

Kids with special needs are our VIPs!

VIPs are kids with special needs, which include any physical, cognitive, medical or hidden disability, chronic or life-threatening illness, or those who are medically fragile.

Buddies are friends to VIPs.

Sharing "the Hope" with Kids with Special Needs and their Families



Nathaniel's Hope bright spot!

Issue #3 | Fall 2007

Tropical Storm Barry Could Not Hold Back Record-Breaking Smiles at Our Nathaniel's Hope 5th Annual Make 'm Smile!

When Tropical Storm Barry threatened Central Florida on the eve of Make 'm Smile in June, with less than 12 hours before the event, the difficult decision was made to postpone the celebration so families could be safe from the threat of inclement weather. Friends of Nathaniel's Hope and the media worked fast that night to notify the 4,000 people who had pre-registered for the event as well as the community-at-large who may have been planning to show up to the event on Saturday morning.



Celebrating VIP Kids!

The staff and volunteers were more determined than ever to make the rescheduled event into a great day! The "new" date of Saturday, July 14 proved to be a charm as over

5,000 people, including 700 VIP kids (kids with special needs), gathered to celebrate together at this year's Make 'm Smile.

Make 'm Smile is an annual community event dedicated to celebrating the lives of VIP kids. It was established in memory of Nathaniel Kuck's birthday (June 6th). In addition to "celebrating life," the desire is to help build friendships between VIP kids and the community. This year over 3,500

people registered for the Buddy Stroll, a portion of the larger Make 'm Smile event in which VIP kids and their families are "buddied up" with other individuals and families from the community (Buddies) for a friendship stroll around Lake Eola. VIPs and Buddies enjoyed the entertainment of theme park characters, music, clowns, magicians, a fire truck, bounce houses, and animals, including Gus the camel! Over 150 exhibitors, including organizations who service the special needs community, closed down Robinson Street and lined up around Lake Eola.

Thanks to the generosity of corporate and individual sponsors, we were able to provide participants with FREE goodies and entertainment including: 4,000 t-shirts, 5,000 SeaWorld hats, 3,500 Chick-fil-A sandwiches, 3,000 hotdogs, 20,000 bottles of beverage, Frito-Lay chips, sno-cones, ice cream, popcorn, cotton candy, etc.



(more, page 2)



➤ Z88.3's Jeff Cruz with his family and their new VIP friends on the Buddy Stroll.

Smiles Continue Between New Friends

It is always a joy to hear about VIP and Buddy friendships that begin on the Buddy Stroll and continue beyond the event. Buddy Jeff Cruz shared this story...

"Having heard great things about the ministry of Nathaniel's Hope from the rest of the Z88.3 radio staff when I first moved into town, I was excited to participate in Make 'm Smile as a part of the Z crew. Since I would be busy at the Z tent during the event, my wife and kids decided to sign up for the Buddy Stroll. The plan was for them to stop by the radio booth so I could meet the family before they went on their trip around Lake Eola, but when they came by, I decided to join them on the walk... and boy am I glad I did!

The family we met is from Kissimmee and they had their wonderful VIP son Syrus with them who is about seven years old. They also had a younger daughter and son with them (about the same age as my two young kids) and their older daughter too. I loved getting to know them and talking as we walked around to all the booths and exhibits. We had such fun and did so much stuff that it took us nearly three hours to get all the way around, and we loved every minute of it!

We had a wonderful time as we got to know the family, and we found that they were just like us. The relaxed, fun environment of Make 'm Smile made it easy to feel comfortable so we were able to get to know them well. In the end, we enjoyed their company so much that we exchanged contact information and talked about getting together again, which we did about two weeks later at our house for our son's birthday party. We had a "pirate party" and Syrus was the life of the party sitting in a small chair, in the blow-up pool hitting balloons back and forth with the other kids. After another great afternoon with our new friends, we were even happier that we took the time to do the Buddy Stroll at Make 'm Smile. Without it we would not have gotten to know and become friends with such an awesome family." ●

(continued from cover)

A special note of appreciation is also extended to our honorary co-chairs Orange County Mayor Richard T. Crotty and Pam Crotty, and Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer and Karen Dyer, and their respective staffs. This year Orange County and the City of Orlando once again issued proclamations recognizing Saturday, July 14, 2007 as "Make 'm Smile Day" in honor of the VIP kids in our community.

