

Guardian Angel Gazette

From the Founder/President's Desk



Anita Gilford, RN, MSN

Are you ready for some fun and relief from the current tough times we are all going through? Well, now is your chance! Don't miss this opportunity. I am very proud to announce that the Saintsations have chosen Angels Place once again as one of their charities! So, please dust off your "stepping out clothes" and join us at our "Under Angels Wings Fundraiser" on Friday, October 30th, 2009!!! It will be held at the Airport

Hilton Hotel by Armstrong Airport in Kenner. A divine sit down dinner will be served, and our Saintsations will model Stein Mart fashions. We will also have a silent and live auction.

I would like to give a big THANK YOU to the following committee members who have worked so hard and given of their time, talents, and treasure) to help us:

Joan Ingram-Event chair; Janet McCormick, Co-Chair; Suzette Herpich, Co-Chair; Committee Members: Ann Batt, Lisa Baynham, Tammy Sponge, Anne Favret, Anita Gilford, Carolyn Landwerlin, Jamie Moreau, Cindi Reynolds, Susan Richards, Joy Shane, Debbie Stagni and Wanda Tiblier.

Tickets are \$75.00 each. Would you consider being a sponsor? Please call our office, 504-455-2620 for information. Only 300 tickets will be sold. Our Angels Place honorees are: **Scott Fujita of the New Orleans Saints; Sheila Stroup of the Times Picayune; Captain Don Rieder of NOBRA; David Abbernante of HRI Properties; Larry Graham of Amedisys; and Judge Glenn Ansardi.**

We are also asking for silent and live auction items. Please remember that Angels Place does "not charge a penny for our local children's respite and end-of-life services!! We give compassionate "respite" visits to our ill Angels' Place children and relief to the exhausted mom and/or dad, who stay at their child's bedside. We help them "battle for their lives" from life-threatening illnesses. At the present time, our census includes 102 children which totals 428 adding in their parents and siblings!

All these services and many more yearly events are offered free of charge for our Angels Place children: A Spring Picnic at **St. Martin's Episcopal School**; a Zephyr's baseball game hosted by **Captain Don Rieder** and the **NOBRA**; Back-to-School Supplies drive; Thanksgiving baskets and/or **Wal Mart** cards to buy their dinners; and our huge Christmas Party at **Archbishop Rummel High School** hosted by **Operation Head-Start** students and teacher/Angels' Place Board Member **Mark Firmin**. We need donated "new toys" for our children and their siblings beginning in December brought to our office at 4323 Division Street, Suite 206, Metairie, La. 70002.

In conclusion: We want to thank all of you who care and share your many blessings with us and our ill children and families. It is truly a community spirit that sustains Angels Place. Blessings to you and your family!

Sincerely, Anita Gilford, RN, MSN,
Founder and Executive Director



Mary Kantlehner, Childrens Program Director

As hurricane season is (hopefully) winding down, several of our children will start preparation for Bone Marrow Transplants (BMT). This is a physically & emotionally taxing procedure for the child & family. The preparation regimen is tough, several days of heavy doses of chemotherapy & radiation to destroy the existing BM & any cancerous cells as well as having a central line inserted. It is a very debilitating experience, like a severe flu, with nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea & extreme weakness for several weeks. After transplant, is a very critical time. The child has no immune system as they wait for the new BM to engraft. They can only be in contact with minimal people and everyone is masked, gowned & gloved, all at a time when you need human contact, family, friends & familiar surroundings. Our children are so brave. I am sure you will enjoy reading Ahliyahs story. She is doing great and started back at school.



Gabby

Micah, a 12 year old boy, is our next child undergoing transplant. Micah is well aware of what is ahead of him as he had a transplant last year and it did not engraft. Micah also had to evacuate for Hurricane Gustav in the midst of his transplant. He has faced unbelievable hurdles in the past year and is ready for his second chance. If anyone would like to donate some DVD's (Spiderman2,



Kylan

Transformers2, and Step-Up2) or Nintendo DS games (Many Ninjas), I know Micah would really appreciate them. Please contact me at the office regarding this.

Continued on page 2

Mark Your Calendar!

Under Angels' Wings Fundraiser

An evening of Fun, Food, Fashion & Entertainment

Benefiting Angels' Place

Featuring

Stein Mart Fashions modeled by the Saintsations

Live & Silent Auctions

"saintsational" entertainment

Friday, October 30, 2009 Doors Open—7:00 PM

Airport Hilton Hotel, Kenner, LA

Tickets: \$75 each

Corporate Sponsors needed!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Angels' Place

