



At a time when we felt like we had to take so much away from Kaitlyn, First STEP has allowed her to actually build friendships and have preschool buddies. She always comes home excited, with something new to share.

Gidget, Mother of Kaitlyn

First Step Preschool Pilot a Success *by Leslie Wright, Program Coordinator*

The First STEP preschool program, a partnership between ASK and First Baptist Church Weekday Preschool, opened its doors and arms to four preschoolers on September 22nd. A fifth child enrolled shortly thereafter, and two additional children began in January. ASK had sensed that there was a need out there for a preschool that was equipped with staff that would understand and adapt to the needs of children as they dealt with the physical and emotional demands of cancer treatment or other serious chronic health conditions. Too often, ASK members saw children unable to attend preschool due to the demands of treatment, creating a time of isolation from peers and the fun educational opportunities that preschool experiences provide. It can best be seen on Friday mornings when the smiles and play of each of these children fill the room, that First STEP has reached its goal of providing a great preschool experience for the children who are attending



The following quotes from parents and teachers leave no doubt that First STEP will continue beyond the pilot program and into another year!

This program has allowed Andre to experience preschool and do so with no expectations. It allows him to feel energetic and engaged when he feels up to it, and also to feel "not-so-great" and quiet when he doesn't. It has given him a socialization experience at a time when we had not anticipated his being able to have one. He's smiling and enjoying the experience, and at the same time he's learning.

Stephanie, Mother of Andre

Khari loves school and he loves to see his friends. He's always excited on Friday mornings because he gets to go to school. He's learned all the words to the songs and he sings them around the house. His vocabulary is growing.

Evelyn, Mother of Khari

It has been a wonderful experience for Madison. She is always excited about coming to school, and it allows us the flexibility that we would not have received in other schools. The teachers have been wonderful, and we appreciate the generosity of the First Baptist Church.

Karen, Mother of Madison

We've gotten off to a wonderful start. The children come regularly with smiles on their faces, and they immediately start playing with one another. It is a joy to see these children enjoying themselves so much in school.

Carol Snyder, Preschool teacher

While we have tried to be a blessing to the children, they have ended up being more of a blessing to us. Even though we know they are not always feeling well, our children come in with smiles, encouragement for one another and a willingness to participate. The parents have been completely supportive.

Janet Holloway, Preschool teacher

ASK wishes to express a deep thank you to First Baptist Church for its amazing generosity in partnering with us on this program.

ASK

newsletter

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Destiny and Rebecca

by Virginia Gays

Destiny and Rebecca met one another last summer and became fast friends. Destiny is from Norfolk, and Rebecca is from Winchester. Both came to Richmond for a bone marrow transplant (“BMT”) at VCU Medical Center in May 2006. VCU Medical Center has the only bone marrow transplant facility in Virginia for children. In January, I had the privilege of meeting these two very brave girls and some of their family members at the ASK Clinic (the “Clinic”).

Destiny is a cheerful 8-year old who has an affectionate and energetic personality. In the fall of 2005, she started feeling tired and was not as enthusiastic about her school work. Her mother knew something was not right and took her to the doctor.

Soon afterwards, they learned she had leukemia. She was initially treated at King’s Daughters, a Children’s Hospital in Norfolk. She and her mother came to Richmond at the end of May 2006 for her BMT.

She stayed at VCU Medical Center inpatient for about a month, and then moved over to the Hospital Hospitality House (the “Hospitality House”) for about two months, outpatient. She had appointments at the Clinic twice a week while staying at the Hospitality House. On her visits to the Clinic, she enjoyed doing art projects, playing SpongeBob video games, and watching SpongeBob and Cinderella movies. She really enjoyed the “Music Lady” who brought her an iPod she could listen too.



She now wants her own

iPod. Destiny said her most favorite part though about going to the Clinic was seeing “Katie” (the Child Life Specialist).

