

Bounce Children's Foundation

Celebrates 10 Years of Building Resilience and Transforming Lives in Chicagoland

Nonprofit marks a decade of supporting chronically ill children and invites the Chicagoland community to help write the next chapter

Chicago, Ill. September 8, 2025 — Bounce Children's Foundation® is proud to commemorate its 10th anniversary, reflecting on a decade of life-changing support for families raising children battling pediatric chronic illness. Since launching in 2015, Bounce has helped hundreds of families shift from merely surviving to fully thriving.

While Bounce takes pride in its accomplishments to date, the foundation is seizing this milestone to rally the Chicagoland community — and beyond — toward achieving bold new goals in the next decade. With 1 in 5 U.S. children living with an incurable disease (more than 300,000 kids in Chicagoland alone!), Bounce knows their mission is far from complete.

"Our 10th anniversary is both a celebration and a call to action," said Joan Steltmann, CEO & Founder of Bounce Children's Foundation. "We've witnessed how compassion, community, and resources can heal. But with hundreds of thousands of children and families still in need, we invite Chicagoland — and everyone beyond — to help us amplify our impact and shift even more families from surviving to thriving."

By the Numbers: Impact of a Decade of Care

Since 2015, Bounce has delivered impactful programs that have allowed the organization to boast a 99% retention rate of the people they serve, a rarity for similar organizations. Bounce also secured a 2019 Chicago Innovation Award for building a first of its kind model that addressed the hidden epidemic of isolation and lack of resources for those families supporting a child — or children — with chronic illness.

Ultimately, Bounce's focus on building resilience and creating meaningful peer connection among families, has been what has driven its success — and allowed families to thrive — through signature programs such as:

- **Bounce Bash® family adventures:** Bounce created 141 events with 11,285 total attendees, bringing meaningful experiences to families such as Halloween Hoopla. During a time when most chronically ill children might miss out on the fun and joy of this childhood passage, Bounce builds a custom event that caters to what the kids and families need. The events transform the everyday into once-in-a-lifetime adventures.
- **Bounce Back Kits®:** customized family care packages that combat the devastating impact of perpetual quarantine: Twenty-three rounds of "Bounce Back Kits", delivering 7,797 care packages full of comfort and creative connection; 95% said kits fostered family togetherness, 98% expressed satisfaction, and 96% agreed they provided fun.
- **Bounce Academy®:** Workshops and thought leadership that share vital coping skills that help parents hold themselves, and their families, together. Bounce hosted six resilience-building workshops attended by 68 families, with 100% satisfaction, 93% noting the impact helped them take action to move from "survive to thrive."
- **Bounce it Forward®, turning donated tickets into unexpected relief:** One-hundred fifty-two (152) family outings facilitated via 1,042 donated tickets to sports, theater, and cultural events —

transforming the stress that families feel in bringing their children to these events into surprise and delight.

- **Bounce Net®**, a “24 x 7” online safety net of peer support: A vibrant Bounce Net online community with 375 members, averaging 24 monthly posts and 496 comments and contributions — fostering ongoing connection and support.

“Bounce has been a lifeline for us,” shares one family served by the foundation. “It means knowing we aren’t alone — that there are people who truly get what we face and lift us up when needed most. Bounce turns some of our hardest days into moments of joy. We never thought we could take our family trick-or-treating, or ice skating, and through Bounce, we learned we could do so many things we didn’t think could be possible. Bounce lets us feel seen, gives us support, and a place to belong.”

Acknowledgments

Bounce extends deep gratitude to the many individuals and partners who have propelled its mission:

