

Section I. Summary

Starlight brings together experts from pediatric health care, technology and entertainment to create programs that educate, entertain and inspire seriously ill children. Whether it's finding friends online, learning more about a disease, or just spending time together as a family, Starlight's programs help children and families cope with the challenges they face daily.

Section II. Statement of purpose

When a child is diagnosed with a serious illness, the day-to-day joys of childhood take a back seat to the rigors of treatment and hospitalization. For more than 25 years, Starlight Children's Foundation has dedicated itself to improving the quality of life for children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses and life-altering injuries by providing entertainment, education and family activities that help them cope with the pain, fear and isolation of prolonged illness.

We understand what families go through when a child is sick, and how important it is to find relief from constant worry and isolation. Our programs have been proven to distract children from their pain, help them better understand and manage their illnesses, and connect families with others facing similar challenges so that no one feels alone. Unlike any other charity, Starlight offers a comprehensive menu of outpatient, hospital-based and Web offerings that enable us to provide ongoing support for children and families — from diagnosis through the entire course of medical treatment. Programs include:

- **Family activities and outings** that give families a chance to have fun together away from the hospital so they can relax, regroup and return home with a renewed sense of strength and hope. The events also forge important connections between families struggling with similar issues to combat feelings of isolation.
- **In-hospital entertainment technology** that helps kids fill hours in hospitals or treatment centers with therapeutic fun; find distraction during long or painful medical procedures; access Starlight's online educational programs and communities; and stay connected with the outside world and keep up with school work during extended hospitalizations.

- **Online communities and interactive websites** that help seriously ill teens connect with each other and find tips and strategies for coping with their medical conditions.
- **In-hospital playrooms, kid-friendly treatment rooms and special events** that help ease the loneliness, fear and boredom that accompany hospital stays.
- **Educational programming** — delivered via online interactive games, ezines, webisodes, a comic book and websites — to help sick children understand common hospital procedures and manage illnesses and injuries such as cancer, sickle cell, cystic fibrosis, asthma, Crohn’s and colitis, severe burns and kidney disease.

Section III. Outcomes

Research studies have found that Starlight’s programs help reduce children’s pain while helping them to better deal with, understand and manage their illnesses. In addition, Starlight programs help the child, parents and siblings experience less depression, anxiety, pain and isolation and bond as a family. While researchers look for cures and doctors work to restore a child's health, Starlight works to restore the entire family's spirits.

Section IV. Additional Resources

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