Rebecca is a charming and composed 10-year old. She is mature and sophisticated beyond her years. She speaks English and Spanish fluently and translates English into Spanish for her parents. She lives in Winchester. Her ordeal began with a broken arm in 2005. It was hurting and was just not healing properly. Shortly thereafter, she found out she had leukemia. She received her initial treatment at UVA Hospital. She and her parents came to Richmond for



her BMT in May 2006, and she was also in the hospital for about a month, and then at the Hospitality House on an out-patient basis for about two months. She too visited the Clinic twice a week during the two month period while at the Hospitality House. She enjoyed watching princess movies, playing video games, and doing art projects.

Destiny and Rebecca are both looking great and doing well. They will receive a bone marrow biopsy every three

months for the first year following their BMTs. They have already had two bone marrow biopsies and were at the Clinic on the same day for their second one. That is when I met them. I saw that Destiny was holding a jewelry set, and I asked her about it. She informed me that it was a gift from Rebecca, that she had given her that day. They will both be back to the Clinic in the spring for their third bone marrow biopsy.

Q & A on Leukemia and BMTs

What is bone marrow?

Bone marrow is the spongy tissue found inside bones. The breast bone, skull, hips, ribs, and spine have bone marrow that contain the stem cells that produce the body's blood cells, including the white blood cells (which fight infection), red blood cells (which carry oxygen to tissues throughout the body), and platelets (which help form blood clots that control bleeding).

What is leukemia?

Leukemia is a cancer that begins in the bone marrow that makes the blood cells. It begins when young, white blood cells (called blasts) undergo a series of mutations or changes that cause them to reproduce uncontrollably. Eventually, the blasts "crowd out" the normal cells. One blast will become 10 billion cells, which is the number of blast cells usually present at the time of diagnosis.

Why does someone have a BMT?

Someone has a bone marrow transplant when his/her disease is at high risk for relapse. Those patients get high dose chemotherapy. This dose of chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy not only kills abnormal cells but can also destroy normal cells found in the bone marrow. The purpose of the BMT is to replace the diseased or damaged bone marrow with bone marrow containing healthy stem cells. Sometimes the new bone marrow fights the cancer from inside the body.

How is a BMT done?

The bone marrow is infused into the patient intravenously similar to a blood transfusion. It takes about one to two hours, and takes place in the patient's room, not an operating room. Patients who received a BMT from a donor will receive additional medications to prevent and control graft-versus-host disease. †

What is Graft-Versus-Host Disease ("GVHD")?

GVHD occurs when the new donor marrow is trying to destroy the recipient's cells and tissues as if it were a disease or foreign material. There are varying degrees of GVHD, from mild to severe. There are also two kinds. Acute happens

during the three months after transplant, and chronic can happen later. To prevent GVHD, bone marrow from a donor must match the genetic makeup of the patient's marrow as closely as possible. Only identical twins have identical bone marrow. GVHD may have a positive effect because along with fighting the patient's tissues, it can also fight the leukemia from inside.

What happens after one leaves the hospital after a BMT?

It can take six months or more from the day of transplant before a patient is ready to fully resume normal activities. During this period, the patient's immune system is not developed enough to provide normal protection against viruses and bacteria so contact with the general public is limited. Patients will often wear protective masks when outside the home, and their diet is restricted. Patients are closely monitored during this time.

What is a bone marrow aspirate and biopsy?

A bone marrow aspirate is a test that is done to see if the cells in the bone marrow are healthy. A needle is placed in the bone (usually the hip bone) and a small amount of cells are removed and sent to the lab for testing. For a bone marrow biopsy, a needle is placed into the bone (usually the hip bone) and a small piece of bone is removed and sent to the lab for testing. These tests help evaluate bone marrow function.

