

2019

Annual Impact Report

Message from the Executive Director

Everything we do is driven by our mission: To improve the quality of life of Hawaii's families as they face the emotional and financial hardships of caring for a seriously ill child. Our mission has been the heart of our work since 1982, and the needs of Hawaii's families continue to grow. In 2019, we saw tremendous growth in the number of HUGS families served, an increase of 20% more families statewide and an 11% increase in new families from 2018. Through Sammy's Keiki Aloha Fund, we've seen a 42% increase in neighbor island families whose child needs specialized medical care on Oahu. We're also visiting more children in the hospitals, and more families are requesting the need for community resources through our Ho'okele case management program.

Our programs provide ongoing support for each family member and the entire family as they face the challenges of caregiving, unknown treatments and financial hardships and also offer opportunities for families to connect with each other in a safe place. It's especially rewarding when we see a big smile on a child's face for the first time in a long time or when a parent says, "Thank you, I feel relieved, meeting other people who understand what I'm going through."

The partnerships between HUGS and all of you have made a collective impact on Hawaii's seriously ill children, their parents and their siblings. Whether you are a donor, supporter, community partner or volunteer, living on Oahu, a neighbor island or on the mainland, we are so very grateful for your compassion and generous support. You make HUGS a unique organization of bringing hope and joy to Hawaii's families with seriously ill children. We hope we can continue to count on you to be our HUGS champions for our families.

With aloha,



Joan Naguwa
Executive Director

"No one ever expects that their child will become seriously ill. Our world was turned completely upside down as we struggled to make many difficult decisions. The financial strains are very challenging. HUGS helped my family stay afloat during the hardest time in our lives, offering support and financial aid that we didn't know we were eligible for. The compassionate and caring staff share their Aloha to improve the lives of families like mine."

– a HUGS family from Hawaii Island



96590



84333

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HUGS Impact Overview

443

Families statewide received HUGS' services

2,013

Family members served

112

New HUGS families

19,290

Total touchpoints or interactions with families

562

Hospital visits made by HUGS staff and volunteers

136

Boxes of food provided to 61 families

134

Family members received emergency airfare assistance

116

Families received case management services

129

Neighbor Island families received a stipend for daily living expenses with a hospitalized child on Oahu

\$0

Amount families pay for services

7,230

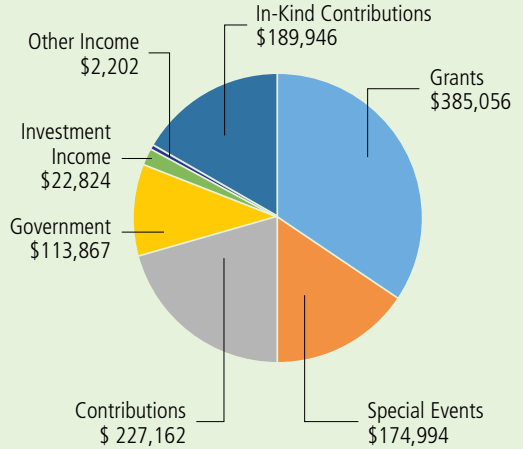
Total hours provided by 1,654 volunteers

\$926,105

Raised

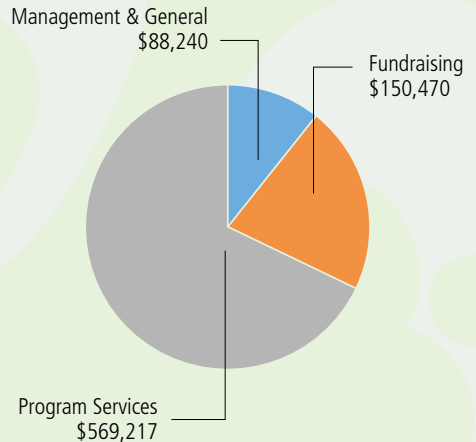
Revenue & Other Support

\$1,116,051



Expenses

\$807,927



*Unaudited Financials

"I'm grateful for an organization like HUGS....It means a lot to be able to connect with other families who have gone through similar journeys, as it can be a very lonely thing."

