



St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital<sup>®</sup>  
Finding cures. Saving children.  
ALSAC • DANNY THOMAS, FOUNDER

# The St. Jude **Hope** Imperative

April 2026



# Study

## Methodology

This study was conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and ALSAC, the fundraising and awareness organization for St. Jude.

- Phase 1 – two qualitative focus groups conducted in February 2026
- Phase 2 – quantitative study in March 2026 with 2501 U.S. adults age 18+

This report consolidates the findings across both phases of work.



# Executive

## Summary

Hope is deeply important to Americans, shaping everyday life and positive emotions, even as many feel hopeful personally but pessimistic about broader society.

- Nearly 9 in 10 find hope important and can't imagine a world without it. But when people lose hope in the world around them, they retreat inward; that paralysis has consequences for how they plan, focus and engage with society.

When they need hope, Americans are looking to things they can control — things that may seem small to someone on the outside but help keep their hope cup filled.

- Hope doesn't have to be aspirational. It lives in small, daily moments that drive meaning, momentum and faith in the future.

Hope isn't something Americans wait for — it's something they actively build through small wins, meaningful action and shared connection with others.

- From time with loved ones to supporting favorite causes, hope sparks habitual, meaningful action. Giving back is one of those practices; contributing in steady and small ways is one of the most powerful expressions of hope for Americans.

St. Jude stands as one of the strongest symbols of hope in America.

- St. Jude's unmatched association with hope, medical advancements, clear mission and success stories inspire hope and confidence that contributions of all sizes drive real impact for childhood cancer patients.



St. Jude patient **Erma**,  
pictured with her dad.



# SECTION 1

## Inside Today's Hope Mindset



# Hope is extremely important to Americans today.

It plays an important role in their everyday lives.

St. Jude patient Erma

## Importance of **hope** in daily life

% extremely/somewhat

*“Hope provides a sense of agency. It’s the difference between feeling stuck in a situation and believing you have the power to navigate through it toward a better outcome.” Male, 35 44*

*“In today’s world you cannot mentally survive without hope.” Female, 65 74*

*“Hope provides you with a feeling that things will improve and get better.” Male, 65 74*



# 89%

of Americans agree,  
“I can’t imagine living in  
a world without hope.”

*“Hope is very important because for me, it’s what drives me to get up and keep going every day...so it’s pretty much the reason to not only just go about my day, but to continue to dream and continue to push through those hard challenges.” Male, 25 34*



Q202: Earlier, we asked about how important hope was to you overall. Focusing on your day-to-day, how important is having hope in your daily life? (Total n=2,501)

Q100a: On a scale of 1 to 10, you rated hope a [INSERT Q100 ANSWER] in terms of importance. Please explain why you gave this rating (Top 3 Box for Q100, n=2,194)

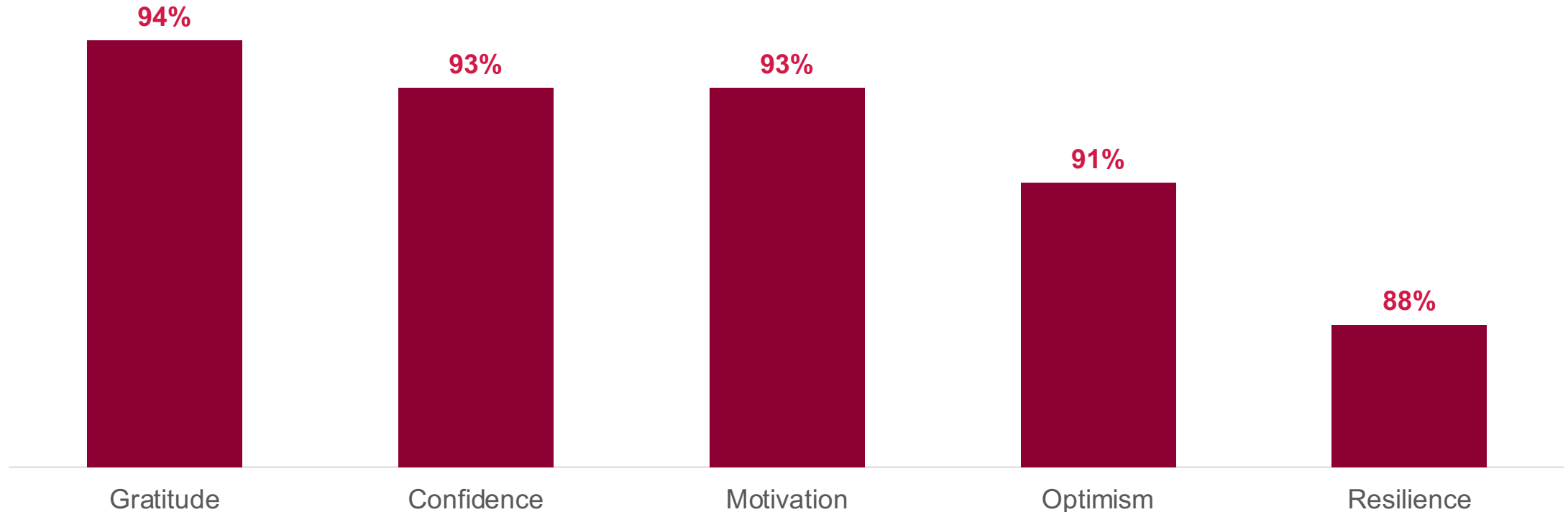
Q205: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Total n=2,501)