Sources:

<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/medicine/bonemarrow/bmtinfo.html>

<http://www.cancerindex.org/ccw/guide2bm.htm#bmt>

http://www.emedicinehealth.com/bone_marrow_biopsy/article_em.htm

<http://www.medicinenet.com/leukemia/article.htm>

<http://health.allrefer.com/health/graft-versus-host-disease-info.html>

<http://www.curesearch.org/glossary/index.aspx>



Climbing Mountains for ASK

by Virginia Gays and Amy Godkin

What does mountain climbing in Tibet have to do with helping kids with cancer here in Richmond? A lot, if you are Sean Burch. Sean is a resident of Northern Virginia, and the founder of Burch Hyperfitness Systems. He is a successful explorer, fitness expert, and world record holder. He believes that with the right balance of attitude, physical training, and nutrition, individuals can transform themselves mentally and physically, and acquire a revived sense of determination to achieve goals and turn dreams into reality.

An extreme athlete dedicated to "hyperfitness," Sean recently approached ASK about how he could use his talents to help ASK's kids. He learned about ASK from his friend Richard Owen, and wanted to get involved. As a result, Sean dedicated his expedition to an unexplored region of Chang Tang in Tibet to ASK.

Before his expedition, Sean stopped by the Clinic to meet some of the children and talked with them about his upcoming climb, challenges, and accomplishments. Sean expressed hope that his visit would give them strength in the challenges they are facing in their own lives. Sean even called the Clinic from his satellite phone from the mountains of Chang Tang, spoke with some of the children, answered questions, and reported on his progress.

He began his climb on November 9th - achieved 63 first ascents in 23 days - and set a new record. He climbed for about 16 hours a day. Sean has also set Guinness world records on Mt. Everest, the North Pole, and Mt. Kilimanjaro. Sean hopes to visit the Clinic again in the spring and reunite with his friends who served as his inspiration. A huge thank you goes to Sean for supporting ASK.

Sources:

http://www.bbcookies.com/pages/sean_burch.html

<http://www.seanburch.com/interactive.html>

http://www.seanburch.com/BHS_Consulting/motivation.html

Lee Graves, Burch's giving knows no bounds; Richmond Times Dispatch, December 31, 2006.

Honoring Tad DuPriest

This year, friends of Tad DuPriest are gathering together to remember their friend and raise money for ASK at the same time. In 1992, Tad tragically died in a car accident while taking eight children to play miniature golf. Miraculously, the children walked away from the accident but Tad did not. To remember his spirit and love of children, his friends have formed the Tad DuPriest Foundation and are organizing its first event - Clubs and Cue 4 ASK.

The Clubs and Cue 4 ASK golf tournament will be held on May 11th and will feature an afternoon of golf at Providence followed by a party that evening at Tredegar Iron Works. To learn more about how you can participate in this great event, go to www.tadandask.org.

Rainbow Gala Highlights

ASK held its annual Rainbow Gala on Friday, September 22nd at the Richmond Omni Hotel. A big thank you to Gala co-chairs Heidi Bassett and Kristine Canavan, and to their team of dedicated volunteers for organizing this fantastic event. We are so appreciative of their hard work. The Gala of 2006 raised over \$120,000 for ASK's programs. ASK would also like to thank Flemings Steakhouse and Mosaic Cafe for providing the fabulous appetizers, and to the After Five band for providing great music.

ASK Salutes The 2006 Rainbow Gala Sponsors:

Mr. and Mrs. William Goodwin
SunTrust
WellPoint
Atlantic Bulk Carrier
Boleman
Colefax
Deloitte
VCU Department of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
VCU Department of Pediatrics
Dominion
Emmerson
Ernest & Young
Fi-Tech
LandAmerica
LeClair Ryan
McDonald's
MCV Foundation
Owens & Minor
Performance Food Group
Richmond Commercial Services
Smith Barney



Recent Fundraising Events

Bon Air Rotary Golf Tournament

Bon Air Rotary held another very successful golf tournament this year at Stonehenge Golf and Country Club this fall. Over 130 players turned out to show their support for childhood cancer. The Rotarians have been inspired by one of their own. Rotarian, Gale Cushing, and her daughter Lindsey, know first hand that battling cancer is not easy. Lindsey has been in treatment for a couple years as she continues to attend school in South Carolina. Proceeds from this tournament will support our patient care programs.

