



FUND NEWS

Empathy. Understanding. Hope.

11TH ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

THE FUND ACROSS TENNESSEE

Memphis • Nashville • Chattanooga

Last year, we were pleased to announce our expansion into three new hospitals and two new cities. Now that we have a year under our belt in our new locations, we are excited to share how our reach into each of these institutions has impacted hundreds of families throughout Tennessee who are suffering from the strains and struggles that accompany childhood illness.

NASHVILLE'S MONROE CARELL JR. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AT VANDERBILT:

Upon our arrival into Nashville in October 2017, we hit the ground running and have yet to look back. Close to 600 people in the Nashville area have been supported by the Forrest Spence Fund in one short year. Families with a hospitalized child receive aid through care bags and individual payments to help families make ends meet.

Our Institutional Support program in Nashville allows us to walk side by side with Monroe Carrell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt to assure that non-medical needs are met. We have provided non-medical items off the hospital's wish list such as swings, bouncy seats and other items that are essential to a child's development, well-being and recovery. Through this program, we also provide caregivers with snack bags for nourishment to fuel them during long days in follow up clinic visits. To show our appreciation for the love and care families receive from the staff through their tireless work, we deliver bags filled with goodies to staff at the hospital each month.

Premature babies in the NICU are gifted celebratory



bags filled with developmental items once they reach their full-term age of 40 weeks to promote lifelong growth and learning. These are just a few of the ways we have provided support to the families and institution in Nashville.

The loss of a child or a life altering diagnosis is one of the most challenging circumstances a family might face. We understand that being equipped with positive coping techniques during life's most difficult journeys is vital to the welfare of the entire family. We walk the difficult road of grief with families and pay for 100% of counseling costs following the death or complex diagnosis of a child. Families grappling with the reality of childhood illness in the Nashville area receive up to twelve grief counseling sessions at no cost due to the Forrest Spence Fund counseling program. Julie Burton, Social Worker at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt has seen firsthand how the Forrest Spence Fund works to support families at every level during their most difficult days. "The Forrest Spence Fund recognizes that financial stressors in the form of bills and concrete resources only account for a

portion of our families' needs. As a result, they work diligently to make sure the emotional needs of our families are being met as well. Our parents often don't have insurance and/or financial means to pay for counseling services to help them cope with their grief and loss. Forrest Spence Fund not only pays for the counseling services, but they alleviate the extra burden for our parents by finding them a therapist near their home and initiating the start of services for them. Having this resource has been extremely helpful to our families and we are grateful they have helped meet a need that was not previously easy to coordinate and finance."

Childhood illness poses a financial setback for many families. Caregivers often miss work to care for their child and have mounting medical bills in addition to their day to day financial responsibilities. Our financial grant program is in place to help the families with the most need receive the financial support they need to help make ends meet and get back on their feet following a child's illness. Families who qualify for a grant can receive up to \$5,000. With the assistance of our grant program, families in Nashville who have found themselves in a dire financial situation following their child's illness, feel an immediate relief from our grant program.



In September 2018, we hosted our inaugural event, "Friends for Forrest" to raise awareness and funds to further our reach in Nashville.

"Friends for Forrest" was an emotional evening to honor the legacy of a short life that has impacted so many. Those in attendance learned about the importance of the work done by the Forrest Spence Fund from Brittany and David Spence as well as a grieving mother who has been on the receiving end of our resources. The evening was a touching testament to the work being done to assist families with a critically or chronically ill child. Attendees were

treated to a performance by award winning country music songwriter, Tim Nichols. While enjoying the music in the rolling Nashville hills under a beautiful star lit night, those in attendance dined on delicious food and drinks from Nashville area restaurants. The event raised over \$100,000 for the Forrest Spence Fund in Nashville and will help secure our future in the Nashville community.

CHATTANOOGA'S CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AT ERLANGER:

In 2017, we were approached by the pediatric medical community in Chattanooga with a plea to spread our wings and support families in this region of the state. Our services are unique and the pediatric medical community in Chattanooga saw a need for what we do to help families survive during their darkest days. We were excited at the opportunity to take on this new city, learn about the struggles specific to families in the Chattanooga area and provide the services this community so desperately needs. With the support of our friends in the Chattanooga pediatric medical community, we have had the ability to help over 1,200 families. We have utilized our Individual Needs program to provide families in need with meal vouchers to off-set the cost of eating meals in the hospital cafeteria. We have provided gas cards to assist families in getting to and from the hospital and assist families with their financial strains by covering the cost of individual bills. Our Institutional Support program provides Celebration Bags to celebrate milestones alongside premature babies and their families, snack bags for families during long days in clinic visits and we have provided over 300 items off the hospital's wish list to support all aspects of a child's recovery.