# Connecting closely to other positive emotions people need.

Including gratitude, confidence, motivation and optimism.

## Emotions associated with hope

% Selected



Q201: When you think about the concepts of hope and hopelessness, which of the following emotions do you feel? (Total n=2,501)

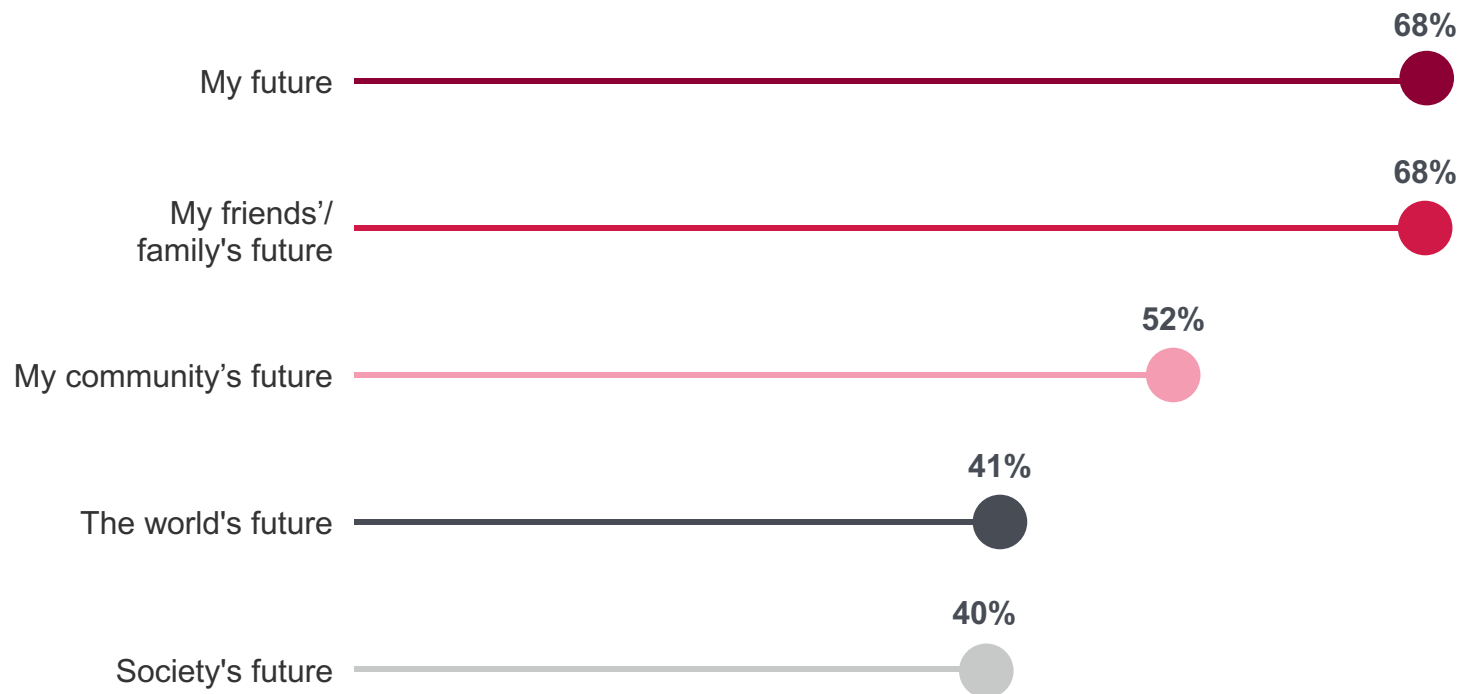


# However, hope in personal futures is far more common.

It is less common for people to feel hope in the world or society.