— a HUGS mom from Kauai



The Lucas Family

The Lucas Family's Story

When a child has cancer, it affects the entire family. For Zackrey Lucas and his family, they have had to face cancer not once, not twice, but three times. From Zack's initial diagnosis to a first relapse and then a second, his parents, John and Leticia, and three older sisters have been there for him every step of the way throughout treatment.

Zack was 9 years old when he was first diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) in 2013. Living on Kauai, the close-

knit family originally thought his recurring fevers were symptoms of the flu. An ultrasound showed there were lesions on Zack's kidneys. He and his mom were medevacked to Honolulu while Dad made the inter-island trip separately. His sisters stayed on Kauai with family friends. A blood test confirmed that Zack had leukemia, and he immediately started chemotherapy treatments.

They stayed in Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children for a month and flew back and forth to Oahu for eight weeks. Overwhelmed by Zack's illness, the family returned to Kauai only to be issued an eviction notice, losing their home. It was also tough when Zack returned to school; he was bullied because he wore a cap to hide his bald head.

Two years later in 2015, Zack had a relapse. Devastated, the family couldn't believe it was happening all over again. Traveling back and forth had taken a toll on the family the last time. Relocating to Oahu to be closer to treatment was the best option, yet moving was difficult, both emotionally and financially. For Zack, 11, that meant leaving his rescue dog, Kanani, and best friend, Drake, behind on Kauai. Their neighbor, a fire captain, organized a benefit golf tournament to help the family with rent, moving costs, airfare, and other expenses.

This time, the cancer treatment affected Zack's nervous system and spinal cord, causing nerve damage and pain (neuropathy). They were told that Zack would be paralyzed from the waist down for the rest of his life. "We were shocked and angry, and couldn't accept this new diagnosis," John remembers, reliving the news.

Although dealing with his own health issues, John stopped working to become Zack's primary caregiver. "I carried Zack, who was using a wheelchair, up and down two flights of stairs almost every day." After six months, while waiting for a body cast to be made for him, Zack felt a twitch in his toe. "It was a miracle!" John exclaims, when Zack began walking again with braces and a walker. However, the permanent nerve damage prevents Zack from fully thriving as a normal teen.

Their journey of ups and downs hit another low point when Zackrey relapsed a second time in August 2018. With many answered prayers, he was a candidate for Car-T cell immunotherapy at Seattle Children's Hospital. He stayed in the hospital for five months, with John and Leticia by his bedside. HUGS provided airfare assistance to the family for multiple trips during this stressful time.

In February 2019, Zack had a cord blood transplant with stem cells collected from donated umbilical cord blood, which are good at fighting cancer. The family has postponed Zack's one-year check up in Seattle due to the coronavirus situation.

Back home in Hawaii, life continues to be challenging. His illness has caused Zack to be behind in school, and he's working with a tutor from the Hawaii Department of Education. With an immune system still weak, he avoids crowds as much as possible yet finds joy in going to the movies and out to eat with his sisters. He's also good at playing board games and cards. Through it all, the family remains faithful.

They are grateful for the food baskets and financial assistance to get them through some very rough times. John also attends Dad's Nights occasionally, finding comfort in the support from other HUGS Dads.

"As a father, I feel overwhelming pressures, trying to keep the family together and provided for. It's hard asking for help. I cannot tell you how much your help has touched all of our hearts," John expresses gratefully. "Thank you very, very much!"

Your Support of HUGS makes a big impact on families like Zack's.

2019 Gifts to HUGS

With heartfelt gratitude, we recognize the following individuals and organizations who generously supported HUGS with gifts valued at \$1,000 or more in 2019. Your gifts are truly making an impact on Hawaii's families on their journey of caring for a child with a life-threatening illness.

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We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this listing and apologize for any gifts we may have missed.

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To strengthen Hawaii's families and improve their quality of life as they face the emotional and financial hardships of caring for a seriously ill child.

