

2024  
Annual Report

POWERING A FUTURE OF  
**HOPE**

**OUR MISSION** is to raise awareness and funds for childhood cancer research to advance cures for children



Braden's  
**HOPE**  
for Childhood Cancer  
[www.bradenshope.org](http://www.bradenshope.org)

# FOUNDATION OF HOPE

# 2024

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

## A Letter from Our President, Deliece Hofen

As we reflect on this past year at Braden's Hope, our commitment to funding life-saving research and raising awareness for childhood cancer has not wavered. Because of you, we continue to turn hope into action.

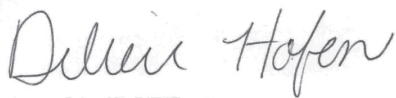
Your support has fueled groundbreaking research, bringing us closer to breakthroughs that will change the future of childhood cancer. These partnerships have already yielded promising progress, and with your help, we will keep pushing forward until better treatments and cures are found.

Awareness is just as critical as research, and this year, we have reached more people than ever before. Through impactful community awareness events, educational initiatives, and outreach campaigns, we have amplified the voices of children and families facing cancer, ensuring their stories inspire change.

None of this would be possible without you. Every donation, every shared story, and every act of support fuels our mission. Together, we are bringing hope, funding progress, and working toward a future where every child has a fighting chance.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your generosity is making an undeniable difference.

With gratitude,



Deliece Hofen

President,  
Braden's Hope for  
Childhood Cancer



OVER **\$2M** RAISED FOR  
CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH



**25+** FUNDRAISING, COMMUNITY  
AND AWARENESS EVENTS



MORE THAN **4,000** DEDICATED  
VOLUNTEER HOURS



**HUNDREDS** OF HERO AND ANGEL  
FAMILIES UNITED IN OUR COMMUNITY



MORE THAN A **MILLION** PEOPLE  
REACHED THROUGH AWARENESS EFFORTS

## Did you know?!

Worldwide, a child is diagnosed  
with cancer every 2 minutes.

# COMMUNITY IN ACTION

## HOPE GALA

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Hope Gala was an unforgettable night of generosity, inspiration, and impact! Our premier fundraising event brought together passionate donors, community leaders, and devoted volunteers all united by a shared mission: to fuel lifesaving research for childhood cancer. With overwhelming support, we raised an incredible **\$1.1 million**, proving that when hope and action come together, anything is possible.

Presenting Sponsor:  **Kiewit**



**\$1,156,955.05**

## CALLYN'S COURSE FOR HOPE

Swinging for Hope! The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Callyn's Course for Hope golf tournament brought together over 140 passionate golfers and supporters for a day of friendly competition and purpose. Named in honor of Hope Hero Callyn, this tournament drives us closer to a future free of cancer. With every swing and putt, our community proves that together, we can make a difference.

Presenting Sponsor: 



**\$222,532.26**



**\$186,503**

## JERSEY MIKE'S DAY OF GIVING

Since 2015, Jersey Mike's has been an outstanding community partner, generously supporting Braden's Hope through their Annual Month of Giving each year in March. In 2024, we partnered with 13 Kansas City locations to raise funds and awareness for childhood cancer research. Thanks to this incredible generosity, we raised over **\$186,000** to make a difference for kids fighting cancer!



**\$90,284**

## QUEEN'S PRICE CHOPPER SHOP FOR HOPE

The annual Shop for Hope event at Queen's Price Chopper is a testament to community commitment. Through special promotions and giveback opportunities, this event transforms everyday shopping into a powerful act of hope. In 2024, Queen's Price Chopper and the community rallied once again, surpassing expectations and raising over **\$90,000** to fund critical childhood cancer research.



## PARADE & FOUNTAIN OF HOPE

Our Annual Parade and Fountain Dyeing at Mill Creek Park is a beloved tradition and a powerful symbol of hope in the fight against childhood cancer. In partnership with Baron BMW, we hosted a Hero Parade, escorting our incredible heroes and their families to the fountain, where they turned the water a brilliant gold - the color representing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.



