

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 #4 | Fall 2008

Nathaniel's Hope 6th Annual Make 'm Smile Breaks All Records!

Smiles were plentiful at our Nathaniel's Hope 6th Annual Make 'm Smile event held on Saturday, June 7, 2008 at Lake Eola in downtown Orlando. We had record-breaking attendance of over 6,500 people participating in this year's event. This included over 1,000 VIP kids (kids with special needs) from our community!



Celebrating VIP Kids!

Make 'm Smile is an annual community event dedicated to celebrating VIP kids and their families. This year, over 5,400 people registered to attend 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. Together they enjoyed entertainment from animals, clowns, face painters, puppets, and over 30 characters including those from major tourist attractions! Over 150 exhibitors, including organizations that serve the special needs community, were available around Lake Eola and Robinson Street.

This year brought extra-special smiles as Nashville's Contemporary Christian Recording Artist Matthew West made a premiere

appearance and performed two concerts for our VIP kids! Matthew encouraged the crowds with the message from his best selling hit that every life has "Something to Say!" We greatly appreciate not only his message, but his genuine heart as he took time out of his busy schedule to visit, hug, and love on our VIP kids! (➔ See top photo)

The Goats were also back on stage with us again, full of energy, bringing hope to all in attendance at the Amphitheatre. We are grateful for their participation with us from the beginning!

Honorary Co-Chairs Orange County Mayor Richard Crotty and Pam Crotty (➔ See middle photo), who have also been involved since the first Make 'm Smile, participated in the Buddy Stroll and were busy serving up hot dogs at this year's event. Other special guest participants included City of Orlando's Kathy Russell and Commissioner Samuel Ings, Orange County Commissioner Linda Stewart, and Orlando Magic's Bo Outlaw and Stuff (➔ See bottom photo), WFTV Channel 9's Martie Salt,

(more, page 2)



(continued from previous page) Z88.3's morning show hosts Ellis and Tyler, and the entire ZCrew participated in the festivities of the day as well.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, participants received FREE goodies and entertainment including: 4,000 t-shirts, toys and goodies from SeaWorld and Universal Orlando, 4,000 Chick-fil-A sandwiches, popcorn and cotton candy from Westgate Resorts Foundation, 4,000 hotdogs, 24,000 bottles of beverage, Frito-Lay chips, 1,200 bags of trail mix, ice cream, sno-cones, etc.

This day of celebration would not be possible without our awesome volunteers and the whole community coming together to share love with our VIP friends.

Be sure to visit our Make 'm Smile 2008 video and photo album at NathanielsHope.org. Plan now to join us for Nathaniel's Hope 7th Annual Make 'm Smile on June 6, 2009!

↓ *SeaWorld brought the ultimate surprise to the Kucks and arranged a visit by Nathaniel's favorite characters Cookie Monster and Elmo!*



↓ *We are grateful to the Central Florida community who made this event happen, including over 400 volunteers who worked the event! This included our set-up crew, mostly from Regal Boats, who worked throughout the night!*



Thank You to Our Top Sponsors!

Ultimate Smile



Diamond Smile



Platinum Smile



Thank you to ALL of our sponsors who helped Make 'm Smile! A complete sponsor listing is available at www.NathanielsHope.org.



BUDDY BREAK IS EXPANDING NATIONALLY: Goal of 1000 Partnering Churches by 2020!

Buddy Break is our FREE kids/respite program where VIP kids and their siblings make new "buddy" friends, have fun playing games, enjoy crafts, and more, while their caregivers get a break! Once a VIP family goes through orientation at one location, they can attend any Buddy Break location nationally.

We now have 15 locations serving over 300 VIP kids and 90 siblings! Since January of 2008, we have welcomed into our network these new Buddy Break partnering churches in Florida:

Calvary Christian Center
Ormond Beach, FL

Church in the Son
Orlando, FL

First Baptist Church of Windermere
Windermere, FL

First Baptist Church of Orlando
Orlando, FL

Journey Christian Center
Apopka, FL

Northland, A Church
Distributed Longwood, FL

Venice Presbyterian Church
Venice, FL

Wesley Memorial UMC
Tampa, FL

We are also excited to add two Buddy Break locations outside of Florida:

Life Assembly
Mount Juliet, TN—
Nashville area

North Arundel Church
Glen Burnie, MD—
Baltimore area

By March 2009, we are anticipating new Buddy Break locations in Florida (Cape Coral and Tampa), Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Virginia.



Nathaniel's Hope

BUDDY BREAK!

