



April 17, 2019

To Whom it May Concern;

It is without hesitation that I write this letter in support of the P.U.N.T. Foundation. As you can imagine, a pediatric cancer diagnosis forever changes a family. The children and families affected by cancer must abandon their normal lives in order to adjust to a “new” normal dictated by a terrible disease that forever changes the lives they have known. These children and families not only struggle with the physical and psychological effects of a chronic illness, but they must also meet the demands of a new and often tremendous financial burden.

The P.U.N.T. Foundation provides families with opportunities to have some normalcy in a completely abnormal situation. Through their various programs families are provided with financial assistance and social support. As the pediatric psychologist in the oncology unit at Oishei Children’s Hospital of Buffalo, I have had the honor of handing out gifts and resources provided by P.U.N.T. I cannot adequately describe the gratitude of the families assisted by the P.U.N.T. Foundation. A gas card to a family traveling 50-plus miles several times per week for lifesaving cancer treatment allows that family to put food on the table. A meal voucher or a parking pass mean the world to a family making an unexpected and urgent trip into the hospital. Financial burdens lifted when a family learns they will have help making ends meet through the direct payment of mortgages, rent, auto, medical, and utility bills.

I could tell you countless stories of families touched by the P.U.N.T. Foundation; a family with multiple financial stressors breathing a sigh of relief because they’ve been adopted for the holidays through the P.U.N.T., a teen fighting a deadly brain tumor getting to see the Buffalo Bills with his family one last time, an impoverished mother accessing financial assistance to cover her 4 year-old daughter’s funeral expenses. The P.U.N.T. Foundation helps with every single funeral for a child lost to cancer. They truly play a critical role in the lives of families touched by a pediatric cancer diagnosis.

Not only does P.U.N.T. support families during treatment, but they also worked with local organizations to develop and implement Remembrance Weekend. Families who have lost a child to pediatric cancer are invited to spend a weekend connecting with one another and participating in a series of grief groups and workshops. This program acknowledges that a loss to cancer is different. A cancer death is often a long process filled with tears and attempts to negotiate with the universe for a different outcome. It is begging for a miracle until the very last minute. Remembrance Weekend provides a unique outlet for the grief pediatric cancer families experience. It offers support, hope for a better tomorrow, and the opportunity to express the pain of losing a child in a safe and supportive environment.

I cannot say enough about the programs and support offered through the P.U.N.T. Foundation. There simply are not enough words to adequately describe the gratitude of the families who benefit from these programs or that of the support services team who work so closely with P.U.N.T. to meet the needs of these families.

Sincerely,
Cate Flanagan-Priore, PhD
Licensed Psychologist