

GOLDEN TICKET GALA

November 2, 2024

COME WITH ME AND

YOU'LL BE IN A WORLD
Beyond
Imagination

Digital Program Book



Letter from our President

Dear Friends,

Welcome to an incredible night celebrating the Beyond Imagination work we're doing at Connecticut Children's!

Each day, a dedicated team of over 3,500 people at Connecticut Children's create magical moments for children and families. While the medical and mental health care we provide is firmly grounded in reality, the true wonder of Connecticut Children's rests on the extraordinary lengths we go to in order to deliver family-centered care, spearhead groundbreaking research and give families experiences that transform lives.

Among the marvels we're privileged to share with you is the exciting vision for our new Advanced Cellular & Gene Therapy Unit, this year's Bid for Kids beneficiary. Imagine having a child who needs a lifesaving bone marrow transplant, only to be told by the doctors who care deeply for your family that they have to send you hundreds of miles away for the care your child needs. It's a problem we are going to solve.

Tonight, we have the privilege of introducing you to Jack and Iliana—two young cancer survivors. While their diagnoses were very different, their families had to face the challenges of leaving the state to save their lives. I'm certain you will love getting to know Jack and Iliana, and I ask you to join Connecticut Children's in our commitment to provide close to home care for all of the children in our region.

Because of generous friends like you, Connecticut Children's will continue to expand our impact and elevate the care we provide to the children and families who need us the most, whether they seek our services at one of our 41 care locations spanning three states or within the eight-story expansion we're adding to our health system in Hartford.

We are thrilled you have joined us for tonight's wonderful, whimsical Wonka-inspired Golden Ticket Gala!

Come with me, and you'll be in a world *Beyond Imagination*,



James E. Shmerling, DHA, FACHE
President and CEO





Alex Voz

Mentalist/Illusionist

Alex Voz is a professional mentalist and magician renowned for his energetic and interactive performances across New York City. Trusted by leading figures on the Forbes list and major corporations worldwide, Alex Voz delivers breathtaking shows that captivate audiences around the globe.

Fairfield County Children's Choir



The Fairfield County Children's Choir (FCCC) is a community-based choral program made up of over 300 children in grades four through twelve from communities in Connecticut's Fairfield County and beyond. The FCCC was founded in 1995 to provide children the opportunity to participate in a musical experience which is challenging, rewarding and enjoyable. The FCCC program provides instruction in vocal technique, choral technique, music literacy, and the appreciation of music through the practice and performance of great choral repertoire.

The FCCC will celebrate its 30th anniversary season with a performance at Carnegie Hall on May 10, 2025.

Music Director & Founder Jon Noyes was selected as the Outstanding Choral Director in 1998 by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.



Miss Porter's School Chamber Orchestra

A chamber orchestra composed of students from Miss Porter's School, Farmington's historic boarding school for girls, will play highlights from the Willy Wonka films, including Pure Imagination, Oompa-loompa, I've Got the Golden Ticket, The Candy Man, and Cheer Up Charlie.



Joshua Goodman, Pianist

Joshua began piano studies at 6 and continued to study in Toronto at the Royal Conservatory of Music. At 20 Joshua was admitted to the Faculty of Music at McGill University in Montreal where he completed jazz and classical studies earning a B. Mus. in Jazz Piano Performance. In 1994 Joshua went on to study and perform at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta with artists like Chucho Valdes and Kenny Wheeler and later in 2013 with Vijay Iyer. However, it was the teachings of Dr. Barry Harris that influenced Joshua the most. Joshua developed a close relationship with Barry and attended his workshops in New York and Toronto numerous times.

From that relationship, Joshua got to know drummer Leroy Williams who worked with Barry for over 40 years. In 2013, Joshua, Brandi Disterheft and Leroy formed the Jazz Descendants and produced an album entitled, Red. The album was top on the list in Canadian radio stations for many weeks.

Joshua continues to perform in U.S.A., Europe and Asia. Joshua is firmly committed to spreading Love and Peace through music as he continues to compose, arrange and record music.





Avenue Groove

Avenue Groove is a Connecticut-based band formed in 2007 consisting of six very talented and dedicated musicians playing R&B/Funk/Dance Music. Known for being extremely tight and having fantastic vocals, Avenue Groove is very well received wherever they perform.

