

YOU MAKE AN

impact



Sam Macarah organized his first head-shaving event for the St. Baldrick's Foundation in middle school. A few years later he was diagnosed with leukemia—and a clinical trial funded through St. Baldrick's saved his life.

Now, It's Personal

An aspiring pilot, Sam hadn't heard of St. Baldrick's before learning of it from his Civil Air Patrol unit. It became an annual fundraiser, and Sam shaved his head every time, never realizing that he would someday have cancer, too. Suddenly, his community service project had become personal.

The healthy high school junior and musician started to feel mild hip pain following a family vacation in January 2021. Then, fever and nausea set in. Since local emergency rooms were still jammed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sam's mom decided to instead drive her son an extra 30 minutes to Children's Hospital Los Angeles, a leading research institution in California.

"I thought it was a staph infection," recalls Karen Macarah, whose mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer around the time of Sam's first St. Baldrick's shave. "After some tests, a physician and social worker took me to a separate room to tell me it was an emergency—Sam had leukemia."

"I didn't cry at all. I was in shock and pissed off. I thought I was going to die."

Doctors diagnosed Sam with acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL), which now has a survival rate of more than 90 percent. Historically, treatments had left survivors with devastating side effects, but more recently that's changed, thanks to ongoing research. That night, the senior oncologist at Children's Hospital immediately enrolled Sam in a Children's Oncology Network (COG) clinical trial funded through St. Baldrick's. Sam received the first dose several hours later.

Most patients in the clinical trial underwent a month of grueling treatments, followed by a relatively mild schedule of follow-up care over several more months. But Sam experienced a rare complication

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Create a Ripple. Save a Life.

At the St. Baldrick's Foundation, we know that every small action creates a ripple effect that can inspire and rally many others, forming waves that carry us closer to cures for pediatric cancer. Here are some small steps you can take for kids with cancer:

1. Donate to the St. Baldrick's Foundation
2. Get involved—shave your head, organize an event, or become an advocate
3. Share St. Baldrick's news on social media
4. Get your business involved
5. Create a Hero Fund



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Marathon Man

Distance runner Kevin Maloney lost his wife, Lisa, to cancer in 2016. Now, he's going the extra mile to fulfill her wish to defeat pediatric cancer.

When Lisa was diagnosed with rectal cancer in 2015, she and Kevin already had a track record for funding childhood cancer research through the St. Baldrick's Foundation. Inspired by his friend, John Bender—*Chairman of Reinsurance & Risk Management at Allied World Assurance Company and a member of the executive board of Allied World Assurance Company*—Kevin ran several half-marathons and marathons to raise money for the Foundation. Lisa was his one-person support team, traveling to races to provide water and encouragement.

Together, the couple navigated the New York City Marathon in 2013 and a year later, Iowa's Distance Classic, a half-marathon known as Dam to Dam. After raising almost \$15,000 for St. Baldrick's at the two races, the dynamic duo set their sights on the Long Island Marathon in 2015. A few weeks before the race came the news that Lisa had stage 4 rectal cancer. Devastated, Kevin wanted to skip the race, but Lisa wouldn't hear of it. Kevin says, "Lisa was all about giving hope to other people."

Suddenly, the couple faced multiple challenges. Kevin honored Lisa's request to run the marathon, and this time, the pain was personal—he was running for Lisa and kids with cancer. With Kevin by her side, Lisa began her grueling battle, which ended March 20, 2016. Shortly before she passed, Lisa told Kevin, "No matter what happens, I don't want you to sit around feeling sorry for yourself. I want you to help people, especially kids with cancer. Never give up."

"Lisa was all about giving hope to other people."

As Kevin grieved, Lisa's words never left him. When he returned to racing a year after her death, the insurance and reinsurance industry and friends like Mike Almskog rallied around him. For his return to racing, Kevin chose the Chubb Bermuda Triangle Challenge, a three-day series of races starting with the Butterfield Mile on the first day, a 10K on the second, and half-marathon or marathon on the third. "Lisa said Bermuda was the most beautiful place on earth," says Kevin, who has chosen the island nation as home base for his annual St. Baldrick's fundraiser. "Competing in Bermuda to help kids with cancer really keeps Lisa's spirit close to my heart."