Other special guests who came to share smiles included Orange County Commissioner Linda Stewart, Kathy Russell representing City of Orlando, Orlando Magic's Nick Anderson, WFTV Channel 9's Martie Salt, Z88.3's Melony McKaye, Former Americas Miss Dianne Garvis, and Miss Florida Teen 2007 Dasha Gonzalez.

This day of celebration would not be possible without the hours of service from 350 volunteers, many of whom worked months to plan the event and stayed up all night to set-up for the event. This day is truly an expression of love from the community to our VIP friends.

Be sure to visit our Make 'm Smile 2007 photo album at www.NathanielsHope.org. Plan now to join us for Nathaniel's Hope 6th Annual Make 'm Smile on June 7, 2008! ●

➤ Pam Crotty, Orange County's First Lady, serves free hot dogs to a hungry crowd.

➔ VIP friends and Buddies: City of Orlando's Kathy Russell, Orange County Commissioner Linda Stewart, Orlando Magic's Nick Anderson, Orange County Mayor Richard T. Crotty, and Tim and Marie Kuck, Co-Founders of Nathaniel's Hope



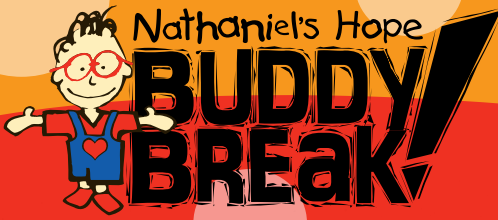
Thank You to Our Top Sponsors!

Diamond Smile:



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BUDDY BREAK

helps VIP families get a

"free" break!



For many VIP families, it's nearly impossible to get a break since the demands of care-giving are constant – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Most people don't realize that VIP families are facing these challenges and are downright worn out. Understanding the needs and stress that VIP families face helped motivate Nathaniel's Hope to develop the Buddy Break program.

Buddy Break is a FREE respite program designed to give caregivers of VIP kids a break from their ongoing care-giving responsibilities for three hours on Friday nights or Saturday mornings. At Buddy Break each VIP kid is paired up with a trained volunteer Buddy for one-on-one attention as everyone has fun playing games, hearing and seeing great children's stories, videos, music and more... while the caregivers get a break! This respite program is held in partnership with local churches in various locations, usually once a month in each location.

The program began three years ago at Calvary Assembly, in Winter Park, Florida, and it is now operating at six locations in Central Florida and Tampa. The Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break has helped approximately 220 VIP kids and their families get a much-needed break, and it has increased disability awareness in the community since over 465 Buddies have been trained to care for VIP kids.

Expansion plans are underway to launch new locations in the near future throughout the state of Florida and develop a structure to support the growth of a Buddy Break network across the nation. This plan includes the completion of Buddy Training 101 curriculum in the form of DVDs and supporting training materials which will equip people to encourage and care for VIP kids and their families. Watch for details in the near future!

If you would like to attend Buddy Break as a VIP or a volunteer Buddy or if you would like to start a Buddy Break program at your church, contact Nathaniel's Hope at 407-857-8224 or visit us online at www.NathanielsHope.org.

↩ Buddies Pastor John & Laura McKinney with VIP Meghan at Buddy Break at South Orlando Baptist Church.

➔ Buddies and VIPs love music time at Buddy Break at St. James United Methodist Church in Tampa.

↓ Kids enjoyed a petting zoo at Buddy Break at Calvary Assembly!



CAROLING FOR KIDS brings hope

to hospitals
on Christmas Day



Since 1997 Caroling for Kids has been sharing hope and encouragement with patients, families, and caregivers at children's hospitals on Christmas Day through caroling, prayer, and bearing goodies and gifts.

This past December over 300 people registered to fill the nine teams of carolers at five locations in Central Florida, including Arnold Palmer Hospital, Florida Children's Hospital, Florida East Hospital, Grandma's House, and Winnie Palmer Hospital. These teams traveled the halls sharing carols, good cheer, and Christmas

goodies including a "Stories of Hope" booklet created to give to parents and caregivers with stories written by parents who have spent the holidays in hospitals. Another special gift that was created just for the event, was an ornament that was designed and handcrafted by Kimberly Cole, a VIP mom, and her dedicated team. All of the goodies were supplied by generous individuals from the community, and over 100 volunteer hours were given by caring buddies in pre-event preparations. To some, Caroling for Kids will become a part of their future Christmas festivities, including one caroler who heard about Caroling for Kids from the promotion on Z88.3 and wrote

us afterwards to say, "we hope to make this a Christmas tradition!" If you would like to get involved with this year's Caroling for Kids program by leading a team at a children's hospital in your area, joining a caroling team, helping supply goodies, or assisting in pre-event preparations, please contact the Nathaniel's Hope office at 407-857-8224. ●

← Kenn, who heard about our event on Z88.3, donated eight totes FULL of beanie bears and toys.

