St. Jude president and CEO. Downing brought that philosophy and early lesson to his lifelong pursuit of medicine that transforms lives, fueling a 40-year career at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®.

From a medical residency in St. Louis, Missouri, to a fellowship in Gainesville, Florida, he landed his first faculty role in Birmingham, Alabama, before St. Jude called with a job offer.

> *"Our core business is to generate knowledge. We generate knowledge to allow us to cure the incurable. We generate knowledge to allow us to treat the untreatable."*
>
> **– James R. Downing, MD,**
> *St. Jude President and CEO*

At first glance, he thought the campus was unremarkable and wouldn't provide the level of opportunity he would have at larger academic medical centers.

But at St. Jude, Downing found a mission. United by a common purpose, St. Jude was a place of rigorous scientific questioning and uncompromising care for children with diseases like sickle cell and pediatric cancer. He saw that purpose reflected in every person and in every corner. And by the end of his visit, he knew St. Jude was where he would make the most impact. He found role models who believed that science can never be too rigorous.

Over the next several decades, his role at St. Jude evolved from an associate member who developed the first molecular diagnostic laboratory at St. Jude to chair of the Department of Pathology. In 2004, he accepted the role of Scientific Director and then president and CEO in 2014.

> *"Over the course of Dr. Downing's leadership as CEO, we have gone from being a good fundamental research institute to a premier fundamental research institute. And the dividends are going to pay off over the next 10, 20 and 30 years. We're going to be feeling the benefits and impact of this growth for decades to come. It's going to be informing things that you see in textbooks."*
>
> – **J. Paul Taylor,** *MD, PhD, St. Jude Scientific Director*

> *"By recognizing the power of discovery science and the amplifying power of collaboration, Jim Downing markedly accelerated the impact of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital on catastrophic diseases of childhood and elevated recognition of St. Jude as a world-class research institution."*
>
> – **Charlie Roberts,** *MD, PhD, Director, St. Jude Comprehensive Cancer Center*

> *"One of Dr. Downing's key legacies has been helping us realize we are a global institution. If we want to cure childhood cancer and sickle cell disease, we must reach every child affected. Bridging the gap between what is possible and what is reality is central to that legacy, helping us to think globally so that our discoveries are for every child everywhere."*
>
> – **Carlos Rodriguez-Galindo,** *MD, Director, St. Jude Global*

In each position, he would think about how St. Jude could have a greater impact in addressing catastrophic childhood diseases. His diagnostic laboratory laid the foundation for how tumors are understood, classified and treated. That desire to understand why and how cancer arises in children led to the Pediatric Cancer Genome Project, the world's first major investment in pediatric cancer genome sequencing. This collaborative project with Washington University in St. Louis uncovered genomic insights that have enabled more accurate diagnoses, risk stratification and the development of targeted therapies that are more effective and less toxic. At a time when genomic sequencing was primarily focused on adult diseases, this project offered hope to families dealing with childhood cancer.

"It succeeded because we were willing to chase big ideas and make the most of a unique moment in history," he said.

It wouldn't be the last time Downing chased a big idea. As CEO, Downing also championed work on catastrophic pediatric neurological diseases. In the spirit of the St. Jude mission, the Pediatric Translational Neuroscience Initiative was launched in 2018 and is accelerating the discovery of therapies for devastating single-gene disorders that currently have no effective treatments.

St. Jude forged major scientific partnerships and built world-class programs in structural biology, imaging science and cellular biology to pursue targets once considered impossible to treat with conventional medicine.

"Our core business is to generate knowledge," Downing said, emphasizing that St. Jude then shares that knowledge with the world. "We generate knowledge to allow us to cure the incurable. We generate knowledge to allow us to treat the untreatable."

James Downing, MD, seen in his office in 1991, joined St. Jude in 1986 and has spent the past 12 of his 40 years with the institution as the St. Jude President and CEO.

Across every effort, Downing's vision has expanded what is possible. But perhaps no initiative underscores his legacy more than the efforts of St. Jude to improve survival rates for children with catastrophic diseases around the world.

An estimated 400,000 children around the world develop cancer each year, and about half aren't diagnosed. In some low- and middle-income countries, four in five children will die from their disease. Meanwhile, in high-income countries, four in five children will survive. Recognizing the disparity in outcomes between countries, Downing forged a new path with St. Jude Global® to change this reality.

The St. Jude Global Alliance, a collaborative body with more than 400 institutions from more than 90 countries, develops workforce training, builds capacity and shares research expertise.

Downing is a key leader in the Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines, a $200 million effort to dramatically increase access to quality cancer medicines for an estimated 120,000 children around the world in conjunction with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organization Strategic Fund.

This ambitious work is spurred by simple questions asked by Downing: "If not St. Jude, who? Who's going to tackle these problems? Who's going to make that future look different than it does today?"

"The greatest legacy of the Downing era was the way St. Jude pioneered bold new horizons for its lifesaving mission," said Marlo Thomas, National Outreach Director for St. Jude.

"Through our landmark St. Jude Global program, my father's founding vision now extends its warm embrace to children worldwide who never before had a chance to benefit from the hospital's groundbreaking science – helping the undiagnosed and untreated, providing drugs and funding to low-income countries. Dr. Downing's stewardship of this remarkable achievement firmly establishes St. Jude as one of the most important pediatric research centers in the world and positions us as a leader in the fight against childhood cancer into the future."

As he concludes his tenure as CEO this year, he will continue to address global health disparities for children with cancer and other catastrophic diseases as a faculty member in the Department of Global Pediatric Medicine.

Downing's bold vision and commitment to research and care have advanced the dream of founder Danny Thomas that "no child should die in the dawn of life." His leadership helped expand the impact St. Jude is having on children everywhere, laying a foundation on which future leaders can build.

CANCER CARE FOR KIDS IN MONGOLIA

Families get lifesaving help thanks to global collaboration and St. Jude.

