

*What do you want to be
when you grow up?*



Emma, age 15, future chef

annual report



**Connecting
Champions**

Helping kids with cancer pursue their passions

A peek inside...

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Steven, age 4, future clown

Our Leadership Team

Board of Directors

Linda McAllister-Lucas MD & PhD *

Chief of Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

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Parent of a Connecting Champions Alumnus

Deb Mills-Scofield *

Owner of Mills-Scofield, LLC

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Chief Operating Officer at Jewish Family & Community Services

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Vice President Corporate Dining & Retail Development at Eat'n Park Hospitality Group

Terrence McAllister ^

Financial Advisor at MassMutual of Pittsburgh; Member of Connecting Champions Young Professionals Advisory Board

Tracey Reed Armant * ^

Program Officer at The Grable Foundation

The Brain Trust—Young Professionals Advisory Board

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Annual Giving Associate at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh

Amy Malishchak *

Brand Communications Coordinator at Eat'n Park Hospitality Group

Terrence McAllister ^

Financial Advisor at MassMutual of Pittsburgh

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Child Alumnus of Connecting Champions; Freshman at Robert Morris University

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Sales Specialist at Marriott International

Medical Advisor

Andrew Bukowinski, MD

Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologist at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

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Friendship Assistant Intern

Teresa Dietrich-O'Donnell *

Storytelling Intern

Jake Fonarev

High School Intern & Connecting Champions Alumnus

Staff



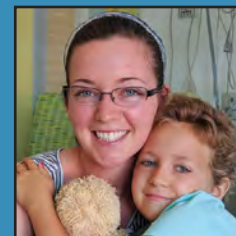
Sidney Kushner
Executive Director & Founder



Jen Lutz *
Friendship Champion & Development Assistant



Coy Thompson ^
Program Coordinator & Friendship Champion



Arias Fischer *
Assistant of Everything

Highlights from 2019

Celebrating our founding moments ...

... & looking ahead to our next milestones

People often ask me when I founded Connecting Champions, and I struggle to find the answer. Was it in high school when my friend Lauren passed away and I realized my purpose in this world was to help kids with cancer in her memory? Was it May 31st, 2010, the first time I mentioned Connecting Champions in my journal? Perhaps it was in 2011, the year we incorporated and started our first friendship. Or was it in 2015, when our program staff, Jen and Coy, joined the team and helped build our program into what it is today?

To me, the answer is yes to all of those moments. **I believe the best organizations have multiple founding moments.**

Right now, we're on the verge of another one of those founding moments.

In the past 12 months, **we've seen the referral rate of newly diagnosed children in our region skyrocket to 90%.** **Our already historic partnership** with UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh deepened even further and our program became more efficient. We built Outcomes Reporting Software that allows us to see the quantitative and qualitative impact we're uniquely creating for kids and families. That impact is helping save lives and change health care forever.

We're ready to climb our next mountain. In the coming year, we'll be working to translate our outcomes into the different languages of our many stakeholders, identify the next city to which we can expand, and achieve financial sustainability in Pittsburgh so that we can continue to thrive here as we strive to help every child with cancer in the country.

Organizations are founded when you look back and say, "That's when it all started." Connecting Champions became what it is today because of each and every one of you. **In my eyes, you are all co-founders.**

Here's to many more founding moments together.

With admiration,

Sidney

Connecting Champions is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

What do you
want to be when
you grow up?