## CHILDHOOD CANCER DAY AT THE K

Each year, Childhood Cancer Awareness Day at The K unites baseball fans, childhood cancer heroes, and the Kansas City Royals for an unforgettable day of hope and awareness. Families impacted by childhood cancer take center stage, with special on-field experiences, a moving tribute, and the chance to cheer on the Royals alongside their biggest supporters. With the KC community rallying together, we shine a light on the urgent need for research.

# ONGOING RESEARCH GRANTS

## \$1 MILLION GRANT

**Midhat Farooqi, M.D., Ph.D.** Director, Molecular Oncology, Children's Mercy Genome Center

### Targeting solid tumors with multi-antigen specific T cells by identifying the genetic and epigenetic determinants of therapeutic response

T cells, a type of immune cell, circulate in our bodies and scan for microbes as well as abnormal cells. In the laboratory, exposing T cells to small fragments of proteins ("antigens") expressed on the surface of tumor cells trains these T cells to recognize cancer cells and eradicate them. This finding led to the recent development of 'multi-antigen specific T cells' (MAS T cells), a safe and novel form of targeted therapy for a range of pediatric solid tumors including neuroblastoma, Ewing Sarcoma and Wilms tumor. Dr. Farooqi's team seeks to understand whether a tumor's genetic profile affects its response to MAS T cell infusion. With funding from Braden's Hope, his team is performing comprehensive genetic sequencing of patient tumor samples pre- and post- therapy. The project involves patients and tumor samples from Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C.; Children's Health in Dallas, Texas, and Cook Children's in Fort Worth, Texas, with plans in the near future to include samples from the Instituto Nacional de Pediatría in Mexico City, Mexico

"With the support of Braden's Hope, we have established and extended our research collaborations particularly with regards to cutting-edge genomics techniques."

Midhat Farooqi, MD, PhD

## \$300,000 GRANT three-year

### Terrie Flatt, DO, MA

Hematology/Oncology/BMT, Director of the Spanish Language Clinic, Children's Mercy Kansas City, along with Andrew Godwin, PhD, University of Kansas Medical Center

Dr. Flatt and Dr. Godwin's project, "Advancing New Treatment Options to Improve Outcomes of Children and Young Adults Diagnosed with Ewing Sarcoma," will work to find drugs that destroy and prevent Ewing sarcoma (EWS) cancer cells from growing back.

The team will use their knowledge of the biology of this type of tumor to rationally combine drugs with like properties.

Based on the team's findings, they will work with expert cancer physicians at Children's Mercy and the KU Cancer Center to develop a clinical study to treat children and young adults with EWS that are not cured by standard chemotherapies.

The study will test multiple novel agents to develop treatments for EWS patients.

"We accepted this challenge, given no new therapies have been offered to children and young adults with EWS for nearly two decades," the investigators wrote in their application. "This study will have a potential to offer new treatment options not typically afforded to patients with very rare tumors such as Ewing sarcoma."

Co-investigators include Joy Fulbright, MD, Hematology/Oncology/BMT, and Joaquina Baranda, MD, Leonidas Bantis, PhD, and Vikalp Vishwakarma, PhD, all of the University of Kansas Medical Center.

## \$300,000 GRANT three-year

### Jay Vivian, PhD

Clinical Genetics, Director of the Rare Disease Model Research Program, Children's Mercy Kansas City

Dr. Vivian's project, "Induced pluripotent stem cell models for pediatric KMT2A-r leukemia development and discovery of targeted therapies," focuses on advancing therapies for children with leukemia in which the KMT2A gene is rearranged.

The team will investigate the cellular and molecular changes in novel engineered stem cell models of pediatric leukemia subtypes and assess the response of three different KMT2A rearrangements to standard chemotherapy and novel agents.