By **Monsy Alvarado** - ALSAC

Tsetsegsaikhan Batmunkh, the founder of the National Cancer Council of Mongolia, had heard heartbreaking stories for years of parents desperately seeking some cancer medications for their children. In group chats and through social media, parents exchanged medication needs and advice on how to track what they needed. Some traveled across borders to get medicine, while others turned to the black market.

In Mongolia, where around 100 to 120 children are diagnosed with cancer every year, the greatest challenge wasn't the cancer diagnosis but accessing quality medicine for treatment. There were few importers and some essential cancer drugs had shortages, forcing parents to turn to informal markets.

"It was really difficult to see how parents are struggling to get some medicines," Batmunkh said. "Parents were getting some needed medicines from each other, or from third people which were not legal in the country."

But things recently began to shift in Mongolia thanks to the Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines, a program by St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Strategic Fund. The Global Platform aims to procure and distribute essential generic cancer drugs to low- and middle-income countries at no cost. Several pilot countries – including Ecuador, Mongolia, Nepal, Uzbekistan and Zambia – began receiving medicines in 2025. Additional countries, including El Salvador, Ghana, Jordan, Moldova, Pakistan, Senegal and Sri Lanka, are expected to begin receiving medicines in 2026.

The Global Platform is the first initiative of its kind, with the goal of providing medicines for the treatment of approximately 120,000 children with cancer in low- and middle-income countries, where survival rates are often less than 30%, far below the rates in high-income countries. St. Jude has committed $200 million globally to support the program.

> In Mongolia, families once scrambled for scarce childhood cancer medicines, but a St. Jude-led global collaboration is now delivering quality-assured drugs at no cost.

"The challenges of increasing childhood cancer survival rates must be addressed from multiple angles," said Carlos Rodriguez-Galindo, MD, Director of St. Jude Global. "This partnership tackles these challenges through a number of avenues, including strengthening supply chains, addressing workforce gaps and increasing advocacy for children with cancer. More children will receive better care at an international level because of this intricate approach."

The program began distributing cancer medicines to Mongolia in early 2025. Over the next five years, Mongolia will receive an uninterrupted supply of quality-assured medicines at no cost to help improve childhood cancer survival rates. The Global Platform works closely with the Ministry of Health of Mongolia, WHO, UNICEF and National Center for Maternal and Child Health to prepare and deliver the medicines. The goal is for the Global Platform to create a sustainable, long-term solution for pediatric cancer treatment. St. Jude and WHO are working closely with participating countries to create long-term solutions, including local capacity building, data sharing and policy development.

The arrival of quality cancer drugs is already making a difference. Batmunkh recalled a mother from a rural area who said the medicines were a lifeline for her child with leukemia.

"It's an additional burden for the family to pay for some of the medicine out of pocket," she said. "She was saying that this is a big relief for her."

For more information about the National Cancer Council of Mongolia, visit cancercouncilmongolia.mn

It is estimated that 400,000 children worldwide develop cancer every year, and about half of them are never diagnosed. In many low- and middle-income countries, 4 in 5 children won't survive cancer, largely due to the lack of access to quality care. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital believes children all over the world deserve the same chance at survival and is working with healthcare institutions and foundations across the globe to help make that dream a reality.

Madelyn's hope

Her parents gave to St. Jude – then they needed help for their child.

By **Karina Bland** - ALSAC

Not long after Madelyn was born in 2018, her dad heard a story on the radio about children with cancer at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®. Matt was so moved that he signed up to be a monthly donor – a Partner in Hope – under Madelyn's name.

"No family should have to go through that," he thought.

Matt and his wife Brittany did the same when their younger daughter, Addison, was born. They never imagined they'd one day need that hope themselves.

Madelyn was 5 in May 2023 when she began complaining of headaches. She was dramatic by nature, Brittany said, and sometimes the timing was suspicious – like just as they pulled up at preschool. They even read "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" to her.

But they took her for an eye exam. Her vision was fine, but the doctor recommended seeing her pediatrician. The pediatrician did a neurological exam, ordered blood work and a CT scan. The earliest appointment for the scan was in four days.

That night, the family skipped a rodeo because Madelyn's head hurt. The next day, at a birthday party, she asked to lie down in the car. Overnight, Madelyn vomited twice.

The next morning, they took her to the emergency room, where a CT scan revealed a mass about the size of a golf ball in her brain.

Brittany rode with Madelyn in the ambulance to a hospital with an oncology department 20 minutes away. "It was so surreal," she said. Madelyn had only ever been sick once – an ear infection.

Matt dropped Addison at her grandmother's house and followed the ambulance. "It was like a really bad dream," he said. One he couldn't wake from.

Counting on St. Jude

The neurosurgeon had tears in his eyes, Matt said. He was a dad, too. The mass was a medulloblastoma, a rare cancerous brain tumor. The pressure it created on her brain triggered her headaches and vomiting.

> *I felt a sense of peace at St. Jude. We knew that it was the place that was going to heal Madelyn.*
>
> – **Brittany,** *Madelyn's mom*

In surgery two days later, the neurosurgeon removed Madelyn's entire tumor. Matt and Brittany waited anxiously for her to wake, knowing the risks of brain surgery to cognition and physical abilities.

When the neurosurgeon checked on Madelyn, he picked up a stuffed pig someone had given her and asked, "Who's this?"

"It's Pizza," Madelyn told him.

Concerned she was confused, the doctor looked to Matt, who reassured him: "It's OK – that's the pig's name!"

Madelyn came through surgery just fine. But survival rates for medulloblastoma are 70-80%, or as low as 60% if it has spread. She needed treatment to target any remaining cancer cells.

Madelyn was referred to St. Jude – the very place her family had signed up to support. "We believed in the mission," Brittany said. Now they were counting on St. Jude to save their daughter.

St. Jude patient Madelyn visits with her doctor Amar Gajjar, MD, during a clinical check-up at St. Jude in October 2025.

'Sense of peace'

The family made the three-hour drive from their Tennessee home to St. Jude. "I felt a sense of peace," Brittany said. "We knew that it was the place that was going to heal Madelyn."