Anyone can learn to "Be a Buddy!" You can too!

Buddy Break Helps Families

"Buddy Break is such a gift for my family! My kids have found a place where they fit right in, are cared for, and loved in ways that sometimes I, as an exhausted mom, just can't do. My son with special needs has a wonderful time playing with his Buddy and his siblings get to talk with other children 'like me, with a special brother or sister.' Meanwhile, I have time to get a few things done or even just sit still with a sense of peace so that I can be a stronger and better parent. I am incredibly grateful!"

- Lucette, VIP parent

Buddy Break Basic Leadership Training

Interested in starting a Buddy Break? We can equip you with the tools, training, and national network! Join us for Buddy Break Basic Leadership Training (BLT) where we offer 24 hours of intensive, informative, and fun hands-on training on how to lead a Buddy Break.

If you know of a church that would be interested in starting a Buddy Break, contact us! Next BLT Dates are:

- February 6-7, 2009
- April 17-18, 2009



This year Life Assembly was featured as the "Church of the Week" on the 700 Club for their Buddy Break program! You can view the clip at NathanielsHope.org, then click on "In the News."

Buddy Training 101 Coming on DVD!

Since January 2008, we have trained over 375 Buddies to serve at Buddy Break, bringing our total active Buddies to nearly 900! In order to meet the explosive growth of this program, we are working on completing a Buddy Training 101 DVD which will educate people of all ages about disability as well as equip them to serve as a Buddy at Buddy Break. The DVD will include special guest appearances by prominent leaders in the disability ministry community.

Watch for the coming announcement about the DVD's release! ●



↑ This VIP enjoys time with her Buddy, one of the 50 "seasoned saints" that recently went through Buddy Training at Venice Presbyterian Church. This church later was featured in the Herald Tribune!



↑ Westgate Resorts executive, Roland, enjoys spending time with his VIP friend at Markham Woods Assembly's Buddy Break (Longwood, FL).



↑ Tim and Marie Kuck interviewed Joni Eareckson Tada for Buddy Training 101.



← This past February, we hosted our inaugural BLT in Orlando, FL with 19 participants from seven churches.



↑ The entire Varsity Football Team from Pine Castle Christian Academy (Orlando, FL) has been trained to be Buddies!

CAROLING FOR KIDS brings songs of hope



Our Caroling for Kids program allows us to share hope and encouragement with patients, families, and caregivers at children's hospitals and with homebound VIP families on Christmas day through caroling and bearing goodies and gifts.

Over 500 people registered to participate as carolers for Christmas 2007! This broke 2006's record and because of the tremendous response of carolers, our overflow carolers visited adult hospitals, thus the creation of "Caroling for Kids... of all Ages!"

↓ *Santa visited several caroling locations.*



Sixteen caroling teams visited ten hospitals to hand out thousands of candy canes, beanie babies, snacks, and cookies that were collected from the community. A special thank you to Z88.3 and Walgreens for their help in recruiting the goodies! Our expanded "Stories of Hope" booklet was also distributed to encourage patients and families.

Caroling Caravan was introduced, giving carolers an opportunity to visit VIP kids and their families who were homebound for the holidays. Twenty families were visited in this pilot project which promises expansion this year! ●

↓ *Carolers at Winnie Palmer Hospital (Orlando, FL).*



This Year We're looking for:

- new hospital locations to visit (even out-of-state)
- homebound VIP families that would enjoy a visit by carolers
- carolers
- goodies (large red and white candy canes, packaged cookies and snacks, NEW toys) Goodies can be dropped off at any of the participating 130 Walgreens stores in Central Florida or a Z88.3 van stop.

Please contact us to participate in our 10th Annual Caroling for Kids on December 25, 2008!

↓ *Pine Castle Christian Academy (Orlando, FL) had a Community Work Day to prepare for our outreach.*



Making a difference...



WHERE IN THE WORLD IS BEARING HOPE?

Throughout the year, we've been receiving stories of VIP kids that are traveling with their Bearing Hope bear. This has spurred us to ask: Where are you taking Bearing Hope? Send photos and stories of your bear's travels to info@NathanielsHope.org.

↓ *Bearing Hope bear was spotted at the Scottish Highland games.*



HALL OF HOPE SHARES VIP KIDS' LEGACY

Through the Hall of Hope, we remember VIP kids who have relocated to their heavenly home. Cards are sent to families on their child's birth date and homegoing date. Their stories and photos, if provided, are posted online for family and friends to view. Please help us spread the word to families that would like to honor their child through the Hall of Hope.

