

## OUR **STEADFAST** MISSION

To provide meaningful *support* to cancer patients, education to promote cancer *prevention* and resources to advance *research* for a cure.



# DEAR FRIENDS, SUPPORTERS AND HEROES,

It is with gratitude and tremendous pride that I reflect on the Heroes Foundation's achievements over the past year. Thanks to your generosity and dedication, 2024 became a landmark year uniting Indiana against cancer by providing meaningful **support** to cancer patients, advancing education to promote cancer **prevention**, and funding lifechanging **research** within our Indiana community.

In 2024, we reached new heights together: We set fundraising records at both our An Evening With Heroes gala and the Swing4Heroes Pro-Am Golf Tournament. Combined with our Fit4Heroes proceeds and other generous donations, these funds allowed us to gift nearly \$225,000 to programs, prevention initiatives and research projects. This critical funding touched more Hoosier lives than ever before, helping us give hope and resources to those navigating life with cancer.

We also celebrated a significant milestone in 2024 with the Heroes Foundation moving to a new home in the Massala Building (310 N. Alabama St., Suite B100, Indianapolis). This space will allow us to grow, collaborate and better serve the Indiana

cancer community. Additionally, we expanded our team with the arrival of Mary Mauer, our new Development Manager, whose passion and expertise are already driving impactful change.

While our 2024 accomplishments were remarkable, they serve as only one chapter of our story. The fight against cancer is ongoing, and with your continued partnership, we will persevere in our mission to create a healthier, more hopeful future for all Hoosiers.

We are thankful beyond measure to our volunteers, donors, corporate partners and the broader cancer community who stand by our side. Your contributions are the lifeblood of the Heroes Foundation, and together, we will continue to make a profound and lasting impact.

Here's to building on 2024's momentum and making an even greater difference in 2025, our 25th anniversary year. On behalf of everyone at the Heroes Foundation, thank you for your unwavering support and for being part of this incredible journey.

Fight on,

Vince Todd, Jr., Co-Founder

#beatcancer







A. Kyle Fisher (far right), B. Jason and Sarah Schaffer (at left), and C. Janet Baker (in memoriam, shown with her son, Aidan Baker)

## 25 HEROES FOUNDATION TRAILBLAZERS

It has taken 25 years and the commitment of many individuals to bring the Heroes Foundation to the place we are today. We're grateful to every single person who has given their time, talent and treasure. Among that vast and varied group are the following 25 special people and couples (listed in alphabetical order).

- 1 Jen Bachman, MBSA Events
- 2 Janet Baker (in memoriam)
- 3 Don Birch
- 4 Zack and Kelly Canada
- 5 Bri Clark
- 6 Norma Creighton
- 7 Elizabeth Ellis
- 8 Kyle Fisher
- 9 Mike Jansen

- 10 Mike and Jen Kaplan
- 11 Nick and Elizabeth Keller
- 12 Karen Kay Marlett
- 13 Kate McGowan
- 14 Jen Neale
- 15 Mark Newman
- 16 Heather O'Brien
- 7 Bill Pollert, Highland Golf & Country Club

- 18 Dave Ripley
- 19 Becky Van Rooy
- 20 John Ryan
- 21 Vince Saul, Greta Speaks
- 22 Jason and Sarah Schaffer
- 23 Joe and Kelly Todd
- 24 Vince and Sue Todd
- 25 Seamus and Lori Wheeler

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Joe Todd, Accessa
Bob Treash, Fairway Investments
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## HEROES FOUNDATION

### **EVENT FUNDRAISING**

The inaugural An Evening With Heroes Gala in 2001 raised \$43,000, exceeding the founding supporters' initial goal by \$33,000. That incredible momentum carried the Heroes Foundation forward and proved how successful events can be as an integral part of our fundraising strategy. Through the years, we've expanded our events and, more importantly, connected with a wider audience by bringing them together.









**FUNDRAISING THEN...** 









AND NOW!

We are so grateful for the sponsors and individuals who support the Heroes Foundation at our fundraising events. Attend an upcoming event! Visit heroesfoundation.org/events for dates and details.

#### 1 AN EVENING WITH HEROES

Each January, we host our signature event, An Evening With Heroes, at the JW Marriott, Indianapolis. Hundreds of people join us for a night to fight cancer and celebrate our progress.

