

Bright Spot
Network 

2021 Annual Report

www.brightspotnetwork.org
[@brightspotnetwork](https://twitter.com/brightspotnetwork)



"Bright Spot Network gave me the support I didn't know I needed... [They] gave my family a grant that helped get us to my appointments and not worry about "what if we get hungry while here?" As well as getting to and from the hospital when I needed to be inpatient... Thank you so much to the Bright Spot Network for everything you have done for my family."

- Jessica, Bright Grant, Bright Box, Bright Reads recipient and mom of 3

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Welcome to Bright Spot Network

Helping Families Through Cancer

Bright Spot Network was founded in 2019 in Alameda, California, out of the very real and personal experiences of our two co-founders: Haley Pollack and Aimee Barnes. While grappling with the stress and fear of cancer, compounded by the difficulty of parenting young kids, they learned first hand that there are few resources available to help young parents staring down a cancer diagnosis. To address this gap, they founded Bright Spot Network, the first national organization designed to serve the unique needs of parents and families affected by cancer, who have children under six years old.



Our Mission

We provide young cancer survivors who are parents of small children with a safe space for individual and familial healing, recovery, and reconnection.

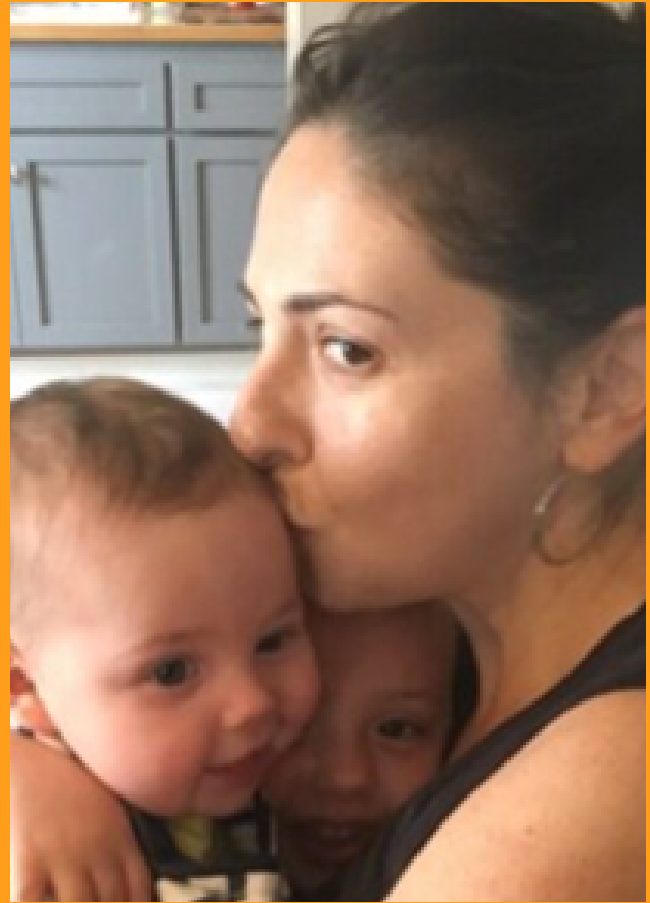
Our Values

We value empathy, equity and justice. Our community is built on trust and authentic connection. We hold hope and healing alongside grief and loss.

Our Programs

We connect families with financial and emotional support, resources to address children's mental health needs, and a community of parents and families affected by cancer while raising young kids.

A note to our Community, — from Haley and Aimee



Dear Friends,

When we launched Bright Spot Network in 2019, we wanted to make things a little easier for young families knocked off balance by a cancer diagnosis. In the beginning, the Bright Spot community was mostly made up of friends and family, and it was this same extended community that gave us the encouragement and support to get the organization off the ground.

Now, two years later, with your support, we have grown into a full-fledged organization and we are so proud of the tremendous growth that we've been able to accomplish this year.

- We grew our programs by adding more support groups and workshops to our calendar.
- We were able to give away more books and financial grants.
- We've expanded our social media reach and reignited our private Facebook group for survivors.
- We also grew our capacity, formalizing internal structures and hiring Haley Pollack as our Executive Director and first full-time employee.

This growth has come during a time of intense uncertainty. We are still living through a lingering pandemic, many of the children in the Bright Spot community remain too young to be vaccinated against Covid-19, and for cancer patients, the pandemic has

meant increased financial stress, balancing being immunocompromised with questions about sending kids to school, or living with the fear of treatment delays due to Covid.