ManTech Golf Tournament

On a very cold, damp, rainy Friday afternoon this past fall, Mantech Corporation held its second annual Golf4ASK outing at Augustine Golf Club in Stafford, Virginia. The bad weather did not deter almost 100 players from raising \$18,000 for ASK. This tournament honored Owen Lea and his family. Dad, Randy, even raised over \$1,500 by shaving his head on a dare!

Ultimate Frisbee Challenge

Welbourne United Methodist Church Youth Group organized its second successful Ultimate Frisbee Tournament in October at Collegiate School's Sports Complex. The event was held in honor of two of Welbourne's youth, Sarah Owen and Nicole Odell, who have been recently treated at the ASK Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Clinic. The event raised over \$5,000 with plans to include more teams from around the city next year.

Just a Reminder

If you have not already done so, please consider making your annual contribution to ASK. Funds received through the Annual Giving Campaign are an important part of ASK's fundraising efforts and help raise valuable unrestricted dollars that can be applied to the area of greatest need. Donations can be made online at www.askweb.org or mailed to: P.O. Box 17184, Richmond, Virginia 23226.



ASK Walk Adds 5k This Year

This year ASK supporters will have the option of walking or running to support kids with cancer in our area. Now known as "The ASK Family Fun Walk & 5K – Step Out for Kids with Cancer," the event will take place on Saturday, April 28th at Short Pump Town Center. The 5K begins at 9 a.m., and the family fun walk will follow at 9:30 a.m. with the Family Festival running from 10 a.m. until noon in the mall's main plaza. Come enjoy the live music of The Jangling Reinharts while enjoying games, activities and free food samples. You can increase the impact of your participation by raising pledges or forming a team to participate. Last year's event netted more than \$30,000 for ASK's programs. Most of those funds were raised through pledges collected by ASK supporters.

Registration is \$20/adult and \$10/child. To register or learn more about the event, go to www.askweb.org or call (804) 828-1531.

Meet the New ASK Board Members

I was first introduced to ASK while organizing a golf event to benefit a Richmond-area charity. The positive impact on the children and families that are touched by ASK motivated me to become more involved. I am privileged to join a dedicated and compassionate board that is driven to deliver on ASK's mission.

by Mike Hedden

Mike is a resident of Hanover County with Joye, his wife, and children, Hannah, Nathan and Alexis. He is a SVP at Bankers Insurance, LLC.



I became familiar with ASK many years ago as a childhood Leukemia (ALL) survivor. I was diagnosed in 1978 at the age of 5 and was treated at the Medical College of Virginia (MCV), now known as VCU. Medical Center, by Dr. Clifford Russell and Dr. Nancy Dunn, among many others. Being a childhood cancer survivor and the father of a five year old son, I could not imagine being faced with what my parents were faced with nearly three decades ago. Coupled with this and the persistence of my good friend and fellow board member Allison Rios, I became inspired to join ASK. I have always held a large place in my heart for those children battling cancer and now is the right time for me to get more involved. I cherish the opportunity that lies in front of me. Thank You!

by Troy Schmidt

Troy is the regional golf director for the American Cancer Society and resides in Richmond with his son, Caden, and the love of his life Kim.

Dr. Cliff Russell Receives Award

Congratulations to Dr. Cliff Russell on receiving the Healing Partner in Healthcare award this past fall. This award is given by the Palliative Care Department each year to practitioners or other personnel for providing exquisite care to the "whole" person.





Upcoming Events

James River H.S. Dinner & Auction

James River High School

Saturday, April 21, 2007

For more information, call Jake Eck at (804) 639-4169.

