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Daniela Conte Foundation

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022

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## Dear Friends,

As 2022 draws to a close, we at Daniela Conte Foundation can't help but reflect on what a remarkable journey this has been. The generous outpouring of support for families battling childhood cancer has been unwavering and awe-inspiring. Even a global pandemic was no match for the inspiration and innovation that poured into DCF.

Since its inception in 2020, DCF has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the financial challenges faced by families battling pediatric cancer. There are endless stories of families facing unexpected and crushing medical bills at a time when they've cut working hours to care for their sick children. We believe that the destruction of a family's financial security should not go hand-in-hand with a pediatric cancer diagnosis, and through our In-Treatment Support program, we are changing that narrative for pediatric cancer families.

DCF is also committed to raising research funding and awareness so that pediatric cancer will one day be a curable disease. This year we were honored to branch into new ways to support those working to draw that day nearer. Through a partnership with Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, DCF funds are helping some of the brightest minds in cancer research to develop safer and more effective treatments for Rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of pediatric cancer.

To say our staff pivoted in 2022 would be an understatement. It is no coincidence that the very mission that drives our work at DCF is precisely what has allowed us to navigate this unprecedented year. We have been blessed to operate under a 100% volunteer Board of Directors and Committees who never fail to deliver on necessary wisdom and guidance. And despite every challenge, we have been able to raise critical funds and award them without skipping a beat.

DCF will emerge in 2023 as an even better and more creative steward of our resources thanks to the valuable lessons of the last two years. Every family facing this terrible disease should be able to focus on the recovery of their children before all else. We plan to deepen our relationships with those we serve while remaining laser-focused on our mission and strategic goals.

We are endlessly grateful to each of you that have joined us on this journey. On behalf of the pediatric cancer families we serve, thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. We invite you to read about the positive impact and difference your support has made for children with cancer and their families, and we are excited to accomplish even more together in 2023 and beyond.

With gratitude,



*Katia Conte*

Katia Conte  
President and Co-Founder



## OUR INSPIRATION

The **DANIELA CONTE FOUNDATION** was inspired by 8-year-old Daniela Marie Conte. Daniela was a beautiful, smart and compassionate girl who courageously fought Rhabdomyosarcoma from October 5, 2016 to March 2, 2020. On that painful March day, Daniela left an amazing legacy of love and hope that her family started in August 2020 to help other families who are going through the same journey. It is important to realize that cancer does not impact just the child fighting. It impacts the whole family, and TOGETHER the whole family fights. Because of our own experience with Daniela, we have committed program resources to help other families in their fight. If you are a cancer family, please know that Daniela Conte Foundation is here to help!

During her 4-year fight, Daniela showed us all how to live each day to the fullest, enjoying every moment. She reminded us that "giving someone a hug" would make you happy. The Daniela Conte Foundation keeps her amazing spirit alive by bringing happiness to children with cancer and their families. She knew having cancer made kids feel lonely and limited and as a result, Daniela felt empowered to help ease these feelings for kids like her who were also fighting cancer.

Since 2020, the Daniela Conte Foundation has been able to send over 100 Daniela's Butterfly Boxes™ to kids in active treatment and their siblings, and has provided In-Treatment and Memorial Support to over hundreds of families of kids with cancer, it is both humbling and truly awesome to see the impact of what you enable us to do. The assistance does so much more than 'just' pay a bill. It lessens the burden on these families so that they can focus on their child - and his or her life-or-death battle. These families know that someone cares about them. They are not alone and we know firsthand what that 'hug', that love, meant to us in the hospital. While we celebrate our impact, we must continue to care until there is a cure!



# MISSION

Providing financial assistance to families of children with cancer, raising awareness for pediatric cancer, and helping to find a cure by funding Rhabdomyosarcoma research.



Daniela Conte Foundation is proud to have been recognized with a Platinum level profile by Guidestar, the world's largest source of information on non-profit organizations. Platinum represents Guidestar's highest level of recognition and demonstrates DCF's commitment to transparent accountability to our supporters.



Daniela Conte Foundation was honored with a 2022 Top-Rated Award from Great Nonprofits.

## Daniela Conte Foundation Programs



### Daniela's Butterfly Boxes™

Special care packages delivered to hospitals or families' homes for children in active treatment and their siblings. These boxes help children fighting cancer and their families' days feel "normal" and also puts a smile on a child's face even in stressful times.



### In-Treatment Support

Financial payments that helps with rent/mortgage, medical co-pays, basic needs such as gas, groceries, utilities and more.



### Memorial Support

We work closely with funeral homes to provide assistance towards memorial cost for a child whose battle with cancer has ended.

