



Fact Sheet

Who we are:

- At Shining Stars we believe in helping kids not just survive cancer but thrive and truly live their lives again. When a child is diagnosed with cancer, the entire family faces overwhelming emotional and social trauma. The illness and its treatments steal their hope and quality of life. We exist to give it back. The proven result of our programs: attitudes transform, spirits come alive, hope is ignited, and lives forever change.
- **Mission:** To transform lives through year-round recreational and social programs for children and their families challenged with pediatric cancer or another life threatening illness.
- **Founded:** 2001

Clients:

We serve pediatric cancer patients and their entire immediate family.

- Over 80% of participants report being in poverty or facing severe financial difficulties. Much of this is the result of: Overwhelming medical bills, losing insurance, job loss, and/or bankruptcy. Many will face medical bills and struggle to pay for the medical needs of their child well into adulthood, regardless if they are in remission.
- The majority of kids served have a physical or mental disability as a result of their illness and/or treatment. This includes paralysis, amputation, nerve damage, chronic fatigue, “chemo” brain, vision loss, hearing loss, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and much more.

Impact and Service Numbers:

- In a typical year, we serve over 80 NEW families or 350+ individuals, in addition to our existing client base
- Over 1,000 families served since our founding
- We have grown every year since 2001
- 100% of programs are provided at no cost to the child or their family
- 87% of cash expenditures directly support programming for the kids and families we serve, according to our most recent audited financials for our 2020 fiscal year
- Children and families from 23 States and 260+ towns/cities, representing 21 hospitals, served since 2001
- We are currently a BBB accredited charity and have the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Guidestar
- Over 340 volunteers provided 14,068 hours of service in 2020
- On average, 60+ programs and events are provided each year

Key Programs and Services:

Aspen Winter Games (February 25 – March 4, 2022): The Aspen Winter Games Program is an 8 day adaptive snowboard and ski recreation program held every year for over 250 participants, including children, their medical team, instructors, and volunteers. Children living with cancer or another life-threatening illness are taken to the slopes in Aspen and given everything they need to ski or ride, including lift tickets, gear, lodging, meals, transportation, and one-on-one adaptive lessons. Kids also enjoy dance parties, music lessons, movie nights, swimming, campfires, snowmobiling, yoga, crafts, and games. The emphasis of the week is on empowering each child and giving them a sense of hope, by pushing them to accomplish things on the mountain that they never thought possible. Each child learns to focus on all that they can do, rather than their limitations.

Aspen Summer Adventure (July 2022): Not your average summer camp - A dynamic, week-long program for children ages 8-14 facing cancer or another life-threatening illness. The program is designed to foster new relationships between participants, while giving them challenging and unique experiences. Activities include rock climbing, rappelling, outdoor education, team building activities, rafting, therapeutic arts & crafts, sailing, horseback riding, hiking, challenge courses, and more! Participants leave the program with a growing belief in themselves and their ability to accomplish great things despite their challenges. They also gain new, life-long friendships with kids who know exactly what they are going through.

Grand County Family Adventure (July 2022): A 5-day summertime adventure offered to the children we serve and their entire immediate family. The program forges strong bonds within families, while introducing them to a much needed network of other families who face similar challenges, creating lasting relationships. Families are given the chance to escape their troubles and enjoy a week together in the beauty of the High Rockies region of Colorado. Activities include boating, hiking, rafting, horseback riding, fishing, a day at Winter Park Resort, zip lining, games, and much more. This program has become one of our largest, as we cater to 250+ children and family members from across the country.

Single Day Family Events (Ongoing, Year-round): Throughout the year, the Foundation hosts single day events which all Shining Stars and their families are invited to. Activities have included days at the zoo, professional sporting events, a holiday party, toy drive, concerts, theater productions, and more! These events help to foster a support network among families, while also giving them a day out to just have fun and enjoy one another away from the hospital and stresses of their daily lives.

Shining Stars All-Stars (Ongoing, Year-round): This is a retreat and mentorship program for young adult pediatric cancer patients. The goal of the program is to provide participants with the tools and support to successfully transition into adulthood and thrive. Retreats provide outdoor adventures during the day and targeted group teambuilding activities and workshops during the evening. Young adults are then matched with a mentor who they work closely with for a full year.

Kids Helping Kids (Ongoing, Year-round): These programs engage high school, middle school, and elementary students from throughout Colorado as volunteers with the Shining Stars Foundation in a variety of projects and leadership roles. The targeted volunteer activities give students the opportunity to learn the importance of philanthropy and make a difference in their communities. In addition, presentations are given in local schools to promote an understanding and acceptance of children who have cancer or another life-threatening illness.

What Makes Shining Stars Unique:

- We provide programming not only for the child, but their entire immediate family, including siblings and parents.
- We provide services for as many years as the family needs it, regardless of whether they are in diagnosis, treatment, remission, relapse, etc.
- We provide services at absolutely no cost to the family. There is no sliding fee scale or required fundraising component for participants.
- We provide year-round programming and support, not a one-time experience.
- We do not operate our own program facility. We have found it to be economically efficient and more beneficial for participants if we travel throughout the community for activities, relying on in-kind donations. This gives us the freedom of not being tied down to a physical location or high capital expenditures. While many similar foundations spend millions of dollars building structures often remarkably similar to the institutions the children most want to forget, we try to make any vestiges of hospital life invisible.
- Due to the experience of our medical team and adaptive sport instructors, we are able to target kids with complex, highly intensive physical and medical challenges. We have safely accommodated children whose doctors had not allowed to attend similar programs because even small physical trauma could be devastating for them. We provide an enormous amount of medical care in a stealth-like matter, behind the scenes, in a fashion that each child's needs are met without taking away from their experience.

Quotes from our Clients:

“When you have cancer, your life becomes about surviving and not about living. But this week, so many kids, including myself, got to feel alive for the first time in a long time.” – Aspen, Diagnosed with Leukemia

“People think supporters and friends will rally around you as you go through something like this, but people disappear. You are left without a support group. The relationships we gain through Shining Stars have more impact than I can explain. For the first time we met other people who understood.” – Mother of Shining Star Alex, Diagnosed with Burkitt's Lymphoma

“I had been told I was hopeless. I was dying, in a wheelchair, and on oxygen. Shining Stars gave me hope. I went skiing – something I never dreamed was possible. Now my life has changed. I want to live all day, every day.” – Evan, Diagnosed with Multiple Blood Disorders