



Photo above taken at Race Against the Odds North Texas.

Never Give Up

My daughter Elena, who passed from brain cancer, set me on a path eight years ago to eliminate cancer from this world. Each child along the way teaches me little lessons and adds to my resolve in finding the cure. At the time Elena was diagnosed with DIPG there were zero treatment options. My husband and I were adamant that no other family would face this fate. So we told Elena’s story through the book “Notes Left Behind” and by developing The Cure Starts Now on a worldwide level to fund research that will not only find the cure to DIPG, but will be the homerun cure to all cancers both adult and pediatric.

One person entered our lives in 2014 who would change the face of DIPG and The Cure Starts Now like no one since Elena. Lauren Hill became a household name and hero to millions, but it wasn’t because of the game she played. It was because of the game changing moves Lauren Hill made in cancer research that will resonate for years to come. Lauren had a determination to be a voice for children battling the same disease and for those not yet diagnosed.

What drew Lauren to The Cure Starts Now is our revolutionary approach to funding research as efficiently as possible. We know money and time is limited for kids battling cancer. That is why we work directly with researchers to ensure the research being funded is shared, streamlined and unique in its approach to make the biggest impact.

Now thanks to Lauren’s continued efforts we are funding research at a record rate not seen in the DIPG community ever. She continues to challenge us to push beyond what we think we can do... to move research forward... to drive America to help her make this last score and find THE cure in honor of Lauren, Elena and all the kids battling cancer. How we honor Lauren, and all these children, is with the cure.

Thank you for your continued support and passion to finding the homerun cure.



Brooke Desserich
Co-Founder / Executive Director
The Cure Starts Now Foundation

Lauren Hill Inspires A Nation

College basketball player with inoperable brain tumor uses her voice to spread awareness and fund over \$1.8 million for pediatric brain cancer research.

Lauren Hill, the inspiring young woman from Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, OH was diagnosed with DIPG, a rare form of inoperable brain cancer, in November 2013. Throughout her diagnosis Lauren was a tireless advocate for the "homerun cure".

Lauren Hill captured the hearts of people worldwide in October 2014, after the NCAA granted an exemption to Mount St. Joseph University, allowing the women's basketball team to move their first game up 2 weeks so Lauren could play in her first collegiate basketball game.

Since Lauren Hill's game on November 2 at the Xavier Cintas Center, she became a worldwide inspiration. Through her efforts more than \$1,800,000 has been raised for DIPG research. But as Lauren mentioned in countless interviews, she was painfully aware that her efforts would not save her life, but will help the next child diagnosed with this deadly cancer. Lauren has used her voice for those children who are too young to speak for the need for funding research for the "homerun cure" to cancer. Her efforts inspired over 100 tribute games and fundraisers in her honor.

"I want to win this fight," said Lauren Hill, "from the beginning my motto has been to never give up, whether that means winning at basketball or at life. I want to be a voice for not only children fighting cancer, but also for all in the pursuit for a homerun cure. And if I'm not giving up, neither should we all on these children."

Throughout her battle, Lauren Hill had two dreams: to play in a collegiate basketball game and to raise \$1 million for DIPG research. Thanks to the continued support worldwide, Lauren was able to achieve both of those dreams. You can continue to help Lauren's mission by participating in your own Layup 4 Lauren Challenge this fall. Record yourself making a layup with your non-dominant hand after turning around 5 times. Why? Because this is how Lauren felt playing basketball while battling DIPG. Challenge 3 people to also take the challenge and donate to The Cure Starts Now. Learn more at www.layup4lauren.org.

Why Did Lauren Choose The Cure Starts Now?

Told by her mother, Lisa Hill.

"We'll like most things that have happened since November 20, 2013, believe it or not it was just fate."



Lauren was looking for someone close to her age that had DIPG. As you know as rare as DIPG is, it is even more rare for young adults to get it. Lauren needed someone to connect with that she could verbally compare and share experiences with. Lauren's social worker introduced Lauren to Brendan Kelly, a 24-year-old with DIPG also local here in Cincinnati.

