SUPPORTING THE CHILDHOOD CANCER JOURNEY

Aflac adopted the charge to further childhood cancer research and treatment and to support families in that struggle. It began more than 20 years ago when a young mother named Vicki Riedel reached out to Aflac seeking support in her fight against childhood cancer.

Riedel’s baby, Ansley, was undergoing treatment for AML, a form of leukemia, at what is today Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. Children like Ansley received cancer treatment on a floor in need of renovations, and Riedel reached out to Kathelen and Dan Amos to request $25,000 from Aflac to get the job done. Touched by Vicki’s story and desire to help, Aflac pledged $3 million to renovate the treatment wing in Atlanta and name it the Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center (Aflac Cancer Center).

In 2016, Aflac surpassed $110 million in funds raised for the treatment and research of childhood cancer since 1995.

In fact, each month, more than 17,000 Aflac independent sales associates contribute more than $500,000 from their commission checks to the Aflac Cancer Center.
LEAVING OUR ‘DUCKPRINTS’

“We are increasingly conscious at Aflac that leaving our ‘duckprints’ – or doing the right thing – is everyone’s job,” said Kathelen Amos, president of the Aflac Foundation.

Childhood cancer is the leading cause of death by disease for children under the age of 15, according to the National Cancer Institute. Yet, less than 4 percent of all federal funding for cancer research goes toward pediatric cancer, according to the Children’s Cancer Fund. Through our ongoing Duckprints initiative, Aflac celebrates individuals who go above and beyond to end this disease.

In 2016, Aflac and its partners hosted four events to celebrate cancer-fighting heroes. The events took place at the Aflac Cancer Center in Atlanta, Georgia; Palmetto Health in Columbia, South Carolina; Cardon Children’s Hospital in Mesa, Arizona; and Dayton Children’s Hospital in Dayton, Ohio.

Aflac Chairman and CEO Dan Amos and Aflac Foundation President Kathelen Amos visit pediatric patients at the Aflac Cancer Center, located at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT OF A COMPANY IS A COMPOSITE OF EVERYONE WHO INHABITS IT, and we’re proud to come together as the Aflac family to celebrate this great desire to see childhood cancer meet its end in this generation.”

Aflac Cancer Center, Atlanta, Georgia

To kick off Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, the Aflac Duck began his Duckprints tour in Atlanta at the Aflac Cancer Center. Aflac’s Duckprints awards went to WSB’s Atlanta Morning News host Scott Slade who started the WSB Radio Care-a-Thon for the Aflac Cancer Center in 2000 and raised millions of dollars to help eradicate childhood cancer. In addition, Dr. Dorothy Jordan, an advanced practice nurse and founder of Camp Sunshine, a nonprofit organization offering year-round recreational, educational and supportive programming for children with cancer and their families, saw her footprints added to the Duckprints Wall of Fame at the Aflac Cancer Center.
Event attendees heard the story of Ellanor Young, a brave girl diagnosed with leukemia at only 4 years old who is now in remission. Her experience inspired her father’s lacrosse team to form Lax for Leukemia Inc., a nonprofit that benefits the Aflac Cancer Center.

**Palmetto Health, Columbia, South Carolina**

The second stop of the Duckprints tour featured long-time Aflac hospital partner, Palmetto Health Children’s Hospital. Todd Ellis, the voice of the South Carolina Gamecocks whose daughter, Logan, is a childhood cancer survivor, served as the master of ceremonies to honor Paul and Sarah Towns, CAMP KEMO supporters and developers of Elgin Lights, a Christmas lights show that honors Cole Sawyer, a local boy whose cancer journey sadly ended in 2004.

Longtime medical director of the Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Palmetto Health, Ronnie Neuberg, M.D., was also honored for his efforts. Our final honoree, Stacy Sawyer, was a valued advisor and advocate for CAMP KEMO. Although Sawyer received this award posthumously, her memory will live on with the success of CAMP KEMO.

The event concluded with commentary from DJ Fisher, a 17-year-old patient at Palmetto Health Children’s Hospital who shared his story and was recognized for his invaluable peer support to other children undergoing cancer treatment.

**Cardon Children’s Hospital, Mesa, Arizona**

The Aflac Duck traveled to Mesa, Arizona, for the third stop on the Duckprints tour to Cardon Children’s Medical Center.

Diagnosed with Burkitt’s Lymphoma at the end of his junior year of high school, honoree Scott Star gave up his lifelong dream of joining the Marines when he was unable to meet the health requirements. His tough attitude and warm heart helped him overcome his battle against childhood cancer. Now cancer-free, he leaves his mark on Cardon Children’s Hospital through his involvement in community programs and is considering becoming an EMT or firefighter.