In 2019, we are expecting large growth in the Chattanooga location of the Forrest Spence Fund.

We are thrilled to have the opportunity to add new forms of support which will include counseling and financial grants, while increasing our outreach across our current programs. Through our Institutional Support program, we will renovate the family kitchen inside of Children's Hospital at Erlanger. Once the renovation is complete, it will be more user friendly for families who are caring for a hospitalized child, and we are honored that it will lovingly be known as the Forrest Spence Fund Family Kitchen. Ashley Allen, Family Advisory Leader for Children's Hospital at Erlanger, has seen the direct impact the Forrest Spence Fund has made on so many families in the Chattanooga area, "Forrest Spence Fund has been an unprecedented resource for the families at Children's Hospital at



Erlanger. It is overwhelming to have such a compassionate organization whose heart is in serving families in times of need. Being able to directly see the families impacted by the Forrest Spence Fund will forever be some of my most cherished moments in my life.”

Along with adding new programs, we are thrilled to expand our staff as we are seeking to hire a Development Director based in Chattanooga. The Development Director will be familiar with Chattanooga and the needs unique to its families. This will assure that we are providing the services that are most beneficial to those in the Chattanooga area. The Development Director will also meet face to face with potential donors and work to secure our future in Chattanooga so that we can be a fixture in the community for years to come. We are also gearing up to host our first annual No Show Ball in Chattanooga in May of 2019.

ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL:

We are so fortunate to have this amazing institution right in our backyard. St. Jude Children's Hospital not only provides top-notch care to children in the Memphis area, they provide life-saving treatment for children all around the globe. We are humbled to have the ability to walk alongside families who come from all corners of the world as they travel through the difficult journey of a life changing diagnosis. Our goal is to assure that while children are undergoing treatment at St. Jude, their health and recovery remains their families' first and only priority. For families who need our assistance during their child's illness and hospitalization at St. Jude, we provide various forms of support through our Individual Needs and Grant programs.

Many St. Jude families have felt the relief of financial burdens as we have covered the cost of a rent/mortgage payment to aid families who are struggling in making ends meet. We pay phone bills to help families stay connected to their loved ones and their child's medical team, utility bills to assure families and their children return to a safe environment following discharge, as well as covering the cost of car repairs to help families get to and from St. Jude for treatment. Tushuna Fennell, whose child is a St. Jude patient received financial support during her child's battle with a life-threatening diagnosis. "I would like to give thanks to such a wonderful team that has helped my family and I during our financial difficulties. We are so thankful that you were able to assist us during our time at St. Jude." Each of these monetary and supportive contributions are vital for giving families the ability to focus on their child's recovery.

In 2019, we look forward to offering more families financial and emotional support as they fight childhood illnesses at St. Jude.

We are delighted with our accomplishments in assisting with the non-medical needs of critically or chronically ill children and their families throughout the Mid-South. As we look forward to our growth in all three cities, we remain committed to those we have cared for in the past. Jameta, whose daughter is a heart patient at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital is one of the thousands who have been touched by the Forrest Spence Fund. "My daughter A'zelia has been a Le Bonheur Patient since birth. My other children and I encountered the Forrest Spence Fund during a family dinner that the Forrest Spence Fund provides for families at Le Bonheur. I learned that the Forrest Spence Fund would provide assistance with my transition from living in Tupelo, MS to Memphis. Once I was able to find housing, the Forrest Spence Fund paid my rent. I needed items to make my house a home, the Forrest Spence Fund got to work and gave us furniture, house hold items, beds, a crib, and clothes for my children. When A'zelia is in the hospital, they give us meal vouchers. We have also received tickets to shows and games at the FedEx Forum. My children and I are forever grateful to the Forrest Spence Fund for the generous donations and love they have and continue to show us. The burden, stress and pressure I would have had to go through if it hadn't been for God sending his angels in disguise to help me and my children out. Thank you all it's very much appreciated, and we are forever grateful." Thanks to our generous donors and supporters, we have been able to help Jameta and thousands of families like hers throughout Tennessee.

Are you looking for a meaningful way to give back to children and families in your community?