Scans showed Madelyn's cancer hadn't spread. She was treated with a protocol developed under the SJMB12 clinical trial, which reimagined how doctors treat medulloblastoma and combined genetic and clinical expertise with personalized care.

Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, SJMB12 used genetic testing to tailor treatment. Kids with low-risk tumors received less intense therapy to help protect developing brains; those with aggressive tumors got stronger treatments to give them the best chance of survival. It was the kind of hope her parents had signed up for.

Madelyn's treatment began with 30 rounds of proton therapy. She felt nauseous at times but still played outside at the Ronald McDonald House, riding trikes and scooters. Brittany stayed with Madelyn at St. Jude, while Matt drove back and forth with Addison. Some weekends, Madelyn got to go home.

Two weeks into treatment, Madelyn's hair began to fall out. She had her head shaved in the salon at Family Commons, a treatment-free zone at St. Jude for families to recharge. "We thought she'd be upset," Matt said. But surrounded by other kids who'd lost their hair, Madelyn didn't seem to mind.

That weekend, Matt let Madelyn shave his head. Their closest friends – a dad and his two sons – did the same. "Bald is beautiful," Madelyn proclaimed.

Healing and homecoming

After proton therapy, Madelyn needed seven rounds of chemotherapy – each lasting 28 days. It was harder than proton therapy. Madelyn spiked fevers and lost weight, dropping from over 50 pounds before her diagnosis to around 40 – the same weight as her 3-year-old sister.

After nine months of treatment, Madelyn returned home on March 29, 2024, just in time to finish kindergarten with her class. The family picked up life with a deeper appreciation for what matters.

"We've learned that you can make it through anything if you have the right support," Brittany said. Their family and friends rallied when Madelyn got sick. "We are all united in our love for Madelyn," Brittany said.

They'd heard how illness could strain marriages, but it strengthened theirs. Even when apart, they talked daily and visited often. Matt told Brittany, "If you need me in Memphis, I will come. If you are missing Addie, I'll bring her over."

Taking care of Addison – her silliness, their walks in the park, ice cream stops – helped Matt stay grounded. He learned to stop sweating the small stuff – and to celebrate even the tiniest wins. "Anything positive that could possibly come out of the day," he said, "celebrate it."

Hope returned

Now 8, Madelyn, who goes by "Maddie Rea," loves second grade, her friends and animals. "She's caring, loving, thoughtful and compassionate," Matt said. "She has a big heart."

She's a fashionista, a fan of flare-bottomed pants and head-turning outfits. Her parents sometimes suggest toning it down, but Madelyn doesn't care what people think. She is uniquely herself.

Her parents still worry whenever she gets a headache. "That's the thing about childhood cancer – it never ends," Brittany said. "You're always going to have that fear."

They hope cancer doesn't define Madelyn – but know it shaped her.

"I hope it's a label she wears proudly, but I hope it doesn't define her," Brittany said. "We want her to just be a normal kid, too."

One morning, as Matt brushed Addison's hair, Madelyn asked, "Can you put mine in a ponytail, too?"

He could. Her hair was finally long enough.

Giving back

Madelyn returns to St. Jude every three months for checkups. The girls look forward to each visit. St. Jude was there for their family – now, they're there for St. Jude.

During treatment, Brittany organized a toy drive, collecting about 300 items for gift closets on inpatient floors and clinics. She got a scooter like the ones used in physical therapy donated to the Ronald McDonald House.

Every checkup, Matt donates platelets at the donation center at St. Jude. Madelyn received many transfusions during treatment. "The transformation when she got a bag of platelets was night and day," Matt said. "She had her energy again."

Brittany had T-shirts and bandanas printed with "Maddie's Rea" across a sun and "shines on the hardest of days" underneath – gifts for those who walked alongside them. She gave crocheted suns to Madelyn's care team, a thank-you for helping her daughter shine.

The family participates in St. Jude events and raises money on social media. They've shared their story with the media, at events and on The Bobby Bones Show's annual St. Jude Radiothon at the iHeartMedia studios at WSIX-FM in Nashville – the same radio show that first inspired them to support St. Jude.

They're still Partners in Hope®. Now, more than ever, they understand the power of that hope.

Your support helps give hope to patients like Madelyn.
stjude.org/ImpactGiving

STRONGER *together*

Through her St. Jude journey, Jasmine leaned on her mom – and inspired her in return.

By **Linda A. Moore** - ALSAC

When Jasmine heard the word "cancer," time seemed to stop – just as it had for her mother, Ashley.

"In that moment, I was kinda like Mom. I just froze. I had to hear him (the doctor) say it more than once before I could process what was being said," Jasmine said. "Even then, I wanted to cry and I wanted to be upset. But I was just so scared that I was just sitting there. I was frozen. I didn't know what to do."

She was only 14, but she knew what cancer was. She knew what it could mean.

For nearly a year, Jasmine, now 16, had been dealing with what they initially thought was a lingering knee injury. After all, before cancer, life was all about softball, and sometimes you get hurt playing the game. And Jasmine liked to slide into the bases.

She played shortstop and was a utility player who was able to play in any position. The field is where she felt strongest, where she excelled.

But the pain in her left knee wouldn't go away.

In April of 2024, Jasmine went in for a surgery to clean out what doctors thought might be an infection, and a biopsy. A routine step, they thought, to treat an infection and rule out something serious. But what they hoped would bring reassurance turned out to be life-changing.

Ashley will never forget the day they got the results.

Jasmine was at school. Ashley – off work for the day – was heading out to shop with her mom when the phone rang. The doctor wanted to see them the next day.

Because of the urgency, Ashley assumed it was something that needed immediate attention. But cancer wasn't on her radar.

The appointment began like any other. The doctor asked Jasmine how she was feeling. Small talk. Calm.

Then everything changed. Jasmine had osteosarcoma, the most common type of bone cancer in children and teens.

"My whole entire world, from that moment, flipped. I couldn't get control of my emotions," Ashley said. "I just wanted to hold her. I kept telling her everything was going to be OK."

Jasmine was referred to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®, where she underwent nine months of treatment that included chemotherapy and limb-sparing surgery.

