2023 ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA

One of the famous songs from *Chicago* is "I Can't Do It Alone". (For those of you in the know, sung by Velma to Roxie.)

Well, we feel the same way. ConnectMed's multiple healthcare, psychosocial and capacity-building services benefit medically complex youth and their families - in San Diego, across the US and globally. We could simply not provide these services alone.

We are overwhelmed by the support and generosity shown in connection with the 2023 gala. **Thank you for a record-breaking year!** We look forward to sharing the work we can do with this funding in 2024.

On behalf of our team, our many volunteers and the many medically complex youth (and their families) we serve....THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!

Look for 2024 Gala announcements by year end!

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

Camp Cosmos Family Meet-Up # 3: October 21

Family Meet-ups are a great way to keep the community we serve connected - both in-person and online - between our longer Camp Cosmos Weekends. The October Meet-Up was all about celebrating a "Marine Halloween" - bringing the best of the beach and the season to our 33 participants!

Kids connected online over themed games & activities, provided by Activity Kits shipped to each participant (including a tiny vial of Encinitas sand, which they loved!) And we all had some belly laughs with special guest magician Billy Bonkers, while parents participated in a guided support group.

October Meet-Up Activity Kit

Families also came together in person at Moonlight Beach for a VERY special tour, led by Encinitas Lifeguards! Our group learned about the station itself, emergency vehicles and equipment. They also learned so much about ocean safety and what lifeguards do, which increased their comfort around the ocean and even inspired some to be junior lifeguards one day! The kids also enjoyed some unique sand activities.

Other Psychosocial Services

ConnectMed partners with organizations to provide services beyond Camp Cosmos. With the CCA (Children's Craniofacial Association), we support **monthly online parent/caregiver support groups**. In August, we supported an **online workshop for teens** featuring Evan Wolkenstein, author of Turtle Boy, a story about "what it means to be brave when all you want to do is hide inside your shell."

In partnership with Palomar Counseling Services, we offer easily accessible and cost-free mental health counseling for qualifying families. Soft-launched just a few months ago, we are already subsidizing ongoing counseling for 7 families.

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

International Collaboration

It was such a pleasure to host our 2021 & 2022 International Fellow, craniofacial surgeon Santiago Lozano of Corrientes, Argentina. He observed many surgeries at UC San Diego and with Mexican surgeon Dr. Alicia Sigler, and attended the International Society of Craniofacial Surgery Conference.

Corrientes is a city near the border of Paraguay, and the public hospital where Dr. Lozano works is the only one serving a large but disperse population, many of which live in remote, rural areas. Truly caring about the well-being of patients and the quality of care they receive, Dr. Lozano continues to distribute a critical quality of life assessment to his pediatric patients, and to organize conferences that improve multidisciplinary team care at his hospital.

Plans for ongoing collaboration are underway - from providing nursing supplies and education to organizing a regional research conference.

COMING UP NEXT

Medical workday in Tijuana, MX
November 4
Surgeries, clinic, speech therapy & art camp

Holiday Gift Drive
November 20 - December 18
Sending gifts that spread joy and well-being to youth around San Diego County, Tijuana, Ensenada, and the US

Holiday Weekend with Camp Cosmos
December 9 (online) & 10 (in person)
Theme: Camp Cosmos in Candyland!

Holiday Social
December 17 - location TBD
Celebrating our volunteers and supporters!

Please follow us on social media to stay up to date!

Thank you!

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