- **Jones Day Law Firm** – As the organization that helped Bounce launch and provided early funding, Jones Day played a pivotal role in making Bounce possible. Their belief in the mission, organization, and team, laid the foundation for everything that has followed, turning vision into reality.
- **The Foglia Family Foundation** – A crucial funder whose generosity has fueled Bounce’s growth over the past decade. Their sustained commitment has enabled the foundation to expand programming, reach more families, and build long-term stability.
- **Current and former board members, including Board Chair, Bobby Lucas** – These leaders have been steadfast in their support, partnership, and vision, guiding Bounce through every stage of its journey. From governance to strategic direction, they have ensured the organization remains strong, mission-focused, and ready for the future.
- **The Emerging Leaders Board** – A passionate group of rising (or next gen leaders) leaders who bring tireless energy to fundraising and advocacy. Their dedication directly powers Bounce’s programs, helping to create meaningful experiences and vital support for families navigating pediatric chronic illness.
- **Generous donors and healthcare partners** – Their unwavering support makes Bounce’s work possible. Donors provide the financial resources that fuel programs, while pediatric hospitals /healthcare partners ensure families are introduced to the foundation and therefore able to access up to twenty-one years of ongoing support. Together, they form the backbone of Bounce’s ability to grow and sustain its impact.
- **Chicagoland program partners** – From sports teams and theaters to cultural institutions and local businesses, program partners create experiences that bring joy, normalcy, and community connection to Bounce families. Their contributions transform everyday challenges into extraordinary moments of relief and celebration.
- **Dedicated volunteers and trustees** – These individuals give their time, talent, and expertise to guide, grow, and deliver Bounce’s mission. Volunteers power events, pack care packages, provide

hands-on support, and extend compassion, while trustees bring wisdom, access to resources and leadership that keeps Bounce strong and forward-looking.

- **Bounce Families** – At the heart of Bounce’s mission, these families embody courage and resilience in the face of chronic illness. Their feedback shapes programming, their stories inspire action, and their strength fuels the foundation’s drive to ensure that no family faces pediatric chronic illness alone.

“Ten years is extraordinary — but it’s just the beginning,” said Bobby Lucas, Board Chair. “Bounce was founded on generosity and a belief that no family should face chronic illness alone. Together, we can ensure the next decade is even more powerful.”

As Bounce steps boldly into its next chapter, the foundation calls on individuals, local businesses, and community leaders to help expand its reach and support even more families in need. To achieve their goals, the organization is asking Chicagoland to share Bounce’s impact with their networks, and they invite everyone connected to Bounce to serve as an ambassador for their next chapter.

“Whether it’s referring a family to Bounce for support, donating time or financial resources, or becoming an advocate for Bounce, community support is essential to help more families and communities thrive,” Steltmann continued.

To commemorate this milestone, Bounce Children’s Foundation will host a special 10th Anniversary Celebration on September 11, 2025, emceed by Emmy Award–winning journalist and host, Nick Smith. The inspiring evening will feature a Bounce Family courageously sharing their journey, reflections on the powerful difference Bounce has made over the past decade, and a forward-looking vision for the next 10 years of impact. Guests will have the opportunity to celebrate the resilience of Bounce Families, honor the community of supporters who make the mission possible, and rally together for the bold road ahead. Bounce will also unveil a special proclamation issued by the State of Illinois and Governor Pritzker that acknowledges the impactful work of the foundation.

For more information, visit www.BounceChildrensFoundation.org.

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About Bounce Children’s Foundation:

Bounce Children’s Foundation® (Bounce), a Chicagoland not-for-profit organization, transforms the lives of chronically ill children, and their families, shifting all from surviving to thriving. Offering a variety of ongoing home and community-based programs, Bounce is unique in filling a vital gap in the patchwork of care for the nearly 1 in 5 U.S. children forced to battle chronic illness.

For Immediate Release



Combatting a deep sense of invisibility and extreme isolation, Bounce provides community and connection, fun and friendship, education and resources, hope and encouragement, and a place to belong - until cures are found for both sick kids and their loved ones. Currently, more than 2,400 Kiddos, Siblings, and Parents/Guardians are supported.

Bounce empowers these members to build the resilience they need to live happier, healthier lives. As one Bounce Dad put it, "Bounce helps families heal!" One hundred percent privately funded, Bounce is offered free of charge. While there is no income requirement, many families are low income and all face extraordinary out-of-pocket medical costs. Since its inception, Bounce has never turned away a qualifying child/family.

For more information about Bounce Children's Foundation, visit www.BounceChildrensFoundation.org and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter (X).

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