### Support Through Awareness



The financial and emotional impact of a childhood cancer diagnosis on a family is tremendous and often overwhelming. Daniela Conte Foundation is passionately committed to increasing the awareness for understanding of childhood cancer and its impact on families through telling patients' stories. By sharing stories, photos and videos featuring DCF heroes, the financial and emotional hardships families face become tangible and relatable. A mix of communication channels including social media, website, email, advertising, public speaking engagements and public relations are utilized to demonstrate the impact Daniela Conte Foundation has on our DCF families and how others are able to help.



# \$72,000+

# DOLLARS

More than \$72,000 dollars in direct support was given to families in need.

# 150

# FAMILIES

150 families received financial support from your donations.

# 100%

# PERCENT

100 percent of eligible In-Treatment and Memorial Support request were fulfilled for families in need.

## HOW YOUR DONATIONS HELPED IN 2022



**52%**

GAS AND GROCERIES



**24%**

HOME PAYMENTS



**10%**

AUTO PAYMENTS



**8%**

UTILITY BILLS

\*OTHER = 6%



## DCF HERO SAMUEL'S STORY

On March 16, 2022, Samuel's mother Cristal took her son to see his pediatrician because a thump had formed in his throat about a week prior.

"I was worried so we took him in the next day and they told us it was a reactive lymph node. I didn't really believe that but they told us it would go away and we went home. Throughout that week he started getting more clingy and whiny, started to walk funny, tired all the time and his leg was starting to swell so I took him to see a different doctor who wouldn't let me leave until we got blood work and an ultrasound done. It was late in the afternoon so they had to find people available to get it done. I could tell he was worried and when I asked him what was wrong, he told me he wanted to rule out cancer.

By 6pm we got a call and it was confirmed that the tumor was cancerous, but they didn't know what kind and we needed to go to make an appointment with Memorial Sloan Kettering (whom we are still currently with for treatment). That was on Wednesday, March 16. That Friday we went to our appointment, explained the situation and they admitted us. We ended up staying for three weeks before he was able to go home. Our lives were turned upside down in a matter of days." said Cristal.

The childhood cancer diagnosis was devastating. Soon, Samuel and his family hit rock bottom. On March 19, he was officially diagnosed with high-risk Neuroblastoma. They started him on emergency chemo. He ended up in the ICU due to his extremely high blood pressure, was sedated for two weeks, had a tube put down his throat, and was on dialysis for a week due to the tumor in his stomach sitting on his kidney which was then injured and wasn't doing its job properly. And that's just the short version of it all.



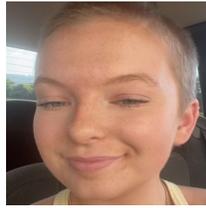
Cristal recalls the two most difficult moments during his diagnosis. "When the pediatrician said 'You'll be seeing an oncologist', my body shut down. I don't recall anything about the next several minutes. The second time was in the hospital when Samuel had jaw pain, a reaction to the chemo." she said. Heartbroken and unable to find the right words, Cristal could only hug her son.

It's been 9 months and he has had all 5 chemo rounds, reduction surgery to remove the tumor from his abdomen, one round of BMT back in August, the second round of BMT, and a very rough go at it. He has developed TMA which caused him to have high blood pressure and a lung collapse which he is currently intubated for in the ICU. He is getting better little by little every day, thank god. After this, we hope to be able to proceed with his next steps of radiation and immunotherapy once recovered.

"But one bright moment was when the Daniela Conte Foundation helped us with a mortgage payment," said Cristal. "With so many hidden medical expenses, the mortgage assistance made a big difference and gave our family some

peace of mind." And when Samuel was well enough to be at home, his spirits were raised. According to Cristal, "Samuel is a big-time feeler and a big-time extrovert. He always wanted to see his friends and family but was immunocompromised and the risk of COVID-19 was too great."

Samuel is on the road to recovery, but still has a long way to go. His family is so grateful that the Daniela Conte Foundation donors have been with them along this challenging road. His parents wrote: "When he is well and at home, he loves spiderman, cars, dinos, legos, paw patrol, dogs, stickers and just being a normal toddler playing and enjoying life. He is so well-mannered and just an overall sweet and silly little boy. He is the strongest person I know and he is loved beyond measure! He is our miracle IVF baby (only child) and we worked too hard and waited too long to have him in our lives. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers as he continues on this incredibly difficult journey of his!"



A LOOK BACK AT  
**2022**  
#WEBELIEVEINACURE







## DCF HERO BRYANA'S STORY

22-month-old Bryana loves going outside in her stroller and being on her balance bike. These are very special moments for her mom, Ashley. "We are moving to the point of leading a more normal life," said Ashley. "The community support we have received has been absolutely wonderful. We are so grateful to every person and organization that has helped us through the last year."

