

⊕ FIGHT CHILDHOOD CANCER

# INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH HOPE. COURAGE. LOVE.

*On a mission for a cure.*

**THOUGH THIS IS A CHILD'S STORY, IT IS CERTAINLY NO FAIRY TALE.**

Supporting Snowdrop helps give these families back their Hope. They need our support to continue to have Courage in their battles. We need your support to continue to offer our organization as a community where these families can find Love.



Running For

Isaiah



## SNOWDROP FOUNDATION WI

# A STORY OF LOVE

Where Cancer meets  
Courage, and lives are changed.

A child is born, and his family is blessed with an immeasurable amount of love and joy. A son, grandson, nephew and cousin. Isaiah has many roles to fill, many laughs to share, many hearts to touch.

This child, however, also has a battle to fight — one that disrupts his family, threatens his life and creates a question mark about his future. Isaiah, at 22 months old, is diagnosed with Stage 4 Neuroblastoma — a rare form of childhood cancer.

“When you get the diagnosis of cancer, the fear of no future is the biggest,” said Barbie Patterson, Isaiah’s mom. “At the end of the day, we want our children to have a future.”

Isaiah’s road ahead would include a year-and-a-half long treatment, including chemotherapy, stem cell harvest and transplant, surgery and antibody therapy. Finally, at the age of 4, he’s able to resume life as a kid.

His life now includes the love and support of a larger network of families he’s met along his journey thanks to Snowdrop Foundation WI.

Snowdrop is a nonprofit organization fighting for a cure for

childhood cancer and a future for the child diagnosed, while creating a sense of family and a support network for the families fighting this disease.

“When your child has a battle in front of them, particularly with the word cancer — it’s a great thing to know that you have so much support, because you are supporting your child who is battling this monster,” Barbie said. “We just want a cure. Snowdrop is looking for a cure — they’re trying to get dollars for research, and I think it’s going to help get a cure.”

While Isaiah is living cancer free now, Neuroblastoma is a very relapse-able cancer.

For survivors of childhood cancer, there’s often risk of other long-term, life-changing side effects of treatment and this lingering threat of return.

Supporting Snowdrop helps give these families back their **Hope**.

They need our support to continue to have **Courage** in their battles.

We need your support to continue to offer our organization as a community where these families can find **Love**.

## FROM THE BEGINNING

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Our organization's journey to advocacy for childhood cancer awareness and research starts with the story of founders Brian and Laura Gruender, and their infant daughter. Makelie was born with a giant nevus on top of her head, which would require a series of surgeries to remove.

While at the hospital for one of these surgeries, Laura met a mother preparing to leave the hospital to take her son - battling cancer - home, on hospice care. Seeing that grief changed their lives forever.

During the course of Makelie's surgeries at Children's Hospital in Chicago, Laura and Brian experienced volunteerism first hand. They also met many more children who were battling issues much more serious than Makelie's. Some of those children did not make it through their struggle with the illness.

"The entire experience rocked us to our core," Laura said. "We knew we had to do something more in our community to give back."

One of the ways Brian has felt motivated to make an impact is through athletic events dedicated to children in the fight. In 2012, Brian was selected to be a part of the "Worth the Hurt" group, the charity arm of the San Francisco Marathon. Brian was one of six athletes selected from across the U.S. to participate.

It was through this experience that Brian met Kevin Kline, President of Snowdrop Foundation Texas. As soon as he heard the story of Snowdrop Texas, he quickly befriended Kevin and introduced Laura to Snowdrop's mission.

Together, Laura and Brian watched the Dear Chelsey documentary — a film that documents a teenage girl's battle with cancer and how that led to Kevin Kline launching the Snowdrop Foundation.

They were inspired, and connected with the Texas chapter. In October 2012, Snowdrop Foundation WI was born.



*"The entire experience rocked us to our core. We knew we had to do something more in our community to give back."*

- Laura Gruender,  
Snowdrop WI Founder

Just a few months earlier, Teo Lorona, at age 15, underwent surgery to remove a Germinoma Brain Tumor. Chemotherapy and radiation would follow. Meeting Brian and becoming part of the newly forming Snowdrop community restored hope for the Lorona family.

"It was very easy to drown our sorrows and turn to alcohol for us," said Topher Lorona, Teo's Dad, about his son's diagnosis. "Then, meeting Brian — I don't know if it was so much Brian or Snowdrop themselves — but just that idea that you can find a positive outlet for that grief and anxiety that you're dealing with.

"It's remarkable," he said. "The community that he and Laura have pulled together — it's just remarkable."

Brian ran the Houston Marathon in January 2013, with pictures of Teo on his back. In 3 years, Brian, the Snowdrop Board Members and other Snowdrop athletes and supporters have logged thousands of miles for kids and Snowdrop families battling cancer.

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## Scholarships

Teo is now a senior in high school, and cancer free. As he thinks about college after graduation, his dad says they look forward to the opportunity provided by Snowdrop Foundation WI's scholarship program.

Our organization dedicates 40 percent of its funds to scholarships for childhood cancer patients and survivors. The average scholarship amount is \$2,500. In awarding a specific amount to a child, our organization's committee considers the needs of each applicant, the severity of their diagnosis and how that applicant is giving back to the committee.

