



Ryan's  
**CASE** for **SMILES**  
Helping kids feel better to heal better

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2015 Annual Report



# A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER



It is hard to believe that we are entering our tenth year of bringing smiles, love and support to sick children everywhere, and what a year it's been.

2015 brought a tremendous amount of growth and change - a new name, new initiatives and new milestones. Yet one thing holds true, our commitment to helping children and their families as they face life changing illness and injuries.

We started with a simple plan: create and distribute whimsical pillowcases to give hospitalized children an emotional boost and remind them that they are not defined by their illness. Today, Ryan's Case for Smiles has a national reach, serving 50,000 children and families in over 330 hospitals across North America. We've delivered our millionth pillowcase, expanded our mission to include all children facing life changing illnesses and injuries, and partnered with the Center for Pediatric Traumatic Stress (CPTS) to develop tools to help prevent long term emotional trauma among children and their families.

None of this would be possible without you.

Thank you to each and every one of you who has been a part of our journey. And especially, thank you to the children and their families who inspire us with their courage, grace and humor in one of life's most harrowing moments.

With Gratitude,

Cindy Kerr  
Founder/CEO



# LOOKING BACK – HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015



## NEW NAME, NEW LOOK, SAME PASSION

2015 was a momentous year for us. We were very excited to introduce our new name and refreshed look and feel! Our new name is supported by our new tagline, “helping kids feel better to heal better.” Why the change? It reflects the growth of our mission to serve all children with life-changing illnesses and injuries - not just those with cancer. It also honors the thousands of extraordinary volunteers who are creating smiles each day.

## ONE MILLION SMILES AND COUNTING

On September 17, 2015 Case for Smiles delivered our ceremonial one millionth pillowcase to a hospitalized child in each of our 120 chapters across North America. Each child received a specially designed pillowcase to celebrate our milestone. In addition, schools across the country declared it “National PJ Day,” and celebrated in honor of our milestone. [Click Here for more information and photos from the celebration.](#)

## #GIVINGSMILES FOR #GIVINGTUESDAY

Our #GivingSmiles Challenge for #GivingTuesday raised \$32,197 to help kids feel better to heal better. We cannot thank our supporters enough for not only helping us to reach our goal, but to more than triple it. The funds raised will support us as we expand our mission to provide additional support and resources to children and their families.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Ryan’s Case for Smiles has been named a [Mutual of America 2015 Community Partnership Merit Finalist Award](#) recipient. The award honors our “innovative partnership with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder experts at Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children, providing access to valuable web-based information and tools designed to help families understand and navigate traumatic illness.”

## BY THE NUMBERS

**120 chapters and 1000s of volunteers**

**More than 330 hospitals served**

**211,311 pillowcases delivered in 2015**

**1.2 Million pillowcases delivered and counting!**



# STORIES OF SMILES



"Although my daughter is 17 she was so excited to get one of your pillowcases during her latest admission. What a great thing you are doing to make kids of all ages smile and happy during a difficult time! Thank You!"

"We spent Christmas in the hospital. We missed friends, family and didn't have any gifts for our son to open. While I know an almost two-year-old still doesn't totally understand Christmas, it's still nice to give him something! We shouldn't have worried because Santa visited and left gifts including a pillowcase. Thank you!"

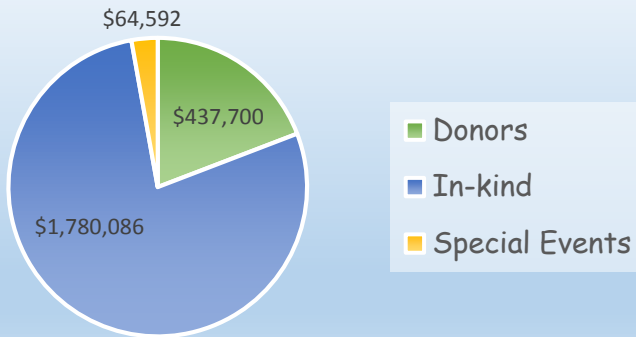
"My five-year-old is in the hospital for diagnosed and treatment for seizures. We have been here for five days now and the awesome nurses brought her a pillowcase. That made her day! She loves it! Thank you for what you do!"



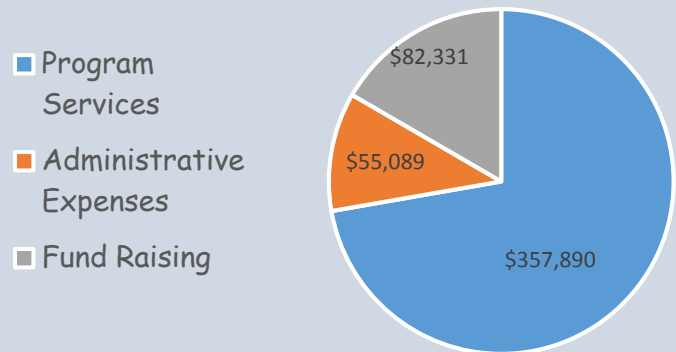
"Our family was changed forever when our sweet Lucy was diagnosed with AML at 14 months old...We were in our daughter's very sterile room and she was given a bright and fun 'Dora the Explorer' pillowcase. It is amazing how it transformed her room! My daughter progressed in her treatment, but we were headed towards bone marrow transplant and would be back to CHOP after a quick stay at home. We needed to change her linens daily, we couldn't use our own stuffed animals or blankets unless they were laundered daily. We spent Christmas, New Years, and Easter in the bone marrow transplant unit and we were fortunate to have the most adorable pillowcases to decorate the room and breathe fun and life back into the very sterile white box that we were isolated in. Lucy loved and would pet the kitty cat pillowcases as they were her favorite animal. She also loved her pretzel pillowcase, as that was her favorite food during treatment. She loved those pillowcases like they were her toys, always running over to the bag under the crib to pull one out to give to me. Who would have thought a pillowcase could mean so much? Lucy tragically passed far too soon one month before her 2nd birthday...I am forever grateful for this beautiful tribute and memorial quilt. I have snuggled up in it and wrapped myself around the positive memories that I hold so closely in. Each case and pattern tells a story and a memory of our time spent with our Lucy."