You may remember Bryana, who was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma in May 2022. Her mom, Ashley, was a recent veterinary school graduate at the time of Bryana's diagnosis and was unable to work for several months due to Bryana's medical needs. But thanks to the generosity of donors at the Daniela Conte Foundation, Bryana and her mom were not alone. "The Daniela Conte Foundation is part of our support team, and it means a lot," said Ashley.



Bryana has had multiple hurdles, including issues with her kidneys and a blood infection, and has a long way to go with treatments. Her family is so grateful that DCF donors have been with them along this challenging road. "I don't know how we would've survived without the help of DCF. I am forever grateful to DCF. Gas to get to and from many appointments was handled. Thank you for showing continued love and support," said Ashley.



*"After receiving the diagnosis, as a family, we had to put our lives on hold...."*

## DCF HERO WYATT'S STORY

Wyatt was a typical three-year-old boy who loved playing outside and learning. Then, in 2019, Wyatt faced constant migraines which resulted in nausea, staggering, and slurred speech. After multiple tests, Wyatt's family learned what had been causing Wyatt's symptoms: a brain tumor.

"After receiving the diagnosis, we had to put our lives on hold as a family," shared Wyatt's mom, Corby. She could no longer continue her job providing childcare for other families - resulting in a loss of income for her family - and was also forced to put her schooling on hold. Taking care of Wyatt became her full-time job.

Doctors successfully removed the mass from Wyatt's brain, but the surgery caused the left side of his brain to go into "sleep mode". It took Wyatt four months to re-learn how to walk, talk, and dress himself. "Worst of all, Wyatt did not understand what was happening to him and why he had to go through all of this." said Corby.

"The Daniela Conte Foundation has been a huge factor in our family's social and financial recovery." Corby expressed. "We received a butterfly box with a small financial gift and other materials about their programs. It was reassuring to know that he had not been forgotten and that we were not alone."

Currently, Wyatt enjoys learning through jigsaw puzzles, mazes, and math. He still has yearly MRI's but there have been no further concerns since his surgery.

"The Daniela Conte Foundation has become an integral part of our support system for Wyatt," said Corby. "The foundation has a genuine concern for Wyatt and our family. We are so happy to be involved with DCF and the wonderful people who support it."

# CHILDHOOD CANCER STATISTICS



**47**

Children are diagnosed with cancer each day in the United States

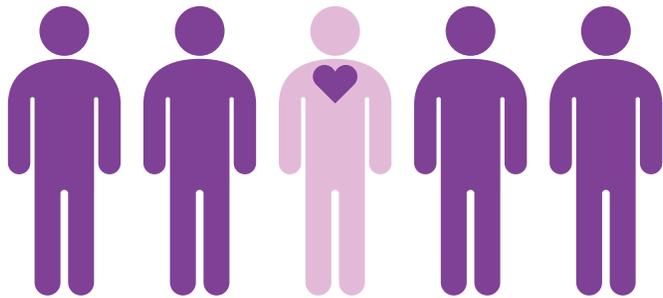


**EVERY 3 MIN**  
a family is told their child has **CANCER**



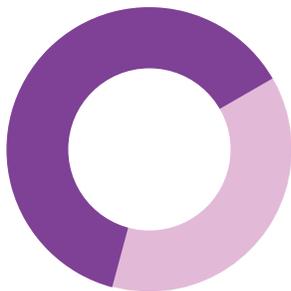
**400,000**

Children are battling worldwide some with no treatment options

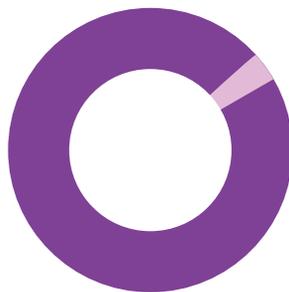


**1 in 5**

won't get the opportunity to grow up, graduate school, or just be a kid



Children make up **ONE THIRD** of our population



Currently they only get **4%** of the funds budgeted for new research



To us, these children are much greater than 4, they deserve the world

## Cancer is the #1 Killer of Children.

It kills more kids than AIDS, Asthma, Juvenile Diabetes, Congenital Anomalies & Cystic Fibrosis Combined.

## Board of Directors

**Katia Conte** | President & Co-Founder

**Anthony M. Conte** | Co-Founder & Treasurer

**Maria Galofaro** | Director of Sponsorships & Partnerships

**Lisa Amatulli** | Director of Events

**Amanda Lee** | Director of Marketing & Communications

**Anthony Conte** | Director of Strategy & Development

**Kerri Jennings** | Secretary

**Vickie Morici** | Community Outreach Coordinator

**Jessica Conte** | School Outreach Coordinator

## Advisory Board

**Ralph Marra**

**Robin Laban**



**DANIELACONTEFOUNDATION.ORG**

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