

## Thursday's Child Celebrates 40 Years

Thursday's Child began forty years ago with a wish – to bring joy to children suffering a health crisis.

At the time, there were no wish-granting organizations interested in serving southwest and south central Wisconsin, but there were children, and their families, who needed something to look forward to other than constant medical worries.

Thursday's Child's name was derived from the Mother Goose nursery rhyme. "Thursday's Child has far to go" also held true for us, starting an organization from scratch. After assembling a Board of Directors, our first decision was that Thursday's Child would be a financially responsible all-volunteer organization, with expenses limited directly to the operation. That continues today. Although our bylaws state that no more than 10% of contributions can be used for administrative purposes, in reality, it's around 3%. Postage and stationery are our only expenses. Even our website and its maintenance are a contribution.

Our second decision was to create a process for reviewing and granting wishes. A committee of medical professionals and business leaders on the Board would evaluate each wish. Today, with our instant communication, each wish is sent to all Board members for review. It needs to be noted that we grant wishes to children younger than age 3 and older than age 18. Especially with the young adults, often they are faced with a recurrence of their disease long after childhood, and are now in college when it becomes apparent a wish would do them a world of good.

Not every wish can be granted. Some are too expensive, some just unattainable. But for all of us, the worst disappointment happens if a child becomes too ill to see a wish come true even though we work against the clock to make it happen.

Memories of thousands of children and their families remain in our hearts. We were, and are, inspired by their stories and their determination. We also hold in our hearts founders Ron Thorstad (1937-2024), Andrea Urbon (1946-2023) and my mother, Dorothy Ferguson (1926-2016) who was our executive director for many years. She made legendary friendships with our families and with the caring celebrities who often maintained relationships with our children and my mother long after the wish was granted.

She also became well-known at Give Kids the World, where a paving stone in her memory is located on the Avenue of Angels in Kids Village.

When considering wishes for seriously ill children and their families, Disney World and Disneyland are often at the top of the list. In fact, we are sending a Verona, WI, family to Disney World on December 23, to celebrate Christmas in the Magic Kingdom.

But also our children attend sporting events and meet the players, attend concerts and Broadway shows and meet the musicians and actors, take cruises, enjoy custom-built playgrounds, get some tuition help for college, receive computers and televisions and bedroom sets, visit far away family or have far away family come to them, have a wish come true to visit Glacier National Park or see the ocean or ride the Hatfield-McCoy Trail on an ATV.

Young families with sick children can also use a little help from Santa, so the Santa Project was born forty years ago. In the early days, we went shopping with a list from each family, we wrapped and sent the packages. Then for several years our families chose items from the JCPenney catalog and my mother and Sue Hefty would work far into the night ordering by phone and having packages sent directly to the families. There had to be an easier way. We found it, providing gift cards for each child in the family, a maximum of four cards per family. Some of the thank you notes would break your heart. Last year a social worker made a last-minute gift card delivery to a young mother and her children living in a homeless shelter. As I recall, we bent the rules just a little bit, so mom could also have a gift card of her own.

People are always willing to help. All we have to do is ask. We've also been fortunate to be the beneficiary of some exceedingly generous bequests and fund raising events over the years. We will always remember Wingra Stone's Dozer Days (General Manager Shawn Triller, 1952-2021); the Bass Tournament (Jim Peterson, 1942-2019); Sandy's Trail Ride in memory of her beautiful daughter Kelly; the MATC Turkey Trot led by the indefatigable Fred Williams (1937-2023); and the special friends who believe in us, trust us, and continue to support us so that we can keep right on making wishes come true for a very long time.



Noel Ferguson



### Judy Setzkorn

(May 30, 1936–February 14, 2024)

Judy was an inspiration as I started my clinic nursing position in 1978. I recall being told that "Judy is a very skilled technician." And indeed she was, but she was so much more.

She was a trusted and consistent and friendly face to the thousands of children and families that she saw at the clinic. A "finger poke" from Judy, to obtain those all-important blood counts, never seemed to be a bad experience for them, as she was welcoming and engaging and so good at what she did. Her skill in reading those blood counts and bone marrow test results was amazing, and was crucial to the accurate care of these patients.

