ANNUAL REPORT 2021
GEORGE MARK CHILDREN’S HOUSE

THE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN PEDIATRIC PALLIATIVE CARE
GEORGE MARK CHILDREN’S HOUSE focuses on quality of life and continuity of care for children with illnesses that modern medicine cannot yet cure, and for those who have complex chronic medical conditions. The goal of pediatric palliative care is to relieve the symptoms, discomfort, and emotional stress of illnesses for children and their families.

“We are a place where kids can be kids and families can be families.”
OUR MISSION
To provide the highest quality of care and to minimize discomfort, addressing the physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychosocial needs of the entire family.

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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Special thanks to Moment by Moment for the professional photographs contributed to this report.
MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO
LINDA ASHCRAFT-HUDAK

Dear George Mark Community,

I am delighted to share with you the Annual Report from George Mark Children’s House for Fiscal Year 2021. In it you will find highlights of our activities and initiatives from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

With the commitment of our nimble and resilient multi-disciplinary staff, we charted a course last year to keep our patients and staff COVID-free, while also enhancing our services. Thanks to their conscientious adherence to intensive health protocols, none of our patients and staff contracted COVID, and we were able to make progress on multiple fronts.

Our offerings expanded with the official opening of our Restorative Garden, “Hummingbird Hill.” Pixar artists designed bronze hummingbirds that will be nesting throughout the hillside - a playful addition to a calming and lovely garden. In addition we introduced a new program, Horticultural Therapy.

Planning for a redesign of our playground gained momentum, and we began to explore enlarging the palliative aquatic therapy pool to accommodate adolescent and young adult patients. Our efforts are timely, because we now admit patients for respite care up to age 25 (previously we offered respite care up to age 22). Expanding our age limit offers young adults a special stay, and their families a regenerative respite.

George Mark serves the whole family, and our efforts this year reflected our commitment to that objective. For example, we produced a free livestreamed panel program composed of bereaved siblings sharing their moving journeys. New resources for our patients and families include: a reimagined Family Handbook shared with each family upon their child’s admission, and a Transition to Adulthood Guide for parents of chronically ill teens and young adults.
We increased our outreach to our referral partners by providing them with colorful quarterly newsletters. A documentary was filmed at George Mark highlighting our Maker Therapy Program and increasing public awareness of our model of compassionate palliative care.

We want every stay for each child, teen, and young adult at George Mark to be special. A new program we launched, Little Wishes, resulted in over twenty of our patients receiving their wishes. These small kindnesses lifted the spirits of our patients, their families, staff, and volunteers.

All of these promising developments occurred as our referrals and admissions of patients increased.

I look forward to building upon the exceptional momentum we have created this year, which is reflected in this report. I hope you see the transformative progress your support has made in the lives of the children and families we serve.

In gratitude,

Linda Ashcraft-Hudak
MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER
DR. KATHY HULL

Dear George Mark Community,

As I write this update to each of you, I am reminded that publishing our Annual Report signifies the completion of another trip around the sun, and of a full year gone by. The report always lends itself to reflection on the fiscal year that has ended: the triumphs, large and small; moments of delight; the accumulation of experiences – some hard, others joyful. This past year has been a transformative one, pushing us all to create new ways of thinking, and working.

As Cecily Tyson wisely suggested: “Challenges make you discover things about yourself that you never really knew. They’re what make you stretch...and go beyond the norm.” As our Founder, I have watched with pride as each person on our staff stretched to reimagine how best to care for our fragile children, young adults, and their families. Together, we drew on strengths, and overcame enormous challenges, to create a safe, COVID-free workplace for staff, and a sanctuary for our patients.

In the truest sense, the completion of Hummingbird Hill, our Restorative Garden, has added a lovely haven and sanctuary to our five-acre property. It is a gift to see the delight on the faces of our special patients as they explore the garden features with their families or our Horticultural Therapist. The well known garden writer, Elizabeth Lawrence, captures the magic of their experience in her observation: “There is a garden in every childhood, an enchanted place where colors are brighter, the air softer, and the morning more fragrant than ever again.” For those of you who are local, we hope that you will be able to join us at one of several Garden Parties that are planned for the fall. Fingers crossed for safe gatherings to come!
I want to echo our CEO, Linda’s, expression of gratitude, for a myriad of things that have sustained our staff and volunteers as the COVID saga continued: for welcoming, open arms at George Mark to embrace the families who so need our services; for the teamwork that embodies the heart of the compassionate care each child and young adult receives; and, lastly, to all of you who provide your unflagging support to George Mark in a multitude of ways.

Your belief in the importance of the work that we do is evermore appreciated.