Today, Kevin has become somewhat of a celebrity in Bermuda during race week, thanks to some colorful uniforms, including the signature red, white, and blue stretch racing onesie he wore the first few years. Mike, who has run every race alongside Kevin, has also run in an eye-catching "mankini" to call attention to the cause. But more compelling to Kevin's growing fan base is Lisa's story and the couple's deep commitment to fighting pediatric cancer. Through the years, support for the Run for Lisa team has grown exponentially, with this year's race raising more than \$132,000 for St. Baldrick's. When Kevin and the team, which last year boasted 51 runners, run again in January, they hope to top the \$800,000 mark in total gifts to St. Baldrick's. Team RUN FOR LISA 2025 is composed of insurance and reinsurance professionals, as well as brokers, clients, and friends.

Through the years, the kindness of others has touched Kevin. A senior vice president on the insurance side of Allied World, he points to the support of his company, colleagues, clients, and personal friends as key to the team's success. But above all, Kevin feels Lisa's spirit guiding him forward: "Running has been a godsend. Lisa knew I'd need to channel all of that pain into something positive. As long as there are people suffering from cancer, I'll come back to run in Bermuda. If I can't run, I'll walk. And if I can't walk, I'll crawl. This is for the kids—and for Lisa."

Kevin Maloney and the Team RUN FOR LISA 2025 will race in the Bermuda Triangle Challenge on Jan. 17–19, 2025. 100% of contributions will benefit the St. Baldrick's Foundation. Make a gift: www.stbaldricks.org/fundraisers/runforlisa2025



Hope Starts Here

Pediatric cancer researcher Jessica Tsai, M.D., Ph.D., is investigating ways to block the pathways fueling rapid growth of pediatric brain tumors. Her daily inspiration: A photo of Griffin Engle, who passed away in 2014 from an aggressive brain cancer.



Jessica Tsai, M.D., Ph.D.

As a physician-scientist, Dr. Tsai treats kids with brain tumors including DIPG (diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma), the cancer that Griffin battled. Her most recent research is supported by a grant through the St. Baldrick's Foundation from Griffin's Guardians, which was created by the Engle family in Griffin's memory.

Dr. Tsai's lab is identifying the genes that trigger these aggressive tumors to grow. The results have been promising: Dr. Tsai has discovered a gene called FOXR2 that is usually inactive, but somehow gets switched on in kids with DIPG. This gene then starts the process that signals tumors to grow. "The identification of FOXR2 as an oncogene is a very important finding," explains Dr. Tsai, a researcher at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. "What is interesting is that FOXR2 seems to be able to turn on downstream signaling pathways. This is very exciting—many of these pathways can be targeted by drugs."

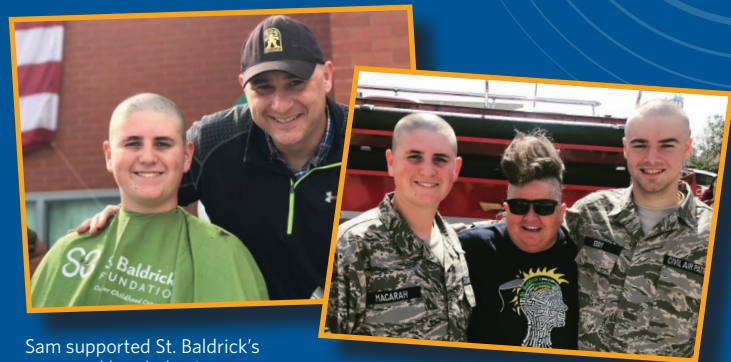
A graduate of Stanford University, Dr. Tsai originally planned to become a neurologist. But an early career encounter with a pediatric neuro-oncologist inspired her to combine her interests in pediatrics with brain science. As a young researcher, she received a St. Baldrick's Fellowship Award to begin studying DIPG, and today she continues this groundbreaking research as a St. Baldrick's Scholar: "As a young investigator, I've been able to work on my research without worrying about funding because of support from St. Baldrick's. This has allowed me to focus on the science and finding better treatments for pediatric brain tumors."

While Dr. Tsai's preliminary findings are extremely encouraging, the research process is painstakingly slow. Consistent donor support through organizations like St. Baldrick's and Griffin's Guardians is critical to keep the momentum going. As she works, Dr. Tsai keeps a special place in her heart for the kids she currently treats: "We have so much more work to do for these children and their families. I am truly inspired and honored by them all the time. Griffin's mom, Erin, and her family have turned tragedy into hope, and they're a constant reminder why I'm in this field."



Griffin Engle passed away in 2014 from aggressive brain cancer.

