



Wonders & Worries

Professional support for children
through a parent's illness or injury.

We will, together.



2023 Fiscal Year In Review

WONDERS & WORRIES

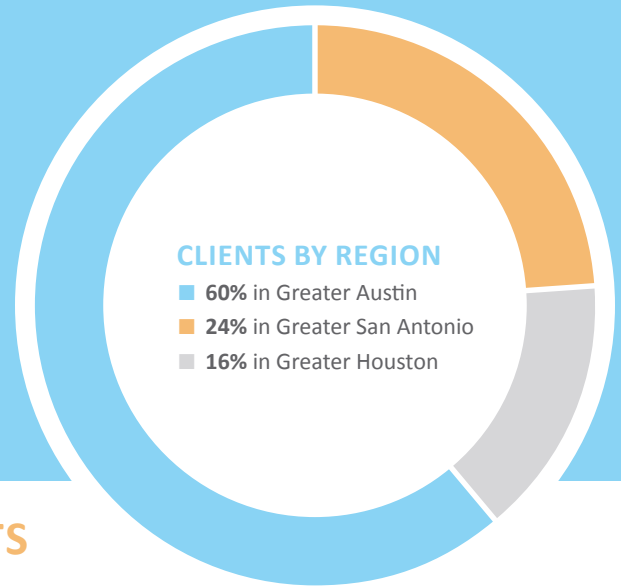
July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023

OUR MISSION

Wonders & Worries provides free, professional support for children and teenagers through a parent's serious illness.

1,389

children and parents received support from Wonders & Worries, an 8% increase from last year.



2023 FISCAL YEAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

TAKING A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH: Wonders & Worries achieved Level 1 Trauma-Informed Care Certification in May 2023 and a ceremony was held in the San Antonio office. Becoming trauma-informed requires an organization to re-examine previous policies and procedures that could be improved upon to make patrons feel more comfortable and secure. It equips staff to be more empathetic and non-judgmental, as well as encourages them to create a more welcoming physical environment. Overall, becoming trauma-informed involves minimizing perceived threats, avoiding re-traumatization, and supporting recovery. The clients we serve may have experienced past trauma, which can be compounded by their current situation. Our awareness and specific training on how to support them is crucial to our success in helping them cope with a parent's serious illness.

WONDERS & WORRIES BOOK: *I Wonder What It's Like When a Parent Has Cancer: Max's Story*, a brand-new children's book, available now in paperback and on Kindle, was written by Jacquelyn Rebecsek and illustrated by Anna Boxall. The first book in the Wonders & Worries Book Series follows the story of a boy, Max, as he learns about and copes with his dad's cancer diagnosis. Strategies for sharing information with Max and his sister about cancer are brought to light. Max explores common feelings and questions throughout the book and challenging points in the story

are supported with "helpers" and coping ideas that assist Max along the way. The Wonders & Worries Book Series are children's books that explore a variety of parent illnesses through the lens of a child. This series helps parents and/or professionals explain medical illnesses in a developmentally appropriate way, focusing on helping children better understand information and learn coping skills. Purchase on [Amazon](#).

W&W2GO FOR PARENTS APP: W&W2Go for parents provides information and strategies that maximize family communication and coping during a parent's illness. Many topics are explored through six main categories: Child Development and Parenting, Family Activities, Illness Communication Strategies, Support for Children, Bereavement Support, and Family Resources. The app is available on both Apple and Google platforms.

W&W2GO FOR PROFESSIONALS APP: W&W2Go for professionals provides clinicians supporting families during a parent's illness with information to further guide and empower their work. Topics focus on strategies to optimize family communication and coping. Many topics are explored through six main categories: Communicating with Families, Caregiver Guidance, Support in the Hospital, Support in the School Setting, Grief Support, and Support for the Clinician. The app is available on both Apple and Google platforms.

DELIVERING SERVICES AT A NATIONAL LEVEL: In FY23, Wonders & Worries concluded a three-year strategic plan and achieved the goal of delivering services at a national level to families who are dealing with serious parental illness and injury through the successful development of products, services, and technologies. The next three-year plan takes this process even further. Our vision is to create the blueprint for Wonders & Worries

to exist on a national scale for many generations to come. Doing this will require ongoing investment in technology infrastructure, programming, business model/structure, processes and standard operating procedures that will allow us to sustain growth nationally. Through the generosity of our donors, dedication of our staff, and volunteers in the community, we will together!

SERVICES BY ETHNICITY



Sneak Peek of Wonders & Worries in the Coming Year...

