



## Gill Aids Local Child Battling Leukemia



Four-year-old Lucy lives in Fort Worth with her mother, Mariel, and father, Joey. Mariel describes Lucy as a “true artist at heart.” Lucy is a painter and loves making jewelry. “She can get lost in the mess of crafts for hours,” Mariel says. Creativity is a family value, as Mariel and Joey are both talented photographers and run their own photography business.

Lucy’s dentist, Dr. Jerod Brazeal of Legacy Pediatric & Adolescent Dentistry, recommended that she have a pulpotomy, a root canal on a baby tooth. They scheduled her surgery appointment, but Lucy developed a respiratory infection. The anesthesia

team ordered a surgery delay.

Shortly after, Lucy woke up one morning in extreme pain and was unable to walk. Her parents rushed her to the Emergency Department. After a comprehensive round of testing and consultations with the medical team, Mariel and Joey received a heartbreaking diagnosis: Lucy had B-Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.

Mariel recalls that day vividly. “Just typing this story fills my eyes with tears as I am brought back into that small room as the attending physician tells us that our sweet baby had Leukemia,” she writes. “From that moment, our family’s lives started down a new, unknown path. The

treatment began immediately. What was originally planned as a four-week stay in the hospital turned into almost three months.”

Even as Lucy’s cancer treatment proceeded, her tooth infection still needed to be addressed. The dental surgery needed to be performed in the operating room at Cook Children’s Medical Center where her oncology team could closely supervise. Lucy’s

insurance denied her claim. Without this authorization, Dr. Brazeal was unable to schedule her dental surgery. Mariel said, “We felt helpless because even though we have great insurance, we were being told we would have to pay for the treatment completely out of pocket.”

By now, the family’s medical bills had become insurmountable. Mariel had to turn down photo shoots to care for Lucy while she was in the hospital. “The business I had worked to build for over 12 years was paused indefinitely, and we were scared about the future. How will we be able to support our family as focus shifts to giving our daughter the attention, support, and time she needs for her treatment?”

The staff at Legacy Pediatric & Adolescent Dentistry referred Lucy to Gill Children’s Services. Because of you, Lucy’s dental surgery was paid for. The treatment was a great success! Lucy recovered overnight and resumed her normal routine the next day.

Lucy is currently in long-term maintenance (LTM), which is an 84-day treatment cycle. Each cycle begins with a lumbar puncture to apply chemotherapy and a spinal tap to ensure she is still in remission, followed [continued on next page...](#)

**Lucy’s dental treatment was going to cost over \$14,000.**

Because of our negotiated rates and generous provider discounts, Lucy’s treatment only cost \$2,300. When you make a donation to support children like Lucy, your investment goes further.

by five days of steroids. She attends pre-kindergarten during the week. Lucy takes oral chemo once a day, with an additional dose on Fridays. "It typically makes us slow down over the weekend," Mariel says. Every 28 days, Lucy must visit Cook Children's for a port flush, count check, and infusions to prevent pneumonia.

Despite her intensive treatment, Lucy remains resilient. "Lucy typically powers through every rainstorm in search of her next rainbow. She fills her time at home crafting, playing games, dancing, and laughing with her big brother and going on neighborhood strolls to get Melt Ice Cream or a treat at Cherry Coffee. Lucy is pure magic and brings joy and sunshine everywhere she goes," Mariel says.

Gill Children's Services is one of many organizations that have walked alongside Lucy during her treatment. "The financial assistance we received for her dental surgery helped us keep our priorities focused on helping our sweet child fight Leukemia," Mariel said. "As the hospital bills came in, Gill Children's Services was the life preserver that helped keep us afloat when we were drowning in medical debt." Mariel is deeply appreciative of the donors who paid for her daughter's dental surgery. "Our future generations can be more successful due to generous donors like you. The best investment is always in a child," she said. "Personally, in a year when we have been hit with thousands of dollars in unexpected medical bills, Gill Children's Services has given relief and provided peace of mind. Thank you doesn't seem sufficient." ●



## Our Generous Donors

Donations from August 2022 - present

The following donors have made gifts to Gill. Thank you for your support!

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# Design Inspirations Breaks Fundraising Record

**The Fort Worth alumnae** of Kappa Kappa Gamma and Pi Beta Phi hosted the 30th annual Design Inspirations event in March 2023. The event featured 64 tables designed by local interior designers, florists, and small businesses. Guests enjoyed a presentation by interior designer Katie Ridder whose work has been featured in Architectural Digest, The New York Times, Elle Décor, Town & Country, House & Garden, and House Beautiful.

Proceeds from Design Inspirations benefited Gill Children's Services and Breakthrough Fort Worth. "Over the past 29 years the luncheon and preview party have become one of the most sought-after tickets in town and have raised more than \$1.4 million," shared Paige Pate, President of the Design Inspirations board.

Proceeds from the 30th anniversary event were unprecedented. Gill Children's Services received a gift of \$92,500, which will provide financial assistance to 327 children in Tarrant County. The investment will address the growing need for dental treatment, emergency childcare, and psychological evaluations. ●



## Text to Give!

Text the word "Gill" to **50155** to donate.