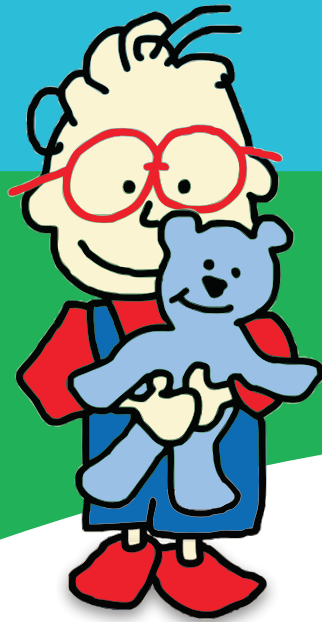
↘ Caroling Team at Winnie Palmer Children's Hospital.

↓ Carolers at Arnold Palmer Children's Hospital.

↓ A VIP enjoys her new toy and visit on Christmas Day.



Making a difference...



VIP BIRTHDAY CLUB IS GROWING!

Do you have a VIP friend? Invite them to join our VIP Birthday Club which celebrates VIP kids year-round! Every VIP Birthday Club member is sent a birthday card and special surprises on their birthday along with other special recognition throughout the year. Names and photos, if provided, are posted on our Nathaniel's Hope website. Out-of-state club members are welcomed. We currently have over 1,850 kids in the VIP Birthday Club, almost doubling our club members in a year!

You can register a VIP kid for the VIP Birthday Club by calling our office at 407-857-8224 or signing up on our website at www.NathanielsHope.org.

BEARING HOPE

Bearing Hope is our loveable, plush beanie bear which is given to VIP kids to communicate the hope we share through Nathaniel's Hope. We're always thankful for those who help "bear hope" by donating \$10 to send a bear to a VIP friend. This year Pine Castle Christian Academy (PCCA) Elementary School raised \$1,000 to provide Bearing Hope bears to VIP kids who join our VIP Birthday Club – **Thank you PCCA!**



HALL OF HOPE SHARES VIP KIDS' LEGACY

The Hall of Hope is dedicated to remembering VIP kids who have passed on to heaven. Their photos and stories, if provided, are posted online for family and friends to view. Nathaniel's Hope also sends cards to family members on their VIP's birthday and the anniversary date of their child's passing so that we may honor their children. Please help us spread the word to families that would like to share their child's legacy with us.



↑ *Make 'm Smile 2007 featured Hall of Hope families in a special ceremony of remembrance, where they could release a butterfly in their child's memory.*

← *According to her mom, Siobhan has banished all other stuffed animals to the toy box and only allows the bear on her bed now.*

**"Be strong and let your heart take courage,
All you who hope in the Lord. (Psalm 31:24 NASB)"**



April 2006: VIP kids and families enjoyed a "Day at the Daytona Races" with a track-side view of the sites and sounds of vintage sports car racing, a visit to the pit wall, and lunch provided by Leyton House Racing.

keep 'm smiling

Keep 'm Smiling is our partnership with other organizations to have community events that are VIP-friendly year-round so that we can keep VIP families smiling all year long!

This program was initiated in April, 2006 when Nathaniel's Hope provided a respite tent for the two days of Luis Palau's Orlando Festival. The tent provided changing facilities, a cot, electrical outlets, water, chairs and tables, first aid supplies, etc. and volunteers to aid as needed. Because of this respite tent, many VIP families were able to attend the event knowing that there was a place where they could take care of their VIP's special needs. They were better able to enjoy the entertainment of great music, children's activities, a sports zone, and more!



May 2007: The Orlando Guardians football team provided free tickets to VIP kids and their families to one of their spring games.



February 2007: Marie Kuck, Kevin Palau, and Sally DePalma (Buddy Break Coordinator at St. James United Methodist Church) at the respite tent for Luis Palau's Tampa Bay Festival.