OPENING NEW OFFICES IN CEDAR PARK AND KATY: Wonders & Worries looks forward to expanding our geographic footprint this year to better serve our communities with the opening of new offices in the Cedar Park/Leander area and Houston/Katy area. We are also actively exploring opportunities to expand to a second location in San Antonio.

WONDERCHATS FOR PARENTS: These regularly provided webinars will focus on strategies to support parenting throughout an illness. Topics will focus on challenges that families face and build on ideas to maximize family coping and connection. Kim Fryar, Wonders & Worries' National Program Director, along with other experienced child life professionals, will facilitate these webinars.

NEW WEB SITE: Wonders & Worries wants to expand its services and resources to those in the Latino community by translating our new web site and supporting documents within the website into Spanish. While Wonders & Worries already offers services in English and Spanish, additional access to translated resources will ensure that Spanish-speaking families receive important information on demand.

SUPPORT MATERIALS OFFERED IN SPANISH: Wonders & Worries wants to expand its services and resources to those in the Latino community by translating our new web site and all supporting documents into Spanish. While Wonders & Worries already offers its core services in English and Spanish, new access to translated resources will ensure that families can get the information on demand.

VIDEO LIBRARY: Curating Wonders & Worries' video assets into an easy-to-access YouTube channel will allow us to provide a centralized platform for our audience to access and view our videos. This in turn will increase visibility to a broader audience, allow for easy sharing and embedding across multiple platforms, permit our channel's appearance to reflect our branding through customization of appearance, provide detailed analytics and insights about our videos' performance, and offer monetization opportunities.

WONDERWORKS: WonderWorks can be gifted and sent directly to families. WonderWorks is an activity bundle that highlights central themes for supporting families as they cope with a medical situation (Communication | Self-Expression | Connection). Sharing feelings and creating strategies to remain connected as a family can be empowering, especially amid change and challenge. Topics and activity outlines provide guidance as families explore each activity, though there is plenty of room for further customization to meet each families' specific needs. WonderWorks will be mailed directly to families.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSE: This is an on-demand foundational course, focused on the developmental understanding and impact of parental illness on children and teens. This course will be available on our continuing education platform, wondersandworries.thinkific.com. The course will have an associated fee for the participant and offer professional continuing education hours.



In May 2024 the ACLP (Association of Child Life Professionals) conference will be held in San Antonio, Texas. Wonders & Worries looks forward to highlighting our presence within the San Antonio region and our expertise supporting children and families facing serious parental illness. The Association represents trained professionals with expertise in helping infants, children, youth, and families cope with the stress and uncertainty of illness, injury, and treatment. ACLP is comprised of more than 5,000 professionals representing at least 600 organizations worldwide. The ACLP advances the field of child life by establishing and maintaining professional standards, enhancing the professional growth and development of members, and advancing the credibility of the child life profession by fostering research and promoting the standards of child life practice on a national and international level.

A HISTORY OF

Wonders & Worries



Wonders & Worries was opened in 2001 in Austin, Texas by two certified child life specialists, Meredith Cooper and Melissa (Missi) Hicks. Both women had experience working with pediatric patients in children's hospitals. Meredith was the first pediatric oncology child life specialist in Austin at Children's Hospital of Austin and Missi relocated to Austin after working with children who had cancer at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore and the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston – Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center.

Through their work, Meredith and Missi became aware of the incredible need to offer developmental and coping support to children and families struggling with parental illness. Children were often left alone wondering, "Why is mom losing her hair?" or worrying, "Did I cause mom to get cancer?"

Often parents, out of misguided concern for their child, hesitated to tell their child about their diagnosis and treatment. They lacked the words to offer age-appropriate information and support for their child's developmental wonders and worries.

Meredith and Missi shared the vision that community based, child life services for children and families with parental illness were needed not only in Austin but throughout the nation and world. While Missi relocated to Atlanta in 2003 and ultimately Raleigh, she remained an ex officio board member with Meredith continuing as executive director. Many board members, donors, and volunteers worked tirelessly to ensure that Wonders & Worries was able to grow and expand to meet the ever-growing need of new families. A second East Austin office was added in 2006, allowing for a greater outreach to underserved and bilingual families. An additional north Austin location was added in 2011, with a Williamson County office opening in the Fall of 2016.