Warmly,

Kathy Hull

“George Mark serves the whole family, and our efforts this year reflected our commitment.”
OUR SERVICES

Celebrating and improving the lives of medically fragile children and their families at George Mark Children’s House.

RESPITE CARE
Children bask in attentive medical care and playful activities while their parents, siblings, and other family members enjoy a break from the nonstop care routines at home.

CANCER CARE SUPPORT 💖
Beginning in 2021, George Mark will provide respite care services for children and young adults with cancer, who require constant medical attention. Thanks to several generous donors, we anticipate providing respite care services and joyful experiences to an estimated 25 – 50 children with cancer we would otherwise be unable to serve due to lack of funding.
TRANSITIONAL CARE
Staying at George Mark with their children after a discharge from an acute care hospital, families are taught how to continue to improve their children’s health and comfort.

END OF LIFE CARE
Patients’ families stay close to their children, in their own family suite, so they can surround their child with love and support. Our palliative care team offers compassionate care to each family member.

BEREAVEMENT CARE
Long-term support is provided prior to, and following, the death of a child. The support includes individual counseling and memory honoring activities, such as the opportunity to design a tile for the George Mark tile wall.

PERINATAL COUNSELING
We offer expertise, resources, and support to families with at-risk preterm births. Education is provided about the prognosis and prospective complications, establishing continuity of care for infants and parents.
IN OUR FAMILIES’ WORDS

“We were only at George Mark for two days, but they were the most meaningful two days of our son’s life because they were actually his and ours.”

– Annie, Mom to Remy

“I have so many memories of Martin, and my family at George Mark. The capable and deeply caring staff and all of George Mark are in my heart.”

– Julia, Mom to Martin
“I was thrilled to learn of George Mark, and even though our family lives in Mendocino County, we discovered it was possible to bring Alice to the Bay Area for respite care.”

- Gwen, Mom to Alice

“Respite care at George Mark is my ‘water.' I'm refreshed after Bella stays, and I can provide all the love and caring attention she needs.”

- Zarinah, Mom to Isabella
“George Mark Children’s House has held us during the most devastating time of our life, and they have celebrated with us during the greatest joys in our life.”

-Amie, mom to Ruthie Lou
Did You Know?

A song written and performed by George Mark patients, their siblings, and bereaved siblings was played for astronauts at the International Space Station. The George Mark song, Our Little Spot, and space-themed artwork created by children and teens were featured on the International Space Album produced by Melodic Caring Project and Space for Art Foundation.

Composing the song, with the support of our Music Therapist, was more than half the fun for our children and teens. Child Life at George Mark means many things: music therapy, therapeutic play and movement, and art activities, to name a few. They all came together in this special project.

Here is a sampling of their lyrics:

**OUR LITTLE SPOT**

*Verse*
Here on this earth
We remember you always.
Looking into the stars
We see your face.

*Verse*
There are dreams of meeting you again.
You touched so many lives.
Your memory lives on in our hearts and in the sky.

*Verse*
That star, it shines bright amongst the others.
It’s the smallest light, but completes the constellation.

**Chorus 1**
Here at George Mark Children’s House
We’re a family.
We’re in this together, you and me.
We say hi from our little spot on the pale blue dot.
Hello hello hello to you.

**Chorus 2**
Here on this earth
We’re a family.
We’re in this together, you and me.
We’re in this together, yes, you see...
We’re in this together, you and me.
We’re in this together, yes, indeed, you and me.
In 2021, we provided:

- 30,408 hours of specialized nursing care
- 1,664 hours of psychosocial support
- 296 hours of music therapy

**Around the clock**

Specialized Nursing Care
63 Staff

- 27 Nurses
- 26 Clinical + program support
- 10 Administrative staff

308 Hours of Palliative Aquatic Therapy

230 Hours of Pet Therapy

160 Volunteers

7,800 Hours of Dedicated Service by Volunteers
# Financial Snapshot

## Fiscal Year 2020-21 Financial Snapshot

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY20-21</th>
<th>FY19-20</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
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<td>Program Services</td>
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<td>Donations, Events</td>
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<td><strong>Total Donations</strong></td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue &amp; Donations</strong></td>
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<td>Program Services</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td>$225,708</td>
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### Support and Revenue

- Donations: 68%
- Program Services: 13%
- Fundraising: 15%
- Events: 16%
- Other Income: 3%

### Expense Allocations

- Program Services: 73%
- Administration: 12%
- Fundraising: 15%
SERVICE IMPACT

157 ADMISSIONS

WHERE OUR FAMILIES LIVE

78% Bay Area

22% come from elsewhere in California

100% would highly recommend George Mark to other families who have children with life-limiting illness