ASK Family Fun Walk & 5k Step Out for Kids with Cancer

Short Pump Town Center

Saturday, April 28, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

For more information, go to <http://www.askweb.org> for more details or call (804) 828-1531.

ASK's Drive 4 Kids Golf Tournament

Hunting Hawk Golf Course

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

For more information, go to <http://www.askweb.org> or call (804) 828-1531.

Tad DuPriest Foundation's Clubs & Que 4 ASK

Providence and Tredegar Iron Works

For more information, go to <http://www.tadanask.org>

Believe in Miracles Golf Tournament

Mattaponi Springs

Monday, May 14, 2007

For more information, call Rusty Dodd at (540) 370-1866, ext #2.

For information on the many Special Love events open to children with cancer and their families, go to <http://www.speciallove.org> or call Robyn Dillon at (804) 628-0422 or Special Love at 1-888-930-2707.

Important Numbers

All numbers are area code (804) unless otherwise noted.

Pediatric Hem/Onc Research –

Rose Thune, Clinical research assistant – 628-1889

Shari Hiers, Clinical research assistant – 628-1232

Diane Richardson, Clin. research assist. – 628-1923

Dr. Godder, Russell, Massey and Dunn – 828-9605

After hours – 828-0951

Clinic Nurses – 828-9300

Margaret Sharp, Rachel Mollen,

Kathy Tofferi, Jennifer Eglund

Nurse Practitioners – 828-9605

Anne Mauck, Elizabeth Hall, Debbie Fisher

Social Worker

Robyn Dillon – 628-0422

Chaplain

Jim Bonomo – 628-1123

Childlife Therapist

Stephanie White-Poyer – 828-2304

Education Consultant

Alma Morgan – 828-0426

Ronald McDonald House – 355-6517

Special Love – (540) 667-3774

Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation – (800) 366-2223

American Cancer Society – (800) 966-3586

Leukemia Society of America (800) 866-4483

The Association for the Support of Children with Cancer (ASK) – 828-1531

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Message from the President

As outgoing President, David Andrews introduced me in a previous newsletter. On behalf of all the ASK families, I want to thank David Andrews for his leadership. During David's tenure, ASK has continued to grow. With the help of many volunteers, board members, and friends of ASK we are expanding our support for families from initial diagnosis, through treatment, and post-treatment.

I'd like to introduce some of the newest ASK staff members that are focused on patient care.

Last year, Katie Barber joined us as our new Child Life Therapist. Katie brings her upbeat energy to the clinic. She welcomes families to the clinic setting, explains to a child what is happening to them in a way they can understand, coordinates events like Kings Dominion Day, takes siblings to the treasure chest for toys/activities, and helps create special Christmas packages, just to name a few of her many efforts!

Leslie Wright has joined ASK as our Program Coordinator. In that role Leslie brings tremendous creativity as she develops new programs. These programs include a Young Adult Advisory Group that is planning a youth retreat, a reunion of survivors, socials, and contemplating a buddy system. Another program Leslie has started is the First STEP preschool program. This program is designed for young children whose preschool or kindergarten was interrupted. With this program, we also welcome our First STEP teacher, Carol Snyder.

All of this and many other acts of kindness (big and small) would not be possible without the tremendous generosity of all of ASK's friends. Our Rainbow Gala Committee put on a wonderful event in September, with donations exceeding \$100,000. Many organizations and many new friends of ASK are boosting our fundraising throughout the year.

So with this momentum, I am truly encouraged as we strengthen our partnership with Drs. Laver, Godder, Khan and the whole MCV staff. Additionally, the new Advisory board brings insights in promoting ASK's mission and further enhancing our long-term financial outlook. Also, Cathryn Lowe is leading ASK in a Strategic Planning process to further refine our mission, vision, and future goals.