"This study is the first of its kind, and we anticipate it will generate fundamental, mechanistic insight that can be shared with other researchers and will become widely used to study new treatments for leukemia involving KMT2A, in both children and adults," Dr. Vivian wrote.

Co-investigators include John Perry, PhD, Hematology/Oncology/BMT, Children's Mercy Kansas City

## \$100,000 GRANT two-year

### Tomoo Iwakuma, MD, PhD

Hematology/Oncology/BMT, Director of Translational Laboratory Oncology Research, Children's Mercy Kansas City

Dr. Iwakuma's project, "Identifying compounds that target vulnerabilities imposed by EWS haploinsufficiency to discover novel treatments for EWSR1 fusion-positive childhood sarcomas," will investigate if a lesser amount of Ewing sarcoma (EWS) proteins caused by EWS-fusion sarcomas commonly carrying only one EWS gene contributes to disease progression.

Based on the results of previous research the team has done, they hypothesize that the loss of a single EWS gene in human cancer cells increases yet unappreciated cancer promoting signaling that is crucial for the survival of cancer cells with a single EWS gene.

The goal of this study is to find drugs that specifically kill cancer cells with low EWS protein levels in EWS-fusion sarcomas while sparing normal tissues and to understand the underlying mechanism. They will screen drug libraries to identify drugs/compounds that specifically kills cells with one EWS gene without killing cells with two EWS genes. They will investigate how the identified drugs affect cell death, cell cycle progression, DNA copy numbers, and molecular changes in the cell. Finally, they will investigate how the identified drugs inhibit cancer progression following transplantation of Ewing sarcoma cells with one EWS gene into immunocompromised mice.

"Significance of this study is the new concept in which the drugs can specifically kill sarcoma cells with low EWS protein levels (with one EWS gene) while sparing normal cells with two EWS genes," Dr. Iwakuma wrote. "Innovation of this study is that the drug will change the paradigm by reducing the side effects in the patients with EWS-fusion sarcomas."

The ultimate goal is to increase the survival rate of patients with EWS-fusion sarcomas.

Co-investigators include Mizuki Azuma, PhD, the University of Kansas.

# HOPE DRIVES EVERYTHING WE DO

We are leading the charge in childhood cancer research, funding the most promising studies so every child has a future filled with hope.