4323 Division Street, Suite 206, Metairie, LA 70002

Phone 504-455-2620 FAX 504-455-2622

www.angelsplace.org

Wing Claps

3rd District Kiwanis for a kind donation of school supplies
 AORN, Chapter 1902 for a kind donation from raffle
 AT&T Advertising Solutions for donating attraction tickets for our kids
 Auxillary Metairie Council No. 1 for a kind donation
 Carol Bandera for a kind donation of school supplies
 Rey Bienvenu for a kind donation
 Nathalie Cordes for a kind donation of school supplies
 Zedyda Craighead for a kind donation for school supplies
 Gail Crysop for a kind donation of school supplies
 Evelyn Faucheux for a kind donation of school supplies
 Kelly Fambro for a kind donation
 Jake Fruchtnict for a kind donation
 Mary Lou Shannon-Fueast for a kind donation
 The GAP, Lakeside Mall for a kind donation of school supplies
 Gwen Gutierrez for a kind donation of school supplies
 Frederick R. Heebe for a kind donation
 Hilton N.O. Airport, Kristin Wahl for a kind donation of school supplies.
 Donald and Carol Lyn Hoffman for a kind donation
 Miranda Joy & Gabrielle Grace Howard for a kind donation of school supplies.
 Janet Keller for a kind donation and for school supplies
 Thomas & Mary Kennedy for a kind donation for school supplies
 Thomas & Connie Kitchen for a kind donation for school supplies
 Moisant Kiwanis Club for a kind donation of school supplies
 Konnect With My Eyes for a kind donation of school supplies
 Munholland United Methodist Women's Assoc. for a kind donation
 Richard Palisi for a kind donation
 Pontchartrain Bone & Joint Clinic for a kind donation of school supplies
 Pontchartrain Lions Club for a kind donation of school supplies
 OYO (On Your Own) Club for a kind donation
 St. Josephs Hospice for donations from their Bake Sale
 St. Matthew the Apostle School for a kind donation of school supplies
 The Brown Foundation for a donation of school supplies
 Mr. & Mrs. W. Martinez for a kind donation of school supplies
 Beatrice Mestayer for a kind donation for school supplies
 Judee Morovich for a kind donation of school supplies
 New Orleans Association of Health Underwriters for a kind donation.
 Anna Richoll for a kind donation for school supplies
 Dr. Anita Prieto for a kind donation of a check for school supplies
 Shirley Trahant for a kind donation
 Felicia Usner for a kind donation

Childrens Program Director Report continued from page 1

Congratulations to Gabby who finally got home to Mandeville after six months of treatment in New York, at Sloan -Kettering. Continue on your recovery Gabby. Also congratulations to baby Kylen on his recent BMT & to Daniel who received a new shoulder. Every child and family's story /circumstances are unique but all face life with a positive attitude. Their absolute priority is the health & wellbeing of their child.



Daniel

Having said that I know of many who are in dire financial need, facing homelessness and living on hotdogs. We always welcome donations of gift cards from popular stores, like Wal-Mart as they really do help families in need. Looking ahead, if you have a group of friends or colleagues that would like to either adopt a family or contribute to our toy drive at Christmas, I assure you will be directly bringing joy and relief to a family. As always please keep our children & their families in your thoughts & prayers.

Thank you Savannah Stonerbreaker, Julianna Crozier, Amanda Kruse, Matthew Couch and our newsletter posse, Weezie Goudet, Pat Duplantis and Mel Ankrum for volunteering hours to Angels' Place.

A special thanks to our two Angels, Carl Schneider and Brendin Harb for always being there for our computer system needs and for being great friends of Angels' Place.

School Supplies Courtesy of Love

Nothing stops the generosity of Angels' Place contributors—not the economy—nothing!

We thought we wouldn't have enough school supplies to give to our children and their siblings to start out the school year. We were wrong. Day by day supplies were dropped off at our office and checks came in. We were even able to buy extra supplies with the check donations



as well as purchase gift cards for families living too far to pick up their supplies. Loving hearts saw the need and responded with their usual generosity.

Angels' Place families are always so thankful for the break they get from the expenses to start the new school year. They know people care about their hurts and needs. Some have mentioned that they didn't know what they would do without the help of the Angels' Place school supplies.

We could not offer this relief if it wasn't for our kind and generous donors who, every year, appear at our Angels' Place door with a helping hand. We mentioned our donors in our "Wing Claps" If we missed anyone, please let us know.

From Angels' Place and all our families we say thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your kindness.



Ahliyahs Amazing Story



Ashley and Ahliyah

I'm writing to let families know how things can be with a very sick child. My daughter, **Ahliyah**, was diagnosed with Leukemia (ALL) in December of 2002 when she was two years old.

The Friday after Thanksgiving in 2002, we went to the emergency room at **Childrens Hospital** in New Orleans because Ahliyah was running high fevers, looked very pale and wouldn't eat. Many tests were run, and on December 2 she was diagnosed with cancer. The doctor tried to explain what was going on but everything he said became a blur—my head was spinning. I pulled myself together and had to face it—Ahliyah would be fighting for her life.