She was a bit of a pioneer in the coordination of clinical trials for the treatment of childhood cancer. Most of her career was prior to the common use of computers when she shared the loads of data on our patients via a national center. This data played a big part in the advancement of treatments of these pediatric cancers during the years of her career.

Judy taught us much, not only as a clinician, but as a friend and a co-worker and "team player." I found her to be something of a wonder.

Remembered by her dear friend, Jan Lehmann, retired nurse from UW Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Clinic, Madison

## Thank You, Kay!

For the past 16 years, our thank you cards have been written, stamped and sent by Kay Schmitz, our friend and Jack Kussmaul's sister. Over the years, she has made a difference in many lives through her volunteer work in Grant County and her support of Thursday's Child.

Kay and her husband, Joe, recently moved to their new home in Prairie du Chien, where she is sure to become involved in her community and her church. Always ready to lend a hand, she reminds us that she is just a phone call away. We will certainly remember that!

## The Santa Cause

The Santa Cause 5K was held for the sixth year in Platteville, WI on December 2, 2023. Included with their \$1,000 check was this note:

"Your organization is one that we believe in and we are so happy to help you do your magic each year. We are very proud of all the participants who come to the Santa Cause each year to share the day together for a holiday cause. Keep doing what you do!"

-Melissa and Jenni Martinez, Santa Cause 5K organizers



## Well-Built Humans Benefit

The Third Annual Well - Built Humans Basketball Tournament Fundraising Benefit raised \$1745 for Thursday's Child. Held April 5 and 6 and hosted by Belmont, WI High School, 16 teams from all over the tri-state area participated, raising money and awareness for Thursday's Child as well as having a good time with friends and enjoying some catching up with opponents.

Well-Built Humans Co-Owners Brent Curtis and Matt Eastlick, Potosi, together with their event partner Mitch Austin, Darlington, created this popular fundraiser.

It was a weekend for neighbors, families and friends to gather and watch their favorite teams play, enjoy concessions, register for raffle prizes and keep track of the standings from 6:00 p.m. Friday through the 7:00 Saturday championship games.



Pictured are Sandy Meier and Angele Walsh (Thursday's Child Board Members) and Brent Curtis (Well-Built Humans Owner).

## Board of Directors

### Executive Director & Secretary:

Noël Ferguson  
Mt. Hope, WI  
noel@chorus.net

### President:

Diane Puccetti, M.D., Madison

### Vice President:

Susan Hefty, Mt. Horeb

### Treasurer:

Steven Maerz, Madison

### Directors:

Paul Dvorak, M.D. Madison  
John Kussmaul, Woodman  
Valerie Martin, Platteville  
Sandra Meier, Potosi  
Lisa Roh, Platteville  
Angele Walsh, Potosi

### President Emeritus:

Paul Dvorak, M.D., Madison

### Director Emeriti:

Ivan Hoffland, Prairie du Chien  
Bill Brodbeck, Hillsdale, MI

### Website Design:

WebWise Design & Marketing  
Fennimore, WI  
Travis Washburn, Web Developer



## Playset Wish

A little boy from Rockford, IL, diagnosed with cancer at 9 months, was not able to enjoy his first birthday or have fun playing in a park or just get to be an inquisitive toddler.

We thought a play set was a really good idea for him. We contacted Shannon and Jim Hadac at PlayNWisconsin, Middleton Their company designed and set up the perfect playset for little Carlos and his big brothers.

Thank you, Jim and Shannon, for your kindness and generosity.



## Santa Project

For 40 years now Thursday's Child has worked with the social workers at American Family Children's Hospital in Madison and Santa to make the holidays a little more special for children who can use an extra helping of Christmas cheer. Thursday's Child provides \$60 Target gift cards for each child in the family, through age 18, with a maximum of four cards per family. This year we have 75 families on our list.



## Thank you, Santa..

We receive many heartfelt thank you notes from parents who tell us how much the Target gift cards help them provide gifts for their children at Christmas time.

One from last year stands out and here is our reply to him.

A letter to a Santa Project Dad:

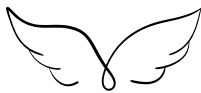
Dear Jacob,

You wrote that you would like to know who is supporting your family at this difficult time. I am. Our Board of Directors is. Our Contributors are. They come back year after year because they believe in helping families like yours who all of a sudden are faced with a situation we never want anyone to have. We can't do very much, but we can provide Target gift cards at Christmas time and appropriate wishes to children who have so many medical mountains to climb. Especially at Christmas we want you to know we are thinking of you. If we can do something else for you and your family, we will try our best to help.