Emma Paulson, diagnosed with Leukemia at 16, was among the first recipients of the funding from the scholarship program.

Dealing with her own diagnosis, Emma didn't want much to do with other people "in the cancer world." She wasn't interested in knowing other individuals fighting cancer or their families. Meeting Snowdrop helped give her that extra dose of positivity to push forward and start connecting with others in her situation.

She has since developed an ongoing relationship with the organization.

*"Whenever we meet new families at the hospital, we always tell people about Snowdrop and we kind of brag about them. The scholarship definitely helped us financially after all those medical bills for all those years, being able to go to a school for a career for all that I love."*

*- Emma Paulson, diagnosed with Leukemia at 16*

Emma is studying nursing and hopes to focus on pediatric oncology.

## Research Funding

Unfortunately, not all kids experience the milestones Emma is now enjoying. In fact, Cancer is killing too many of our children: it's the second leading cause of death in kids — after accidents.

Major advancements in treatments in recent decades have increased survival rates, but this will not prove to be enough as the number of kids diagnosed with invasive pediatric cancers continues to rise.

There's a serious lack of federal funding — only 4% of all federal dollars for cancer research are dedicated to childhood research — and we need to help before it's too late. Snowdrop Foundation WI dedicates 60% of its annual funds towards clinical trials.

Each year, the Snowdrop Foundation WI board members personally select a doctor from a list of clinical trials provided by Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. In January 2015, Dr. Michael Burke applied a \$21,000 grant from our organization to a clinical trial focused on improving survival rates for children with acute leukemia and needing an organ transplant.

The study involved four patients, three of which saw improved results from the trial. "This trial offers families a study that may improve the chance of survival for their children," Burke said. "Without the support from foundations like you, these local investigator initiated studies would never get off the ground and the lives of the children they may impact would remain a hope and dream rather than a reality."

Reality is, the average age of death for a child battling cancer is:

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**WE CAN'T CONTINUE  
TO LET THIS HAPPEN.**



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

# SNOWDROP IS FAMILY

Snowdrop Foundation WI is about **Hope. Love. Courage.** For its families, for their children, *for a cure.*

### Research Funding & Scholarships

Since its inception in 2012, Snowdrop Foundation WI has provided \$61,500 in funding for its specific causes:

- \$43,000 in funds raised for research to find a cure.
- \$18,500 in scholarships provided to childhood cancer survivors.

### Charitable Donations

Every holiday season, the organization holds the Snowdrop Toydrop, collecting toys to donate to Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. Snowdrop Foundation WI has collected 4,000 toys to date.

### Community Events

Snowdrop Foundation WI holds events throughout the year to build community and raise funds to meet its goals.

Our attendance shows the reach our organization has, and it continues to grow.

- Courage Over Cancer: A 5K fundraiser, the largest attendance in the 3 years of the event totaled 400 attendees, including about 60 local families.

- Event fundraising success: Our largest event to-date raised \$12,000, \$7,200 of which was donated to research, and \$4,800 to scholarships.



*"It's just selfless acts of love and courage and hope that they have within them. They're like angels on earth, they're trying to help our children to find a cure. It's those things that make life go 'round, it's those things that make a difference."*

*- Barbie, Isaiah's mom*

## HOW TO HELP

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Success is not a destination but a journey. Snowdrop Foundation WI's needs continue to evolve as the organization gains a stronger foothold in the Fox Valley and the fight against childhood cancer.

There are major expenses involved with fundraising events put on for the general public each year. These events have always been successful, but the expenses are real: administrative costs, T-shirt expenses, food, advertising, printing and so forth.

As Snowdrop Foundation WI meets more and more families, we need to raise additional funds to ensure scholarship dollars are available for childhood cancer survivors, and that our organization continues to donate a healthy sum to a doctor at Children's Hospital.

### **A Free Option to Make a Difference**

Snowdrop Foundation WI is enrolled in United Community, a program that works with local businesses to donate a percentage of purchases as cash back to nonprofit foundations. The program includes 400 area businesses, and it's free to register. Visit [www.ucmission.com](http://www.ucmission.com) and click "Join Now." Choose to support "Snowdrop Foundation Wisconsin" when registering, and our foundation will receive 0.5-10% cash back on the purchases you make. .

### **Help us afford event expenses.**

In-kind donations, grants and sponsorship opportunities are a great help in overcoming these expenses. Donations can be made online via Givezooks (<http://bit.ly/DonateToSnowdrop>) or via mail to:

Snowdrop Foundation WI  
4910 N. Fuji Drive  
Appleton, WI 54913

### **Contribute to research funding & scholarships**

Follow us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on our upcoming events, and then attend. These events are main sources of fundraising for Snowdrop Foundation WI and your attendance leaves a big mark.

### **Join forces in supporting our cause**

We touch a lot of community members. A corporate partnership or sponsorship offers a mutually beneficial path to supporting our programs and future growth. Your organization's dedication to Snowdrop Foundation WI helps us offset our event costs and further our mission. To join forces, start a conversation by e-mailing [brian@snowdropfoundation.org](mailto:brian@snowdropfoundation.org).

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