

Many survivors of childhood cancer feel that their battle against the disease has given them the tools to overcome obstacles and achieve the impossible. Here is what former patients of the Childrens Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases say about how their struggles have affected them:

"I will continue to step up to whatever challenge I may face. That is what battling leukemia has taught me. I know that even though the cancer is gone, the scars it left will always be there. I am constantly reminded to never give up my hope and to never give up my dreams. No matter how hard it gets, I will fulfill my purposes, achieve my dreams, and live my life to the fullest extent."

◆ Alex Lai

"My life has been enriched by cancer, not devastated. I have tested the strength of my determination, intellect, and spirit, always confident that I would triumph over obstacles . . . My cancer diagnosis has instilled in me a sense of purpose and validation, a steadfast belief in my strength and future . . . I live my life from dream to dream, appreciating the present in preparation for the future." ◆ Silvano Gonzalez

"My illness and the recovery that followed changed my self-image, and made me realize that I could reach beyond any self-imposed limits and ultimately succeed." ◆ Ivan Arellano Gonzalez

Cover quote ◆ Jeffrey M. Kettle

The LIFE Survivorship and Transition Program gives survivors of childhood cancer the opportunity to make the dreams forged during the long fight against the disease come true.

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ChildrensHospitalLosAngeles
International Leader in Pediatrics



"I have been given an awesome chance. I am alive and am able to appreciate every moment."

friends 
of childrens
hospital

In Support of Survivors of Childhood Cancer

Our history Friends of Childrens Hospital was founded in 1999 by ten friends brought together by Katherine Galbraith Hult. A decade later, the organization remains a small group of dedicated women, actively involved in furthering the mission of Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and supporting the LIFE Survivorship and Transition Program at the Childrens Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases. Through an annual benefit party and private fundraising efforts, Friends of Childrens Hospital has raised over a half million dollars for the LIFE Program, enabling the addition of key staff positions.

A few specifics

- ◆ The Childrens Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles is the largest pediatric hematology/oncology program in the western United States.
- ◆ Currently there are nearly 300,000 survivors of childhood cancer in the United States, and that number will continue to increase as more survivors live longer after treatment. In fact, today, 1 in 600 American young adults is a survivor of childhood cancer as compared to 1 in 1000 young adults just five years ago.
- ◆ As survivorship increases, we are learning more about chronic health complications in adult life called "late effects." Approximately 2/3 of long-term survivors have one or more chronic health problems resulting from the cancer or its treatment. About 1/3 of long-term survivors have at least one chronic health problem that is severe or life-threatening. A few examples include congestive heart failure, secondary cancers (such as breast cancer, thyroid cancer, or melanoma), infertility, osteoporosis, and osteonecrosis (joint breakdown).

- ◆ Founded in 1992, the LIFE Survivorship and Transition Program exists to meet the increasing demand by survivors of childhood cancer for medical care, psychosocial support, and health-related education. "LIFE" stands for Long-term Information, Follow-up and Education — which describes the comprehensive scope of services needed for state-of-the-art care of childhood cancer survivors. Each year, the program evaluates approximately 300



new long-term survivors and provides long-term follow-up services to over 3,000 survivors ranging from 10 to 40 years of age.



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- ◆ In 2008, a new LIFE Clinic was opened for first-time evaluations to facilitate the fundamental shift in approach from disease-oriented to survivorship care and to help survivors succeed in their post-cancer lives. At all LIFE visits, survivors are evaluated by a multidisciplinary team that specializes in cancer survivorship, including an oncologist, a nurse practitioner, and a medical social worker. The LIFE Clinic provides a comprehensive assessment, a treatment summary, and educational resources specific to each individual survivor. All survivors are encouraged to minimize future health problems by making healthy lifestyle choices.