1

Pilot Trial at CMRI

3

Groundbreaking research projects

13

Participating institutions

39

Major findings

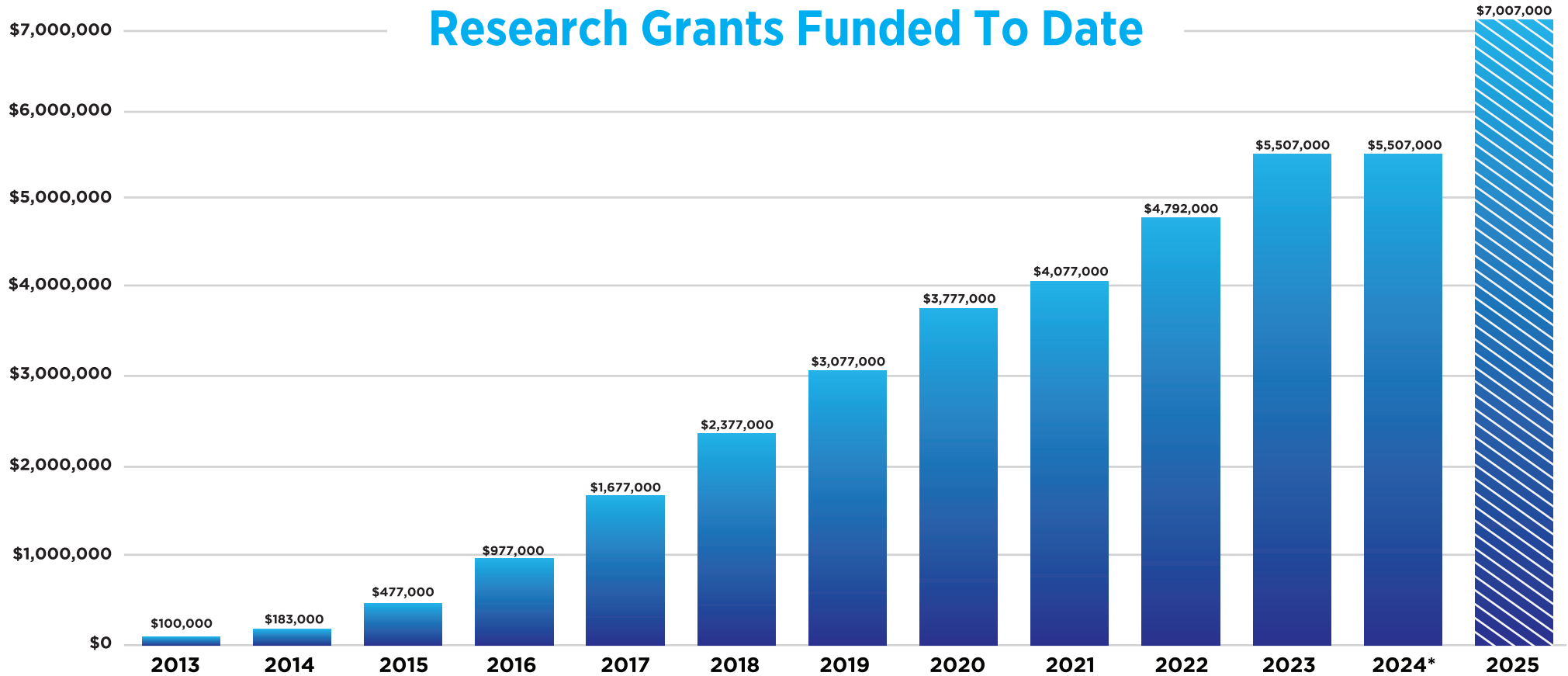
42

Researchers

60

Presentations & publications

## Research Grants Funded To Date



\*Grant payment deferred to 2025.

### Braden's Hope supports inter-institutional research involving investigators at these participating institutions:

Arima Genomics  
 Children's Mercy Research Institute  
 Children's National Medical Center  
 Cook Children's Hospital

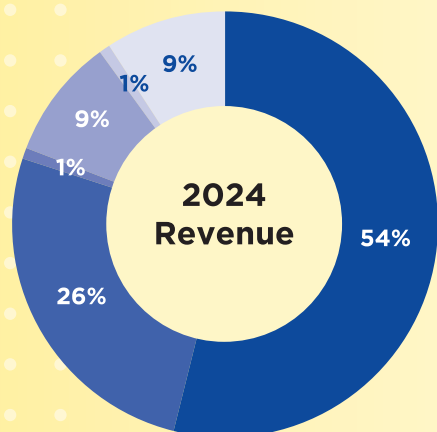
Instituto Nacional de Pediatria  
 Kansas State University  
 MD Anderson Cancer Center  
 National Cancer Institute  
 Pacific Biosciences

Stowers Institute for Medical Research  
 The University of Kansas  
 The University of Kansas Cancer Center  
 University of Iowa

# HOPE FINANCIALS

We choose to focus on **HOPE**, to lead the charge in childhood cancer research and find safer treatment options and cures for all children.