## Hope felt about individual & societal institutions

% selected top 3 box



St. Jude patient Erma, pictured with her mom



Q101: On a scale of 1 to 10, how hopeful are you about the following... (Total n=2,501)

# Hope in personal futures provides more control and positivity.

It also encourages progress.

Top reasons people feel more **hopeful** for their own future than society's future

% Selected

#1

**60%**

I feel like I have more control over my own life.

#2

**57%**

Even when there is negative news about society, I can still have positive life experiences.

#3

**43%**

I see results/progress more quickly in my own life than I do in society.

**92%**

of Americans agree, "As a society, we need **hope now more than ever before.**"

*"It's definitely an uphill battle and a struggle, but I don't feel like I have a **ton of control over society**...For as long as I can remember, there's constant challenges in society, and **I don't feel like I'm able to necessarily change them.**"*

*Male, 25-34*

Q202: Earlier, we asked about how important hope was to you overall. Focusing on your day-to-day, how important is having hope in your daily life? (Total n=2,501)

Q100a: On a scale of 1 to 10, you rated hope a [INSERT Q100 ANSWER] in terms of importance.

Q101a: You said that you were feeling more hopeful about your future than you are about society's future. Why is this true for you? (More hopeful about own than society's future for Q101, n=1,497)

Q205: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Total n=2,501)