Volunteering for the Forrest Spence Fund is a wonderful way to get involved, support families and see firsthand the difference you are making in the lives of others. Veteran Forrest Spence Fund volunteer, Leslie Rhodes is dedicated to supporting children and families who have been impacted by childhood illness, "The Forrest Spence Fund is an organization founded on a mission that is near and dear to my heart. The fund does so many great things meeting the non-medical needs for the patients and families of Le Bonheur as well as other hospitals. It is so amazing to witness firsthand all of the amazing services the fund provides. As good citizens, it is important to volunteer our time and talents and there is no other organization I would be more honored to serve. Won't you join me in doing the same? You will not regret it!" Join Leslie and the Forrest Spence Fund volunteers in a mission based on service and compassion.



ASSEMBLE CARE BAGS:

This is another wonderful opportunity for a group. There are opportunities to financially sponsor a block of bags, assemble the bags, or both!

SERVE ON AN EVENT COMMITTEE:

The Forrest Spence Fund hosts exciting fundraisers throughout the year in all three cities. Each event has a dedicated committee of volunteers working together behind the scenes to plan, execute, and engage the community. We are always looking for people with a heart for service and head for event-planning to help with:

- Forrest Spence 5k (Memphis)
- Spring for Forrest Cocktail Party & Auction (Memphis)
- No Show Ball (Memphis)
- No Show Ball (Chattanooga)
- Friends for Forrest (Nashville)

These events make our mission possible, and each one has grown to be a beloved event within the community.

OTHER WAYS TO BE INVOLVED:

- Compile Unit Appreciation bags for hospital staff
- Compile snack bags for families
- Make no sew blankets for care bags
- Host a drive to collect new books
- Donate items from our wish list
- Donate items for the Bereavement Cart
- Knit/Crochet Prayer Shawls for the Bereavement Cart
- Collect travel size toiletry items for the Comfort Cart

To volunteer and learn more visit our website at WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG



VOLUNTEER AT A MONTHLY DINNER:

Each month, the Forrest Spence Fund provides a meal to families who have a loved one hospitalized at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis. You can volunteer as an individual, or make it a group outing with friends, co-workers, church groups, etc. We need warm and welcoming people to set up the dining room, serve food, clear tables, refill drinks and help with childrens crafts and activities. This is an easy way to jump right in, with no ongoing commitment necessary. Many volunteers report that they enjoy meeting the families we serve in person and hearing their stories.

THANK YOU

THANK YOU to our incredible family of donors and volunteers who have loved and supported families in need this year. We are incredibly grateful for your donations of all kinds, in every amount. Our heart is to help families survive pediatric illness and weather the storm of grief, confusion, and fear. If you have given to the Fund and contributed to our mission of love in 2018, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



BY THE NUMBERS...

48,957 various forms of assistance for patients/families – including rent, utility bills, new tires, car notes, phone bills, meal vouchers, gas cards, care bags, and purchases of items needed for the home.

10,384 Various forms of Institutional/Hospital Support – including fulfilling wish lists of much needed items such as play mats, DVD players, bouncy seats, game systems, sound machines, swings, and crib mobiles along with our Hospital programs such as Unit Appreciation, Comfort Cart, Bereavement Cart, Snack Bags, and Celebration Bags.

143 Patients and their families received free third party counseling

\$240,000 Total funds awarded to families through financial grants

A FUND STORY - ST. JUDE:

“The Forrest Spence Fund helped ease our burdens during a very difficult time in our lives. We will forever be grateful for their generosity and kind hearts.” – *LaKisha Harris, mother to Kobe Worthan, St. Jude patient*

A FUND STORY - LE BONHEUR:

“The Forrest Spence Fund has made such an impact on the Child Life Team and the patients we serve at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital. Having the Forrest Spence Fund as a partner has helped us continue to provide opportunities for our patients and families to feel supported and cared for while in the hospital. The FSF helps us provide opportunities for kids to be kids and continue to reach and celebrate developmental milestones while they are in the hospital. We are so thankful for their support of the patients and families at Le Bonheur. –*Anna Epstein, Certified Child Life Specialist at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital*

How
to
give...



There are two easy ways to make a financial donation. The fastest way is to visit WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG and contribute via the “Donate” tab. There you can make a general donation or select a specific item such as a care bag, counseling session, or a meal voucher. You can also select the city to which you would like your donation allocated. Memphis, Nashville, and Chattanooga each have their own operating budgets and donors can choose where to send funds from the online menu as well. You may also simply mail a check in the enclosed envelope and specify a city in the memo line. Regular monthly donations are always welcome and encouraged.

For more information or to set-up an ongoing monthly donation, email: brittany@forrestspencefund.org.

NO SHOW Ball

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Get ready to go nowhere!

