

Mystic Force Foundation Returns to Capitol Hill to Advocate for Childhood Cancer as a National Priority

Thankful for a historic legislative victory, Mystic Force Directors turn grief into action and advocacy into hope for children with cancer.

NORTH MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, February 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Childhood cancer remains the leading cause of disease-related death among children in the United States, yet federal investment in pediatric cancer research continues to lag far behind adult cancers. Congress has the power to change that.

For the past 13 years, the Directors of the [Mystic Force Foundation](#) for Childhood Cancer have traveled to Washington, D.C. to advocate for increased federal funding for childhood cancer research and for the passage of critical, life-saving legislation. This week, they return to Capitol Hill alongside advocates from across the country as part of the Alliance for Childhood Cancer, united as one voice for children battling cancer.

Advocates will meet with members of Congress to urge them to make childhood cancer a top national child health priority, while also thanking lawmakers for recent historic progress that will change the future of pediatric cancer care.

After five long years of relentless advocacy by children with cancer, their parents, bereaved families, physicians, researchers, and other advocates, the Mikaela Naylor Give Kids a Chance Act was officially passed by Congress and signed into law on February 3, 2026. This groundbreaking legislation marks a major turning point for children suffering from cancer by transforming how pediatric cancer drugs are developed and studied.



“We are honored to stand alongside Nancy Goodman of Kids v Cancer, who lost her son Jacob at the age of 10 to medulloblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer,” said Silvia Vanni, who also lost her own son to cancer and is the Founder and Executive Director of the Mystic Force Foundation.

“Following Jacob’s death, Nancy devoted her life to changing outcomes for other children like him, writing regulatory policy reform to promote pediatric cancer drug development. She has worked tirelessly on the Give Kids a Chance Act since 2021, and this victory belongs to families like hers and mine.”

The Mikaela Naylor Give Kids a Chance Act strengthens pediatric drug development by:

- Giving the FDA authority to require combination drug trials for pediatric cancers when drugs are owned by the same company or are generics — an approach widely recognized as offering the best chance for new cures.

“

I fight so that one day, no parent will ever feel this immeasurable pain.”

Silvia Dominguez Vanni, Co-Founder, Executive Director

- Reauthorizing the Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Voucher Program through FY 2029, which has already resulted in more than 60 new drugs for children with rare diseases.
- Strengthening enforcement to ensure pharmaceutical companies complete required pediatric studies.
- Directing \$25 million in NIH funding toward pediatric drug studies.

In addition to the Give Kids a Chance Act, Congress also passed and signed other vital pediatric cancer legislation, including the Accelerating Kids’ Access to Care Act, which reduces bureaucratic barriers for children who must travel out of state for specialized or life-saving treatment. The funding legislation also fully supports several initiatives designed to strengthen pediatric cancer research and national data infrastructure.

During meetings on Capitol Hill, Mystic Force Foundation directors and fellow advocates will express gratitude to lawmakers for prioritizing children with cancer while also urging Congress to take the next critical step: significantly increasing federal funding for childhood cancer research in Fiscal Year 2027.



Members of the Mystic Force Foundation surrounded by some of the Childhood Cancer Heroes they continue to fight for.

Advocates are calling for:

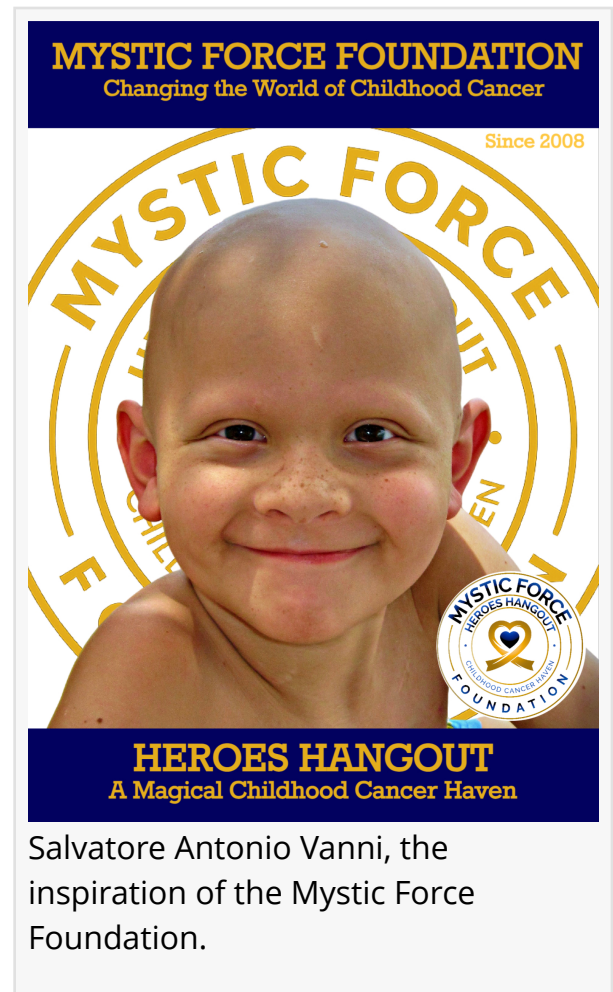
- At least \$35 million for the Childhood Cancer STAR Act, a \$5 million increase matching the FY26 House funding level
- \$100 million for the Childhood Cancer Data Initiative (CCDI), matching FY26 funding and supporting the September 30, 2025 Executive Order to double CCDI's budget and expand the use of artificial intelligence in childhood cancer research
- \$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- \$7.9 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI)
- \$1.5 billion for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H)

"For children facing cancer, every minute matters," Vanni said. "These investments are not optional — they are essential. Childhood Cancer research saves lives, shortens suffering, and gives families hope where there was once none. It is too late for my own baby, but not for the countless children battling now, and in the future."

As advocates return home from Capitol Hill, they will do so encouraged by recent progress — but clear-eyed about the work still ahead. Until every child has access to effective treatments, innovative research, and the chance to grow up cancer-free, the Mystic Force Foundation will continue to fight.

"My hope is that one day we won't need to advocate for the childhood cancer community because cures have been found, but until that day, we will continue to return year after year to be the voice for the children that need to be seen and heard" said Maggie Dominguez Chambers, aunt to Salvatore Vanni.

Founded in 2008 by Dr. Steven and Silvia Vanni after their four-year-old son Salvatore was diagnosed with Stage IV Neuroblastoma, the Mystic Force Foundation exists to honor Salvatore's legacy by improving the lives of children battling cancer. For 18 years, the Foundation has raised awareness and critical funding for childhood cancer research, led national advocacy efforts, granted Dream Wishes, provided emergency financial support, and delivered joy through hospital programs and celebrations. At the heart of the Foundation's mission is [Heroes Hangout](#)—a magical [Childhood Cancer Haven](#) located in North Miami Beach, Florida—now celebrating 8 years of serving children battling cancer from hospitals across South Florida. Heroes Hangout is free to all families and is 100% community supported. Mystic Force is dedicated to bringing love, hope and happiness to the littlest heroes during the fight of their lives.



Salvatore Antonio Vanni, the inspiration of the Mystic Force Foundation.

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