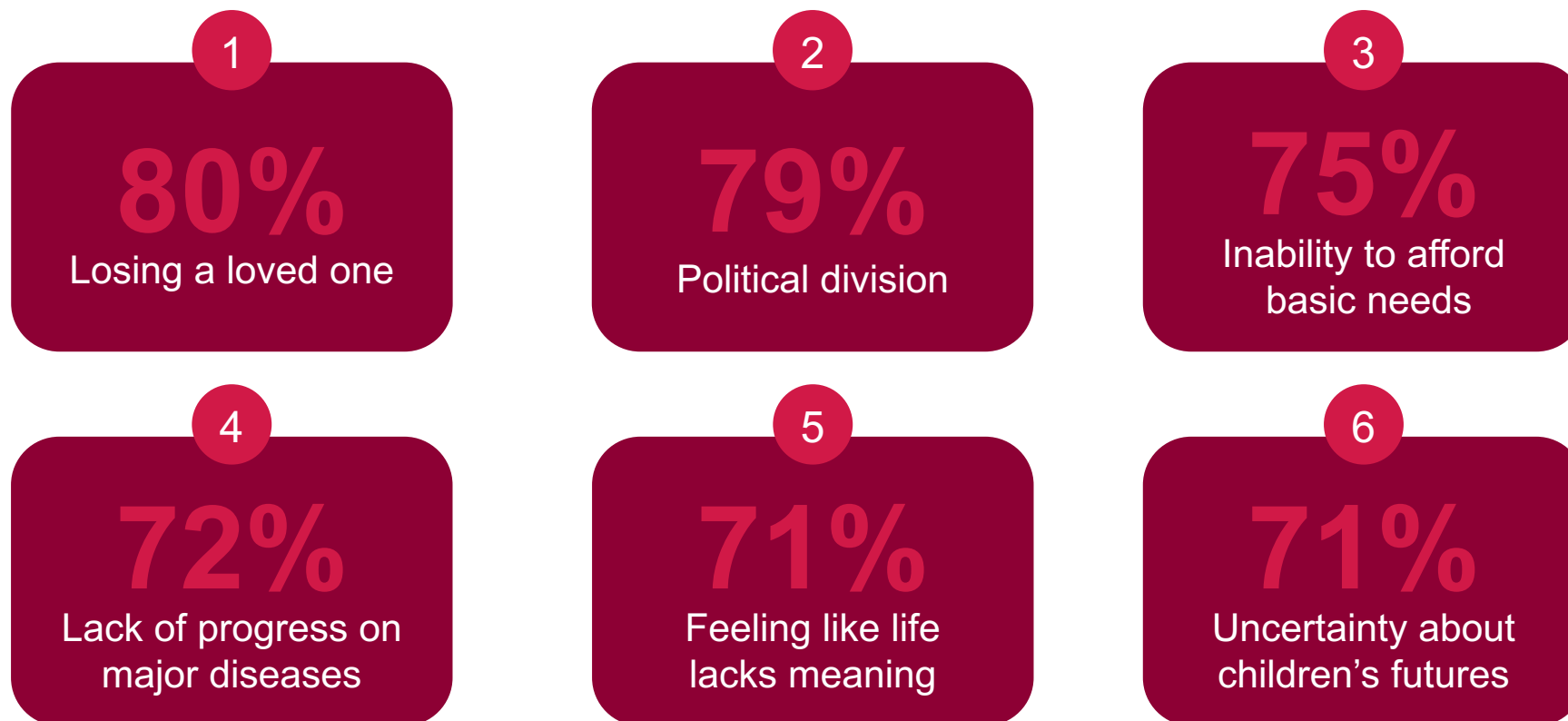


# When it comes to a lack of hope, several key issues stand out.

These include the loss of a loved one, political division and rising cost.

## Top issues that reduce **hope** today

Completely eliminates / significantly reduces / somewhat reduces hope (NET)



Q103: How much do each of the following eliminate hope for you? (Total n=2,501)

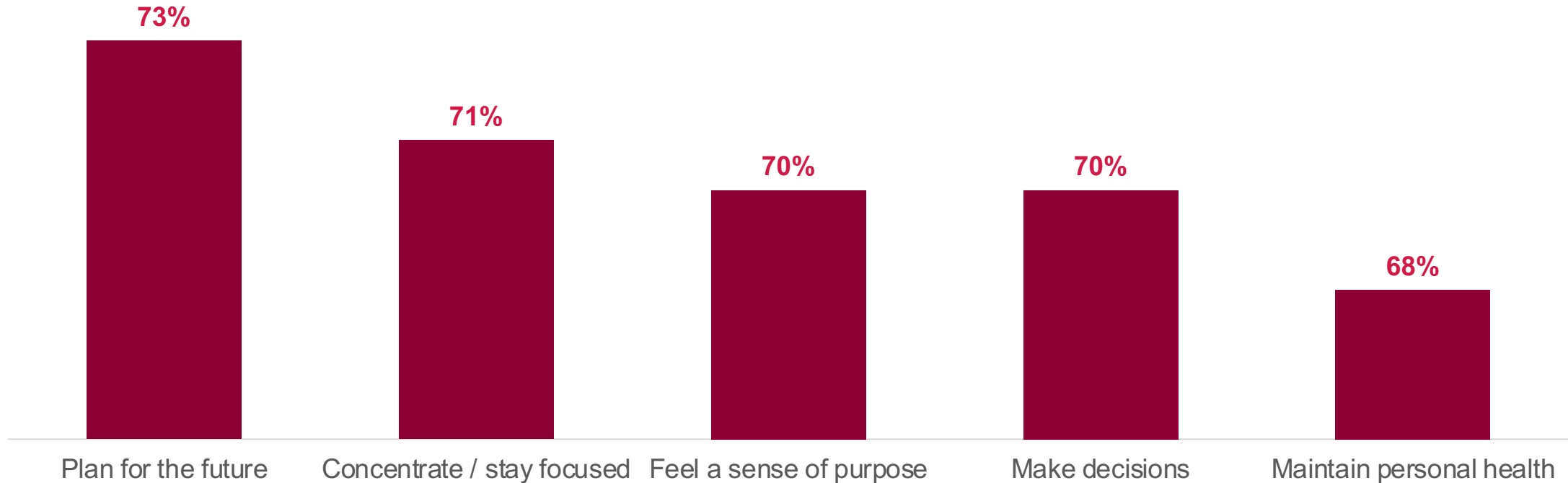


# A lack of hope has real consequences.

It affects one's physical, emotional and mental health.

## Negative impacts of **hopelessness**

Complete / significant / some negative impact (NET)



Q104: When you feel hopeless, what impact does it have on your ability to...