Pictured: January 27, 2024

#### 2 FIT4HEROES

The Heroes Foundation's online, peer-to-peer fundraiser reminds Hoosiers of the connection between lifestyle and cancer prevention.

Pictured: June 2024, Powered by NEXTmsp (formerly The Brookfield Group)

#### 3 SWING4HEROES

This is not just another charity golf outing. The Swing4Heroes Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Highland Golf & Country Club, Indianapolis, sells out annually as players look forward to returning each year to win the coveted Swing4Heroes trophy. Pictured: September 26, 2024, Swing4Heroes Teed Up by eimagine, Cerity (formerly SBC Wealth Management) and Hays+Sons Complete Restoration

#### SPECIAL THANK YOU!

Several local businesses, organizations and individuals stepped up in 2024 to host special events and campaigns to push the Heroes Foundation mission forward. Those included Advisors Resource Co-op (ARC), Bishop Chatard High School and Tri-West High School softball teams, Franklin Central High School, Haulstr, Indianapolis Monthly (Faces of Philanthropy, made possible by Duncan Supply Company) and Kroger. We're so grateful for their support! This advocacy is in addition to our regular fundraising initiatives and support from Summit Partners, Corporate Sponsors and In-Kind Donors (see pages 18-19).







## 2024 EVENT PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: INDIANAPOLIS MONTHLY

The Indianapolis Monthly Indianapolis Gives Challenge, presented by Lilly, generated more than \$60,000 for the Heroes Foundation in just 10 days in December 2024. This interactive program was Indianapolis Monthly's inaugural city-wide fundraising initiative. We also were the beneficiary of wine sales at the Indianapolis Monthly Fall Savor 2024 event in November.

### MOMENTS AND MILESTONES

#### 2012

The Heroes Foundation Team JOEY Program was formed, named in memory of Joey Keller. Joey fought cancer with the spirit and attitude that amazed and inspired family, friends and even caregivers.

#### 2002

The Heroes Foundation began supporting the CompleteLife Program at the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center. Founded by renowned oncologist Dr. Larry Cripe, the comprehensive therapy program attends to the body, mind and spirit of the whole person.

#### 2015

The Heroes Foundation began funding a high-risk, high-reward new project proposed by Dr. Grzegorz Nalepa, an esteemed Associate Professor of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology, Medical and Molecular Genetics, and Biochemistry at the IU School of Medicine. The pediatric oncologist specialized in acute leukemia and rare childhood tumors. This initial funding led to additional awards from the National Institutes of Health in the form of a prestigious RO I grant and invited presentations/achievement awards from the American Society of Hematology.



#### 2000

The mission of the Heroes Foundation began to take shape as Vince Todd, Jr. fought cancer with his wife, Cindy Todd, at his side.

#### **200** I

The Heroes Foundation officially took its name in May as a registered 501(c)(3) public charity.

The Geist Riders, led by cyclists Don Birch and Dave Ripley, decided to bike for a purpose bigger than themselves when they became Team Heroes.

#### 2007

The SJP Heroes
Cancer Research
Fund was launched
to provide financial
support to a clinical
or research fellow
or research project
at the Indiana
University Melvin
and Bren Simon
Comprehensive
Cancer Center.

#### 2016

The Catherine Peachey Fund, which promotes advances in breast cancer research and treatment in Indiana, joined the Heroes Foundation.

eimagine hosted the Team
JOEY Program's first corporate
LEGO drive, kicking-off
a consistent practice of
partnering with businesses to
bring joy to pediatric
cancer patients.

#### 2020-2I

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Heroes Foundation supplied food and supplies to Central Indiana cancer centers and emergency departments. The Team JOEY Program continued delivering LEGO sets to hospitals for staff to pass out.

#### 2022

The Harper Cancer Research Institute at the University of Notre Dame received its first Heroes Foundation funding gift.

#### 2023

The Heroes Foundation Team JOEY Cityscape Room opened at Peyton Manning Children's Hospital. The inpatient pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) room serves 156 patients per year.

The Catherine Peachey Fund returned to a separate 501(c)(3) status after experiencing significant revenue growth and impact on breast cancer advocacy during its seven years with the Heroes Foundation.