Finding courage together

"More than anything, I was scared because I didn't know what was going to happen while we were here," Jasmine said. "But I kept myself going because I would always look at my mom and see the woman that she is. And it just inspired me to keep going."

What Jasmine didn't realize was that her courage was fueling Ashley, too.

"Never, not once, did she give up," Ashley said.

She never said she was tired. She never ever stopped pushing herself to get better, her mom said.

"To know that she pushed through, she helped me push through," Ashley said.

Jasmine, her only child and "biggest blessing," experienced serious reactions to some of her chemotherapy medications. One drug resulted in kidney problems, and another drug resulted in a seizure. At one point during the seizure, she thought she'd lost her daughter.

Thankfully, the St. Jude staff reacted immediately, Ashley said.

"I looked down one moment and I'm holding Jasmine's hand, and I look up in the next and the room was full of doctors and nurses who are doing everything possible to get her to reverse back to a normal status," she said. "And they got her back pretty quickly."

Even in the chaos, the St. Jude staff made sure Ashley understood what was happening.

> ***St. Jude is an amazing place. Your caregivers, your team – everybody here, they just become family throughout the journey.***
>
> – **Jasmine,** *St. Jude patient*

"They walked me through every step that there was," she said. "They wanted to make sure I was OK as the caregiver and as her mother."

It was the hardest fight Jasmine had ever faced.

"Some days I questioned if I was going to wake up the next day because of how hard chemo was, especially during my seizures and during my kidney failure. It was a hard long fight. But in the end, I did it."

Still, no child should have to go through childhood cancer, Jasmine said.

"But, during those times you learn a lot about yourself. I learned that I can be a lot more resilient than I thought I could be. When I get knocked down, I just get back up," she said.

Now on the other side of treatment, the relationship with her mother is stronger than ever.

"Me and my mom have always had a close bond. But during our time here we've spent so much time together, it's just gotten so much better. We're a lot closer than we were before," Jasmine said.

Amazing care

"St. Jude is an amazing place. Your caregivers, your team – everybody here, they just become family throughout the journey," Jasmine said.

She noticed that the level of care is extraordinary.

"It's a whole different world and a whole different concept of care that you get," Ashley said.

And that care comes without the worry about cost, she said.

Families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment travel, housing or food. For Jasmine's family, that support has made all the difference.

"Just to know that the donations that come in and the people that help, they're taking so much of a burden off of families that need that care and are helping parents be here with their children," Ashley said.

Next chapter of their St. Jude journey

Today, Ashley has a gold ribbon tattoo. The color is the international symbol for childhood cancer awareness.

"I placed the tattoo on my left forearm, so it's seen daily," Ashley said. "And when questioned about the tattoo I say 'my warrior survived but some didn't. Some have wings now. So, I wear gold and yellow for not just my daughter, but the ones still fighting and the ones resting.'"

Words can hardly capture the pride that Ashley feels for Jasmine.

"This woman she is becoming, at just 16 years old, with the battles she's been through, is just something so amazing to have watched," Ashley said. "I brought a child here and I'm leaving with a young woman. Battles that I never thought that she would ever have to face, she's fought head on and she never gave up. And I'm so very proud of her."

Jasmine and Ashley now have returned to their home in Tennessee, to family and friends and their Boston Terrier, Harley, who had been living with Ashley's mom.

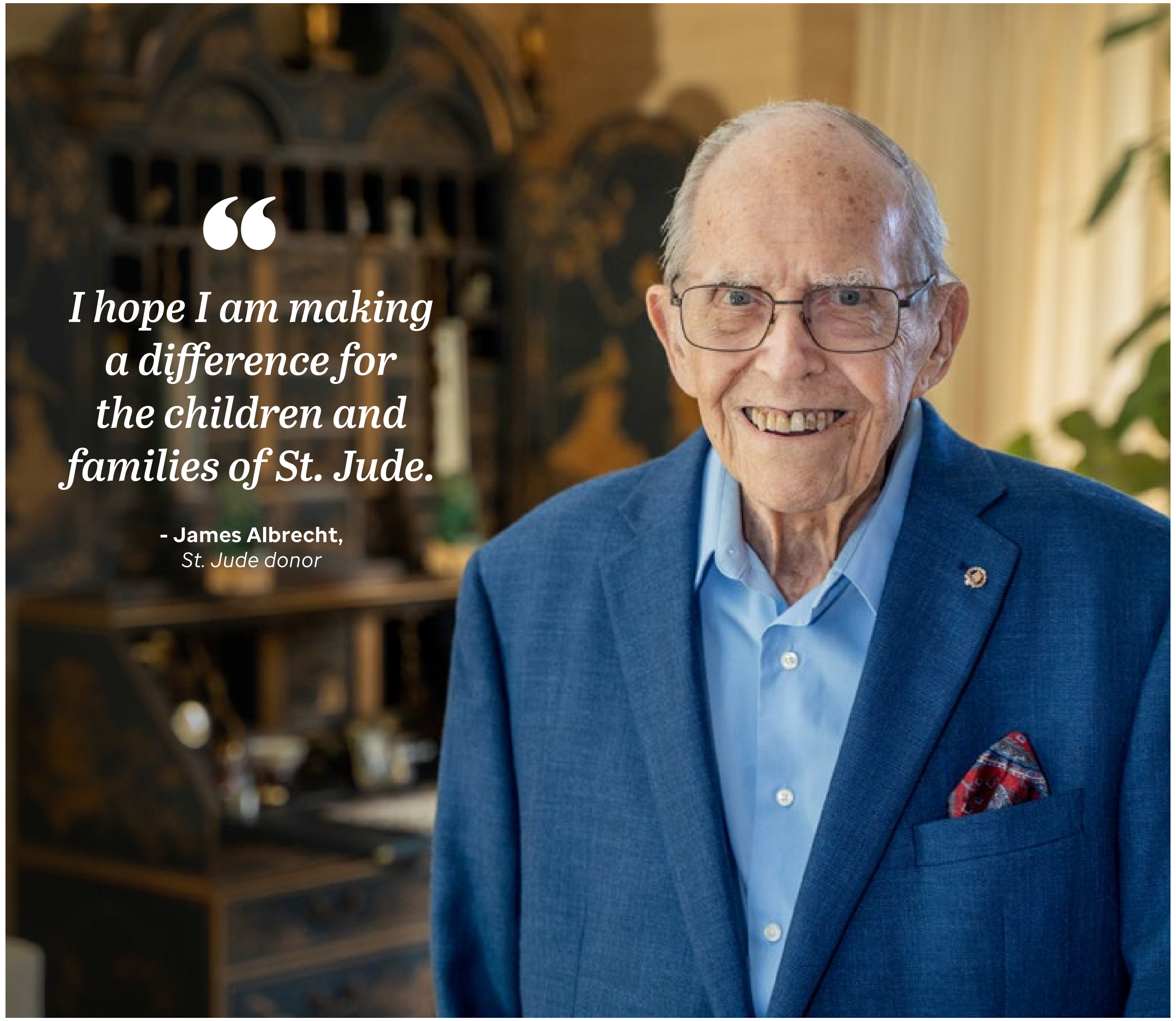
And Jasmine has developed a passion for photography, and she's saving money to buy her own camera.