Noël



## Remembering Ron



**Ron Thorstad**

**Thursday's Child Co-Founder and President 1984-1995**

October 29, 1937 - January 14, 2024

Ron's obituary says he was a "co-founder" of Thursday's Child. This is technically true but what people probably don't realize is he gave us the money to get started. So it wasn't only his passionate belief in helping others, he also wrote the check that allowed us to grant our first wishes. He never wanted that known, but I knew, and so did the other member of our co-founding trio, the late Andrea Urban. Raising money for a fledgling, unknown non-profit is not easy. I'm not sure we would have made it without his faith and generosity.

Ron served as Board President for ten years. After he stepped away from that duty, Board Member Dr. Paul Dvorak wrote this in the November 1995 Thursday's Child Newsletter: "For ten years Ron ably led our organization with compassion and generosity. He has spent countless hours on behalf of children and families in Southern Wisconsin speaking at dozens of fund raising events and generally spreading the word about Thursday's Child. Ron's contribution to Thursday's Child in particular, but also to our community as a whole, reflects the heart and character of a very special man."

Thousands of wishes later, his legacy continues as Thursday's Child begins its 40th year. He was proud of its continuing success and would check in with me once in awhile to see how we were doing or if we needed money. He was a good man, a good friend, and the world is a little bit better because he was with us for 86 years.

- Noël Ferguson, Executive Director

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

*Valerie Martin*

**PLATTEVILLE, WI - LAYOUT AND DESIGN**

*Supreme Graphics*

**PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WI - PRINTING**

## GIFTS IN THEIR MEMORY

*from their loving friends and family*

*Dorothy Ferguson*  
Mount Hope, WI

*Cari Jane Hadac*  
Mt. Horeb, WI

*Ronald Hunter*  
Dodgeville, WI

*Kelly Meier*  
Potosi, WI

*Lloyd Mueller*  
Crystal Lake, IL

*Julianne (Judy) Setzkorn*  
Madison, WI

*Ronald Thorstad*  
Verona, WI

*Morgan Turnquist*  
Madison, WI

*Andrea Urban*  
St. Paul, MN/Madison, WI

*Caleb Wipperfurth*  
Cambridge, WI



## OUR MISSION

Thursday's Child makes wishes come true for seriously ill children and young adults living within and/or treated within Southwest and South Central WI.

Contributions are tax deductible and can be sent to:

Thursday's Child, Inc  
PO Box 95, Mt. Hope, WI 53816

[www.thursdayschildwisconsin.org](http://www.thursdayschildwisconsin.org)



## Kids Helping Kids

KIDS HELPING KIDS is a meaningful and important gift. Our Mt. Hope Cardinals 4-H Club are loyal supporters who want to make the Best Better for children who don't have good health, who struggle to just be a normal kid.



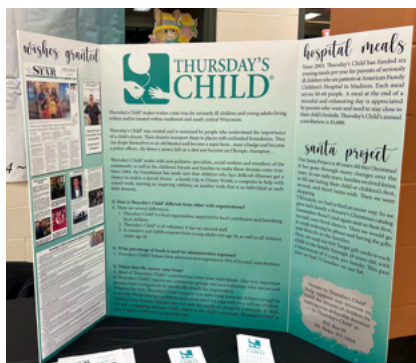
They send their love and encouragement along with this year's \$200 contribution.

Thank you!

### Yoder's Bar

A huge thank you to Yoder's Bar Rockville and to owner Ellie Yoose for donating proceeds from their 50/50 to Thursday's Child. Yoder's holds an annual scenic ride to honor the memory of those motorcycle enthusiasts they have lost.

This year they chose Thursday's Child as the recipient of the 50/50 raffle before heading out on their approximately 130-mile ride, one of the riders being Board member Sandy Meier. We are grateful for their generosity.

