



## ***Tracy's Kids***

2019 Annual Report  
[www.tracyskids.org](http://www.tracyskids.org)

*The mom of a boy who comes for monthly infusions wrote, "As a mother, I couldn't be any happier. My son feels so happy coming here even when it's scary getting treatment. He enjoys everything from all the activities to how great Tracy is with him."*

## Message from Matt Gerson, Founder and President of *Tracy's Kids*

We ended 2019 strong. Our programs, including our newest site at Walter Reed, were flourishing. Our team of Art Therapists were making a real difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. Our February 12, 2020 movie-themed fundraiser was a great success, so our financial situation was sound and our future bright.

Then came COVID. Communities large and small came together for those coping with the disease -- be they health care providers who needed food, clean clothes and childcare, small business owners whose dreams were teetering, graduates deprived of the chance to celebrate years of hard work, or others facing circumstances unimaginable just weeks before.

We saw that spirit early on when a ten year-old from Davidsonville, MD -- who wasn't a Tracy's Kids patient and didn't know anyone who was -- dedicated his birthday to raising money so that our patients had new, sanitary paints, markers, clay and other materials. Thanks to Jonah's compelling video, his parents' Facebook network, and their friends far and wide, he raised \$3,000 to help restock our art room shelves. People often forget that in addition to being the Nation's Capital, we're a community with ordinary families and neighborhoods. "Stay At Home" orders meant loneliness, anxiety and uncertainty -- feelings that the 5,000 children that we serve face every day. One of our Art Therapists explained that, "these hard times were compounded for our patients and families because they were denied many of the supports we'd usually tell them to turn to."

So our resourceful, Masters-trained team explored new ways of fulfilling our mission. While working from home, often with their own young children to tend to, our therapists started using videoconferencing to provide Telemedicine to kids still going to the clinic. Our first virtual session lasted 45 minutes and only ended because the doctor needed the patient. The verdict?? "Maybe we can actually make this work!!" At a clinic across town, our Art Therapist worked with a patient via Zoom before a procedure involving sedation. Back and forth, each drew a picture for the other and they managed an hour and a half session -- "almost like being in clinic!!"

One military Mom sent us this note about her 12 year-old -- "I wanted to thank you for the session with Tatiana. She told me that today was a good day because she was able to express herself through art with someone who understands her. I feel blessed by the outlet you provide, aware that she can convey her feelings in a different way with you." As a parent I smiled when she ended with, "How often can Tatiana meet with you?"

NBCNews4 in DC aired a wonderful segment that poignantly captured the value of a Zoom session. I love the pictures of our therapist's face on a screen just behind the six year-old girl's easel.

People often raise positive changes that may come from COVID. It is clear that the ability for a parent to seek out emotional support for her child via tablet or laptop is one of them. The pandemic has created an unexpected beta test for telemedicine. The families we serve are overjoyed that professional therapists they trust are accessible without an in-clinic appointment or the inconveniences of travel, navigating around work or finding childcare for healthy siblings.

I am immensely proud of the way our team adapted to unprecedented challenges. Thank you for enabling them to do their invaluable work.

**-Matt Gerson, Founder and President**

## Our Mission

*Tracy's Kids helps young cancer patients and their families cope with the emotional stress and trauma imposed by cancer and its treatment. We are dedicated to helping the children and families we serve to be emotionally prepared to fight cancer as actively as possible—and prepared for the time when they are cancer free.*

## What is art therapy?

Art therapy is a mental health profession in which patients and Art Therapists use the creative process and the resulting artwork to explore feelings, reduce anxiety, and improve social skills and confidence.

The Tracy's Kids team of ten Masters-trained and credentialed Art Therapists offer a wealth of art media and approaches to patients from toddlers to twenty-somethings.



## Processing medical trauma

Young people who endure long courses of treatment or sudden, life altering diagnoses often experience overwhelmingly scary events. Events too frightening to be remembered and understood are stored as non-verbal memories. Smells, sounds, visual images, and bodily sensations can trigger distress if they match the sensory memories of the traumatic event. Visual communication helps our patients identify troubling sensations and memories, put their feelings on paper, and reflect on their experiences in both art and words, gaining distance from scary events.