In 2017, Alex Gabbi, a past client, was hired by the board to create a 3-year strategic plan to support this vision. He joined Wonders & Worries in 2018 as Executive Director. Meredith Cooper stepped into the role of a Founder and oversees the geographic expansion efforts, lends programmatic expertise to new initiatives, and works to build national awareness within the child life community. The expansion into San Antonio came with the opening of an office in the START medical complex in spring of 2017 in collaboration with the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas and our Houston office opened in September of 2020. Alex helped position the organization to expand virtually and in the past few years, Wonders & Worries has created an online continuing education program for professionals, podcasts and online educational video series for parents, and a VR Treatment Center Tour. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Wonders & Worries quickly transitioned all their services so that families could receive support virtually. At the beginning of FY21, Wonders & Worries embarked on a new three-year strategic plan with the ongoing goal of providing free, professional support to any family in the United States struggling with parental illness. In this regard, in FY21 Wonders & Worries launched a live and on-demand Registered Wonders & Worries Program, that allows clinical professionals across the country to be equipped with the ability to provide the Wonders & Worries curriculum to their patient population. To date, Wonders & Worries has 57 registered providers in 23 states and Japan.

Alex continues to lead the organization toward the achievement of the Strategic Vision of providing free, professional support to any family in the United States struggling with parental illness. The development of virtual programming during the pandemic remains a strong option for support while in person services have resumed in all three of our Texas geographical locations. Last year, additional virtual resources to enhance support for both families and professionals across the country were launched, including new products in our WonderVR line, mobile applications for parents and professionals, and a podcast (WonderCast) for parents. Expect to see Wonders & Worries' name and expertise seen and utilized farther and wider in the year to come along with an emphasis on providing support to an increasing number of families at a national level.



Donors and Supporters

We are grateful for the many contributions from individuals, families, businesses, and foundations during the 2023 fiscal year. Your support and generosity allows us to provide free, professional support for children through a parent’s illness, in both English and Spanish.

\$50,000+

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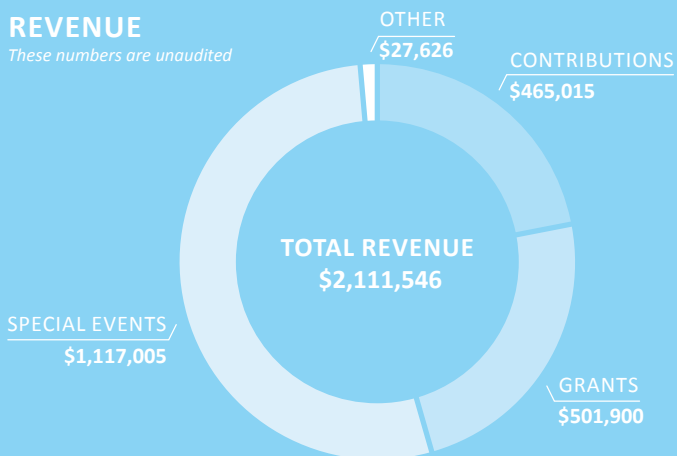
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These numbers are unaudited



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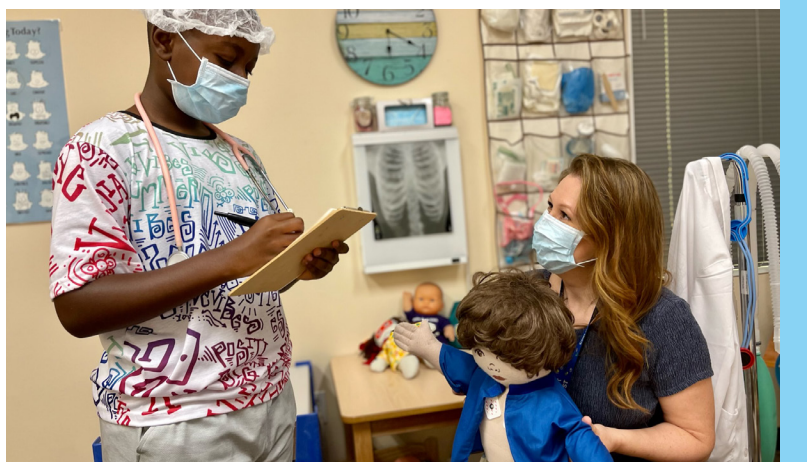
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Please visit www.wondersandworries.org/millennium-society and www.wondersandworries.org/corporate-circle-of-excellence, for more information about our special giving groups.



Wonders & Worries

Millennium Society

The Millennium Society is a sustainable funding initiative to support the general operations of Wonders & Worries.

Joe & Bettye Albanese | Tom Bentley & Carol Rylander | Donald & Nina Daniel | Jonathan & Kelly Davison
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Wonders & Worries

Corporate Circle of Excellence

The Corporate Circle of Excellence is comprised of a group of organizations who recognize the profound impact of parental illness on children, families, and our community, and choose to directly support the mission of Wonders & Worries.



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Wonders & Worries

Professional support for children
through a parent's illness or injury.

We will, together.

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info@wondersandworries.org
www.wondersandworries.org