

Ben Ries

Care

When the Ries family got the diagnosis that seven-year-old son Ben had medulloblastoma, the most common type of childhood central nervous system tumor, they were shocked. The original symptoms had been subtle: Vomiting in the early morning when he'd gotten up to help with the family's dogs, and a head tilt. His parents took Ben directly to UI Children's Hospital, which would become his home away from home for the next five years. He spent each of his next birthdays there—including his 12th and final one—complete with parties and gifts. "The staff was just unbelievable," recalls his dad, Steve. "Many of them went way beyond their job descriptions. It was truly a great experience in a bad situation."



Saryn's Art Carts contain stickers, markers, paints and paper, and are available to patients in the clinics and inpatient units. Donated by Drs. Gary Koretzky and Kim Overby in memory of their daughter, Saryn, the carts allow kids to remain connected to their creativity.

Each March, more than 80 hunters pay to spend a day in the field with sporting-world celebrities such as Joel Hilgenberg and Babe Winkelman. The event, sponsored by the Aiming for a Cure Foundation, culminates in a banquet at which participants hear stories of inspiration from University of Iowa Children's Hospital patients and staff. For Steve and Jodie Ries, the founders of Aiming for a Cure, the event—and the foundation itself—is their way of saying "thank you."

"We always knew we wanted to give back, but we didn't know how," says Steve, whose son Ben was a patient at UI Children's Hospital for five years before his death in 2005. A lifelong hunter and professional dog breeder, Steve found his answer when he came across television coverage of a philanthropic hunting event. Immediately, he knew he wanted to organize something similar in Iowa, and Aiming for a Cure was born.

In its first six years—through the hunting event as well as golf and fishing tournaments, a walk-run, and a pizza-thon in the Ries' hometown of Central City—Aiming for a Cure has donated a half million dollars to UI Children's Hospital.

In addition to funding for pediatric cancer research, Aiming for a Cure provides \$500 stipends to every family with a child undergoing a bone-marrow transplant, to be spent on unreimbursed expenses, such as gas, sibling childcare, and long-distance phone calls. They also maintain a rainy-day fund for unusual situations. "They've helped pay for a child's funeral or a family's heating bill," says social worker John Warner.

In addition, Aiming for a Cure sends two current UI Children's Hospital families on a buying spree at Wal-Mart once a year to purchase books, games, videos, and larger items for the pediatric oncology area.

"They are the ones who know what's really needed," says Jodie. "Families have bought roll-away beds, new equipment for the hospital kitchenette, and laptop computers—all things that make their stays more comfortable and manageable."

Aiming for a Cure

Steve, Jodie and Rachel Ries with the German Shorthair Pointer dogs they raise near Central City, Iowa.



Givers



The sixth annual "Aiming for a Cure" hunting event was held March 20-21 at Highland Hideaway Hunt Club near Riverside, Iowa. The Aiming for a Cure board presented a check to UI Children's Hospital for \$200,000 to support pediatric cancer research and other programs for the families of cancer patients.

Peregrine Charities Funds Innovative Research A gift of \$100,000 from Peregrine Charities will help researchers at UI Children's Hospital come closer to finding better treatments and cures for rare pediatric diseases. The Peregrine Charities Discovery Fund for Children's Medicine has served as an indispensable source of research seed funding, and has allowed the hospital's leadership to invest in promising new research ideas. Peregrine Charities partners with hospitals in Eastern Iowa to improve the quality of life for children.