*A little guy working at the art table exclaimed:  
"I like making slime! It's relaxing. When my mind is focused on something else, I don't worry AND I don't taste my medicine. . . Is that why you have the art room?!"*



***In 2019, the Tracy's Kids programs provided 12,461 hours of art therapy, over 20,000 art therapy contacts with patients and family members, and 1,047 hours of consultation with treatment teams.***

## Tracy's Kids' Work

In 2019 Tracy's Kids operated at eight locations across the country—five in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area, one in New York City, one in Baltimore, and one in San Antonio, Texas. A new Tracy's Kids location opened at a major military medical center in 2019. All of our services are offered at no cost to the patients and families we serve. Our child-centered, open studio approach for inpatients and outpatients allows us to provide support during all phases of cancer treatment.

*Tracy's Kids* began at the Lombardi Cancer Center of Georgetown University Hospital in 1991 and has grown from one art therapist at one hospital to ten art therapists at seven locations in five states. They are integrated members of the medical teams and work directly with physicians, nurses and medical professionals to help address the multi-faceted needs of each patient.

*Tracy's Kids* provides opportunities for relaxation, confidence-building, and self-expression. Using art to identify fears and feelings, whether conscious or unconscious, the *Tracy's Kids* program allows young patients and their siblings and parents to gain some control over the difficult experiences they are going through.

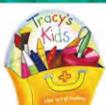
Year after year, parents tell us that their children come to our clinics eagerly anticipating the art projects they will do. Shifting the focus from medicine and discomfort to creativity makes treatment days less stressful. Art therapy can't replace the soccer games, sleepovers and normalcy that are lost during cancer treatment, but through art kids are able to experience themselves not "just" as a patient or sick kid, but as creators, in charge of their art and engaged in meaningful work. We help them find what they are able to do and what they enjoy, cultivating resilience and hope that the illness will not be forever. And in the process they can trust our trained art therapists with whatever is on their minds.

### MEET MEG

*This month's Artist of the Month*

Featuring one Tracy's Kids artist each month





**Meg D.**

Current Age: 12 years old

Diagnosis: AML

Who is nominating the artist?  
My parents

What is your favorite art material to use?  
Pencil or paint

How has art/art therapy helped you while at the hospital?  
Its helped me forget and calm me down.

Tell us about one of your art pieces!  
The silk hoop of an anchor: I love the ocean and the beach. I spend most of my time at the beach, so it reminds me of how much fun I have there.







## Healing the Whole Family

Tracy's Kids focuses on the children undergoing cancer treatment, but the impact of this disruptive and scary chapter of their lives extends well beyond the patient. We know the entire family suffers when a child has cancer, and we encourage parents, siblings and other family members to work with our art therapists too.



Tracy's Kids also provides bereavement and support services to clinic and hospital staff as they are faced with the difficult changes and losses that are inevitable when working with this disease. The art therapists offer formal and informal exercises, workshops and presentations to staff, integrating art therapy into not only the patients' lives, but also into the lives of those who care for them.



*The photos above show medical team members filling empty eggshells with paint, and preparing to smash them against a canvas. Each egg is dedicated to a feeling, concern or experience that the staff member would like to release. As each egg is thrown, she focuses on the concern and releases it to the canvas. In this way, something beautiful is made from letting go of stressful thoughts and feelings!*

## Art Therapy Research

In 2019, Tracy and the **Tracy's Kids** art therapy team partnered with Girija Kaimal of Drexel University to craft an art therapy outcomes research protocol that is scheduled for implementation at five Tracy's Kids locations in 2019. The research is part of a larger art therapy research initiative between Drexel University and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The conceptual framework for their research has been published by the Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08322473.2019.1672453>.

We look forward to implementing this research at five Tracy's Kids locations in 2020.