# 2015 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## Funds Raised

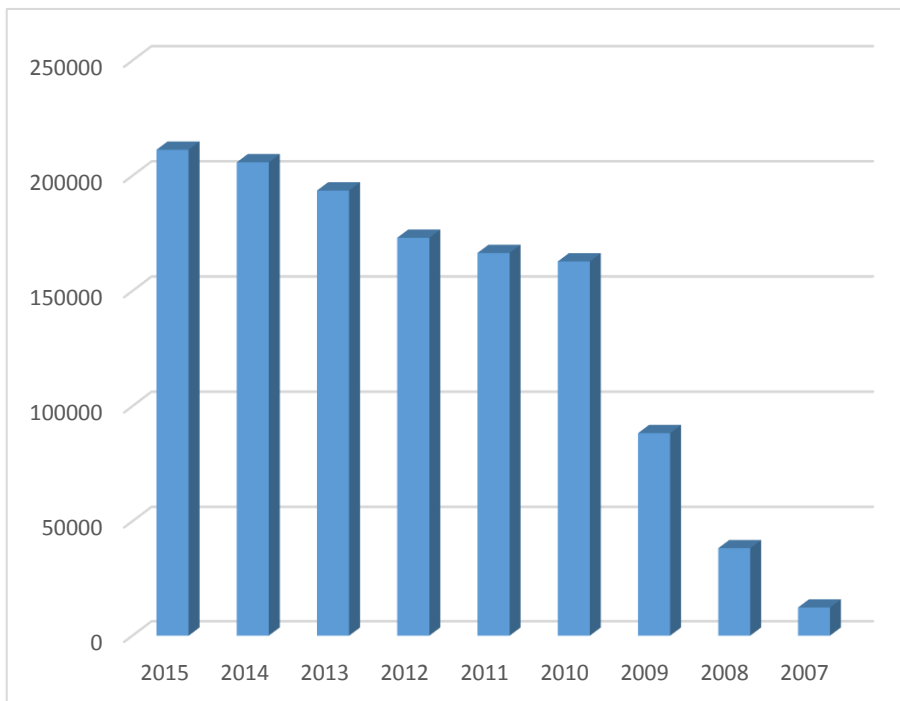


## Mission Expenses



Administrative Costs = 11% Cash Donations; 2% Total Donations  
 Largest Expense is Sewing and Fabric Supplies = 61% of Program Expenses

## Pillowcases Delivered



## Thank You To Our Donors

- The Hess Foundation
- Kohl's
- Wawa
- Barton Foundation
- Children's Hospital of Michigan
- Bock Foundation
- Beneficial Bank
- Baby Lock
- And our many other generous sponsors

# LOOKING FORWARD

## Post-Traumatic Stress Initiative

A hospital stay can be a terrifying experience for a child and their family. And while many of our programs focus on enabling children with cancer and other life changing illnesses to cope today, we must also help them build resiliency to thrive tomorrow.



Emerging research shows just how terrifying hospital stays can be: 49% of adolescents develop mild to severe Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms (PTSS) following cancer treatment, while 30% of young patients develop PTSS following a serious illness. The stress affects families, too: 42% of mothers and 25% of siblings of cancer patients develop symptoms of PTS (Kazak, et al., 2015). This type of PTS is known as Pediatric Medical Traumatic Stress (PMTS).

Recognizing that the negative effects of health-related trauma continues long after treatment, we are partnering with the country's leading researchers and clinicians at the Center for Pediatric Traumatic Stress (CPTS) to develop tools to help children and families to not only cope with the immediate crisis but to avoid and prevent long term emotional trauma. We seek to become a hub of information and help alleviate their stress and emotional trauma. We are also building a community of support where families can have questions answered and feel less alone. With this important initiative, we can continue to help children feel better to heal better long into the future.

## Sibling Support

New research has shown that nearly 25 percent of siblings develop symptoms of pediatric-traumatic stress. The good news is that outcomes can be improved through stress reduction and better coping strategies. Recognizing that siblings can often feel left out or experience other emotional effects when their sibling is diagnosed with a life-changing illness or injury, Ryan's Case for Smiles is launching its Sibshops program. Sibshops are pedal-to-the-metal events where siblings will meet other siblings, have fun, laugh, talk about the good and not-so-good parts of having a sibling with medical needs, play some great games and have some more fun!

**Join us in**  
***Helping Kids Feel Better to Heal Better***  
**[www.caseforsmiles.org](http://www.caseforsmiles.org)**