#### 2018

The first CompleteLife Art Show was held at the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center.The Heroes Foundation's decades of support have sustained and helped grow First Mondays Cancer Support Groups and the CompleteLife Art Show.

#### **2021**

The Purdue Institute for Cancer Research received its first Heroes Foundation funding gift.

The Summits Podcast debuted to share cancer stories from survivors, caretakers, researchers and others impacted by cancer.

#### 2024

lames Hinshaw assumed the role of board chair of the Heroes Foundation after Vince Todd, Jr.'s 24 years of leadership.

#### 2025

During the 25th Annual An Evening With Heroes gala, Heroes Foundation supporters united to provide over \$725,000 to advance the organization's ambitious mission.

A team of researchers led by Elizabeth A. Sierra Potchanant, PhD, Assistant Research Professor at the IU School of Medicine, published a third study that can be traced back to Dr. Nalepa's foundational 2015 project.

### CANCER SUPPORT IN 2024

When someone is diagnosed with cancer, they need much more than medical care. They also need someone or something to help carry their emotional and financial burden, to empathize, and to answer their questions. For 25 years, the Heroes Foundation has been here to fund support programs and services that do just that.



Teresa Altemeyer is an incredible advocate for people with cancer in Indiana and for the Heroes Foundation.

When Teresa Altemeyer presented her hematologist oncologist and his team with an armload of dahlias at an appointment early in her treatment for lymphoma, Jose Azar, M.D., began to tear up. He had recently lost a patient who, during his last hours of life, asked Dr. Azar to promise him that he would form a support group so other patients wouldn't have to go through what he and his wife had. At the time, the couple had no one who understood their experience at the patient level. They had no one to share their emotions, thoughts and dreams with. Teresa heard Dr. Azar's story and said she would commit to the promise, too.

Not long after, Teresa learned that Larry Cripe, M.D., was also working to bring a program to life that included support groups for cancer patients. Missions aligned, and after months of discussions and research, with the support of Dr. Cripe and the Riley Cheer Guild, the seeds of CompleteLife took root in 2002 on the second floor of the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center. What began as art interventions for patients and caregivers while they waited for procedures or admittance is now a robust cancer support program.

The Heroes Foundation has been a major supporter of CompleteLife since its early days. We renewed our commitment in 2024 with a \$40,000 gift to the CompleteLife First Mondays Cancer Support Groups and Art Show. First Mondays support groups are completely free of charge, confidential and provided to any registered patient who may benefit from the group, regardless of where they receive treatment.

"For all the people who have had these wonderful experiences in the support groups, if it were not for the Heroes Foundation and others, the void would be enormous," says Teresa, who has dedicated many years to advocating for patients through cancer support groups and art therapy through CompleteLife.



Donors who gave to the Heroes Foundation helped ensure these Indiana cancer patients and 1,655 others could pay for basic needs while they underwent treatment in 2024.



Supporters of the Heroes Foundation made it possible for pediatric cancer patients at four hospitals that serve young Hoosiers to receive LEGO sets and more fun through the Team JOEY Program.

People may attend groups related to blood cancers, bone marrow transplant, brain tumor, breast cancer, caregivers, gynecologic cancers, living with cancer, lung cancer, or multiple myeloma. Teresa volunteered to be a blood cancer support group facilitator and has served in this capacity for 15 years. Since CompleteLife started tracking in January 2022, its therapies have seen 2,108 distinct patients with 11,551 interactions.

The financial burden of a cancer diagnosis is also a pervasive issue for people facing cancer, which is why, since 2015, the Heroes Foundation has supported the Community Health Network Foundation Oncology Patient Assistance Fund, including a \$30,000 gift in 2024. This critical source of financial assistance connects cancer patients in need to food, medicine, transportation, and housing and utilities assistance.

In 2024, Community social workers, nurse navigators and financial counselors distributed more Oncology Patient Assistance Fund gift cards to Community Health Network MD Anderson Cancer Center patients than any year since the fund's inception. This incredible program helped 1,659 patients and distributed 2,411 gift cards to patients.