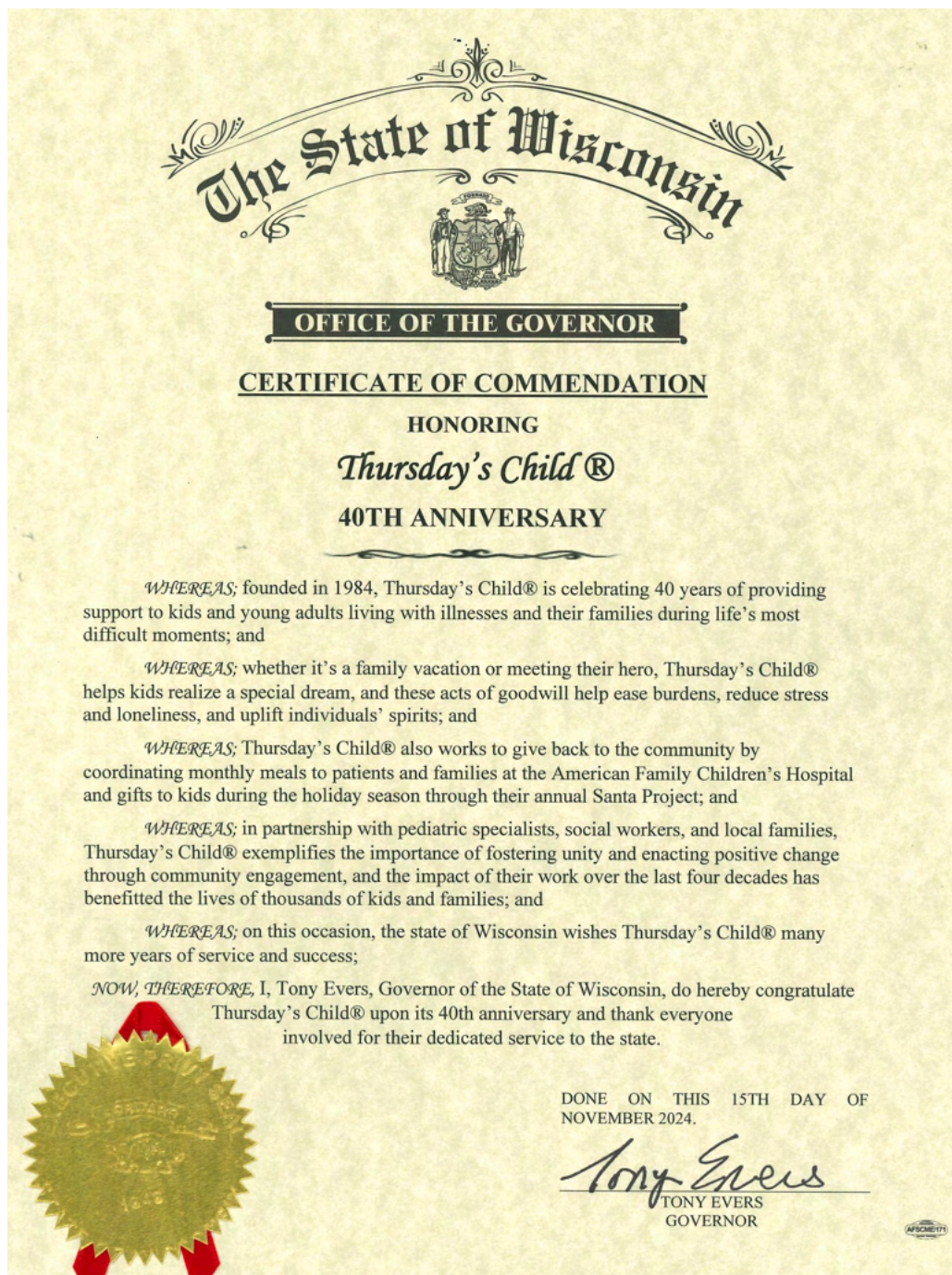


### Hospital Meals

Since 2003, Thursday's Child has funded six evening meals per year for parents of seriously ill children who are patients at American Family Children's Hospital in Madison.

Each meal serves 50-60 people. A meal at the end of a stressful and exhausting day is appreciated by parents who want and need to stay close to their child's bedside. Thursday's Child's annual contribution is \$3,000.

## Certificate of Commendation



*We hope you get to spend time with those who are near and dear to you this holiday season!*

**If you would like to opt out of receiving our newsletter, please send an email to [angelewals@gmail.com](mailto:angelewals@gmail.com).**