Brendan was involved with The Cure Starts Now as ambassador for the 2013 Hyde Park Blast. He had spoken to Keith and Brooke about Lauren and recommended she be 2014 Hyde Park Blast Ambassador.

Lauren quickly agreed to get involved, as she wanted to speak out and become the voice for all the younger kids who couldn't articulate their journey. It wasn't until mid-October 2014 when Lauren's story about her dream to play college basketball broke nationally and went viral, that I knew we needed to team up with an organization that was able to assist us with a large out pouring of support that was brewing on the forefront. The Cure Starts Now was the first foundation that popped into our mind.

We knew firsthand about the desperate need for research, better treatments and ultimately the homerun cure. We teamed up on the hope that someday another child or their family wouldn't have to endure the pain, suffering and loss that DIPG inflicts with no mercy.

Looking back on our journey, it is very interesting how the right people and players for our team have always just happened into our lives at just the right time. I cannot thank The Cure Starts Now team for taking on a huge additional work load that Lauren created. \$1.6 million dollars in just 6 months is crazy awesome.

I'm also thankful to be an official part of The Cure Starts Now team. Of course this is another example of an opportunity that just happened to open up at just the right time."

Lisa



The DIPG Registry

The DIPG Registry supports innovative research and will ultimately find a cure for DIPG.

Curing cancer isn't about luck. You can't guess your way to a treatment the same way a basketball team can't will their way to a championship. Instead it's something that must be planned, researched and strategized. It requires teamwork, practice and sometimes even knowing your opponent better than they know themselves.

Lauren Hill knew this better than all of us. Diagnosed with DIPG (diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma), she forced us to not only become aware of the homerun cure for cancer that exists through The Cure Starts Now's work, but she gave a voice to the hundreds of children fighting brain cancers. The result was not only a will to "never give up" but a movement that encouraged us to win that championship through preparation, collaboration and strategy.

It works the same way with cancer research. Just as you can't win a game without knowing your opponent, the Medical Advisory Council of The Cure Starts Now in 2011 identified a key weakness in current cancer research and sought to correct it. The result was an unprecedented partnership between over 78 different institutions in over 44 countries worldwide to collect, examine and provide genomic analysis to a limited pool of DIPG samples. These efforts are called the International DIPG Registry and the SIOP European DIPG Registry, which are today models of collaboration not only within pediatric cancers, but across all forms and types of cancers.

Taking up the calling, Dr. Maryam Fouladi of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center began the difficult work of standardizing collection methods, identifying key partners with unique skillsets and advocating a registry across the world. Today, joined also by Dr. Dannis vanVuurden in Europe, they have developed a revolutionary database that will form the foundation for nearly all forms of future DIPG research.

Anticipated to initially cost \$750,000 to fund for the first three years, Dr. Fouladi and other partners including The Cure Starts Now were able to not only nearly double anticipated results but do so under budget and for an additional year beyond projections. And in 2015, the valuable research funds you contribute today will go towards an extension of the DIPG Registries through 2018, this time supported by over \$1,600,000, shared by the DIPG Collaborative, of which The Cure Starts Now Foundation is the founding member.

Through the Registry, not only will we better understand cancer, but we will also build a platform bringing together the best researchers in a way that enhances transparency, eliminates duplication and furthers collaboration. And from there our future is limitless.

"We see the Registry as a critical element of our future research program. Through it, we hope to identify cancer's weaknesses and customize future treatments to attack it." – Dr. Gavin Baumgardner, Chairman, CSN's Medical Advisory Council .



Members of The Cure Starts Now, along with Lauren Hill and her family, present Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center with a donation to the DIPG Registry in November 2014.

DIPG COLLABORATIVE FOUNDATIONAL PARTNERS



DIPG COLLABORATIVE FOUNDATIONAL SPONSORS



DIPG COLLABORATIVE SYMPOSIUM SPONSORS



A Collaborative Effort

DIPG Collaborative brings together dozens of foundations and institutions to find the homerun cure.