You can help ensure families like Jasmine's never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food – so they can focus on helping their child live. Donate today at **stjude**.org/ImpactGiving

Legacy of Compassion

James Albrecht's longtime support of St. Jude inspires hope and empowers education.

By **Yolanda Jones** - ALSAC



I hope I am making a difference for the children and families of St. Jude.

- James Albrecht,
St. Jude donor

Growing up in the Midwest, James Albrecht watched his mother turn to her patron saint, St. Jude, during moments of hardship – especially throughout the Great Depression. Her unwavering devotion left a lasting impression on her only child.

Years later, that same devotion would inspire him to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® – the research hospital that bears the name of the saint his mother whispered prayers to.

"It was pretty tough times during the Depression. I remember my dad was out of work for two years. During that difficult time, there were a lot of prayers to St. Jude," Albrecht recalled.

By the time St. Jude opened its doors, Albrecht had graduated college and landed his first job. He began his career as a food technologist, a role that sparked his lifelong interest in science. Over the decades, he held various leadership positions at several major food and beverage companies, but he never forgot St. Jude.

Making small donations, he later increased his support, working with his financial advisor to establish a charitable remainder trust and naming St. Jude in his will. When his St. Jude representative told him about a new program to help children with neurological disorders, he was among the first to contribute to the Pediatric Translational Neuroscience Initiative.

Then, he took his support a step further. When he learned that St. Jude was opening a graduate school to train the next generation of doctors and researchers, he couldn't wait to help. He funded the James J. Albrecht Endowment fund, supporting the master's degree program in Global Child Health at the St. Jude Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

Etched on a wall near the graduate school is a plaque bearing his mother's name, Emma Albrecht.

For James Albrecht, supporting St. Jude is not just about giving back. He believes in supporting programs that empower others and align with his values of education, science and compassion.

"I support the graduate school because it is focused on a very specific skill that is desperately needed – biomedicine and science," Albrecht said. "I think this is a fantastic part of the St. Jude mission."

Albrecht's life is a testament to quiet service. He mentors high school and college students and provides scholarships to help them pursue their dreams. Every Monday afternoon, he can be found in the lobby of a hospital near his home in Maryland, playing piano – offering comfort through music and presence.

Retired since 1998, Albrecht, who is in his 90s, hasn't slowed down. He does some consulting work for food technology companies and serves on several boards, offering his expertise wherever it is needed.

Although he visited the campus of St. Jude nearly two decades ago, he has kept up with the hospital's growth and evolution.

"I never married or had children," Albrecht said. "I want my money to go toward helping people, especially young people who need financial or medical support, like the children at St. Jude. I want my tombstone to say, 'He made a difference.' I hope I am making a difference for the children and families of St. Jude."

Join James Albrecht in making St. Jude a part of your legacy. Choose the planned giving option that is right for you. Your generosity will help children with cancer and other life-threatening diseases.
stjude.org/ImpactGiving

Everyday
INSPIRATION

Jeritza came to St. Jude in search of treatment – and found so much more.

By **Alban Zamora** - ALSAC

Yeremi picks up the phone just in time to answer the call. In the background, the uncontrollable laughter of two children echoes through the garden. Her kids, Jeritza and Yetzael, are chasing each other and tossing pillows as they play.

“Lower your voices!” she says gently.

Jeritza, the oldest, looks at her, smiles, and throws another pillow at her brother, as if that playful gesture were part of their secret language of love.

She knows exactly how to win her mother’s attention. “She does it with every smile and every word,” Yeremi said. “Every day she comes up to me, gives me a kiss, and says, ‘Mommy, I love you.’”

Outgoing, genuine and incredibly friendly, Jeritza has been a source of inspiration for her family. “She’s taught me to be strong, while I try to lift her spirits on the hard days,” her mom said.

That bond grew even stronger in April 2024, when Jeritza began experiencing health issues that worried the entire family. In their home country, Dominican Republic, doctors discovered a mass arising from her liver as well as several tumors in her lungs.

Testing confirmed Jeritza had stage four hepatoblastoma, a rare pediatric liver cancer that is usually found in infants and children under age 3. Hepatoblastoma is the most common type of liver cancer in children. Jeritza was diagnosed a few months before celebrating her fourth birthday.