↓ *During Make 'm Smile 2008, Aunt Donna's Butterfly Garden again sponsored our Hall of Hope Butterfly Release. Families of Hall of Hope kids were invited to release a butterfly in their child's memory.*



VIP BIRTHDAY CLUB— JUST KEEPS GROWING!

We currently have over 2,500 VIP kids in our international VIP Birthday Club, which celebrates VIP kids year-round. Every club member is sent a Bearing Hope beanie bear upon registration, and on their birthday they receive a card that has been lovingly signed by Nathaniel's grandma. They also receive special surprises throughout the year. Names and photos, if provided, are posted on our Nathaniel's Hope website. We welcome club members from everywhere!

If you know of a VIP kid, invite them to join! They can register online at NathanielsHope.org or by calling our office.

↓ *Nathan joins our VIP Birthday Club all the way from Jamaica!*



↓ *VIP kids that are in the VIP Birthday Club in Central Florida received an extra surprise this year. Names were randomly selected to go for an all expenses paid day trip with a guide to a theme park of their choice for them and their immediate family. Thank you Dream Tours for your generosity!*



← *Nathaniel's grandma, Annette, pauses from signing cards to have her picture taken.*



↖ We appreciate the Orlando Guardians football team for once again providing free admission and special entertainment for our VIP families at one of their games!

keep 'm smiling

Keep 'm Smiling is our partnership with other organizations to have community events that are VIP-friendly year round.

If you have an event that you would like to make more VIP-friendly, or if your company or organization would like to create an event just for VIP kids (or to benefit VIP kids) and their families, please contact us. ●

➔ Thank you Ballet South for hosting our VIP kids at your special dance performances of the Nutcracker and your spring performance!



NATHANIEL'S HOPE IS OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

This year Nathaniel's Hope has been invited to participate in various community events around Central Florida and elsewhere, including: Accessibility Summit (McLean, VA), All Church Ministries Conference (Lakeland, FL), Autism Society of Greater Orlando's Walk, Cure Autism Now's "Walk Now," the Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida's Buddy Walk, Family Café, Friendship Conference (Holland, MI), National Children's Pastors' Conference, OCPS Parent



↑ Kids loved hugging this LARGE Bearing Hope bear at our Family Café booth.

Ambassador Community Conference, SEPTA in Seminole County, STAND in Pinellas County, Z88.3 Little Ears Expo, etc. Help us spread the word! **If you know of an event where you think we should be, please let us know!** ●

NATHANIEL'S HOPE IS MAKING HEADLINES

Visit the "In the News" portion of our website to see and hear the TV and radio media that Nathaniel's Hope has attracted including:

700 Club's "Church of the Week" story on Life Assembly's Buddy Break program

The following stations aired interviews:

- WRBS 95.1 FM in Baltimore, MD
- WFCV 1090 AM in Fort Wayne, IN
- WORL 660 AM in Orlando, FL
- KHCB 105.7 FM in Houston, TX

We've also been featured in print publications:

NEW TAMPA
Check Out Our Exclusive 2008 'Taste Of New Tampa' Recipe In This Issue's Dining & Beverage Guide!

Neighborhood NEWS

Volume 16
Issue 7
April 4, 2008
Section A

The Direct-Mail Newspaper Serving New Tampa & Wesley Chapel Since 1993!

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Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break Will Benefit From Night Of 5000!

New Tampa Junior Woman's Club To Hold Its Annual 'Night of 5000' Fund Raiser At Saddlebrook

By Melissa O'Brien

For parents with special needs children, having time to sit down and relax, do some errands or just sleep can be almost impossible. Finding childcare can be difficult enough, but these parents have to be sure the needs of their disabled child can be met by a person trained to assist special needs kids.

Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break is a not-for-profit ministry that offers a once-a-month afternoon out with children they with trained volunteers. To help ensure the organization can meet the need, the New Tampa Junior Woman's Club (NTJWC) has chosen Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break as the local primary benefactor of its 11th Annual signature Night of 5000 gala.

"A donation by the New Tampa Junior Woman's Club enables us to reach more families," says Nathaniel's Hope co-founder Marie Kack. "It is a blessing to have the resources to run the program and to reach even farther out into the community."

Kack, along with her husband Timothy, started Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break after the death of their son.

"We began Nathaniel's Hope to honor our son, Nathaniel Timothy Kack," says Marie. "He was born with birth anomalies and for four-and-a-half years, he fought for his life. He brought us into the disabled community. It has been more than six years since he died and it is our mission to bring hope to kids with special needs and to assist their families with life's special care."

