



“Our child’s illness overwhelmed us. Then Friends of Karen came in and navigated a path through our storm of emotions.”

With news of a life-threatening diagnosis, parents and their families begin the seemingly never-ending spiral of hospitalizations, treatments and family disruptions. This diagnosis quickly becomes a disease that will overwhelm a family...socially, emotionally and financially.

For over 30 years, the dedicated social workers at Friends of Karen have carefully advised, guided and supported thousands of families of children with life-threatening illnesses.

As founder Sheila Petersen said, **“When parents of a terminally- or catastrophically-ill child receive financial and emotional help, they have more time to love.”**

HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are many more families of critically-ill children that urgently need your help. The only way we can provide the emotional support and financial assistance they need is through generous donations from people like you.

Please visit www.friendsofkaren.org to make a secure donation and learn about gifting stocks, becoming a corporate partner, and leaving a legacy. You can also choose to donate by mail or phone. More than 81 cents of every dollar donated directly supports our families.



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**Lifting the lives
of families
with critically-ill
children**

HOW WE HELP

Friends of Karen puts its vast experience to work to ensure the emotional and financial well-being of every family member coping with a child's illness.

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM:

Our social workers assess a family's needs and give a range of support. We can provide:

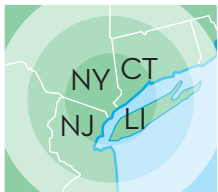
- Emotional support to assist families in coping with their extraordinary circumstances.
- Advocacy and assistance with issues concerning treatment, insurance and education.
- Sibling support provided by counselors who address sibling needs and issues.
- Palliative/bereavement support to parents and siblings during end of life and after a child's death.
- Referrals to other agencies or government programs that are available to families.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Families who demonstrate a need may be eligible for financial assistance for the following:

- Medical expenses not covered by insurance, including co-payments and insurance premiums.
- Living expenses (like food, rent, utilities) if there is loss of income as a direct result of a child's condition.
- Sibling childcare costs when parents must be with their hospitalized child.
- Transportation costs to treatments and hospitals.
- Funeral planning and expenses.

WHO WE HELP



Children up to 21 years old who are diagnosed with any life-threatening illness. They must be a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident and live in the New York metro area.



CHRISTINA'S STORY by her mother

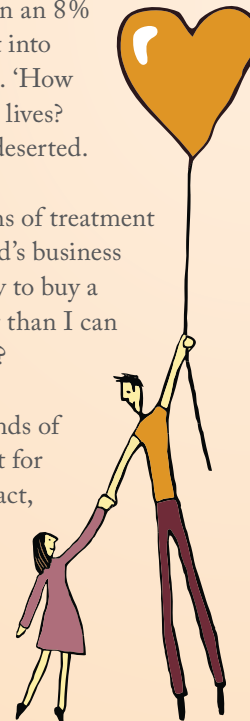
"Christina was my first-born baby. And beautiful, of course! But at 9 months we found a lump in her neck. Eventually a doctor did a biopsy and suddenly they had us at Mt. Sinai. The surgeon tried to operate but discovered that it was this very rare childhood cancer.

And the world just turned upside down completely.

We were told Christina had less than an 8% chance of survival. Everything went into slow motion. It was a massive shock. 'How can everyone be going on with their lives? Our baby has cancer here!' We felt deserted.

We went through her first 10 months of treatment with barely any income. My husband's business dried up. We had saved some money to buy a home, and that money went quicker than I can blink. It was like, where do we turn?

That was when we heard about Friends of Karen. That was a real turning point for us. They knew the resources to contact, they knew where the doctors were, where the clinics were. They knew all of that. And they gave us the emotional support that we needed. Friends of Karen was a safe place, a soft place to fall, like a pillow. It was OK to fall there.



They treated us with respect, and it was loving and kind. They knew we had to focus on getting our daughter well, so they took care of the rest. They helped pay for rent, electricity, phones. They helped pay for insurance premiums, for food baskets at the holidays. They even had people that shopped for presents so we could have Christmas.

Christina had surgery to remove the lymph nodes. The tumor itself was inoperable. Then 8 weeks of radiation, twice a day, which was really, really intense for such a young child. We spent over 300 days in the hospital our first year. I kept a diary, and we counted the days.

And when we eventually got home, having the social worker come to our house, that was huge. Spending time with me and Christina. We were just so grateful.

Somebody to help lift the burden. Somebody to give us emotional support. It was immense.



Friends of Karen became our family. They always ask about Christina, they always remember her birthday. Her illness didn't really just stop. She had a lot of medical complexities after that. And they have been a support system for us to this day.

I will forever be grateful. I could have millions of dollars and give it all to Friends of Karen, but I would never feel like I could repay them for what they did for my family. How they helped us survive."