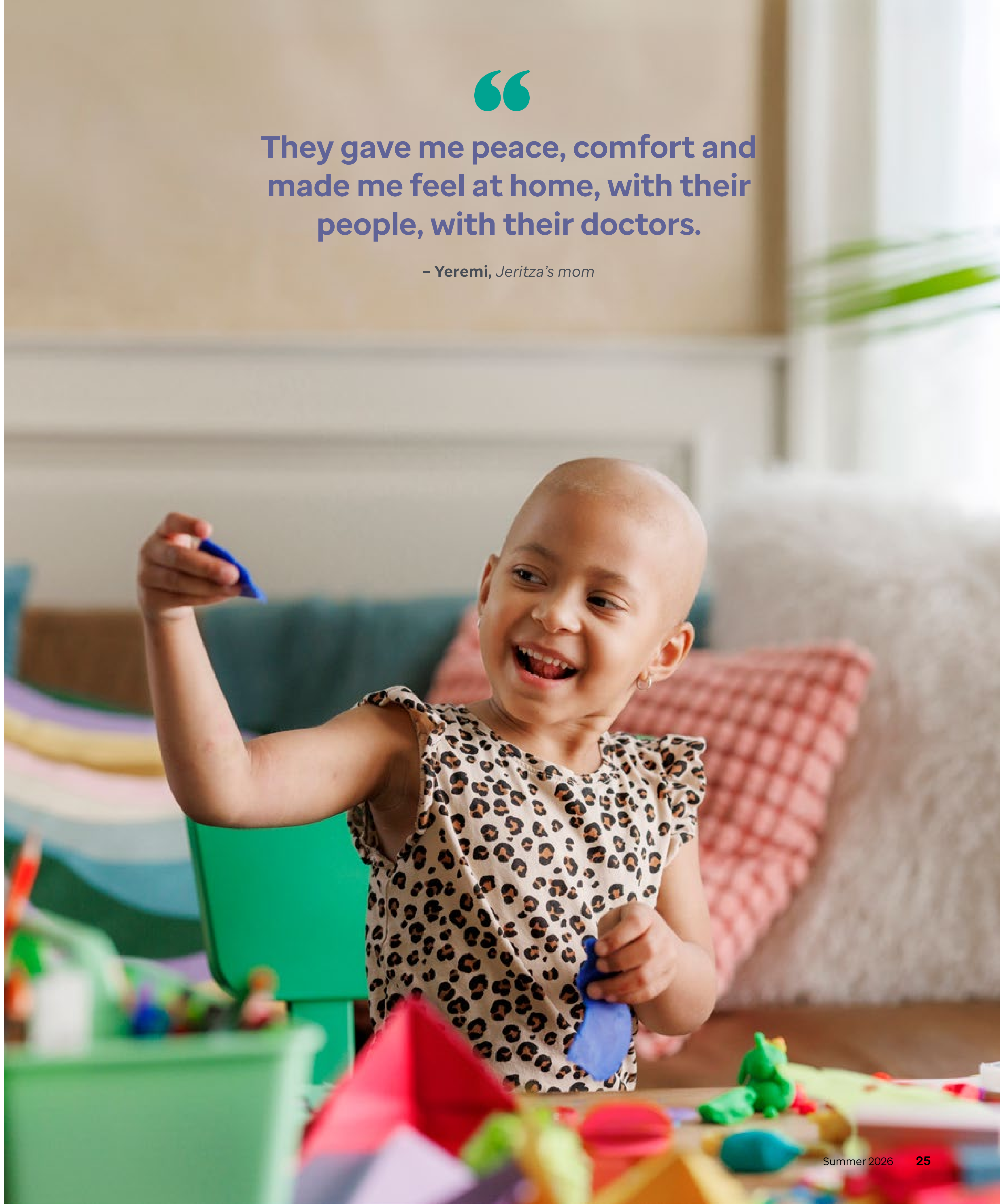
Yeremi remembers that their doctors gave her only a 50% chance of survival in the Dominican Republic.

“I was in denial; I didn’t want to face the truth. Then I threw myself into researching, learning everything I could, because I knew we would have to move heaven and earth – do whatever it took – to save my daughter,” said Jesús, Jeritza’s father.

She started chemotherapy near her home, but around six months into treatment, her tumor was pressing against major blood vessels meaning surgery at that time was not possible. Without surgical removal of the tumor, there was no path to a potential cure. Jeritza’s oncologist referred her to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital® in Memphis, Tennessee.

At St. Jude, Yeremi found hope that she desperately needed. The care team at St. Jude planned to treat the tumor with radiotherapy in the hopes of shrinking it away from her major blood vessels and allowing a chance for the tumor to be removed. In those early days, Yeremi remembers her daughter being restless and sad. “But the psychosocial team at St. Jude helped both of us so much. We received a range of services and an extraordinary level of support we never imagined,” she said.

This mother also felt reassured by the doctors at every step. “They told me they would explore every possible way to save her liver,” Yeremi said.



> “They gave me peace, comfort and made me feel at home, with their people, with their doctors.
>
> – **Yeremi,** *Jeritza’s mom*

"And they did."

After undergoing a targeted type of radiotherapy called Y 90 and additional chemotherapy, Jeritza was able to have surgery to remove the remaining tumor tissue.

By August 2025, she had completed treatment and returned home to her younger brother, Yetzael, who had been eagerly waiting for her.

"He supports her in everything – she's his favorite person. If we ever have to scold Jeritza, he runs over and hugs her to comfort her," Yeremi said, touched by the bond between her children, even after being apart during treatment.

Their extended family has also played a key role in this new chapter. On weekends, they visit grandparents and uncles, and Jeritza enjoys every moment, swimming with her cousins, playing and bouncing around nonstop. "She's become so energetic – she never stops moving!" her mom said with a laugh.

Every three months, Jeritza undergoes follow-up scans and lab tests in her home country to monitor her health and confirm she remains free of disease.

"There are no words, just gratitude for St. Jude. They gave me peace, comfort and made me feel at home, with their people, with their doctors. St. Jude is everything," Yeremi said.

Inseparable friends

For seven months, Jeritza and her mom stayed at The Domino's Village, one of the housing facilities at St. Jude for patients and their loved ones who are away from home during treatment. Families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food.

Once they settled into their temporary home, it didn't take long for Jeritza to make friends. When asked about her time in Memphis, she excitedly shares stories about the many people she bonded with – nurses, teachers and the bus drivers who took her to the hospital.

But one friendship stood out.

She met another Hispanic patient who was also 4 years old, originally from Ecuador, and the two quickly became inseparable. "They had sleepovers and would pick out matching outfits from the closet. They weren't just friends – they were sisters, united by the journey they were going through," Yeremi said.