Through all of this, we've shown up for one another.

Bright Spot Network is here so that no family would have to scour the internet looking for answers to questions that they couldn't bear to ask in the first place. How do we talk to our kids about cancer? Hospitals? Surgery? Chemo? Hair loss? And to find a community to help fortify us when things felt fraught. We are so glad to be going into this coming year full of growth and promise.

This report contains a snapshot of the work that we've done this year and the community who has supported it. Thank you for all that you do to support young families navigating a cancer diagnosis and treatment while raising young kids. Thank you for helping to ensure that no family has to go through this alone.

Warmly,
Haley Pollack & Aimee Barnes
Bright Spot Network Co-Founders

Our Programs

Our programs focus on serving young parents and guardians caring for young children at the time of diagnosis, including those diagnosed during pregnancy.

1. Support Groups

Virtual and free monthly meetings where participants discuss the fears, challenges, and successful coping strategies associated with parenting through cancer treatment and survivorship. Our support groups help those in treatment, survivors, and partners. In 2021, we expanded our groups to include a group for non-cancer partners supporting a loved one going through cancer, a group for parents with Stage IV cancer, and a weekly series for parents in active cancer treatment or recent survivorship.

2. Bright Grants

We offer grants of up to \$500 to BSN families, parents, and caregivers in need. We have an accessible application on our website that is easy to fill out; we review submissions on a monthly basis so that we can provide support in a timely manner.

3. Bright Reads

Bright Reads provides free age-appropriate books about dealing with big emotions, cancer and illness, and grief and loss, to the children of parents going through cancer. These books are meant for preschool age and early school age children.

4. Bright Box

In partnership with The Dolly Project we provide boxes of art projects specially designed for kids of cancer patients. Each box has everything you need to give your kids an amazing activity, so you can love them well, in the midst of sickness and fatigue.

2021 In Review

2021 was a year of growth and change for us! Some of our main achievements this past year include:

1. We changed our name from Operation Ohana to Bright Spot Network to match the expanded scope and scale of our work.
2. We created our Parent Advisory Board to build on the experiences of parents who have undergone a cancer diagnosis while raising young children.
3. We expanded our groups to include a group for non-cancer partners supporting a loved one going through cancer, a group for parents with Stage IV cancer, and a weekly series for parents in active cancer treatment or recent survivorship.
4. Together with The Dolly Project, we sent out the first round of Bright Boxes designed for children whose parents have cancer.
5. Our Bright Grants program grew from giving away \$12,500 in 2020 to \$50,000 in 2021 of \$500 barrier-free grants to families navigating cancer and in financial need.

\$50k

Distributed to 100 families navigating cancer and in financial need.

146

Bright Boxes distributed to families across the United States.

400+

Free books distributed to 136 families through our Bright Reads program.

36

Volunteers supporting our programs and community events.

Meet the Team



Haley Pollack
Co-Founder and Executive
Director



Aimee Barnes
Co-Founder and Board
President



Jakub Zielkiewicz
Board Treasurer



Jamie Callahan
Board Secretary

"Being on the Board of Directors of Bright Spot Network and playing a small part in its success has been a true privilege. Bright Spot Network has continued to exponentially grow from Haley and Aimee's vision into an organization that is filling a real and needed gap for young families dealing with cancer."

Jamie Callahan
Bright Spot Network – Board Secretary

Who We Serve.

Bright Spot Network serves families where a parent, or primary caregiver, of a preschool-age kid (ages 0–6 or pregnant at the time of diagnosis) has cancer. We serve people from diagnosis to survivorship, those in active treatment and living with cancer, understanding that a cancer "journey" can be long for the patient and their family.

"... I'm a child and adolescent psychiatrist, and I love the behaviorally informed, developmentally appropriate resources you shared with us and with others.... My daughter is almost four, and especially loves the book Cancer Hates Kisses. Currently she likes to run around acting out how we're going to help Mommy kick cancer's butt... Thank you for what you have done and continue to do."

- Paula, Bright Reads recipient and mother of two



Thank you to all of our supporters & donors!