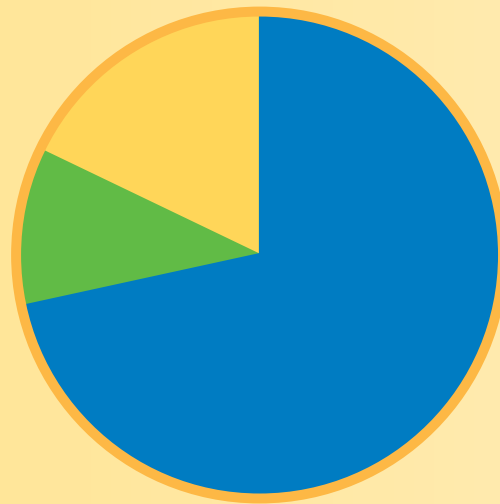
I am excited about what we have accomplished together and the future for our ASK children and families.

Jim Eck

Total Revenue and Expenses for FY 05-06
(June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006)

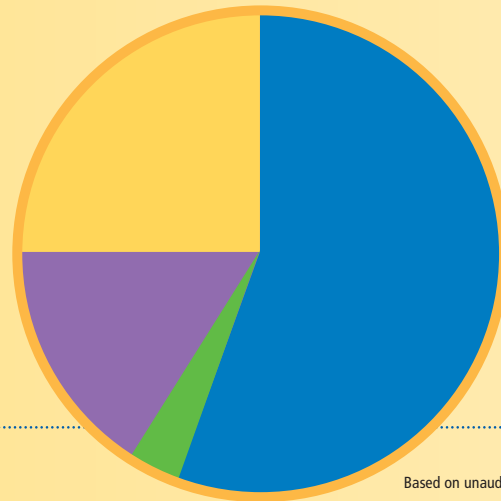
expenses

Program Expenditures:	72%
Management Expenditures:	12%
Fundraising Expenditures:	16%



revenue

Contributions:	25%
Grants:	19%
Events:	53%
Other:	3%



Based on unaudited financial statements.

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Stephanie Poyer, Child Life Therapist
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Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Highlights

- Provided over \$30,000 in direct financial support through the Brett Jones Memorial Foundation. Grants covered expenses such as mortgage and utility payments.
- Provided meals and parking for extended stays. Treatment is often lengthy, lasting one to three years. Much of the treatment is outpatient several times per week but there are times that a long inpatient stay is warranted especially when a Bone Marrow Transplant is needed.
- Development of a “Family to Family Program” that connects newly diagnosed families to those with experience.
- Enhanced the funding and extension of the Living Well support group that uses art as a means of communication and comfort.
- Provided several social functions throughout the year including a picnic at a farm, Braves Game Night, Spa Day for moms and daughters, VCU Basketball, Metro Zoo, Holiday Party, Easter Hunt, Valentine Tea, and concert, circus, special event tickets.
- Provided 11 high school cancer survivors with college scholarships.
- Continued social, emotional, and educational services offered by ASK staff and ex-officio board members.
- Provided over 20 needy families with special holiday gifts and our Santa distributed over 200 toys to children throughout the clinic. Organized a Christmas in July event to provide the joy of this holiday to our sickest children.
- Initiated a Leadership Reception and Advisory Board to assist with long-range financial and community awareness planning.
- Supported a summer school enrichment program aimed at providing additional support for children with academic and/or learning problems related to their treatments.
- Initiated an early childhood initiative aimed at providing social, emotional, and readiness skills for young children who have interrupted or postponed school because of cancer treatment.
- Process of developing programs aimed at young adult survivors.
- Welcomed Katie Barber as new Child Life Therapist. She came to us from Children’s Hospital with 15 years of experience.



Association for the Support of Children with Cancer

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ASK, a private, non-profit organization, provides unique social, emotional, spiritual and financial support for children with cancer and their families. ASK also supports clinical and laboratory research at the VCU Medical Center to aid in finding the causes and cures of childhood cancer.