Kack says that Nathaniel's care was very involved—24 hours a day, seven days a week. "We had many sleepless nights, feeding tubes, medications, doctor's visits, hospital

Photo: Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break

New Tampa Junior Woman's Club members (l. to r.) Lisa Matthews, Dawn Swadlow, Melissa McCormick, Jerilyn Ruhl, and Sairre Nelson-Crowley, at last year's "Night of 5000." and family friends join VIP families to attend break while donations provide some financial

Ministry Today

Is your church effectively ministering to kids with special needs and their families?

We can help!

KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ARE VIP KIDS!

VIP Kids include kids with any physical, cognitive, medical or hidden disability, chronic or life-threatening illness, or those who are medically fragile. Buddies are friends to VIPs!

we share hope through:

Buddy Training (BT) Equip your church to minister to VIP kids and their families.

Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break Start a Buddy Break—a FREE three hour require program where VIP kids are cared for while completing your church's BT. Plus, you'll be included in the Buddy Break network!

Nathaniel's Hope Family Café Invite your VIP kids to join the FREE program in which they receive a birthday card and special surprises throughout the year.

Learn more about all our programs at:
www.Nathaniel'sHope.org

Sharing The Hope with kids with Special Needs and their Families
Nathaniel's Hope | 2309 Joplin Drive, Orlando, FL 32809 | 407.857.8224 | www.NoHomelessHope.org

central florida moms

nathaniel's hope
how to make a difference

By Angela White

Bright Feats

Your Medical, Educational and Special Needs Family Resource

En Español
BrightFeats.com

Make 'm Smile

HeraldTribune.com

BuddyBreak program meets special needs

BY STEVEY ULLIOTT/LIFE/EVERETT COLLECTION

ORLANDO, Fla. (Staff Writer) — For many parents of children with special needs, the idea of a "Buddy Break" program is a dream come true. It's a place where their children can have fun and make friends with other children who have similar challenges.

The program, called "Buddy Break," is a free, three-hour program where children with special needs can have fun and make friends with other children who have similar challenges. The program is held at the Saddlebrook Resort in Orlando, Fla.

The program is a great place for children who have special needs to have fun and make friends with other children who have similar challenges. The program is held at the Saddlebrook Resort in Orlando, Fla.

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YOU CAN BE A PARTNER

share the hope

with us to

with VIP Kids

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, businesses, and organizations to fund our outreach. **We'd like to thank the following who have partnered with us in unique and wonderful ways!**



← Starbucks Make Your Mark Volunteer Program donated \$3,000 as a result of Starbucks employees who volunteered for Nathaniel's Hope.



↑ We are grateful for the generosity of two Walgreens districts in Central Florida (57 stores) who collected toys and goodies for our VIP kids at Christmas! Some managers and staff even personally delivered gifts to Buddy Break and at hospitals on Christmas Day. Many thanks to Walgreens for making ALL of this possible!



↑ The Orange County Leadership Group 2008 raised \$12,755.80 to assist in the development of our secure online database system.

↓ Kohl's Department Stores' A-Team participated in the Buddy Stroll at Make 'm Smile. Their corporate office celebrated their employees' volunteer time by rewarding us with a sponsorship check.



↑ GFWC New Tampa Junior Woman's Club raised over \$9,000 to help Buddy Break in the New Tampa area.



↑ Westgate Resorts Foundation awarded Nathaniel's Hope with a \$10,000 sponsorship check for Make 'm Smile 2008.



↑ Hamilton Elementary School supported Bearing Hope through a service learning project and raised \$504.74 to provide bears for VIP kids.



Consider partnering with us like these individuals and organizations! To donate with your checking account, Visa, or MasterCard, simply go online to NathanielsHope.org or call us at 407-857-8224.



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

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We Need Your Help to Reach More VIP Kids!

All of our programs are offered for free to VIP kids and their families. You can help us continue these free services by making a donation. It's easy!

1. Donate online at www.NathanielsHope.org. You can use Visa, MasterCard, or your checking account.
2. Call our office at 407-857-8224, and we will be happy to process your contribution.
3. Mail your check or money order made out to Nathaniel's Hope to:
2300 Jetport Drive, Orlando, FL 32809
4. Set up a monthly automatic withdrawal by signing up online or calling our office.



Matthew West and the Kucks during Make 'm Smile
(L to R): Brianna, Marie, Matthew, Tim & Ashley

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!

"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord." ~ Psalm 31:24 NIV