



NEWS RELEASE

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CONNECTICUT CHALLENGE DONATES \$25,000 TO CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER'S CANCER SURVIVORSHIP PROGRAM

HARTFORD, Conn.— Pediatric cancer survivors at Connecticut Children's Medical Center are now receiving even more support thanks to a generous financial gift from the Connecticut Challenge.

In early February, the Connecticut Challenge donated \$25,000 to Connecticut Children's REACH for the STARS Survivorship Program (*REACH: Research, Education, Advocacy, Continued life and Health; STARS: Survivors Tackling All Roadblocks Successfully*).

The program helps pediatric cancer survivors improve and maintain a high quality and successful lifestyle. The donation comes on the heels of the Connecticut Challenge's expanded funding of cancer survivorship programs across the state including the Connecticut Challenge Survivorship Network.

"This funding will help support and encourage our pediatric cancer survivors to achieve their dreams," said pediatric hematologist/oncologist Eileen Gillan, MD, of Connecticut Children's. "We're also excited about working closely with the Survivorship Network in the months and years ahead to improve the care and services provided to pediatric cancer survivors throughout Connecticut."

Dr. Gillan founded the REACH for the STARS Program in 2007 and said the program provides access to interactive resources including a comprehensive archived summary of all the child's treatments if they are needed by the family. REACH for the STARS also provides patients with the opportunity to take part in the latest protocols of the Children's Oncology Group.

"The Connecticut Challenge is honored to partner with Dr. Gillan and her staff. Their exceptional work improves the lives of cancer survivors and that is the mission of our organization. Today, Connecticut is among the very few states with any comprehensive programs dedicated to the needs of cancer survivors. Our goal is to engage hospitals across the state and make Connecticut a leader in this growing field," said Connecticut Challenge Executive Director Bob Mazzone.

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Mazzone added that the organization raises its funds primarily through the annual Connecticut Challenge charity bike ride. Since 2005, the Connecticut Challenge has raised more than \$2 million for survivorship clinics, research grants, symposiums, and survivor education and awareness events. Organizers have set Saturday, July 25th as the date for their 2009 ride, the 5th anniversary of its signature fundraising event. "We are especially excited this year to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the ride. The passionate support of our cyclists and volunteers has allowed us to improve the care of Connecticut's 120,000 cancer survivors," said co-founder, Jeff Keith, of Fairfield. "We all know people who have battled cancer with incredible courage. What we don't often see is how these survivors may continue to struggle with the long-term effects of their disease and their treatments. By helping us to raise money to improve survivorship programs across Connecticut, our riders, volunteers and donors are making a very direct, positive impact on the cancer survivors in their lives," said Keith.

"This is a very special investment to our program by the Connecticut Challenge, and our patients and families truly appreciate their support," said Dr. Gillian.

For more information on the REACH for the STARS Program, please visit www.connecticutchildrens.org. For more information on the 2009 Connecticut Challenge charity bike ride, please visit www.ctchallenge.org.

Connecticut Children's is the region's only academic medical center dedicated exclusively to the care of children. Offering a full range of services for children from birth through age 18, Connecticut Children's brings quality care to children and families through 10 affiliated community hospitals and 16 practice locations.

For more information, please visit www.connecticutchildrens.org.

The Connecticut Challenge is a non-competitive bike ride based in Fairfield, CT that raises money for the cancer survivorship programs of the Connecticut Challenge, including survivorship clinics, research grants, symposiums and survivor education and awareness events. Riders of all ages and skill levels can register for a 12, 25, 50, 75 or 100-mile ride and raise funds from personal sponsors to support their efforts. The 2009 Connecticut Challenge will take place on Saturday, July 25th, starting and finishing in Fairfield, CT. Cyclists who register before May 1st will receive a custom-designed, 5th anniversary CT Challenge cycling jersey, produced by Louis Garneau. To register to ride, volunteer or make a contribution to the 2009 event, please visit www.ctchallenge.org.



February 26, 2009: Connecticut Challenge check presentation to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

(l-r): Bob Mazzone, CT Challenge Executive Director; Casey Beaupre, REACH for the STARS patient; Mike Daly, CT Challenge Survivor Advisory Board; Dr. Eileen Gillan, Director, REACH for the STARS Survivorship Program.

(photo: Marion Hill, CCMC)