At the end of April, The Cure Starts Now attended the third DIPG Collaborative Symposium in Chicago, IL. The DIPG Collaborative is a collection of foundations with the shared mission of efficiently funding and inspiring diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) research, with the belief that through a cure for DIPG significant advances in other cancer research will be made.

The DIPG Collaborative Symposium was started by The Cure Starts Now four years ago. Out of this two-day meeting 80 researchers, 27 foundations and 24 chapters of The Cure Starts Now talked about new ideas in DIPG research, analyzed recent studies, and discussed how much progress has been made since the first meeting in 2011.

With our June 2015 grant deadline behind us, we are proud to say that as a collaborative effort, we funded \$3 million in research in 2015 alone. This is a tremendous benchmark in the world of DIPG, and wouldn't be possible without your support and most importantly your donations. Thanks to your continued support of The Cure Starts Now, we are one step closer to that homerun cure. To learn more about the Collaborative effort, visit www.dipg.org/homerun.



A researcher discusses his research findings during a doctor's session at the 2015 DIPG Symposium.



Discussions underway during a doctor's session at the 2015 DIPG Symposium in Chicago, IL.

Research Funded to Date

2008

St. Jude—\$25,000
Cincinnati Children's —\$50,000

2009

St. Jude—\$10,000
Cincinnati Children's —\$50,000
St. Jude—\$50,000

2010

Weill Cornell—\$91,470
Cincinnati Children's —\$75,000
Cincinnati Children's —\$35,000
St. Jude—\$35,000

2011

Sydney Children's—\$100,000
Doernbecher—\$100,000
Duke Children's—\$82,049
Texas Children's—\$100,000

2012

Cincinnati Children's —\$219,000
Stanford University—\$35,589
Texas Children's—\$100,000
St. Jude—\$15,000

2013

Children's Cancer Institute AU—\$100,000
Cincinnati Children's —\$205,000
Lurie Children's—\$100,000
Children's National Medical Center—\$99,979
Yale—\$100,000
Duke Children's—\$85,394

2013 CONT.

Monash Institute—\$100,000
Sick Kids Hospital—\$100,000
Texas Children's—\$100,000
Dana Farber—\$50,000

2014

UCSF—\$100,000
Sick Kids Hospital—\$99,400
Institute of Cancer Research UK—\$95,325
VUMC—\$32,529
Cincinnati Children's—\$176,196

2015

Sick Kid's Hospital—\$190,065
Stanford University—\$200,000
Centre for Evolution and Cancer—\$99,470
Children's National Medical Center—\$200,000
Cincinnati Children's—\$200,000
Children's Cancer Institute AU—\$145,341
VUMC, Netherlands —\$932,917
Cincinnati Children's—\$699,935
Dana Farber—\$100,000
Memorial Sloan Kettering—\$99,980
Dana Farber—\$100,000
VUMC, Netherlands —\$92,950
Texas Children's—\$200,000
Jewish General Hospital—\$100,000
Boston Children's—\$110,000
UCL Institute of Child Health—\$200,000
Children's Cancer Institute—\$145,341
Cincinnati Children's—\$100,000
Children's National—\$125,000

\$6.7 MILLION AND COUNTING...



Brooke Desserich and Lisa Hill of The Cure Starts Now present a check for \$699,935 Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center for the DIPG Registry.

2014 Annual Report

Financial Analysis

Balance Sheet

For the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2014

Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$2,474,083 ³
Investments	\$691,469
Inventory	\$83,001 ¹
Other assets - Prepaid expenses	\$72,804
Total assets	\$3,321,357

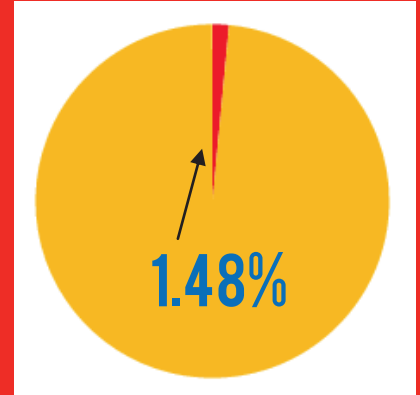
Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$34,388
Grants payable	-
Other liabilities:	
Accrued compensation	\$2,968
Deferred revenue	\$53,451
Total liabilities	\$90,807

Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$3,230,550
Total net assets	\$3,230,550
Total liabilities and net asset	\$3,321,357

TOTAL OVERHEAD EXPENSES OF THE CURE STARTS NOW



REVENUE GROWTH OVER TIME



Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets ²

For the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2014

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Revenue, Gains, and Other Support				
Contributions	\$1,750,171	\$3,960	-	\$1,754,131
In-kind donations	\$132,628	-	-	\$132,628
Special event revenue	\$1,497,569	-	-	\$1,497,569
Investment return	\$18,794	-	-	\$18,794
Net assets released from restrictions	\$3,960	(\$3,960)	-	-
Total revenue, gains, and other support	\$3,403,122	\$0	-	\$3,403,122
Expenses				
Program services:				
Medical research	\$435,496	-	-	\$435,496
Monkey in My Chair	\$102,354	-	-	\$102,354
Medical symposium	\$76,403	-	-	\$76,403
Family support program	\$80,865	-	-	\$80,865
Fundraising	\$652,192	-	-	\$652,192
Management and general	\$50,363	-	-	\$50,363
Total expenses	\$1,397,673	\$0	\$0	\$1,397,673
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$2,005,449	-	-	\$2,005,449
Net Assets - Beginning of year	\$1,225,101	-	-	\$1,225,101
Net Assets - End of year	\$3,230,550	\$0	-	\$3,230,550

¹ Inventory consists of stocking Monkey in My Chair kits to prepare for demand.

² Tax form 990 is available online and full audited financials are available upon request.

³ Net assets were high due to preparation of 2015 DIPG Symposium and grant cycle in 2015. DIPG Symposium takes place every other year.

Inspired Giving

2014 Top Individual Donors*
 (Donors not listed in alphabetical order)



Did You Know? Donors who are 70.5 years old are able to redirect their IRA minimum distribution to a qualified charity such as The Cure Starts Now until 12/31/15. **Contact us at info@thecurestartsnow.org to learn more.**

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***Categories are determined by the net value of gifts received.**

Inspired Giving

2014 Top Individual Donors*
 (Donors not listed in alphabetical order)



Did You Know? Our average donation is \$183 thanks to small community fundraisers that make a huge impact! Ask us how to start one in your city! Email events@thecurestartsnow.org

Donors \$1,000 - \$2,499 cont.

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YOUR DONATIONS IN ACTION

"Once again, thank you very much for the continued support of DIPG study and our research, and we greatly appreciate all the hard work of all the parents, the member foundations and the DIPG Collaborative."

- Dr. Li,
 Texas Children's Hospital



Won't You Be a Hero to these Kids?



**THE
CURE
STARTS
NOW**
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www.thecurestartsnow.org

Curing Cancer, One Child at a Time.

What makes The Cure Starts Now different is our commitment to research? **100% of your general donation goes directly to research** – not overhead costs. Instead, our merchandise and event sponsorships help to defray these costs, allowing you the confidence of knowing your donation goes directly to critical research. But CSN is more than about pediatric brain cancer research, we're also about finding that homerun for cancer in a battle we must win with our children first. We believe that the cure for all cancers starts with one of the most elusive cancers: pediatric brain cancer. Our hope begins with our children and their hope begins with a cure.

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**Mail completed form to 10280 Chester Road; Cincinnati, OH 45215 or
make a donation online at www.thecurestartsnow.org**

A “Super Hero” Inspiration

Four-year-old “Super Luke” inspires people all around him during his battle with cancer.

Luke Knapke is like most four-year-olds. He loves playing with trucks, pretending he’s a policeman and running around with his twin brother.

He’s an outgoing and friendly boy who says “hello” to everyone who passes by. He’s so friendly, in fact, that everyone calls him “Mr. Mayor.”

Luke is like a lot of kids, but what you might not see is that he has a rare form of brain cancer. Luke was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor, pilomyxoid astrocytoma (PMA), in July 2013, nearly six months after his second birthday.