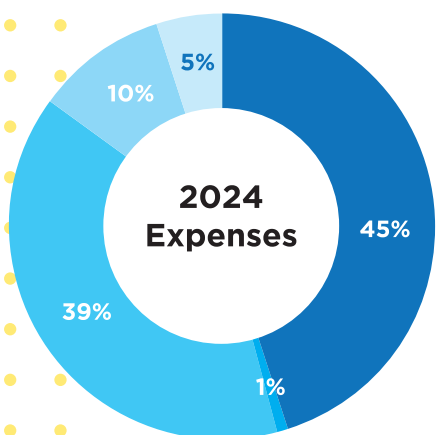
## REVENUE



- Fundraisers
- Corporate Sponsorships
- Payroll Designations
- Community Events
- Memorial Donations
- Individual Donations

Revenue	2024	2023
Fundraisers	\$1,098,258	\$821,990
Corporate Sponsorships	518,689	586,635
Payroll Designations	18,698	19,142
Community Events	187,689	241,734
Memorial Donations	14,596	29,478
Individual Donations	182,217	400,772
	<b>\$2,020,147</b>	<b>\$2,099,751</b>

## FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES



- Awarded Grants - Payments Deferred to 2025\*
- General Operating
- Fundraising
- Administrative
- Awareness

Functional Expenses	2024	2023
Payments on Awarded Grants	\$715,000*	\$715,000
General Operating	10,557	9,654
Fundraising	621,848	558,454
Administrative	162,959	146,036
Awareness	72,444	64,069
	<b>\$1,582,808</b>	<b>\$1,493,213</b>

\*Grant payment deferred to 2025.

# THE FUTURE OF HOPE

To deliver hope to children and families fighting cancer.

Braden's Hope is on track to surpass **\$10 million** in total research funding in the next three years! This is an incredible milestone that reflects our unwavering commitment to funding life-changing childhood cancer research.

As we look ahead, we are dedicated to deepening our impact both locally and nationally. We will grow our partnerships with Children's Mercy and KU Cancer Center, two vital institutions in our community. Additionally, we are excited to expand our reach through new collaborations with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, reinforcing our long-term commitment to groundbreaking research.

Over the next three years, we will invest in initiatives that create meaningful change in three key areas:



## TRADITIONAL MEDICAL RESEARCH

Advancing cures to give children a future



## QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

Funding less toxic treatments to enhance care and reduce long-term side effects



## SURVIVORSHIP STUDIES

Ensuring children not only survive but thrive beyond their diagnosis

# EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Dave Flickinger, Chair  
Rob Rogers, Vice Chair  
Mike Loritz, Treasurer  
Stacy Albin, Secretary  
Hema Bisarya  
Sam Bowlby  
Austin Bradley  
Matt Hansen  
Brian Hofen  
Deliece Hofen  
Steve Linder  
Bryan McGowan  
Kim Stanley  
Jennifer Utting  
Keith White

## Did you know?!

More children are lost to cancer in the U.S. than any other disease—in fact, more than many other childhood diseases combined.