## 2019 Grants to Provide Art Therapy

In 2019, *Tracy's Kids* awarded \$604,764 in grants to our eight art therapy program sites.

In 2019, *Tracy's Kids* granted the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center \$81,307

The Tracy's Kids program at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital continues with Tracy Councill serving as a full-time art therapist. *Tracy's Kids* has long been the focus of life in Lombardi's pediatric oncology outpatient clinic, fostering an inviting atmosphere of relaxation while inspiring reflection through creativity. Creating art in the midst of treatment allows patients to process and respond to their experiences in a healthy and empowering way. Georgetown Hospital's motto "*cura personalis*" means "care of the whole person," and our program focuses not only on the needs of patients, but of their family members as well and the medical team as well.

One compelling patient story is of a young adult patient being treated for her fourth cancer diagnosis! Diagnosed as a 12-year old in another state, she pushed through three cancer diagnoses and grew up to become a nurse at a nearby hospital. As she received treatment for her latest cancer, she worked for weeks to create an elaborate and beautiful dream-catcher, talking with Tracy about her life as she carefully knotted the string. On a recent visit to hear scan results, she requested to make "slime." Pretty soon, the patient, her friend, a nurse, a social worker, two pharmacists and Tracy had created a rainbow of slime!



Art Therapist Tracy Councill, MA, ATR-BC, LCPAT serves as an integrated member of the treatment team, working with patients, siblings and caregivers in both inpatient and outpatient settings. In 2019, *Tracy's Kids* at Lombardi provided 1,724 hours of art therapy sessions, 1,332 patient contacts, and 99 hours of consultation with treatment teams.



*Above, left: A young patient joyfully squirted paint, kneaded clay, and processed medical experiences through art and play during many hours of infusions of IV medication.*

## In 2019, *Tracy's Kids* granted Children's National Hospital \$176,713

Children's National has the Washington DC area's largest pediatric oncology program, with a 30-bed inpatient unit that is often filled to capacity, in addition to a twelve-bed Bone Marrow Transplant unit.

Art therapy is offered year-round by art therapists Jane Woo, MA, ATR-BC, Beth Tutt, MA, ATR-BC, and Elizabeth Burks, MA, ATR-BC. From June through September, 2019, Katherine Pedrick facilitated "Scribbling Siblings" – a summer program providing art therapy services to patients' brothers and sisters who visit the CCBD clinic. During the academic year, the Tracy's Kids program is augmented by practicum students from The George Washington University's graduate art therapy program.

A ten-year old recovering from surgery found physical therapy scary and painful. The patient and her art therapists found a creative solution to combine art and movement during her physical therapy sessions. Art became a powerful motivator for this particular patient as she filled syringes with paint and walked to a canvas with the words

"You are Brave" blocked off with tape.

In art therapy, she was able to turn a task she dreaded--walking after surgery--into a creative process. In her words, something "very messy" became a beautiful and empowering reminder of how brave she really is.



*Tracy's Kids* at CNH is implemented by full-time art therapists Jane Woo and Beth Tutt, part-time art therapist Elizabeth Burks, and for the summer Scribbling Siblings program, Katherine Peddick. The CNMC program logged 4,234 hours of art therapy, 6,249 patient contacts, and 258 hours of consultation with treatment teams in 2019.

The Scribbling Siblings program provides structure and safety at the waiting room art table. In 2019, siblings, patients, and families were invited to participate in the creation of a galaxy as a collaborative project. They created planets, rockets, astronauts, and stars to contribute to the outer-space scene. Families also chose words representing personal strengths and qualities to add to the sun, which included "goofy", "caring", "independent" and more.

One sibling created a planet to represent his younger sibling who had passed away. He titled it a "Remember Planet", and described it as a beautiful place where people can go and visit loved ones they have lost. This provided a meaningful experience where he could honor his sibling and share memories of the time they had together. The Tracy's Kids Galaxy is now being displayed in the CCBD hallway so current and future families can admire this meaningful collaborative piece.