Then, just a year later, his care team at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital discovered another tumor -- this one, slightly different from the first.

His doctors ran tests to discover that the second tumor, shaped slightly different than the original, but located near the same area of his brain, was related to a rare genetic disease, neurofibromatosis, that causes tumor growth.

After spending 61 days inpatient at Cincinnati Children’s and monthly chemo sessions, his first tumor shrank down to nothing. He’s in remission of that tumor. Once his doctor discovered the second tumor in the fall of 2014, they changed his care plan to weekly chemo treatments.

Although he has been through a lot in his short life, Luke is still a “bubbly firecracker,” as described by his mom, Jessica.

“As he walks through the halls of the hospital, he doesn’t let a stranger pass without yelling, Hi! I wish I could videotape him. It’s hysterical,” Jessica says.

Super Luke and his family are grateful for The Cure Starts Now and all they are doing to help him with his treatment by funding some of the best research around. Visit his Facebook page, Super Luke’s Journey to the Finish Line to get daily updates on how’s he’s doing.

In the words of Super Luke himself, “Bam! Pow!”



Super Luke posing with Wonder Woman at a fundraiser.



Super Luke with his super hero sidekick, Lauren Hill, at a photoshoot in January 2015.

Monkeys Helping in the Classroom

The Monkey in My Chair program is helping one mom’s daughter feel connected to her classroom. Story told by Liz C.

“My daughter, Amanda, received her monkey last week and was so excited to have it and to share it with her class! We often call Amanda “Amanda Panda” so she decided to name her monkey “Panda”. Who ever heard of a monkey named Panda? Amanda is in kindergarten at Frank Fowler Dow School #52 in Rochester, NY. It is a public school that has uniforms so Amanda’s teacher, Mrs. VanBuren, put “Panda” in a uniform shirt and introduced the monkey to the class. Some of the kindergartners know Amanda from preschool... many do not.

The monkey has already played a very important role in helping the kids understand what Amanda is going through and where she is when she can’t be at school. Last week Mrs. VanBuren read the book to the class. The next day, we knew Amanda would be gone for the morning for a chemo appointment. She ended up being gone from school for the whole day because a morning trip to the clinic turned into an all day affair. Throughout the day while we were at the clinic, Amanda’s teacher sent us a few photos of “Panda”. The photos made Amanda smile and the monkey made the class smile. I heard from a parent that the monkey really had an impact on their child as she relayed the meaning of having Panda in the chair (and on the carpet and at specials!)

When the class filed in on Friday morning, a student asked where Panda was. The conversation went something like this: The student said, “Why isn’t the monkey here today? Why isn’t it in the chair?” Mrs. VanBuren replied, “We don’t need the monkey today! Amanda will be here today! Wouldn’t you rather have Amanda here than the monkey?” The student paused a moment and said, “Hey...why doesn’t Amanda stay at school and we can send the MONKEY to the hospital?”

What a thoughtful and surprising response from someone who is only five! In just one day, the students understood that the monkey represents so much more than “just another student who couldn’t make it to school that day”. I smiled when I heard this story and thought “Oh, how I wish we could send the monkey in for chemo instead of Amanda...”

Thank you, again, for providing this for our family, for Amanda, and for her classmates. You are making a huge difference. Perhaps a bigger difference than you realize. Keep up the good work.”



Amanda’s classroom with her monkey, Panda. Through the program, each child is provided with a “monkey kit” which includes a big stuffed monkey that takes their place in school when they are unable to be there.

CSN Chapter Locations



Did You Know Fact: With 28 Locations in 2 countries, CSN is one of the fastest growing cancer charities!

