

# Charna Radbell Foundation

*providing sibling support*

## Charna's Kids Club

### Who We Are

- an award-winning child life sibling support program
- a model for other medical institutions across the globe
- a safe, recreational, and therapeutic play space for the well siblings of the inpatient pediatric population within children's hospitals

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Program Activities	2
Community Impact	2
Charna's Kids Club at Cohen's	3
A Safe Place to Feel	3
Remembering Charna Radbell	4
More Reasons to Give	4



**NewYork-Presbyterian Kids**  
Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital

### Announcement:

This year marks our 11th anniversary at NewYork-Presbyterian and our 2nd anniversary at Cohen Children's Medical Center. Charna's Kids Club has achieved a record number. We served over 3,500 children plus their entire families this year!!! That is certainly something to celebrate!

Charna's Kids Club, fully sponsored by the Charna Radbell Foundation, has become an award-winning sibling support program and a proven model for institutions across the globe. Our mission is to help the well siblings of pediatric patients. We provide a safe, recreational, and therapeutic play space for children who are struggling with the challenges of their sibling's devastating illness. This environment helps them to better understand their surroundings, express their feelings, meet peers in similar circumstances, and reduce the stress associated with the hospitalization of a sibling. "Charna's" has become their respite, a place in which they feel safe, valued, and loved.

We have served thousands of pediatric patients, their siblings, and their entire families for more than a decade, becoming an integral part of Family Center Care at both NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital (Manhattan) and Cohen Children's Medical Center at Northwell Health (Long Island). Your support has made all of this possible and we are so grateful. We hope that you will continue to support our efforts as we move toward the future which looks even brighter for "Charna's Kids." **Our partnerships with the Ronald McDonald House and the Make-a-Wish Foundation have created new growth opportunities for Charna's Kids Club, locally and out-of-state. We hope you will join us on this new journey as well.**



## Highlights: Our Impact within the Community

### Broadway Inspirational Voices

For the sixth year in a row, the Ronald McDonald House Hospital Outreach Program has extended a kind invitation to one of our siblings to participate in this beautiful evening of song. This sibling attended Meet and Greet sessions with a Broadway composer, who, in turn, wrote a song about this special girl! The song was performed by Broadway performers for the Ronald McDonald House community. This special child and her family were in attendance as this song honored her for her strength, talent and unique style! Broadway Inspirational Voices is always a touching and beautiful evening of joy for the parents, family members, and of course, the wonderful sibling being celebrated in song.

### Annual Ronald McDonald House Carnival

Our wonderful friends at the Ronald McDonald House Hospital Outreach Program invited 25 of Charna's Kids and their families to participate in this annual event. These families enjoyed performances, music and dancing, magic, food, and fun prizes. One of our beloved siblings even won a bicycle and helmet! This was a well-deserved day filled with fun and joy, providing our families with respite from the hospital environment and treatments. We are so grateful to the Ronald McDonald House Hospital Outreach Program team and to the Charna Radbell Foundation for making this possible for so many families.

### Musicians On Call

These generous and wonderful musicians have returned to Charna's Kids Club, visiting us each Monday. The siblings welcome a sing-along, a dance, and an opportunity to explore the instruments up close. These moments are always comforting and stress-reducing.



## Program Activities: Healing Hearts



### Flowers

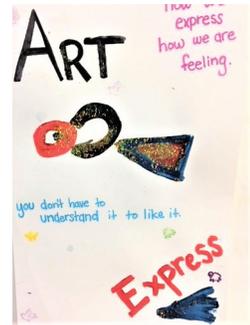
Charna's Kids created all types of flower art to represent color, blooms, and the renewal of health and hope that the Spring season commonly brings. These themes are particularly useful in expressing hopes for good health during their sibling's hospital journey.

### Celebrating All Our Caregivers

In May, Charna's Kids celebrated their mothers and all the special women in their lives who have been their heroes: mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and caregivers. They created artistic expressions which symbolized the gifts of love, care, and companionship which these women have given them. Some kids created drawings and cards with their own poetry ... a real treasure.

### Back to School

The fall season represents new beginnings, especially for children going back to school. Charna's Kids created artwork that expressed their desires for new starts, new friends, and learning new things in the school year. They created drawings of the things they loved, hoped for, and wished to always have with them in their backpacks. They also created images of things that they wanted to keep with them at all times as a reminder of their hospitalized brother or sister.



## Summer Sizzle Celebration Creating Smiles for 10 Years



We rocked the house, again! Our Summer Sizzle Celebration gets better and better each year. Charna's Kids Club celebrated "Charna's Kids," the pediatric patients and their siblings as well as their entire families. It was another sizzlin' day that couldn't be beat. Everyone enjoyed the fabulous music of DJ Mario Robles of APB Entertainment, and MC Meester Mario Calderon dazzled us all as he does every year. The Dynamic Rockers Break Dance Crew impressed us as did the vocal performances of some of our very own Charna's Kids Club alumnae. This special day was rounded out with a Family Photo Area, Arts & Crafts, and Food & Refreshments, and topped off with our annual Dance Finale Show-Off. Each child was a real star as they are each and every day in the lives of their hospitalized sibling. Thank you for supporting them!