# HOPE HEROES ARE AT THE OF EVERYTHING WE DO

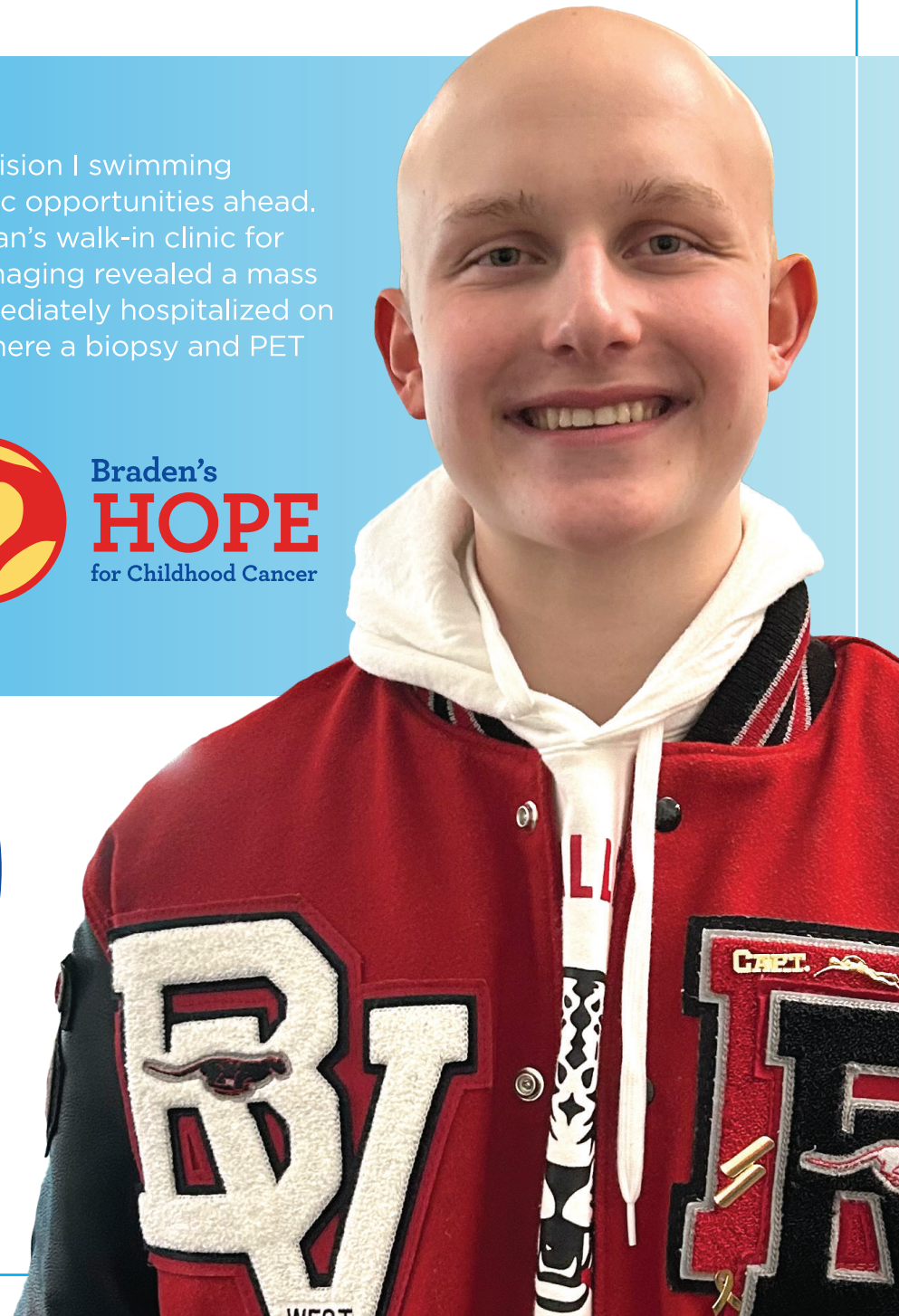
## MEET JACK

In September 2024, Jack returned home from his first official Division I swimming recruiting trip, filled with excitement for the academic and athletic opportunities ahead. But just one day later, his world changed. A visit to the pediatrician's walk-in clinic for swollen lymph nodes led to unexpected and life-altering news. Imaging revealed a mass on his thymus and multiple inflamed lymph nodes. Jack was immediately hospitalized on the oncology floor at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, where a biopsy and PET scan confirmed his diagnosis: Stage II Hodgkin Lymphoma.

Instead of touring universities and finalizing college applications, events changed quickly. Jack began undergoing eight rounds of chemotherapy treatments as he faced the biggest race of his life: beating Stage II Hodgkin Lymphoma as a senior in high school.



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**SHOP FOR HOPE**  
APRIL 30 - MAY 6

**CALLYN'S COURSE FOR HOPE**  
JUNE 16

**FOUNTAIN OF HOPE**  
SEPTEMBER 5

**DAY AT THE "K"**  
SEPTEMBER 7

**HOPE GALA**  
OCTOBER 4

SAVE THE DATE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS



Deliece Hofen, President  
Kim Stanley, Executive Director