Gala All-Star Ambassadors



Iliana

As a baby, Iliana had been back and forth to the pediatrician with a variety of ailments—colds, fevers and stomach bugs. After holding her breath and passing out, Iliana was taken to Urgent Care at Connecticut Children’s Specialty Care Center in Farmington. The results of an EKG prompted pediatric cardiologist Alex Golden, MD, to order an ultrasound and bloodwork, and that changed everything. Iliana was just seven months old when she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML), and she needed a bone marrow transplant. Iliana lives in Bristol with her parents, Brianna and Thanasi, and older brother, Yanni.



Gala All-Star Ambassadors

Jack

Jack, age 15, is an excellent student with a passion for soccer. In January of 2023, he was experiencing leg pains and was noticeably pale. After visiting several different specialists, Jack ended up at Connecticut Children's where pediatric hematologist-oncologist Kerry Moss, MD, diagnosed him with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), a type of blood cancer that is common in older men, but relatively rare in children. Jack needed a bone marrow transplant, and will share his story at the Gala. Jack lives in East Hampton with his parents, Brett and Lesley, and younger brother, Joe.



Gala All-Star Ambassadors

Gracyn-Rose

Seven-year-old Gracyn was born with chronic intestinal pseudo-obstruction (CIPO), a condition so rare that only about 100 kids in the U.S. are diagnosed with it each year. CIPO means that the nerves and muscles in Gracyn's intestines don't work properly, preventing food, fluids and air from moving through her body. Following birth, Gracyn struggled to eat and failed to gain weight. She needed an ileostomy, a surgical procedure that allowed her intestines to drain into a pouch on the outside of her body. Christine Finck, MD, Surgeon-in-Chief at Connecticut Children's performed the surgery.

Gracyn will likely have CIPO for the rest of her life, and no one can say why. Genetic testing turned up no definitive answer, and her medical challenges were far from over. Ordinary illnesses often landed her in the hospital to recover. In 2020, Dr. Finck placed a gastrostomy tube (G-tube) into Gracyn's stomach to help with feeding and to ensure that her body can absorb the nutrients she needs.



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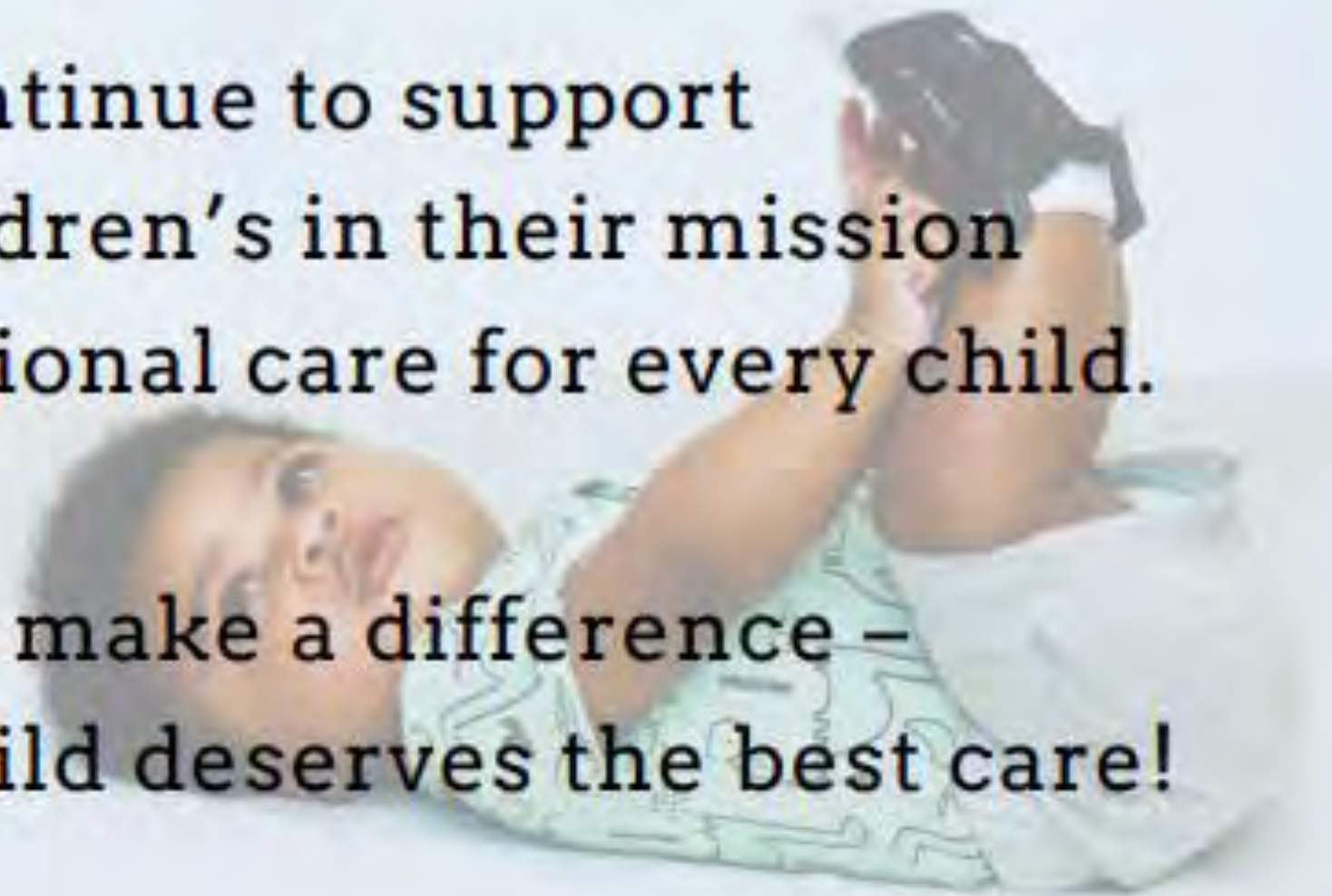