Now, It's Personal (continued)



Sam supported St. Baldrick's at several head-shaving events through his Civil Air Patrol unit.

resulting in a dangerous bleed that compressed his spinal cord. The active teen was paralyzed from the waist down. Sam says the next weeks were a blur: "I didn't cry at all. I was in shock and pissed off. I thought I was going to die."

While pandemic protocols limited visitors, a sneak visit from his sister finally gave Sam hope. In that moment, he made the decision to fight. Tears started to flow, releasing the fear and anger that Sam had bottled inside. "I realized there was so much more I wanted to do in life," Sam says. "I wanted to walk across the stage with my class at graduation and then go to college. I wanted to have a family and a career as a pilot. And I needed to keep a positive attitude to do all that."

Over the next 11 months, Sam stuck to his treatment regimen, as well as physical therapy to re-learn how to walk. He also faced a number of surgeries to heal his spine. Discharged from the hospital—and still in a wheelchair—Sam made sure to shave his head that year at the annual Civil Air Patrol event for St. Baldrick's.

Through it all, Sam kept up with his schoolwork, too. True to his dream, Sam walked across the stage at his high school graduation in 2022. Now 21, he is a history major at San Diego State University, where he plays in the orchestra and has joined a fraternity. He will enroll in pilot's training after college graduation.

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Today, he and Karen—along with Sam's father, Matt Macarah—are grateful to the St. Baldrick's donors who continue to fund lifesaving childhood cancer research. Karen says, "Donors make an impact that are measured in people, like Sam, whose lives have been saved."

For his part, Sam realizes he's one of the lucky ones and has vowed to fight on behalf of other kids with cancer. Recently, he and Matt traveled to Washington, D.C., to lobby for an increase in pediatric cancer research funding: "Of the 40 delegates from California, I was the only survivor story. The rest were bereaved families. That's why I will always say 'yes' when St. Baldrick's calls."

Then, Sam adds, "It's been almost four years, and now, I look at the ways cancer has changed me in positive ways. I hold it in such a special place that doesn't bring me down—it pushes me to do good for other people who are fighting cancer."

Growling for a Cure

Every summer, swim clubs in Raleigh, N.C., battle on the volleyball court at the Growler Beach Volleyball Tournament, a fierce, but good natured competition to win bragging rights to the Growler Trophy. Yet, the bigger winners are kids with cancer—the tournament has contributed more than \$1.3 million to the St. Baldrick's Foundation.

It all began 17 years ago as a friendly club competition. One of the founders, Mark Williams, lost a brother to cancer, so event organizers decided to raise money for research. Since then, the tournament has grown every year: 36 teams representing eight local swim clubs entered last summer, raising a record \$215,000.

Sponsors account for a big part of the tournament's success. This year over 80 stepped up, including Jacobs Construction and David Jacobs, whose wife, Kelley Sharp, lost her young son, Sawyer, to cancer. Other partner level sponsors were GFL Environmental, Lynnwood Grill, Pepsi, Eric Campbell and Campbell Orthodontics, and Lynnwood Brewing Concern.

Each year since 2015, the event has honored a "Growler Kid" who has fought pediatric cancer. This year's Growler Kid was Zeke, a North Carolina 4-year-old born with JMML (juvenile myelomonocytic leukemia). Since diagnosis, Zeke has undergone cancer treatments that left devastating side effects. "My words can't do justice to what an amazing young boy Zeke is," says Scot Carboni, who has been involved with the tournament for 12 years. "He is an incredible kid with energy, excitement, and pure love. No child should go through what Zeke has gone through. This is all he knows—and that is not ok."

Tournament organizers have already set their sights on next year, with a goal to top \$1.5 million in cumulative donations to St. Baldrick's. Scot says, "Our promise to these families is that we will Growl until there is a cure for childhood cancers."



Above: 2024 Growler Kid, Zeke, held by his mom, Hollie, talking with Scot. Right: This year's winning team, Volleywood.



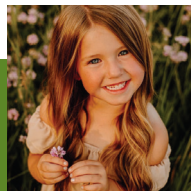
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CANCER**[®]
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FOUNDATION

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Thank you for supporting lifesaving childhood cancer research. Through your gifts, you are helping the St. Baldrick's Foundation fund the best childhood cancer research, no matter where it's being done. With \$354 million in research grants in the U.S. funded since 2005, we are the largest charity funder of pediatric cancer research grants. YOU made progress possible!

Ways to Give

Kids with cancer need cures now, and it starts with you. Donate to fund the most promising childhood cancer research. Give once or monthly. Start today: stbaldricks.org/ways-to-give



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