- Mobile, Alabama** - Erica Bonner
- Montgomery, Alabama** – Elizabeth & Pat Adams
- Arizona** - Chris Hallsey
- Australia** – Ren Pedersen
- Northern California** – Jackie Harrison
- Southern California** - Alison Winston
- Colorado** – Katie Sarles
- District of Columbia** – Neely & Jonathan Agin
- Florida** – Sandra & Doug Howison
- Illinois** – Deb Fuller
- Indiana** - Lynn & John Whittington
- Iowa** - Mikinzie Smith
- Kansas** – Heidi Feyerherm
- Louisiana** – Erin Sarrat
- Massachusetts** – Lisa & John Mackintosh
- Minnesota** – Erika & John Hauschildt
- New Hampshire** – Alison & Jesse Thompson
- Southern New Hampshire** – Frank LaFountain
- New Jersey** – Amy & Joseph Stein
- North Carolina** – Renae & Mark Newmiller
- Ohio** – Brooke & Keith Desserich
- Pennsylvania** – Alyssa Hawranko
- Tennessee** – Jody & Dennis Desserich
- North Texas** – Michelle & Steve Bjornberg
- Southeast Texas** – Cristy Smith
- Utah** – Tiffany & Zac Huish
- Virginia** – Ginny & Dee Pritchett
- Washington** - Julie Couture



Each year The Cure Starts Now hosts an annual chapter meeting to provide brainstorming and training for its chapters. Here are some of our chapters from our 2015 Chapter Meeting in Chicago, IL. The sunglasses being worn in the photo are personalized Lauren Hill #22. Lauren was such an inspiration to each of our chapters.

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- Jen Gault, PR & Marketing Coordinator
- Lisa Hill, Event Coordinator
- Heidi Feyerherm, Monkey in My Chair Administrator
- Rick Merk, Development & Family Outreach Coordinator
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Monkey Council

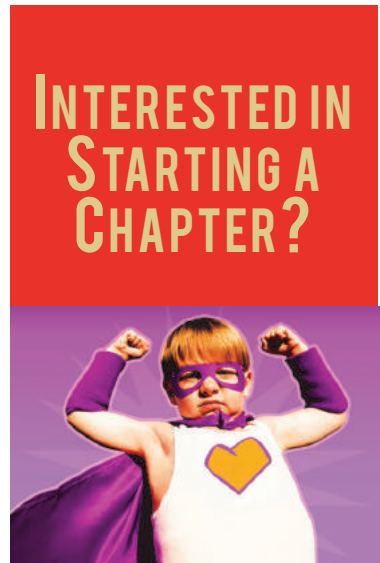
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The Cure Starts Now is quickly adding chapters all over the country and even the world.

Want to start your own chapter? Contact us at :

events@thecurestartsnw.org or call 513-772-4888

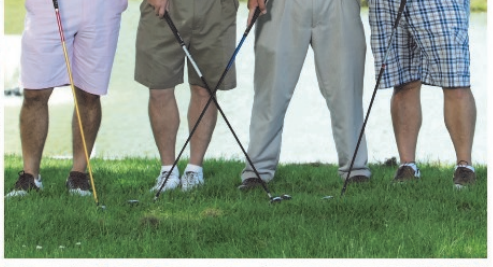
Team Work



The photos below are from events that are hosted by some of our chapters or third party events that our chapters benefit from. These 12 photos represent over \$600,000 and are just a dozen of the 70+ events that are put on throughout the year.



Top Left: Hyde Park Blast—Cincinnati, OH, **Top Right:** JBT Regatta—Gilford, NH, **Middle Left:** Bowling for a Cure—Pioneer, CA, **Middle Center:** A Night to Beat the Odds—Arlington, VA, **Middle Right:** Drive for the Cure—Dawson, PA, **Bottom Left:** Hogs for the Cause—New Orleans, LA, **Bottom Right:** Carnival for the Cure—Columbus, IN



Top Left: Run Your Bass Off 5K—Orange, TX, **Top Middle:** Beer Wine Food Festival—Cincinnati, OH **Top Right:** On Course Fore A Cure—Suffolk, VA, **Middle Left:** Meet Me in Margaritaville Bash—Wrentham, MA, **Middle Center:** Ella's Race - Chick-fil-A Race Series—Raleigh, NC, **Bottom Left:** Ballerina for a Day—Cincinnati, OH, **Bottom Right:** Once in a Lifetime Gala—Cincinnati, OH

2015 PROGRESS & 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

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