Get in Touch with Us

Website: www.ConnectingChampions.org

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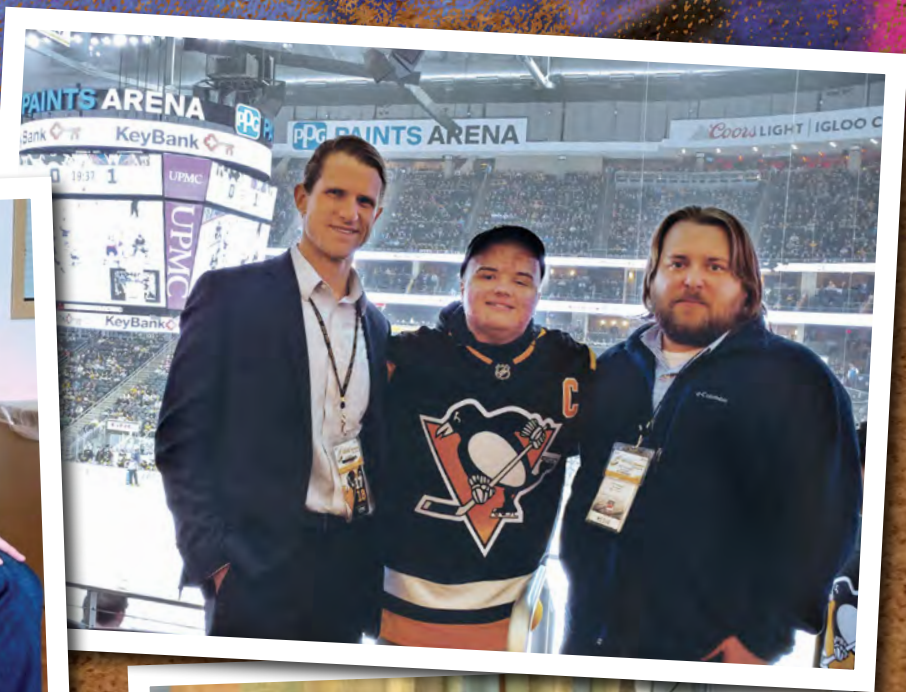
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Ways to help: www.ConnectingChampions.org/helping

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Instagram: [@ConnectingChampions](https://www.instagram.com/ConnectingChampions)

Twitter: [@ConnectChamps](https://twitter.com/ConnectChamps)



Meet some of our kids!

Facing page, clockwise from left: **Kelsey**, age 9, future cheerleader & wrestler / **Thomas**, age 19, future cyber security expert / **Riley**, age 8, future sports star / **Savannah**, age 11, future rodeo cowgirl
 This page, clockwise from top left: **Sawyer**, age 6, future paleontologist / **Lance**, age 20, hockey reporting enthusiast / **Tristan**, age 4, police car enthusiast / **Davis**, age 10, future video game designer / **Amber**, age 16, future police officer

A Big Thank You

to all of our generous donors in 2019!

Thank you to our special donors, sponsors, & foundations for helping our kids pursue their passions!

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\$50,000

Elsie H. Hillman Foundation

\$25,000

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Newman's Own Foundation

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March to FRIENDSHIP

Entire month of March, online (www.MarchToFriendship.com)

Every year, people across the country form teams with their coworkers, friends, and classmates to **help children with cancer better survive their cancer journey.**

Teams make their March Madness pool charitable (or for those not interested in basketball, they creatively crowdfund). **Every \$250 a team pools together sponsors a friendship moment for a newly diagnosed child.** At the end of the year, they get a personalized scrapbook sharing highlights from the friendship they made possible. **In 2019, we had 500+ donors supporting 140 friendship moments.**



Night of INSPIRATION

Every September (www.ConnectingChampions.org/inspiration)
Emceed by Sean Nolan, local teen with cancer

Every fall, Connecting Champions hosts the “Night of Inspiration,” an evening celebrating local kids with cancer. **Each child is presented with an award from their mentor sharing how they have inspired us with their bravery during the cancer journey.** Each award is presented by one of our Presenting or Gold sponsors, and the event is emceed by one of our teens, Sean, who wants to be a sports broadcaster when he grows up. The Night of Inspiration also features **hors d’oeuvres, an open bar, and a powerful story shared by a local kid with cancer.**



Check out our other events at www.ConnectingChampions.org/events

Janet Lynne McAllister Masquerade Ball | Pittsburgh Marathon Charity Team