SECTION 2  
Everyday Hope

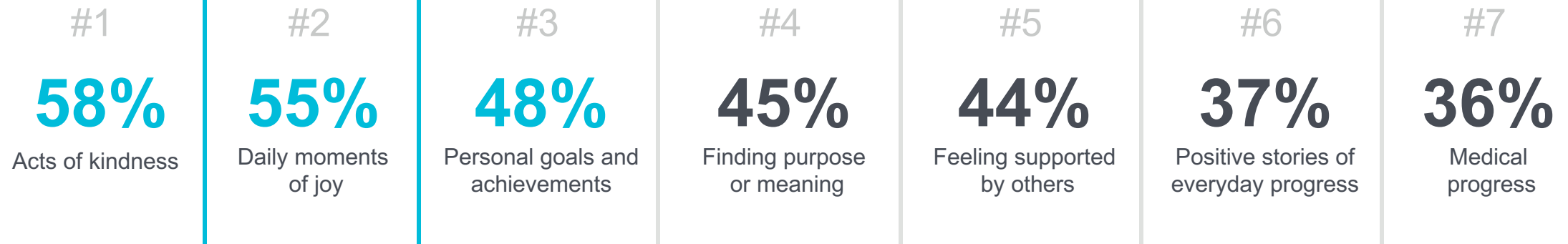
St. Jude patient **Phenix**,  
pictured with his family



# When Americans need hope they focus on small controllable actions that keep them going.

## Top reasons to be **hopeful** about the future

% Selected, Top 7 Shown



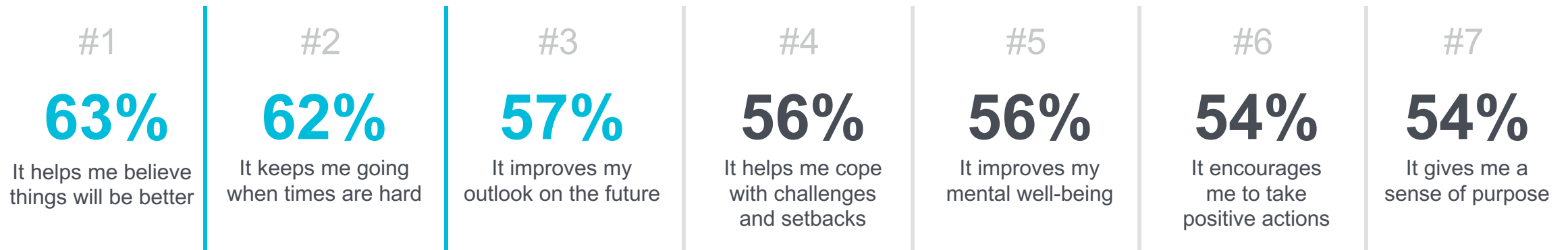
*“Counting the small blessings and victories that happen in my life, those things give me a glimmer of hope.” -Female, 35-44*



# Everyday hope is essential for perseverance, positive outlooks, and belief in a better world.

## Top reasons **hope** is important to daily life

% Selected, Top 7 Shown



# 82%

of Americans agree, "Without hope, I would struggle to find meaning in my day-to-day."

Q202: Earlier, we asked about how important hope was to you overall. Focusing on your day-to-day, how important is having hope in your daily life? (Total n=2,501)

Q205: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Total n=2,501)

Q203: Why is having hope important in your daily life? (Total n=2,501)



St. Jude patient **Olivia**

# SECTION 3

## Hope as a Practice



# Hope isn't something Americans wait for.

They build it through small wins, meaningful action and shared connection.

## 91%

of Americans agree,  
**"Helping others**, even in  
**small ways**, is one of the  
 most powerful ways I  
**express hope."**

*"When I complete something, I feel hopeful about my future." - Female, 65-74*

## 90%

of Americans agree,  
**"Small, everyday successes** help me  
 feel hopeful about  
 the future."

*"You take one step at a time. One change at a time. Encountering small successes makes me feel as if someone is making an effort." - Female, 75-84*

## 87%

of Americans agree,  
**"I use the moments I feel hope** as opportunities to  
**take positive action."**

*"Hope and faith without works is dead. You have to take action." - Female, 18-24*

## 86%

of Americans agree,  
**"I feel more hopeful when I take small actions** rather  
 than when I focus on the  
 larger end goal."