97% of families gave George Mark the highest rating for medical care

ETHNICITY

12% African American
12% Asian
36% Caucasian
29% Latino
11% Other

AGES

41% 0-3
33% 4-12
17% 13-17
9% 18 and above

DAYS OF SERVICE
1,267

AVERAGE DAILY CENSUS 3.5
OUR RESTORATIVE GARDEN

The Hummingbird Hill project was completed this year! The garden’s opening was a joyful day for all who had contributed their considerable talents, as well as for patients, their families, and our staff. The garden is a place for exploration, relaxation, and reflection. Horticultural therapy is a new service for our patients, offering our medically fragile children a chance to use their five senses in the garden. The garden is also a calming and accessible setting for patients to visit in their wheelchairs. We were delighted that Horticulture Magazine featured Hummingbird Hill and the garden’s innovative design and restorative effect on patients and their families. The article appeared in November/December 2021.

The garden will soon be home to whimsical bronze hummingbirds created by talented artists from Pixar. Their planning and design of the tiny birds started in 2021. Look for the birds to take flight in 2021/22.
IN MEMORIAM – WILMA CHAN

We, like countless others in the Bay Area and beyond, were deeply saddened by the untimely death of Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan in 2021. Supervisor Chan was an early champion of George Mark Children’s House, paving the way for George Mark founders to obtain permission to lease the land on which the House is built. Over the years, George Mark benefited again and again from her dedication and strategic support. Supervisor Chan visited George Mark most recently during the groundbreaking ceremony for Hummingbird Hill, and gave the project her ardent blessing.

We will always remember Supervisor Wilma Chan and her unwavering dedication to children’s health and well-being. George Mark Children’s House is grateful to be a recipient of her expansive legacy.
On March 28-29, 2022, more than 125 health professionals came together for our annual West Coast Summit on Pediatric Palliative Care at Hayes Mansion in San Jose. The program included more than 40 speakers, with five plenary presentations and more than 15 breakout sessions, focused on pediatric palliative care practice, technique, and teamwork. Participants and speakers expressed enthusiastic gratitude at the opportunity to gather together after two and a half years since we hosted the first Summit in 2019.
As part of our West Coast Summit in March 2022, George Mark Children’s House presented a panel of young adults who shared the stories of their life-altering losses with great sensitivity and insight. During the impactful session, panelists reflected on their deep bonds with their ill siblings, their losses, their grieving, and their healing journeys.
SPIRIT OF CHILDREN

We were delighted to be selected as a first-time beneficiary of the Spirit of Children campaign. The campaign supports Child Life activities for children in medical settings. We have been informed that we will be invited again to participate in the annual campaign, so stay tuned for an announcement this fall. Thank you to all who supported George Mark by purchasing items at participating Spirit of Halloween Stores!

LIGHT THE WORLD GIVING MACHINE CAMPAIGN

George Mark was selected by the Church of Latter Day Saints as a beneficiary for their Giving Machine Campaign, which “makes giving to the community as easy as buying a candy bar from a vending machine.” Individuals were able to purchase, for example, a dinner for a family receiving end of life care, or personal protection equipment for a George Mark nurse. We were touched by the many acts of goodwill and generosity shown to George Mark during this holiday fundraiser.

CHILDREN’S HEALTH GUILD – Founded in 2012, the Children’s Health Guild is a group of dedicated women who creatively raise funds and awareness for George Mark and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland. To date, the Children’s Health Guild has raised more than $1.25 million each for George Mark and Children’s Hospital Oakland through a series of annual events and activities.
LIKE HOUSES COALITION

George Mark is continuing to be a leader in the pediatric palliative care movement, serving as a prototype for other organizations around the country interested in replicating our model of care. We host bi-monthly meetings of the “Like House Coalition,” a consortium of approximately 40 organizations and 30 individuals from around the country, who all share a vision to open a facility like George Mark in their region.

MR. AMADOR SHOW

This annual talent show produced by students from Amador Valley High School in Pleasanton, benefits George Mark annually. Established in 2014, The Mr. Amador Show has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for George Mark programs and services. In 2021, Amador Valley High School students involved in the event received the Association of Fundraising Professionals Golden Gate Chapter’s Youth in Philanthropy Award in recognition for their incredible support of George Mark.

SWAT FITNESS CHALLENGE

The SWAT Fitness Challenge is a community fundraising initiative established in 2013 by members of the San Leandro Police Department. Management was subsequently assumed by the Alameda County Sheriff’s Office in 2018. The annual event features SWAT teams from across the state coming together to participate in a series of competitive skills challenges, all to raise funds for George Mark. The event has raised more than $250,000 to date.
THE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN PEDIATRIC PALLIATIVE CARE

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