Support provided by the Heroes Foundation Team JOEY Program centers around lifting the spirits of pediatric cancer patients through the magic of LEGO and visits from special costumed characters! In 2024, our volunteers handed out 500+ LEGO sets and threw eight pizza parties for children in treatment at hospitals, including Peyton Manning Children's Hospital (Indianapolis), Riley Hospital (Indianapolis), Lutheran Children's Hospital (Fort Wayne) and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.



Cancer patients and survivors in Indianapolis can access exercise equipment and personal training sessions thanks in part to financial gifts from Heroes Foundation supporters.

### CANCER **PREVENTION** IN 2024

Cancer prevention comes in many forms, from empowering individuals to lead healthy lifestyles to preventing a cancer diagnosis through advanced medicine. That's why the Heroes Foundation provides funding to multiple programs and people leading the way in Indiana.



Katharine White, Ph.D.

In 2024, the Heroes Foundation announced a \$25,000 commitment to **Katharine**White, Ph.D., the Clare Boothe Luce Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Notre Dame. Inside her lab at the Harper Cancer Research Institute in South Bend, her team is studying how dysregulated

cellular pH initiates cancer and drives cancer metastasis. A better understanding of intracellular pH (pHi) will help cancer researchers determine its potential role in cancer prevention and treatment.

"We've shown that increasing pHi in normal human breast cells can cause these normal cells to behave like cancer cells and that lowering pHi in cancer cells can revert these cells to more 'normal' cell signaling, metabolism, and cell migration patterns," Katharine says. "Future work will begin exploring whether maintaining a lower pHi in normal cells can prevent the initiation of cancer."

Her lab is also developing mouse models to measure pHi dynamics in normal tissues and better understand how pHi drives initiation and progression. If successful, their work will give them better diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to cancer metastasis and motivate targeting pHi with drugs to prevent cancer.

At the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center in Indianapolis, a \$30,000 gift supporting the Multidisciplinary Oncologic Vitality and Exercise (MOVE) program is helping cancer patients maintain, improve and sustain their health and physical function. In addition, the MOVE team is actively involved in research studies to better understand how exercise may play a role in cancer prevention and improve outcomes for people living with cancer.

"Generous gifts from the Heroes Foundation allow the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center MOVE program to provide free-of-charge, individualized cancer exercise sessions to patients at any point in their cancer experience," says Tarah Ballinger, MD, Medical Director of MOVE as well as Vera Bradley Foundation Scholar in Breast Cancer Research and Associate Professor of Medicine at Indiana University School of Medicine.



Michaela Quinn

With an eye toward continued breakthroughs in cancer prevention, the Heroes Foundation also supports the education of future healthcare providers through the Andrew S. Hipskind MD Memorial Scholarship. Michaela Quinn is a pre-nursing student and a track and field distance athlete at Indiana University. She was named the most recent recipient of the scholarship. Michaela is from

Elmhurst, III., and recently completed her first year at IU. Indiana University Foundation and IU manage the scholarship.





David Evers (center) attended the An Evening With Heroes gala with his wife, Holly, and Team Heroes teammate and neighbor Scott Kennedy and wife Clara

## IN MEMORIAM DAVE EVERS OF TEAM HEROES

The Heroes Foundation pays tribute to a warrior, a competitor and a kind soul, David Evers (aka Diamond Dave). Dave passed away on Feb. 4, 2025, after his battle with cancer. He was a long-time Team Heroes athlete and supporter of the Heroes Foundation and is survived by his wife of 24 years, Holly Evers, and their son, Noah Evers.

"His fierce determination was always on display in both his personal and professional life," Holly says. During his cancer fight, a favorite quote on the refrigerator served as a daily reminder to himself and his family: It's not what happens to you but how you react to it that matters.

As someone who lost both of his parents to cancer, he loved to advocate for cancer awareness by participating in charitable races. He made the newspaper in 1995 when he ran and won Louisville's first Run for Life 5K benefiting women's cancer research in honor of his mother. Little did the crowd know that he'd raced in the Cincinnati 14K Brewery Run earlier that morning.

Team Heroes is made up of Indiana athletes who compete at all levels of events sanctioned by USA Cycling, gravel/mountain bike/cyclocross, and USA Triathlon throughout the Midwest and beyond. Team Heroes members represent the Heroes Foundation while exemplifying a cancer-preventing, healthy lifestyle.