Honoree Joel Nava was diagnosed with high-risk acute lymphoblastic leukemia in May 2003 at the age of 13. His disease later recurred in his central nervous system. Searching for his personal mission and finding his voice, Nava traveled to Japan and earned a degree in nursing and health innovation. He credits his pediatric oncology nurses as his mentors, saying, “My nurses were there for me,” and they “epitomize the idea of compassion and empathy.”

Aflac also honored the McKenzie Monks Foundation and its mission of helping children cope with cancer. The foundation provides children with “Kenzie Kases,” inspired by the Hello Kitty suitcase that brought McKenzie Monks joy and comfort when she was ill with cancer years ago.

Children fighting cancer gaze up at a fireworks show at CAMP KEMO, a camp dedicated to making children feel like kids, not patients.
The McKenzie Monks Foundation’s “Kenzie Kases” provide toys and crafts for pediatric cancer patients.

ago. Each Kenzie Kase includes an iPad (or DVD player), blankets, toys and crafts. The McKenzie Monks Foundation also created a special space at Cardon Children's for very young patients, dubbed the “Kenzie Korner.” It offers children a safe place to step away from their treatment and relax, have fun and just be a kid.

Dayton Children’s Hospital, Dayton, Ohio

The 2016 Duckprints tour made its final stop at Dayton Children’s Hospital to honor Kayleigh Crabtree.

Our small but mighty honoree, Kayleigh Crabtree, learned the word “cancer” when she was introduced to Alex’s Lemonade Stand, an organization that raises money for childhood cancer research. Although only 6 years old, she was inspired to host her own lemonade stands to raise money for pediatric cancer patents. In two seasons, she raised more than $500 for the organization.

After two years of raising money, Crabtree was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Dayton Children’s helped her and her family make it through two years of treatment with a successful outcome. She now continues to raise money for cancer causes, including Dayton Children’s, Children's Miracle Network, CureSearch and others.

Duckprints also recognized Moms 4 Miracles, a program through which local resident Sallie

Aflac honored Kayleigh Crabtree as she presented her story at the Dayton Children’s Hospital Duckprints event.

The Duckprints tour recognized Moms 4 Miracles for their fundraising in support of The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Taylor gathers a group of dedicated moms to host an annual golf outing to raise money for The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Identifying emotional support for childhood cancer patients as a critical need, participants in Moms 4 Miracles purchased gaming systems and tablet devices to help entertain kids during their long stays in the hospital. With the proceeds from the golf event, the group helps pay off medical bills, makes wishes come true, funds and supports research and supports hospital initiatives.

We’re inspired by all these stories, which reaffirm the need to raise broader awareness of this issue. That’s why we’re proud to say that in 2016, Aflac exceeded its goal for social
interactions with the Duckprints campaign for childhood cancer. The campaign rallied people across America to become active in pediatric cancer issues. It encouraged social media users to create or share posts related to childhood cancer by using #Duckprints. For each use of the hashtag, Aflac pledged to contribute $2, up to $1.5 million total to the cause.

In support of #Duckprints pledges, Aflac launched the #Duckprints Twitter Vending Machine (TVM) at Atlanta’s 2016 PGA Tour Championship. Through the vending machine, users tweeted pre-scripted messages spreading the word about Aflac’s Duckprints program through their personal accounts. After tweeting, users received a unique code prompting the TVM to vend a prize at random.

All told, there were more than 900,000 social media engagements across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, making it the first time the #Duckprints program, which started in 2013, reached its goal of $1.5 million in contributions.

“We are proud to have achieved and even exceeded our 2016 goal,” said Dan Amos, Aflac CEO. “But it was just one step on the way to achieving the greater goal of eradicating childhood cancer, because every child deserves a lifetime and every family deserves to be whole.”

CUREFEST AND CHASING CANCER: ADVANCING THE NATIONAL DISCUSSION ON CANCER

Aflac expanded its support of this critical issue in 2016 by becoming a corporate sponsor for Curefest, a grassroots organization that aims to make the disease a priority by uniting the childhood cancer community, the general public, physicians, researchers and elected leaders. Curefest is a two-day event held at Freedom Plaza and at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It included three key events:

a “Night of Golden Lights,” which featured live music and speakers and was followed by a walk to the White House gates for a candlelight vigil; a gathering of more than 250 childhood cancer support organizations at the National Mall, where the Aflac Duck greeted attendees; and finally, a 5k race that concluded the weekend.

To compliment the event itself, Aflac Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications Catherine Blades conducted a six-minute interview on CNBC to promote Curefest and their efforts to eradicate childhood cancer.

In December, Aflac worked with the Washington Post to create a live panel program called “Chasing Cancer.” Aflac CEO Dan Amos and Aflac Foundation President Kathelen Amos