Ahliyah went through two and a half years of Chemotherapy. Not only was her life changed, mine was too. I had to drop out of school and quit working because I had to be there for my child. The road was very rough. We were in and out of the hospital. It was a very painful time for us. In June 2005, she went into remission. We gave her an "I Survived Cancer" party and she did well for almost four years. One night, Ahliyah said her neck was bothering her and when I looked there was a big knot on the left side. Our doctor at Childrens Hospital ran a battery of tests on Ahliyah after which I was told that the cancer had not only returned, but she also had another cancer called Hodgkin's Lymphoma. The doctor said she had never seen a case where someone got both cancers at the same time. I was absolutely devastated—overcome with nausea. Why? How? I asked myself. I questioned God, wondering why he had allowed this to happen to my baby girl. I had so many questions but no answers.

Ahliyah started treatment after her eighth birthday in October and our lives were put on hold—no plans could be made—we just lived one day at a time. In January 2009, Ahliyah received a bone marrow transplant (BMT). A BMT is a transfer of blood cells from a donor to the patient. I was tested, my son, **Terry**, and my daughter, **Ahlejah**, were tested to see if we qualified to be donors. My five year old daughter, Ahlejah, was the only donor match for her big sister. What a blessing! Ahliyah had a new chance at life.

Preparing for a transplant is quite a process. Ahliyah went through four days of radiation and four days of chemotherapy. February 18, 2009 was her transplant day.

The bone marrow transplant was not as bad as I expected. A machine collects the donor blood and processes it, separating the cells from the blood and the blood is returned to the donor's body. Days before the transplant the donor is given a shot that makes the cells in the body multiply. It takes three days, four hours a day (depending on how much is needed) for this to happen. For all the preparation, the procedure only takes about a half hour.

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In Loving Memory Of

- Helen and Gus Hotstream** in memory of **Maryann Bienvenu**
- Tom and Mary Kennedy** in memory of **Roger Doucette**
- Metairie Art Guild** in memory of **Mary Ann Bienvenu**
- Yvonne and Rene Naccari** in memory of **Maryann Bienvenu**
- Kathleen and Noël Pilié** in memory of **Bridget Guidry**
- Lanny and Marilyn Higgins** in memory of **Oris Lee**
- Kathleen and Noël Pilié** in memory of **Gay Pilié**
- Jodi Schwing** in memory of **Lauren Schwing**
- Tom and Mary Kennedy** in memory of **Bernice Tessitore**
- Kathleen and Noël Pilié** in memory of **Rena White**
- Anna Rickoll** in memory of **Walter M. Whiteside**
- Richard and Ann Rushing** in memory of **George and Tot Lewis**

WIN!

**A Man's Handsome Oyster
Perpetual Rolex Watch
\$6,500 value
Drawing : October 30, 2009
Tickets only \$10 each**



Rolex Watch donated by ALLFAX

**Please make checks payable to Angels' Place—
Tickets will be mailed to you or call the office for
VISA charge.**

**Proceeds go to Angels' Place
4323 Division St., Ste. 206, Metairie, LA 70002
(504) 455-2620**

Ahliyahs Amazing Story continued from page 3

My heart broke as I watched Ahliyah with a central line inserted in her neck and Ahlejah with a central line in her chest. My five year old daughter pouring life into her big sister. It was the beginning of a NEW day. We had a sign on our hospital room door that everyone signed letting Ahliyah know they were there for her. It truly was an experience of a lifetime.

Ahliyah has another chance at life now even though she had become diabetic, had high blood pressure and numerous other health issues that developed because of the medications she was taking. Once she was off the medications, the problems went away. Halleluiah!

In June, Ahliyah was tested and the doctor told me that her cells were 100 percent her donors cells—her little sisters cells. I was so happy I cried. Ahliyah asked why I was crying and I told her those were tears of pure joy.

Everything is going well for her even though she still has to wear a mask to keep germs away from her. She is on antibiotics and five medications but that is better than the 13 medications she was taking.

I asked Ahliyah how she felt about the BMT process. She said she didn't mind it as long as she wasn't sick any more and that she was very happy her sister was a match.

The bone marrow transplant was not as bad as I expected.



Ashley and Ahlejah

Ahliyah is in remission once again. Having a second chance at life is truly a blessing—given ANY chance is a blessing. The road is never easy when your child is seriously sick. It is up to us as parents, caregivers and family members to be there for our kids. They can't go through it alone—it's hard, stressful, depressing and painful. The sick child doesn't know what to expect. We have to reassure them, let them know it's going to be Okay, give them lots of hugs and kisses and answer any questions they may have. If we don't have the answers—we must find them so our child will trust what we say. We MUST stay strong although there were times when Ahliyah was stronger than me. I'd say to myself, "my daughter is being stronger than me and she's the one who is sick! I'd better get my act together!" I couldn't let her see me weak.

Everyone on 4 West at Childrens Hospital knows Ahliyah. She is a very popular little girl. She is outgoing, outspoken and can make anyone smile and laugh. She is true sunshine.

Remember one last thing, He doesn't give us more than we can handle.

Ashley
Ahliyahs mom

Calendar—2009

October 30—Under Angels' Wings Fundraiser

November—Thanksgiving

December 13—Angels' Place Christmas Party



Angels' Place
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Nonprofit Org.
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Metairie, LA
Permit Number 784

A non-profit organization that provides supportive services to seriously and terminally ill children and their families.