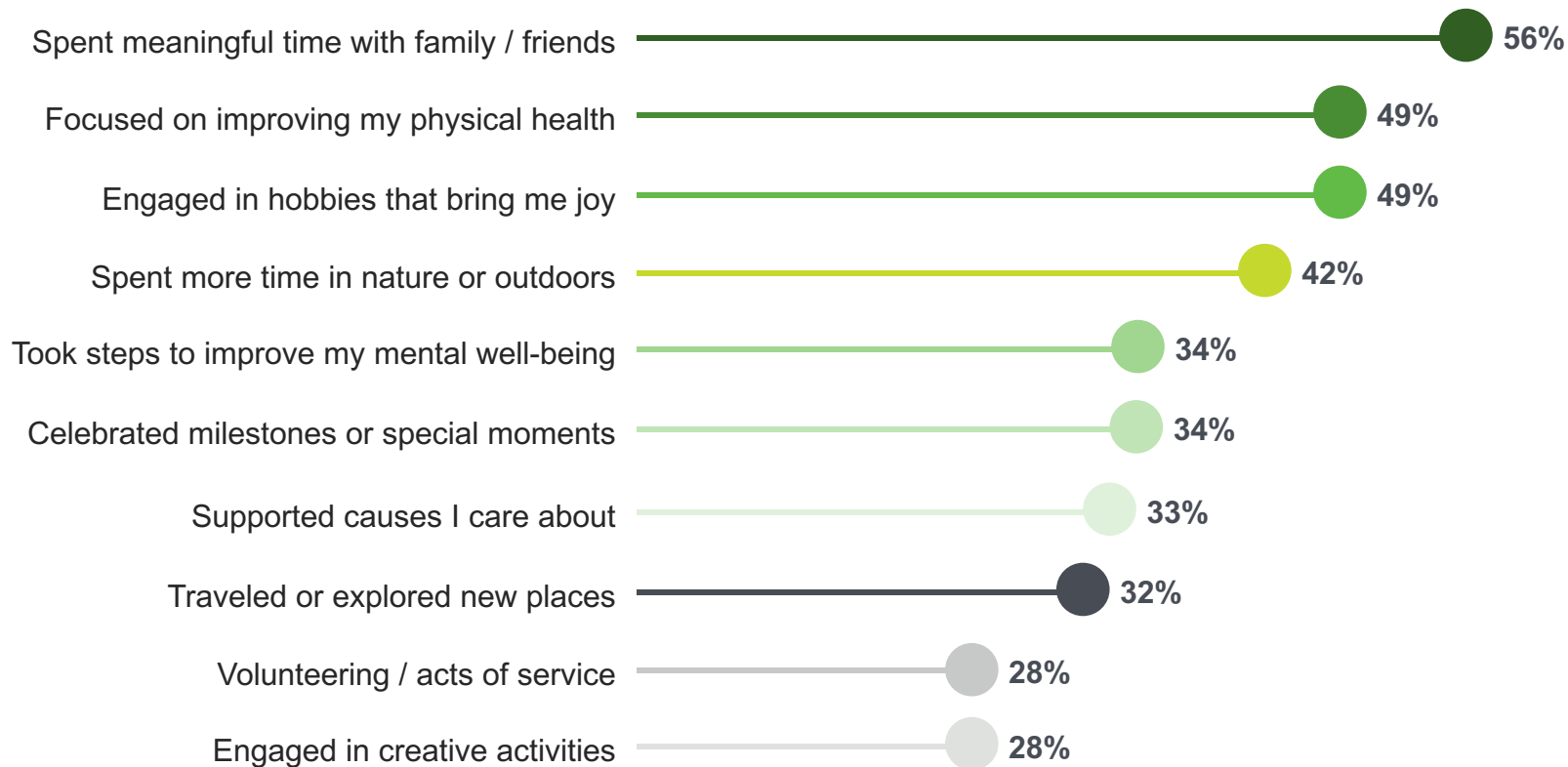


# Hope inspires meaningful action in daily life.

It strengthens both the self and the community.