# State of Gill

By Peyton Salavarría Lehrer, Executive Director

**Gill Children's Services** was founded as a safety net for children when other resources were unavailable. As our community's network of resources changes, we are there to help children who have been denied and wait-listed elsewhere. We expect to intervene for more Tarrant County children in the wake of Medicaid enrollment changes.

As you may know, the Federal government barred states from terminating Medicaid coverage at the beginning of the Pandemic. That protection expired on March 31, 2023. The state of Texas will begin rechecking women and children enrolled in Medicaid to confirm their eligibility, starting with pregnant women, children turning 19, and families whose income has changed.

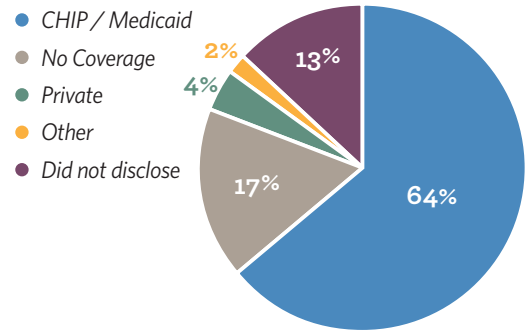
Some families may still be eligible for Medicaid coverage, but they will need to complete a renewal packet. They may not receive the renewal notice if the family's contact information has not been updated, so that a qualifying family may have a lapse in coverage. If the family is no longer eligible, they are encouraged to apply for CHIP or find an insurance plan on the marketplace. They may also request a Medicaid Fair Hearing to contest the decision.



“Just last year, nearly two-thirds of the children we assisted relied on CHIP or Medicaid for their health needs.”

Across Texas 2.7 million people are at risk of losing coverage, and the local impact will be great. Last year, nearly two-thirds of the children we assisted relied on CHIP or Medicaid for their health needs. We will likely see the number of uninsured children grow as a result of Medicaid protections expiring.

## Insurance Status:



## New Champions join the Board of Directors

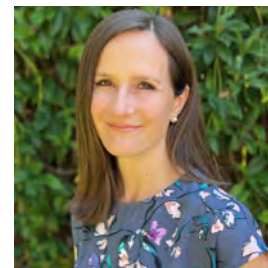
**Gill Children's Services** welcomes three members to the Board of Directors. James Delaune is a managing director of Crestline Investors in Fort Worth. Ginette Harrell is an Assistant Criminal District Attorney in Tarrant County. Dr. Adele Reeder is a pediatrician at Girls to Women/Young Men's Health and Wellness in Fort Worth.



Mr. James Delaune



Ms. Ginette Harrell



Dr. Adele Reeder

## Our Mission

*Gill Children's Services provides last resort funding for Tarrant County children whose medical, dental, physical, social, psychological, or educational needs have not been met by other community resources.*



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## Public School Students Pay for Summer School

Of the 21 school districts that educate Tarrant County children, 11 will charge students to attend summer school this year. Some students may pursue an acceleration course over the summer, which would allow them to have a free period in the fall or graduate early. Others need to enroll in a credit recovery course to be promoted to the next grade. Credit recovery is required when a student has not mastered the course material. The student's learning may have been impacted by medical-related absences, experiences of domestic violence, or other challenges in the home. Without recovering course credits, students may have to repeat a grade.

Summer school tuition rates vary from district to district and from year to year. In 2023, some districts offer an accessible \$20 per class to enroll. Others will be charging up to \$330 per class.

District	Tuition Fees per Course
Arlington	\$0 credit recovery; \$82 acceleration
Birdville	\$100 credit recovery; \$150 acceleration
Carroll	\$150 credit recovery; \$250 acceleration
Crowley	\$20 credit recovery and acceleration
Eagle Mountain-Saginaw	\$100 credit recovery; \$200 acceleration
Grapevine-Colleyville	\$330 credit recovery and acceleration (\$33 for students enrolled in free/reduced lunch)
HEB	\$125 credit recovery and acceleration
Kennedale	\$100 for first class, \$50 for second
Mansfield	\$150 acceleration (\$50-100 for free/reduced lunch)
Northwest	\$50 credit recovery and acceleration (\$25 for free/reduced lunch)
White Settlement	\$20 credit recovery and acceleration

Gill Children's Services offers a safety net for middle and high school students who cannot afford to enroll in credit recovery. We provided tuition assistance for 205 Tarrant County children last year. Your gift of \$300 can ensure that a student remains on the path to graduation. ●



Sign up Online at  
[www.gillchildrens.org](http://www.gillchildrens.org)  
 to receive our newsletter by e-mail!

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## TCU Honors Students Learn the Power of Philanthropy

**The Nature of Giving** course is offered to the John V. Roach Honors College students at Texas Christian University. Under the leadership of Dean Ron Pitcock, students enrolled in the course learn how to be strategic philanthropists. Students begin by researching more than 100 nonprofit organizations, narrowing their focus to a handful of causes for which to advocate. Catherine Shurtleff, Alex Salgado, and Paige Smith advocated for Gill Children's Services throughout the semester through several elimination rounds. After 10 hours of deliberations, the class selected five local organizations that aligned with their class values and invested \$125,000. Gill Children's Services was chosen to receive \$35,000, which will provide last resort funding for Tarrant County children with unmet needs. ●

