

## HOPE, STRENGTH AND LOVE, POWERED BY TOMMY



Tommy was a beautifully sweet, silly, caring and adventurous little boy. He loved his older brother and sister, loved making everyone laugh, loved Star Wars, building Legos, riding his bike and being with his buddies at school. In February 2017, Tommy was diagnosed with a brain tumor (anaplastic ependymoma, grade III) shortly after turning 4. Tommy was the embodiment of strength during his two-year-long battle, often giving the rest of us the hope and stamina we needed to see our family through his treatment. After our beautiful boy passed away in February 2019, our family wanted to create a way to honor Tommy's legacy by helping other families affected by pediatric cancer. The Tommy Strong Foundation was born shortly thereafter.

The Tommy Strong Foundation's mission is two-fold: to support the medical community who have dedicated their life's work to finding a cure and better treatments for these incredible children; and to support the children and families as they navigate through a cancer diagnosis, treatment and everyday life. It is with immense gratitude that we share all that we have been able to accomplish during our inaugural year. As we look to the future, we continue to aspire to do more for these children... to allow them to hope, dream and get back to being a kid again.



## RECENT TOMMY STRONG FUNDED PROJECTS

### CLINICAL AND RESEARCH SUPPORT

Tommy Strong has awarded a **\$15,000 grant** to the new **Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Lab at Hackensack Meridian Health Center for Discovery and Innovation**. The lab is led by pediatric neuro-oncologist Dr. Derek Hanson and surgeon-scientist Dr. Timothy Vogel, both of whom cared for and deeply about Tommy. The lab will focus its efforts on pediatric central nervous system (CNS) tumors.

**\$15,000** was granted to the **Ependymoma Working Group through the Children's Brain Tumor Network** (<http://cbtn.org>) and **Pacific Pediatric Neuro-oncology Consortium** (<http://pnoc.us>). Leading medical research institutions from around the world, including Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Children's National Medical Center, Hackensack Meridian Health, Texas Children's Hospital, SickKids Toronto, Seattle Children's Hospital, German Cancer Research Center, Medical University of Vienna, St. Jude and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, are collaborating to advance pre-clinical studies and develop clinical trials for ependymoma, the third most common form of brain cancer in children and the most common form of pediatric spinal cord tumor.

### PATIENT/FAMILY SUPPORT

A **\$10,000 grant** was made to **Christopher's Haven** (<http://christophershaven.org>). Christopher's Haven is located in Boston, MA with a mission to operate a supportive community consisting of temporary apartments and a community recreation area for families of children being treated for cancer in nearby hospitals. The grant will cover housing expenses for one apartment for an entire year, allowing 6 - 8 families in need to stay at Christopher's Haven rent free.

A **\$15,000 grant** was awarded to the Hackensack University Medical Center Foundation to support the development of a **Sibling Support Program**. The Sibling Support Program, managed through the Child Life Department at the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital, will encompass one-on-one therapy; group therapy, including bereavement groups; and organized recreational outings for the siblings of the Hospital's pediatric oncology patients. A dedicated Child Life Specialist will work with the siblings, providing them with emotional support and therapeutic programming.

Tommy Strong gifted a fleet of **sleeping chairs and recliners** to the pediatric ICU at the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital, giving parents a place to rest during their child's hospitalization.



Delivering meals to the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital

## COVID-19 ASSISTANCE

During the height of the pandemic, Covid-19 shut down much of the world, including some support services for pediatric cancer patients. Children were isolated in hospital rooms and caregivers experienced reduced wages, yet cancer treatment continued. Tommy Strong sought ways to help these families with basic needs so that they could focus on caring for their children. We were able to provide:

- New iPads for pediatric cancer patients so the children could keep in touch with friends and family during isolation.
- Visa, grocery store and food delivery service gift cards for pediatric cancer families.
- Meals to patients, caregivers and pediatric oncology medical staff.
- Bulk shipments of hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and paper goods to pediatric cancer families.

## DID YOU KNOW?



EACH DAY, **43** KIDS IN THE U.S. ARE DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER.

Only 4% of the national cancer research budget is allocated to pediatric cancer research.

In the U.S., cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children.

**MORE THAN 95%** OF CHILDHOOD CANCER SURVIVORS HAVE SIGNIFICANT HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES BECAUSE OF CURRENT CANCER TREATMENT OPTIONS.

THE AVERAGE AGE OF DEATH FOR A CHILD WITH CANCER IS 6, CAUSING A CHILDHOOD CANCER VICTIM TO LOSE 71 YEARS OF EXPECTED LIFE YEARS.

SINCE 1980, FEWER THAN 10 DRUGS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR USE IN CHILDREN WITH CANCER, AS COMPARED WITH THE HUNDREDS OF DRUGS THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED FOR ADULTS.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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