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Flying for Their Lives:

Children's Flight of Hope Raises \$920K for Children in Need of Lifesaving Medical Care
Raleigh nonprofit hosts annual Denim & Diamonds fundraiser to ensure children have access to specialized care.



RALEIGH, N.C., November 8, 2022 – On Friday, Raleigh-based nonprofit Children's Flight of Hope (CFOH) hosted its annual Denim & Diamonds fundraising event. The organization raised \$920,000 to support its mission to provide air transportation for children in need of specialized medical care that might otherwise be out of reach. These flights offer access to specialists, children's hospitals, and cancer centers most qualified to treat rare conditions. For CFOH families, these facilities are often out of reach, hundreds of miles away from their homes, and transportation to get to them is usually not covered by health insurance.

“The incredible generosity of our supporters and donors is changing and saving lives every day – and this event allows us to serve more families in need,” said Pat Nelli, President and CEO of Children's Flight of Hope. “With these donated resources, we will continue to expand awareness and mission delivery to ensure more children receive the care they desperately need and deserve – bringing hope and healing to both them and their families.”

At this year's Denim & Diamonds gala, Children's Flight of Hope was proud to highlight the story of one of its frequent flyers, Ashlyn, age six. In 2020, Ashlyn was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma, a rare cancer that affects the sympathetic nervous system and has since flown with CFOH 33 times.

“Once Ashlyn received the correct diagnosis of Neuroblastoma, I knew we had to get her to Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York City. I didn’t know how that would happen without any income at the time,” said Ashlyn’s mom, Julie. “I can honestly say that I don’t think Ashlyn would be with us today if it weren’t for her care at Memorial Sloan Kettering. We are so grateful to everyone who supports Children’s Flight of Hope for all they do for my family, for Ashlyn, and for all the other kids fighting for a chance to grow up.”

Ashlyn is one of about 700 children who are diagnosed with Neuroblastoma each year. Most Neuroblastoma cases are diagnosed before the age of five. Memorial Sloan Kettering has a unique course of treatment for children with Neuroblastoma and has changed outcomes for this previously lethal cancer but is over 500 miles away from Ashlyn’s home in Raleigh. The organization anticipates providing 1,200 flights in 2022. In 2021, CFOH welcomed 113 new families; in 2022 that number is 220 year-to-date. CFOH currently serves children in 48 states and 32 countries and plans to deliver 1,600 flights in 2023.

“We know that a diagnosis of childhood cancer affects the entire family,” said Nelli. “From volunteers, donors, sponsors, and airline partners – it takes an entire crew to help get treatment off the ground. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide hope and healing to families like Ashlyn’s.”

Children’s Flight of Hope hosted its Denim & Diamonds event at the Angus Barn Pavillion in Raleigh on November 4th, 2022. The event featured a silent auction, raffle for a rare collection of Pappy Van Winkle bourbon, a spirited live auction, and a generous request for donations. To learn more or to donate, please visit www.childrensflightofhope.org.

About Children’s Flight of Hope

Children’s Flight of Hope (CFOH) believes distance and the cost of travel should never prevent a child from receiving needed care. The children served are facing rare, complex and serious diagnoses that cannot be treated close to home. Children’s Flight of Hope provides air travel to specialized medical care for children in need for the duration of the healthcare journey, no matter the distance, no matter the frequency. Children’s Flight of Hope is a 501(c)(3) and delivers their mission through the generosity of others.

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