### CANCER RESEARCH IN 2024

The Heroes Foundation has been working to unite Indiana against cancer for 25 years. Part of that initiative is doing our part to encourage collaboration among our state's universities and investing in exciting cancer research because collaboration among academic and research institutions has proven to save lives.

When U.S. Army veteran Don Bryant was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer, he enrolled in a clinical trial at IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center. There he was administered Pluvicto™, a life-extending therapy invented at the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research by Philip Low, Presidential Scholar for Drug Discovery and Ralph C. Corley Distinguished Professor of Chemistry in Purdue's College of Science. Don Bryant had been given six months to two years to live. He told his story three years after his diagnosis.



Researchers at the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research received their first Heroes Foundation funding gift in 2021.

Together, the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research and the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center are advancing cancer care for Hoosiers, shaping national clinical practice, and contributing to global innovation in targeted therapies. While our organization has long supported research affiliated with Indiana University, the Heroes Foundation began funding research at the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research in 2021 and Harper Cancer Research Institute at the University of Notre Dame in 2022. In 2024, Katharine White, Ph.D., received \$30,000 to pursue better diagnostic



Nuri Damayanti, Ph.D.



Karen Pollok, Ph.D.

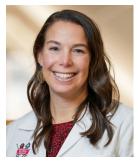
and therapeutic approaches to address cancer metastasis at the Harper Cancer Research Institute in South Bend (more on page 12).

The Heroes Foundation continued its legacy of awarding financial gifts to scientists and programs associated with Indiana University in 2024. Our organization provided \$15,000 to IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center to fund the research of Nuri Damayanti, Ph.D., and Karen Pollok, Ph.D.. Their team is working to uncover new treatment methods for children with rare brain cancers that could translate to the clinic more quickly and inexpensively than traditional drug development processes.



Researchers at the Harper Cancer Research Institute at the University of Notre Dame received their first Heroes Foundation funding gift in 2022.





Jennifer Belsky, DO, MS

We also continued to support the work of Jennifer Belsky, DO, MS, at IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center. Our \$10,000 gift in 2024 helped fund research to continue her work to decrease the detrimental side effects of cancer therapy that children and teens experience.

The Heroes Foundation increased its continued support to Nawal Kassem, MD, for her research on hereditary cancer syndrome at IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center to \$25,000 in 2024. The Assistant Professor of Medicine at the



Nawal Kassem, MD

Indiana University School of Medicine will receive our support through 2025. Hereditary cancers are caused by mutations in the genetic code that are passed down from parents to their children. Depending on the mutation, an individual can have up to 80 percent increased risk for certain cancers. Since receiving startup funding,

she has collected patient data and written a clinical trial protocol centered around Black patients.

### PROGRESS IN THE CANCER BATTLE

#### FROM 2000 THROUGH 2025

We're collectively winning more cancer battles, but the fight is far from over. While gains have been made, some markers of progress have faltered. Uniting Indiana against cancer continues to be the Heroes Foundation's top priority as we pursue an end to this horrible disease.

#### **PREVENTION**

Up to one-third of cancer cases in the U.S. are related to poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and/or excess body weight or obesity, and thus could be prevented.

Furthermore, cancer screening tests can provide potential opportunities for patients to obtain more effective treatment with fewer side effects. Patients whose cancers are found and treated at an earlier stage are less likely to die from these cancers than are those whose cancers are found later.

- 1 2000-2020: Consumption of fruits and vegetables declined.
- **1** 2000-2020: **Alcohol consumption** rose.
- 1 2000-2022: Physical activity among adults declined.
- 10 2016-2022: Physical activity among children declined.

- 2000-2023: Cervical cancer screenings\* dropped (87.8% to 73.5%)
- 2000-2023: Mammography for breast cancer screening\* increased (77.1% to 79.8%)
- 2010-2015: Percentage of adults at risk for lung cancer due to smoking who had a CT scan to check for lung cancer within the past year by sex increased (3.6% to 4.5%)

#### DIAGNOSIS

Rates of new cases of all cancer, delay-adjusted cancer incidence by sex, 2000-2021 (Rate per 100,000 people)

2000: **476** diagnosed

2010: **468** diagnosed

2021: **461** diagnosed

#### TREATMENT

January 2000-October 2022: **573** agents were approved for various oncologic indications, including targeted drugs (48%), biological therapies (43%), and cytotoxic treatments (9%). 29% of those received accelerated approval.