In 2019, *Tracy's Kids* granted PSV's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders and Inova Children's Hospital \$100,237

The *Tracy's Kids* program at the PSV provides a safe, therapeutic, and fun space for patients of all ages and their family members to process the emotional stress and anxieties that often go hand-in-hand with the diagnosis of a chronic medical illness.

This year, **PSV's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders** moved into Inova Schar Cancer Institute and Tracy's Kids Art Therapy Program and full-time art therapist, Jessica Girard, MA, ATR, found a new home in the Inova Children's Hospital Pediatric Outpatient Infusion Center. In advance of the move, Jess worked extensively with PSV and Inova design teams to develop a space conducive to therapeutic activities, exploration, and expression. The new art room includes plentiful storage for art supplies, tables of varying heights chosen to encourage expression from participants of all ages, and a computer for quick access to images, tutorials, and inspiration that aid in the therapeutic process. The separate, lockable room ensures the security of materials and projects when the art therapist is away from the space, but allows for the children to continue utilizing toys in the connected playroom.

*Jess's advocacy for patients' emotional needs manifested in her work with a four-year old hearing impaired patient.*

*In addition to helping the child communicate her feelings and needs through art, Jess helped the treatment team adapt their routines to ensure consistency and assisted them in finding ways to communicate visually what was happening during the visit and what they needed from the patient. The patient had initially been volatile, resistant and emotionally distressed, but with Jess's help she has become curious, playful and interactive during her clinic visits.*



Catherine Rubin works half-time at **Inova Children's Hospital**, providing mostly individual art therapy at bedside in their 22-bed inpatient hematology-oncology unit. In addition to individual work, Catherine organizes Pop-Up Art Therapy Groups in the adjacent playroom, based on the ages and interests of the patients on the unit. This summer, one of these groups had three school-age patients with the same diagnosis. As they created Model Magic "fossils," they talked about their treatment experiences. Catherine facilitated a conversation that allowed the patients who had a long course of treatment ahead of them to express their envy of another patient who was nearing the end of her protocol. It is a testament to the emotional safety Catherine provided that the patients and their families have stayed in contact long after they left the hospital.



In 2019, *Tracy's Kids* granted Methodist Children's Hospital in San Antonio \$45,187

The *Tracy's Kids* program at Methodist Children's Hospital in San Antonio, TX serves a very large and growing population at a regional medical center. Art Therapist Courtney Martin, who is in her sixth year at Methodist, is well-integrated into the medical and psychosocial support teams. She works with inpatients and outpatients, including large specialty programs in bone marrow transplant and Survivorship.

*Tracy's Kids* is viewed by families and medical staff at Methodist as a crucial component of their care.

*"It's a way to reduce anxiety without needing to use sedating medications and I'm all about natural techniques and ways to try to alleviate some of these symptoms without having to medicate the kids. . . What's been encouraging is to see kids almost look forward to coming into the hospital because they are going to have a chance to participate in art therapy and work with Courtney and do some of these projects."--Transplant Physician Dr. Esquilin*

In 2019 *Tracy's Kids* at Methodist Children's Hospital provided 1,321 hours of art therapy sessions, 3,382 patient contacts, and 142 hours of consultation with treatment teams.



A young patient enduring a long hospitalization painted this dolphin to help her remember happy times at the beach with her family and to keep her hope for recovery alive during hard times.



Early in 2019, Bella, a dear little patient, lost her fight to cancer. In July, her family raised \$1,000 for *Tracy's Kids* through the Bella Strong Foundation. Their support means so much to us!



In 2019, **Tracy's Kids** granted New York Presbyterian Hospital \$77,000

Jackie Tassiello is the **Tracy's Kids** art therapist at NYP. Her work brings a sense of fun and creativity to the outpatient clinic, and her work is much appreciated and well supported by the NYP hospital community.

Her work is well integrated into care for both outpatients and inpatients, and is central to the hospital's new AYA (Adolescent and Young Adult) clinic program.