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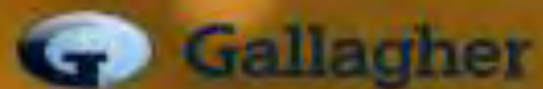
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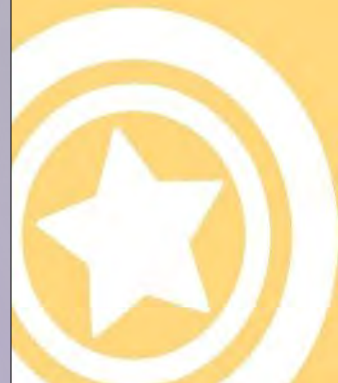
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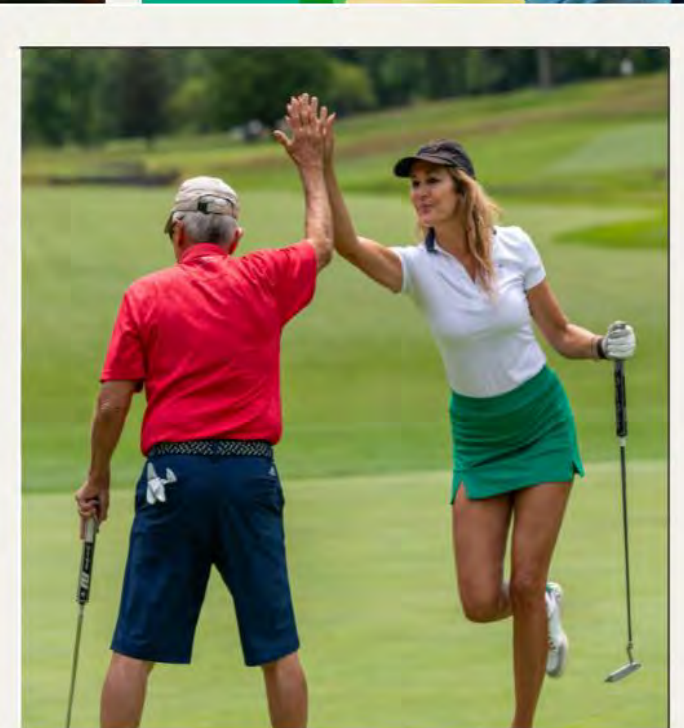
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The background of the slide is a light purple gradient. In the top right and bottom left corners, there are large, colorful lollipops with spiral patterns in shades of red, blue, green, and yellow. Along the bottom edge of the central orange box, there is a decorative border of smaller, colorful lollipops in various colors like pink, purple, yellow, and blue.

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The banner features a white background with light blue snowflake patterns. On the left, a young boy in a Superman costume (red cape, blue suit) holds a Superman action figure. He wears a white t-shirt with the 'Connectia Children' logo. On the right, a young girl with curly hair holds a grey stuffed mouse with pink heart patterns on its paws. She wears a white t-shirt with 'See you next year' and 'AY' printed on it, and black pants with white hearts. In the center, a purple gift box with a large blue bow contains a QR code. The QR code has a small 'Connectia Children' logo in the center.



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