**\$100 INCLUDES DINNER FOR 4
DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR
(MEMPHIS AREA)**

Save-the-date

**NO SHOW BALL - CHATTANOOGA
SATURDAY, MAY 11**

A FUND STORY - CHATTANOOGA:

"It is hard to adequately put into words the impact that the Forrest Spence Fund has on Children's Hospital at Erlanger. The differences that I see go far beyond the gas cards, financial assistance, food vouchers, and bassinets (though we love and appreciate ALL of these items!).

FSF has brought our families hope and relief.

They have brought love, understanding and hope.

FSF has brought families together in ways that I had previously only imagined. As a staff member, it brings me so much joy to know that I have been equipped with the resources needed to truly be a resource to our families. I can't thank Forrest Spence enough for all that they have done and all that they continue to do. - *Katie Wilson, LMSW, Social Worker at Children's Hospital at Erlanger*

A FUND STORY - CHATTANOOGA:

Working at Children's Hospital at Erlanger we hear of many needs from our families, both inside the hospital and outside. A year ago, our Family Advisory Leader, Ashley, informed us about the FSF coming to support our hospital and families. They provided gas cards for families to drive to the hospital to be with their sick child, bassinets for babies to sleep in once home, rocking chairs for parents to hold their child, emergency organization bags for patients with tracheostomies, bouncy seats, high chairs, meal cards, breastmilk warmers, and the list goes on. It doesn't matter the patient's age, their diagnosis, their insurance status, or their socioeconomic level, FSF goes above and beyond to meet the needs of our patients and their families. Our patients, families, coworkers, and community are blessed to have their support!

- *Brooke Anderson, Nurse Practitioner,
Case Manager at Children's Hospital at Erlanger*



FSF OFFICES MOVED

After 10.5 years of having our office at Independent Presbyterian Church, we relocated in February of 2018. We are so thankful for the hospitality we received from our friends at IPC, and are so appreciative of their kindness and support throughout our tenure. We are now just a short drive down Walnut Grove inside of Chickasaw Oaks Village. This new space has allowed us to grow and offer services to families that we have dreamed of for years. We are so excited about our new location and the assistance we will be able to provide the families we serve in our new space.

OFFICE ADDRESS:

3092 Poplar Ave, Suite 15 • Memphis, TN 38111

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 8:30am-4:30pm
Wednesday: 10:00am-5:30pm

FORREST SPENCE 5K



The Forrest Spence 5k is a great event for the entire family to get involved, give back and have some fun. As one of the most popular 5k events in the city, the Forrest Spence 5k features a 5k run/walk, 1-mile fun run and 100 yard dash for kids. Participants cool down with delicious drinks, food, fun and games. In 2018, the 5k raised over \$135,000 to help families and children battling a critical or chronic illness.



SAVE-THE-DATE
12th Annual FORREST SPENCE 5K
Saturday, August 24, 2019
Memphis Botanic Garden

A FUND STORY - NASHVILLE:

"The Forrest Spence Fund has helped us by providing the financial means for us to fix both of our cars so we could travel back and forth to the hospital to see our son. After our son passed away they covered the cost of bereavement counseling for all of our family members. FSF has also helped us through friendship, kindness, and an overwhelming love.

- *Chayla Higgins, mother to Zaine who passed away in 2018*



FIFTH ANNUAL
SPRING
for
FORREST
COCKTAIL PARTY
& AUCTION

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

GRAND CAROUSEL
MEMPHIS CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Each Spring, Memphians gather to celebrate the life of Forrest and the legacy his memory has created at the annual Spring for Forrest Cocktail Party and Auction. Attendees enjoy a mouthwatering meal provided by favorite local food and drink vendors along with a silent auction. The late-night party goes into the wee morning hours and includes drinks, great music and private carousel rides at the Memphis Children's Museum. The 4th Annual Spring for Forrest raised over \$97,000.



The Forrest Spence Fund
P.O. Box 770478
Memphis, TN 38177

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Stay up to date:

Follow us on social media to learn about current volunteer needs and daily happenings with the fund.



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forrestspence5k

WWW.FORRESTSPENCEFUND.ORG

A PLACE FOR SIBLINGS

The Forrest Sibling Playroom at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital serves as a safe space for healthy siblings of hospitalized children. The playroom, which opened in 2011, serves as a place for siblings to play and take a break from the stressful hospital environment. This space also provides parents with the ability to focus on their sick child with the peace of mind that their other children are close by. The Forrest Sibling Playroom has served as a safe-haven for over 2,000 siblings.