LEADERSHIP

Anonymous (x2)
Murray Pollack
Pamela Yip Trust

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Cultivating Sparks

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Aimee Barnes
David Taylor
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Juliana Lisi
Trevor Housner

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Kimberly Carnahan
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Sue Taylor

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Jing Wang
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Karen Weil
Kate Larsen
Kathryn Hannah
Kimberly Craig
Marta Lutsky
Orli Cotel and Ben
Finkel

Paulette and Robert
Moore
Pete Banwell
Rebecca Stern and
Ellery Long
Steve Epstein

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Alena Graedon
Alexa Kleysteuber
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Alli Kaplan
Amanda Schweizer
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Amy Jamgochian
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Andrea Macomber
Andrea Zavitsanos
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Anna Goren
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David Parker
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Dennis Schirmer

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Doreen Hurley
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Emily Brown
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Hongxia Ho
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Mary McCarthy
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May Funabiki
Mazzy Akaba
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Michelle Danner
Michelle Ross
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Noel Van Nyhuis
Nona Caspers
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Philip Wolfe
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Raynor Voorhies
Rebecca Brodey
Rebecca Vitali-
 DeCola
Reena Rosskopf
Reese Kwon
Renee Heather Bauer
Robert Snyder
Robert Weisenmiller

“When your child, whom you love more than life itself, is diagnosed with breast cancer, all you want do is help, help, help. If you’re like me, where the cure and healing are completely out of your hands, donating to Bright Spot allows you to do something to help not just your precious child, but others affected by this wicked disease. Thank you Bright Spot.”

- Sally

“My husband Allan & I decided to fundraise for Bright Spot Network with the hopes of helping BSN reach more families with their incredible offerings. We have benefited from Bright Reads, Bright Box, a Bright Grant and the support groups during my breast cancer diagnosis and treatment; our connection to BSN has helped our family feel extremely supported and less alone in this parenting through cancer experience. We thought that if the money we fundraised could help even just one additional family feel that same support, it would be well worth it.”

- Jen Ellsworth

Robin Daugherty
Robin McFadden
Ruth Shaps
Ryan J Gilliam
Sally Anne Rudloff
Sally Spies
Sandra Russell
Sarah Bovert
Sarah K Kramer
Sarah Okin
Shady Grove Fertility
Clinic
Shane & Peggy
Clarke
Shirin Leos
Shirley Haberfeld
Sima Umathay
Stephen Goldberg
Stephen Good

Stephen Son
Steve Epstein
Sue Carman
Susan/Jim Considine
Suzanne Gillette
Suzanne Nelson
Tamara L Klein
Tasia Kurland
Theresa Roeder
Timothy Juliani
Tom and Linda
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Tracy Brady
Vanessa Hua
Wayne Ellsworth
Wendy Katzman
Wendy Lichtman

William & Paula
LeBlanc
William Sonneman
William Zimmerman
Wilson Rickerson
Zoe Chace

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FUNDRAISERS**

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Aimee Barnes
AJ Milana Gengler
Allan Delvalle
Anna Moschet
Rathbun
Ashika Patel Balani
Emily Banwell
Lagrone

Gila Ruskin
Gina Velasco
Haley Pollack
Jamie Callahan
Jennifer Ellsworth
Jing Wang
Kate Fitzpatrick
Silgals
Lauren Rabinovitz
Lillie Brum
Megan Langwood
Michael Lukas
Rachel Jenkins-
Stevens
Sal Gimbert Carter
Sarah Okin

Get Involved

We invite you to become part of the movement to help us provide young parents who are cancer survivors with a safe space for healing, recovery, and reconnection.

Volunteer.

Are you a wellness practitioner, yoga teacher, social worker, or someone who can dedicate your time to benefit Bright Spot Network and the families we serve? Contact us!

Partner With Us.

We partner with local and national medical, corporate, and non-profit organizations to further our mission and help parents with cancer. Contact us to learn more.

Sponsorship Opportunities.

We welcome financial support, employee giving, and cause-related marketing from companies of all sizes and sectors. Become a **Founder's Circle** donor by donating \$25,000 or be part of our **Bright Spot Leadership Council** by donating \$2,500.

Donate and Fundraise.

You can support us by donating on our website or by starting a Facebook fundraiser.

Do you shop on Amazon? One of the simplest ways to donate is to select Bright Spot Network as your Charity of Choice on Amazon Smile.

We thank you for
your ongoing
support of our
programs.

Follow our journey and help us spread the
word about our work.

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Contact

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