2014-2025: **Therapeutic approvals** have increased for breast cancer, leukemia, and lymphoma. This upward trend has also been detected for skin and thyroid cancers. Most recently, the majority of FDA approvals have been for lung cancers, lymphoma, genitourinary cancers, breast cancer, and leukemia.

The number and percentage of oncology clinical trials that include biomarkers have grown substantially: 55 percent of all oncology trials in 2018 involved the use of biomarkers, as compared with 15 percent in 2000.

#### 

5-year relative survival for all cancer sites combined by sex

2000 diagnosis: **66.6% surviving in 2005** 2007 diagnosis: **70.0% surviving in 2012** 2016 diagnosis: **71.7% surviving in 2021** 

#### MORTALITY

U.S. death rates for all cancers:

2000: 198.8/100,000

2010: **172.0/100,000** 

2022: 142.2/100,000

Sources:

https://progressreport.cancer.gov/

https://www.uspharmacist.com/article/trends-in-fdaapproved-cancer-therapies

 $https://www.personalized medicine coalition.org/Userfiles/PMC-Corporate/file/The\_Evolution\_of\_Biomarker\_Use\_in\_Clinical\_Trials\_for\_Cancer\_Treatments.pdf$ 



## 2024 WAS A HEROIC YEAR

\$100,000

disbursed to **support** cancer patients and their families\*

\$111,000

disbursed to empower cancer **research** 

\*Includes funds disbursed to support partner programs.



## 2024 SUMMIT PARTNERS

Heroes Foundation Summit Partners provide critical support to our organization throughout the entire year. These corporate partners are engaged in the Heroes Foundation in various ways and were represented at all of our 2024 fundraising events.

#### **EVEREST PARTNERS**



















#### DENALI PARTNER



#### KILIMANJARO PARTNERS









































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- > The Teed Family
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- Upland Brewing Company
- Vanilla Bean Bakery
- WestPoint Financial Group
- Wonderly Lights

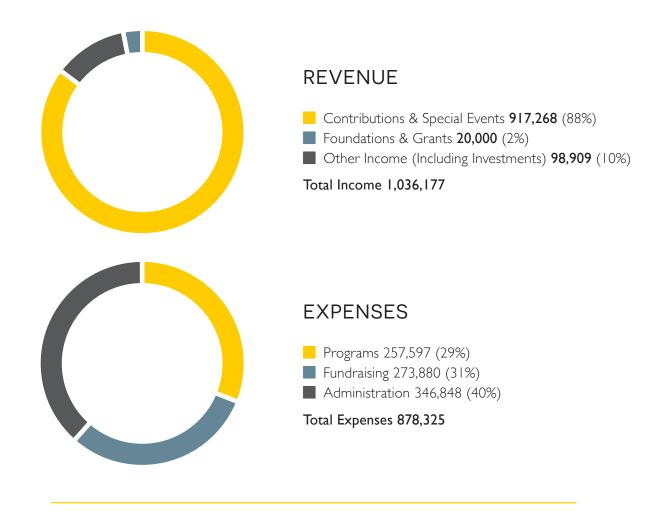
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- Oak Street Funding
- Primrose Schools
- > Taft

### A LOOK AT THE FINANCIALS



#### NET INCOME \$157,852

#### SUPPORT THE HEROES FOUNDATION



PARTNER WITH US Explore becoming a Corporate Partner. Email amartinez@heroesfoundation.org or call 317.983.6580

**DONATE** All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Visit heroesfoundation.org/donate or scan the QR code to the left.

**VOLUNTEER** Become a hero for the cancer community! Email contactus@heroesfoundation.org or call 317.983.6580.

## OUR TEAM



VINCE TODD, JR.
Co-Founder



CINDY TODD

Program & Event Manager,

Co-Founder



**ANNIE MARTINEZ** *Executive Director* 



**JAMES HINSHAW**Heroes Foundation Chairman,
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TARA HOLCOMB

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**MARY MAUER**Development Manager



**KELLY CANADA**Program Manager,
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