Three-year old Joshua experimented with watercolor painting and used art-making to prepare himself for needle sticks and to help himself calm down after them.

Jackie led the creation of a large collage mural with patients and staff, in recognition of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September.



*One teenage patient shared her thoughts about working with Jackie:*

*“Having to come to the hospital routinely every couple of weeks definitely takes a toll on my mental health and having the opportunity to do arts and crafts and talk to staff that listen helps me focus less on the procedures and how tired I am of being here and actually leads me to enjoy my time. The arts and crafts also gives my younger sister something to look forward to, as she often has to come to the hospital with me. I am beyond thankful that these programs exist at the hospital along with great staff.”*

**Tracy's Kids** at New York Presbyterian Hospital provided 1,163 hours of art therapy sessions, 2,457 patient contacts, and 88 hours of consultation with medical teams in 2019.

In 2019, *Tracy's Kids* granted the Herman and Walter Samuelson Children's Hospital at Sinai in Baltimore \$39,581



The ***Tracy's Kids*** program at Sinai is implemented by Danielle Eichner and Peyton Kirkendall. The program serves patients at a large regional children's hospital in the outpatient clinic and inpatient units. Danielle and Peyton facilitate individual art therapy at bedside, collaborative group projects in the outpatient clinic, and spontaneous art that grows from kids' own inspiration.

*The Tracy's Kids program at Sinai provides a monthly art therapy parent support group, where parents whose children are being treated can join other parents to bond, offer peer support, and enjoy some creative time together.*



During 2019, the ***Tracy's Kids*** program at Sinai provided 1, 126 hours of art therapy, 1.069 patient contacts, and 115 hours of medical team consultation.



2019 saw the addition of a new *Tracy's Kids* program that supports military service members and their families under the auspices of the **Henry M. Jackson Foundation**. In 2019, Tracy's Kids awarded \$69,496 to fund this new program.

Kristin Ramsey left our Georgetown program in February to start the newest *Tracy's Kids* program. The military hospital staff have told us over and over again that Tracy's Kids is *transforming their practice*.

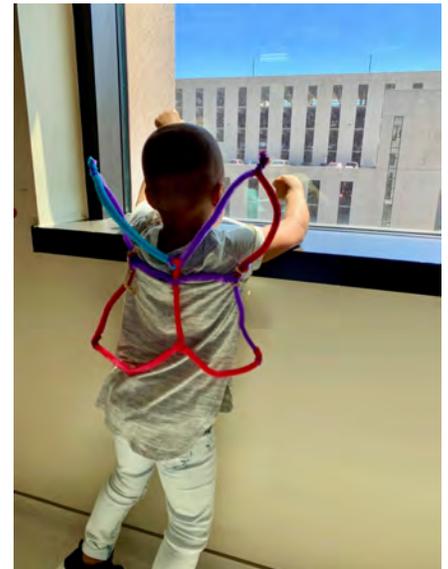
- Patients and families are interacting more within the infusion bay, offering peer to peer support
- Nurses report an increased ease in accomplishing medical tasks
- Physicians report improved affect in patients
- Parents value the art therapist's support in comforting their children and helping them cope.



A teenager uses watercolors to portray life in the clinic with her friends and her medical team.



A young patient likes to make special costumes so she can pretend her way through long days of chemo in the guise of a rainbow fairy or a magical unicorn.