They also took classes together at Imagine Academy by Chili's, the school program at St. Jude that helps patients continue their education while receiving treatment.

Even though they're no longer in the same country, the girls stay in touch through video calls. Their moms also became close and often talk for hours. Meanwhile, the girls sometimes just call to say "hi" and "I miss you"– all in under a minute. In one of those calls, Yeremi recalled, her daughter's friend said: "Jeritza, I cried when you left." To which Jeritza replied, with her signature innocence: "Don't worry, I'll see you tomorrow!"

Your gift helps provide treatment for patients like Jeritza.
stjude.org/ImpactGiving

Enduring Partnership

St. Jude mission drives 40-year partnership with FedEx and PGA TOUR's FedEx St. Jude Championship.

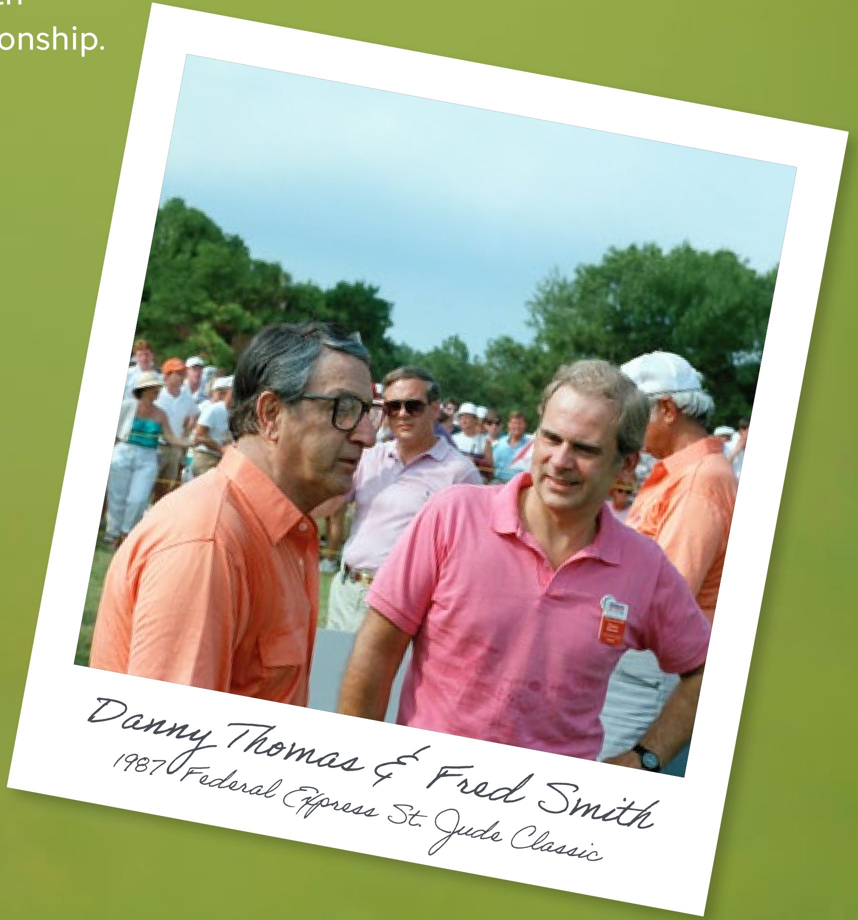
By **Zack McMillin** - ALSAC

As the FedEx cargo jet roared into view, rumbling low over the golf course, the PGA TOUR golfers and spectators could see on the bottom of the plane the initials "FWS" emblazoned in purple.

It was one of many ways the 2025 FedEx St. Jude Championship honored Frederick W. Smith, the FedEx founder who died at age 80, two months before the event.

When the 2026 FedEx St. Jude Championship opens the FedExCup Playoffs in August, it will mark 40 years since Smith and St. Jude founder Danny Thomas forged an enduring partnership – one that has generated more than $80 million in support for the lifesaving mission: Finding cures. Saving children.®

That mission motivates FedEx employees to volunteer each year at the tournament, which integrates many elements authentic to FedEx and St. Jude. Among them: The FedEx Purple Eagle ceremony featuring a FedEx plane dedicated to a St. Jude patient who is a child or a grandchild of a FedEx team member. St. Jude patients also serve as honorary pin flag caddies in the final round each year, adding joy and meaning for golfers and fans.



Danny Thomas & Fred Smith
1987 Federal Express St. Jude Classic

Asked in 2023 to reflect on his "handshake deal" with Thomas, Smith said: "What's been done at St. Jude is one of the greatest gifts to humankind I've seen over my lifetime."

HARRY'S ENERGY SHINES

After a second transplant for acute myeloid leukemia, Harry receives treatment for graft-versus-host disease.

By **Beth Bartholomew** -
ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL

Harry, 6, is a tiny tornado. His dad, "Big" Harry, spends his days trying to keep up with his energetic son.

Little Harry hops, skips and spins his way through the halls of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® between appointments to treat graft-versus-host disease (GVHD), a side effect that sometimes happens after a stem cell (bone marrow) transplant. To look at this joyful child, one would never guess the health challenges Harry has faced during his young life.

"There were some tough times, but the only time – even through chemotherapy, even through the transplants – that we really saw him down was when he got sick with stomach viruses," said Harry's mother, Erica.

The last two years have been a rollercoaster for the family, who live in North Carolina. Harry has received two stem cell (bone marrow) transplants to treat his acute myeloid leukemia (AML), a cancer of the blood.

In patients with AML, cancer cells take over the bone marrow – the soft, spongy material in the center of most bones. The bone marrow contains new blood-forming cells, which produce new blood cells. A stem cell transplant takes healthy blood-forming cells from a donor and gives them to the patient. If the transplant works correctly, the blood-forming cells from the donor replace the patient's bone marrow and start making healthy blood cells.

> "He is the life of the party for sure.
>
> – **Big Harry,** *Little Harry's dad*

Harry's leukemia returned after the first transplant, so he had a second transplant.