## Top actions performed in past year to provide hope\*

% Selected, Top 10 Shown



# 96%

of Americans have taken  
an action in the past year  
to cultivate hope

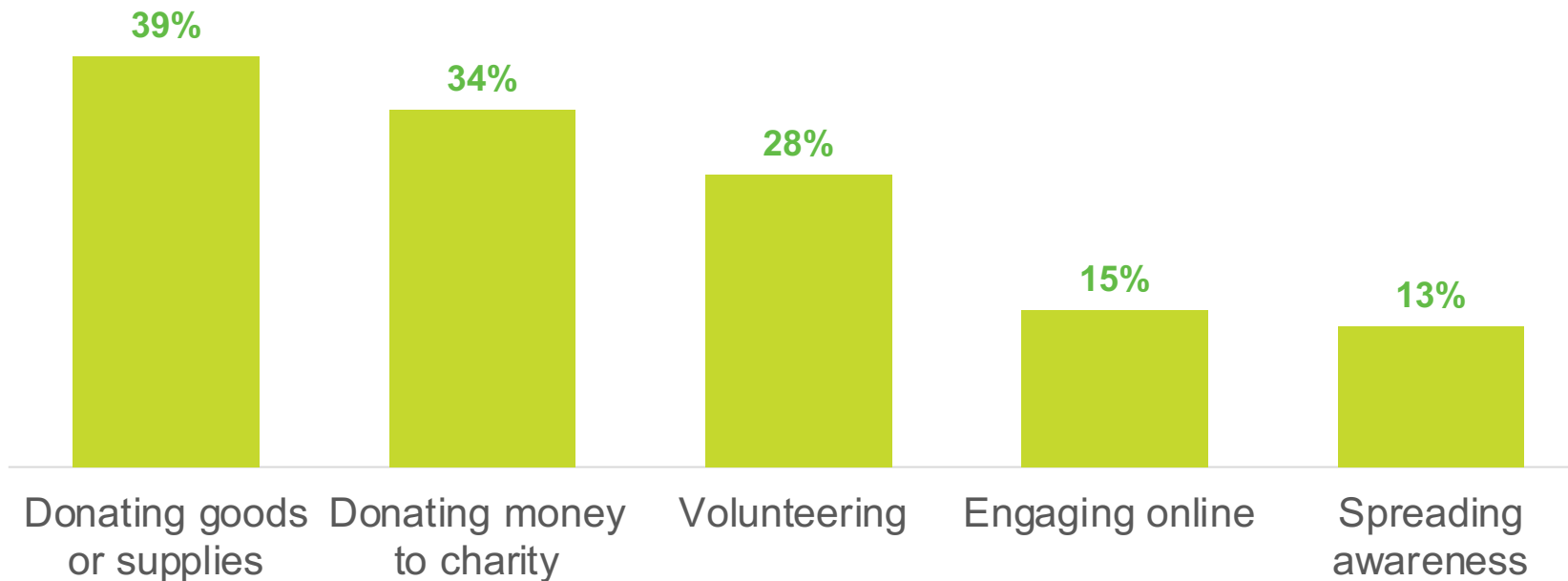


# Charity has become a powerful way Americans practice hope.

It turns intention into meaningful action.

## Top charitable actions that drive hope

% Selected among those who support causes, Top 5



# 85%

of Americans agree, "We need to **ritualize and celebrate victories** more to **build hope** in our communities."

# 72%

of Americans agree, "Making **donations on a more frequent basis** makes me feel like I'm **doing more** for the causes I believe in."

Q302: Earlier in the survey you mentioned doing the following in the past 12 months. Looking back at your actions, which of the following give you the most hope? (Those who supported causes in past year, n=2,084)  
 Q307: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Total n=2,501)



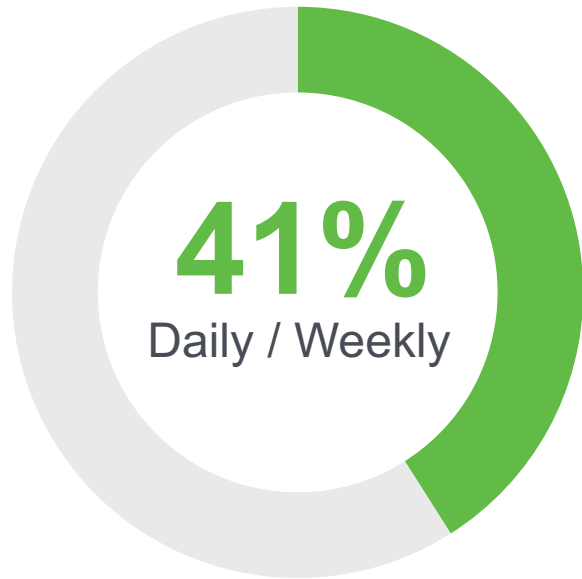
# Nevertheless, there's an opportunity to further ritualize giving back.

This can make generosity more consistent.