**Cohen Children's Medical Center**  
Northwell Health®

# Charna's Kids Club



Amanda A. Smith, LCAT, ATR-BC  
Program Coordinator

## CATERPILLAR COMMENTS

A caterpillar goes through various stages and changes similar to the patients at Cohen Children's Medical Center. At Charna's Kids Club, the well siblings of pediatric inpatients are invited to create a caterpillar for their hospitalized sibling. It is filled with wishes, prayers, and support, and it eventually transforms into a beautiful butterfly. This process symbolizes healing and growth and ultimately better health at which point the patient can be discharged.

The Caterpillar Comments art therapy directive is always successful, not only with the siblings, but also with the patient, families, and hospital employees. This directive requires an "all hands on deck" approach, welcoming the participation of everyone who enters the patient's room. Each person writes an encouraging comment for the patient, adding to the caterpillar and making it grow! The siblings feel empowered by this magical caterpillar and its transformation since they are able to visually observe how many people care, love, support and pray for their brother or sister to get better.

As seen with the caterpillar comments, Charna's Kids Club assists our siblings in finding healthy ways to express their feelings. These mechanisms are so important since siblings often have a

difficult time verbalizing how they feel to their brother or sister who is in the hospital. Since children are naturally more artistic and creative, art therapy is perfect for providing an easier way for them to express themselves. Initially, children are likely to be more comfortable expressing themselves through the use of crayons and markers rather than words.



This is a photo of a mother holding up the caterpillar comments which her two daughters made for their hospitalized brother. The caterpillar grew when family, friends, and CCMC staff wrote down supportive messages which were then linked together. The siblings watched the caterpillar grow from a few links to as tall as their mom! The caterpillar eventually transformed into a butterfly when their baby brother was discharged from PICU.

Charna's Kids Club continues to create caterpillar comments with our siblings and joins them in celebrating the transformation from a caterpillar to a healthy butterfly. We hope you can join us in celebrating all of the beautiful and healthy butterflies!



## A Safe Place to Feel

where children feel safe and valued

Charna's Kids Club addresses the emotional needs and interests of school-aged siblings of young patients. It creates a safe and caring environment in which the well siblings can continue to develop and thrive in spite of the hardships they are experiencing due to their sibling's struggle with a devastating illness. This is very important as these children, alongside their parents, usually witness the physical decline of their siblings.

Our highly specialized staff members support these siblings throughout every step of their emotionally difficult journey. They utilize therapeutic, medical, educational, and recreational forms of play to teach the siblings how to cope in their new environment. Among other factors, these activities are specifically developed and used according to a child's age, the severity and type of illness, and the relationship with the sibling.

Coping strategies include, but are not limited to, recognizing and verbalizing one's own emotions and developing empathy for other children who might be exhibiting pain, anger, or frustration as well. Siblings also learn that their feelings are normal and that they are not alone. These are often the first steps in learning how to develop coping skills, work through problems, and ask for help when needed.



# Remembering Charna Radbell

Charna Radbell was a vibrant and wonderful young woman who, in the prime of her life, lost her courageous battle with colon cancer. Understanding and recognizing the challenges of fighting a life threatening disease, Charna was always very concerned with the welfare of others. It was her vision to help many people of various ages, races, and economic backgrounds. Even in her final days, it became her mission to bring sunshine into the lives of children who were suffering with serious illnesses, especially the well siblings of school-aged patients who would feel “forgotten” during such difficult times.

Charna recognized the value of such support which included the well being of the entire family. Before she passed, Charna established the

Charna Radbell Foundation in order to spread hope and sunshine to all those who would walk through the doors at Charna’s Kids Club.

Today, Charna would be so proud and humbled. Over the years so many people have honored her legacy with their commitment to the foundation’s mission. Their participation and generosity continue to help thousands of families each year.

In fact, the impact of Charna’s Kids Club has far exceeded our expectations. Our sibling support program has become an award-winning one with a global reach, serving as a model for other children’s hospitals throughout the world. We are so grateful to all those who have made this possible.

**Arlene and Larry Radbell  
Nicole and Jason Rabin**

## “Charna’s Kids” Need You!

There is an overwhelming need for Charna’s Kids Club, our award-winning sibling support program. Hospital administrators from around the world have inquired about establishing our program in their children’s hospitals, but we need your help to make these important services available to them. Please make a generous donation today!

Remember, our expansion has begun and we will now provide our cost-free program in two locations. We sponsor ALL of the supplies, services, catering, activities, special events, and the salaries for our Program Coordinators and staff members. We would be especially grateful for your continued support, and it would mean so much to the children.



*“This program saved us!  
We cannot imagine  
what we would have done  
without the respite of  
Charna’s Kids Club.”*

### TO DONATE BY MAIL

**The Charna Radbell Foundation**  
245 East 63rd Street, Suite 1012  
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Arlene and Larry Radbell, Trustees  
Nicole and Jason Rabin, Trustees  
Julia Wannamaker, Executive Director

212.750.9890  
crfsunshinefund@aol.com

## Reasons to Give

Please help our siblings get the therapeutic care they need. Your donations will provide the following benefits to thousands of these special children who are in need. The positive impact you make possible will last a lifetime:

- emotionally and developmentally appropriate sibling support
- a variety of coping techniques
- a network of siblings who share similar experiences
- an improved quality of life for the siblings and their families

For more information about Charna’s Kids Club, please call 212.750.9890. To make an **online donation**, visit our site: [www.charnaradbellfoundation.org](http://www.charnaradbellfoundation.org)

*Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.*

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