After the second transplant, tests showed that Harry's cancer went into remission, but he developed GVHD. In GVHD, immune cells from the donor's bone marrow attack the patient's cells and tissues. GVHD can affect multiple organs or organ systems. In Harry's case, GVHD has caused skin changes and affected how his liver works.

Treatment for GVHD

Harry is getting a treatment for GVHD called extracorporeal photopheresis (ECP). This

St. Jude Imagine Academy by Chili's preschool lead teacher Anne Kolb-Quinn works with Harry at the school located in Family Commons on campus. The accredited school program at St Jude is part of the patient's care team and offers a wide range of services to help patients keep up with their education while undergoing treatment.

treatment is designed to stop a type of white blood cell from attacking Harry's cells and tissues.

In ECP, white blood cells are removed from the patient's blood. The white blood cells are exposed to ultraviolet light, which changes how the white blood cells work. The treated cells are given back to the patient. It is hoped the treated cells will not attack the patient's cells and tissues.

Family keeps growing

Going through major life experiences while separated by more than 600 miles was challenging, to say the least. The family's faith helped them cope. Erica offers this advice to other parents: "Find something that you have faith in because that is literally the only way that I've made it through. And just keep hope."

While Harry was going through treatment, his mom gave birth to two daughters – Haizely in 2023 and Harmony in 2024. The family also has a daughter named Hayden, the oldest of their four children.

"It's been a long two years," said Harry's dad. "We're hopeful that this ECP is the last little hump he needs to get over. And you can see Harry's in great spirits. He is the life of the party for sure."

Harry's love of life has inspired those who have cared for him at St. Jude.

"He is such a happy child," said Swati Naik, MD, Harry's doctor. "Whenever I see him, he runs toward me and leaps into my arms. That's the best part of my day – my Harry hug."

Together with St. Jude, you can support treatment for patients like Little Harry.
stjude.org/ImpactGiving

The Strongest Kid I Know

After heartbreak and healing, dad sees hope for the future for Little Harry.

By **Big Harry** - LITTLE HARRY'S DAD

We call my son Little Harry because I am Big Harry.

I knew from day one if I ever had a son, he was going to be Harry. He is the third. I am the second. And my dad is what used to be Big Harry, but now he's Grandpa Harry.

Prior to his diagnosis, Harry was not sick at all. He was a healthy little boy, running around, playing all the time. Never in a million years would I have thought that my child would have cancer. It never crossed my mind. To this day, I'm still in shock.

When we were referred here for stem cell transplantation following our initial treatment closer to home, I had no idea what St. Jude was. Well, I quickly found out, and I tell everybody this is an unbelievable place. They have taken care of Harry more than I ever could imagine.

It was absolutely crushing to hear that he relapsed after his first stem cell transplant, absolutely crushing. It was actually harder hearing he relapsed than learning his diagnosis the first time, knowing that everything we had already been through, we'd have to go through again. But being here at St. Jude made it a little bit easier. And now we are through relapse treatment, and he is receiving this innovative treatment to combat graft-versus-host disease.

Through it all, he has been the life of the party. He's energetic. He's happy. He truly is the strongest kid I know.

Being a dad means everything to me. It's my pride and joy. I've been fortunate enough to be Little Harry's primary caregiver through this time, while my wife has been back at home with our other children. Everybody knows us as the Harrys here at St. Jude. We do everything together. We go to the playground together, we go to lunch together, we sleep in the same bed at night. It's been very special, being able to bond with him as he fights the battle of his life.

I can say from experience that graduating to being Big Harry is definitely a three-phase process. Once Little Harry completes high school, completes college and has a family of his own, then he can officially become Big Harry, and I will become Granddaddy Harry. My hope is that one day, with the help of St. Jude, we will get there.

Meet the artist:
Sebastian

Sebastian has faced every challenge head-on since he was a young boy, his mom Grace recalled. Now, as a teenager facing cancer, his steadfast courage remains.

Sebastian was 12 and a basketball and volleyball player when he was diagnosed with osteosarcoma – bone cancer – after experiencing pain in his right leg in early 2024.

“Our minds went blank, we couldn’t believe it,” Grace said.

Sebastian was diagnosed at home in Puerto Rico and began chemotherapy treatment there, where he was also diagnosed with Li-Fraumeni syndrome. Patients with this rare genetic disorder, related to a mutation in a gene called TP53, have an increased risk of developing one or more cancers at some point in their lives.

Sebastian was referred to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital® in Memphis, Tennessee, for limb-sparing surgery on his right leg. Sebastian continued his chemotherapy at St. Jude while he was rehabilitating from his surgery. He completed treatment for his osteosarcoma in early 2025.

“St. Jude has been marvelous. If it wasn’t for St. Jude, Sebastian wouldn’t have his leg,” Grace said.

When he wasn’t busy keeping up with his studies at St. Jude, Sebastian spent time painting landscapes that remind him of the Puerto Rican countryside, where he has spent countless hours with his grandmother, older brother and other family members.

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Tatiyana's Support

When Tatiyana was a year old, her mom, Mineka, noticed a glare in her left eye. Eventually, a visit to an eye doctor and emergency department led to a suspicion of retinoblastoma, a cancer of the eye.

Tatiyana was referred to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® when she was 20 months old and arrived in December 2024. At St. Jude, Tatiyana underwent exams that confirmed a diagnosis of retinoblastoma. "It was emotional," recalled her mom. Tatiyana underwent surgery to remove her left eye. She and her family were able to go home to Arkansas for Christmas before she returned to Memphis for chemotherapy. She finished treatment in June 2025 and returns to St. Jude for regular checkups.

"St. Jude is one of the best hospitals I have ever witnessed, not just the doctors, but the nurses and staff," Mineka said. "They make you feel like you are at home when you are not at home."

You help bring hope and healing to patients like Tatiyana when you support St. Jude. Did you know many ways to give with non-cash assets – like stocks and IRAs – may present unique opportunities to save on taxes while furthering the St. Jude mission? Donate today at **stjude**.org/ImpactGiving