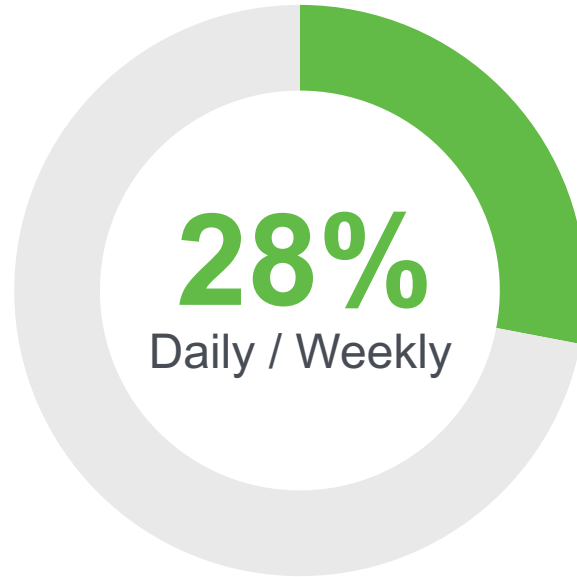
## Frequency of engaging in **hopeful** activities in past year

% Selected among those who do activity

Volunteering / acts of service



Supported causes I care about  
(e.g., donations, advocacy, participation, etc.)



St. Jude patient **Olivia**,  
pictured with her mom



Q301: In the past year, how frequently did you engage in the following activities to give you hope?  
(Those who have done activities to give them hope, n=2,405)

# SECTION 4

## How Nonprofits Drive Hope

St. Jude patient Juan



Nonprofit organizations are a beacon of hope for the vast majority of Americans.

St. Jude patient **Juan**,  
pictured with his family



84%

of Americans say,  
nonprofit / charitable  
organizations give  
them hope.

Q304: In general, do nonprofit / charitable organizations give you hope? (Total n=2,501)



# Clarity of vision, trust and transparency inspire hope in nonprofits.

## Nonprofit qualities that give hope

% Selected

#1  
**50%**  
Clear vision /  
purpose

#2  
**47%**  
Trusted  
reputation

#3  
**45%**  
Transparency in  
how donations  
are used

#4  
**44%**  
Demonstrated  
impact / results

#5  
**31%**  
Personal stories /  
journeys of people  
impacted

#6  
**29%**  
Measurable goals /  
progress updates

#7  
**9%**  
Recognizable  
branding

*"I feel like having a **clear vision and direction or purpose** of the organization is really important so that everybody could get on board with your mission." Male, 25 34*

*"Being able to be **transparent in numbers**...that provides me with hope, knowing that my **donations are actually going somewhere**." Female, 18 24*



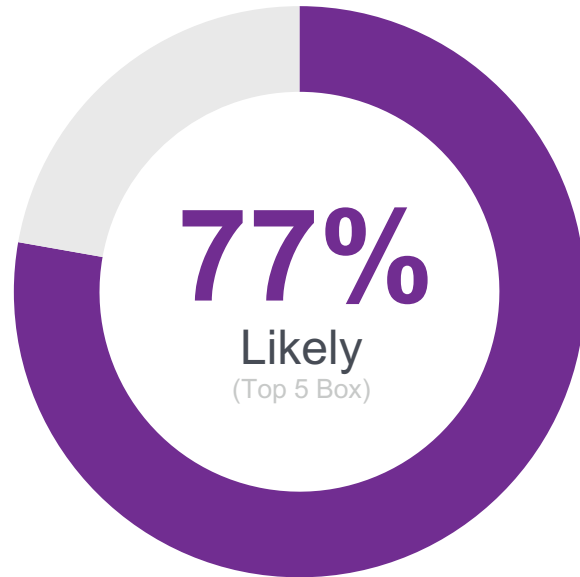
# Hope has become a powerful catalyst in the nonprofit space.

It drives action and impact.

St. Jude patient Juan

Likelihood of increasing support for nonprofit that gives **hope**

% Selected



*"When you hear the stories, you see videos, it becomes more real. It gives you more hope that your money is being used well. And you see the smiling faces, or you hear 'St. Jude, now this child's getting better.'" Female, 35 44*

# 90%

of Americans agree, "Seeing real, measurable progress from nonprofits gives me more hope for the future."

# 83%

of Americans agree, "Brands that support hope-driven causes resonate more with me."



Q306: On a scale of 1-10, how likely are you to increase your support (e.g., donating, volunteering, etc.) for a nonprofit / charitable organization that gives you hope? (Total n=2,501)  
Q307: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Total n=2,501)

## The mission and impact of St. Jude strongly reinforce its role as a source of hope

93%

of Americans agree, “When I think of St. Jude, **I think of hope.**”

94%

of Americans agree, “St. Jude doesn't only give hope to childhood cancer patients; it also **inspires hope** for those **who believe in its mission.**”

94%

of Americans agree, “Knowing that **childhood cancer survival rates** have increased from **20% to over 80%** in the past 60 years **increases my hope** for the world.”