If you have an event that you would like to make more VIP-friendly, please contact our office for some ideas or to have us provide a respite tent. Also, if you work for a company or organization that would like to create an event just for VIP kids (or to benefit VIP kids) and their families, we'd love to partner with you on that.

February 2007: Marie Kuck, Kevin Palau, and Sally DePalma (Buddy Break Coordinator at St. James United Methodist Church) at the respite tent for Luis Palau's Tampa Bay Festival.

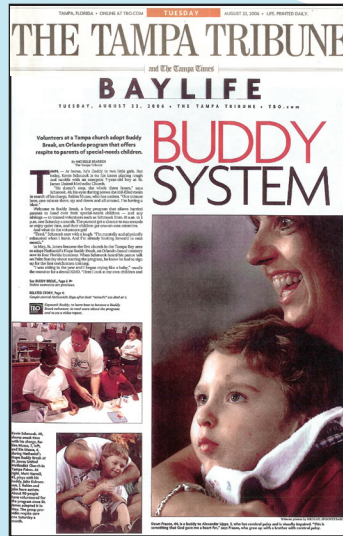
NATHANIEL'S HOPE IS OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

Watch for us to be at your next event! This year Nathaniel's Hope has been all over passing along information about our organization as well as providing encouragement to VIP families. You may have seen us at one of these events: Accessibility Summit in McLean, VA, Autism Society of Greater Orlando's walk, Calvary Chapel's conference in Melbourne, FL, the National Children's Pastors Conference held at Disney, Cure Autism Now's "Walk Now" event, the Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida's Buddy Walk, Family Café, etc. If you know of an event where you think we should be, please let us know!



NATHANIEL'S HOPE IS MAKING HEADLINES

Visit our website to see the media that Nathaniel's Hope has attracted including...



YOU CAN BE A PARTNER share the hope

with us to

All of the programs and services that are provided by Nathaniel's Hope are completely FREE to our VIP kids and families. We rely on the generosity of individuals, families, and businesses to fund our outreach. We'd like to thank the following who have partnered with us in unique and wonderful ways:



↑ At the Family Café conference, Tom Summerill, COO of WellCare of Florida, presented Tim and Marie Kuck with a check to help with the expansion of Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break.



← Z88.3 and WFTV Channel 9 Family Connection recently surprised Nathaniel's Hope with a \$1,000 grant as part of their "I Am the One" campaign.



↑ Westgate Resorts Foundation awarded Nathaniel's Hope with a \$7,500 grant to assist in the expansion of Nathaniel's Hope. They also participated in Make 'm Smile 2007 sharing popcorn, cotton candy, water, and volunteers!



← For Olivia's 1st birthday, her guests were asked to give a donation to Nathaniel's Hope instead of bringing a gift for Olivia. Thank you Olivia!

Have You Considered...

If you would like to give a gift in honor of someone, they will receive a card letting them know that a donation has been made in their name. You can also make a gift in memory of someone, and their family will be notified.

You can mail your check or money order (made out to Nathaniel's Hope) to:
Nathaniel's Hope, 2300 Jetport Drive, Orlando, FL 32809. Or you can make a donation with your Visa or Mastercard by calling our office at 407-857-8224. If you'd like to designate your donation to a particular program, please indicate that.

"But as for me, I will always have hope..." (Psalm 71:14 NIV)

Through Christ all of us can have hope in the midst of our most desperate circumstances, even when it seems like there is no Hope. Hope is bigger than our own intellect and ability. It is believing that God is faithful and that He will see us through the most tempest storms in life. We can trust God, for He is trustworthy, and He will give us Hope!

Sharing Hope with you,

Tim & Marie Kuck (Pictured below with Ashley and Briana Kuck)

Co-Founders, Nathaniel's dad & mom



OUR MISSION:

Nathaniel's Hope is dedicated to sharing hope with kids with special needs (VIP kids) and their families.

This includes:

- Bringing hope and resources of encouragement to VIP kids and their families,
- Providing practical assistance by offering free respite care for VIP kids,
- Educating the community on how to be a Buddy to VIP kids and their families,
- Equipping the community with opportunities, tools, training, and resources to reach out to VIP kids and their families,
- Extending hope to VIP kids overseas, and
- Sharing hope with grieving families.

Help us spread the word! Visit us online at www.NathanielsHope.org!



Sharing "the Hope" with Kids with Special Needs and their Families

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