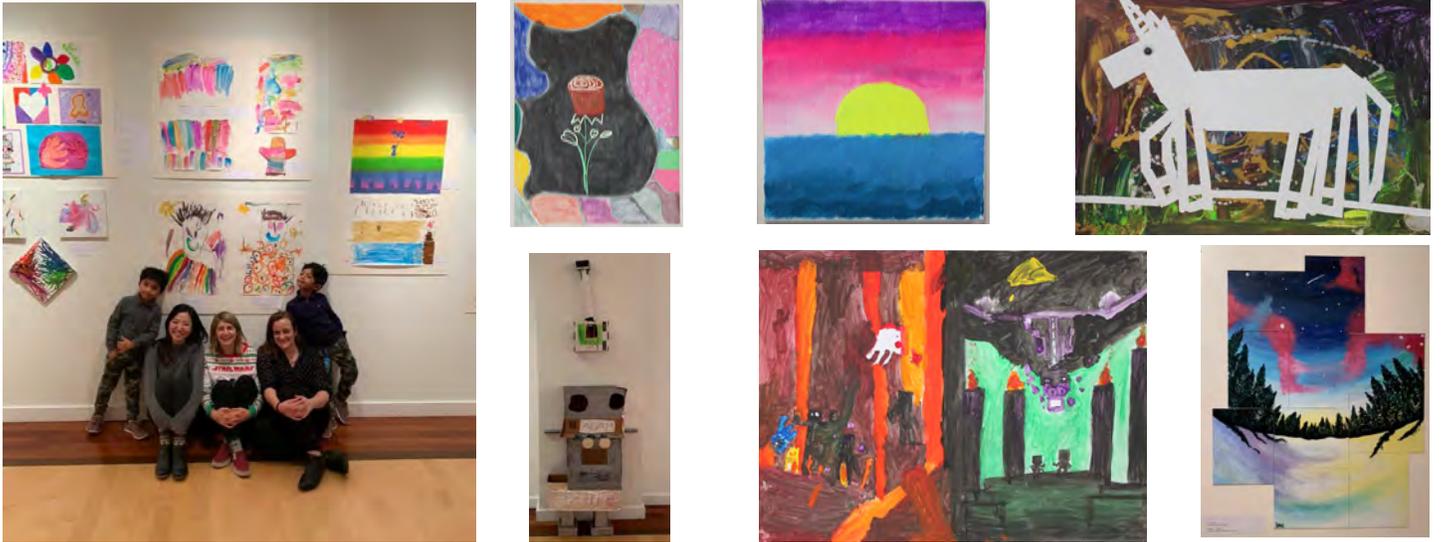


During 2019, the *Tracy's Kids* program at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation provided 462 hours of art therapy, 386 patient contacts, and 152 hours of medical team consultation.

## Special Events in 2019

### **Tracy's Kids at Carroll Square Exhibit**

In December 2019 the Carroll Square Gallery in Washington, DC hosted the eleventh annual *Tracy's Kids* Exhibit. Artists from all eight *Tracy's Kids* programs contributed work to the show. Many thanks to Akridge and Seaton & Benkowski for sponsoring the exhibition.



DC-area families attend the reception and visit the show in person, and kids from our programs in Texas, New York and Baltimore enjoy the virtual gallery on our Facebook page.



Players from the **Washington Redskins** visited the kids at Inova hospital and did some really cool art with them!

When **Washington Capitals Captain Alex Ovechkin** introduced his new Ovi O's Cereal, our kids were among the first to taste it!



## Community Support

### Derby Day, Arlington Knights of Columbus

In May, James Miller and Theresa Chapman Miller, their friends and family and the Edward Douglass White Council 2473 of the Knights of Columbus organized the second annual Kentucky Derby Day Fundraiser for Tracy's Kids! This year kids and staff at our clinics got in on the act by making beautiful Derby Hats.



### The Country Club of Fairfax Ladies 9 Hole Golf Group

raised money for Tracy's Kids at their annual Cancer Awareness Tournament in May.



Jonah Infante heard about Tracy's Kids and hosted an art supply drive to help our kids stay creative, even though he's not a patient!



### **“And the Winner Is...” | 2019 Red Carpet Event**

Our annual event raises critical funds for *Tracy's Kids* and celebrates the work that our art therapists do. Each year, we present the Courage Award, which honors the strength, dignity and perseverance that cancer patients exhibit every day, and is given to a public person who appreciates the challenges inflicted by the disease.

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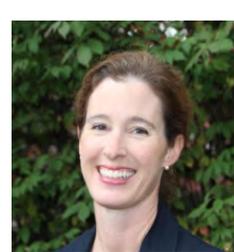
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