SHANNON DALEY
MEMORIAL FUND

The Shannon Daley Memorial Fund is proud to announce its 24th Annual Charity Basketball Event. The Readington Teachers and Readington Men's All-Star Team will once again take on the world-renowned Harlem Wizards.

The Harlem Wizards are one of the greatest basketball show-team organizations to ever "lace it up and let 'em fly." The Harlem Wizards' performance offers a rare combination of individual athleticism, teamwork, and entertainment to delight fans of all ages.

The Shannon Daley Memorial Fund mission is to assist local families facing financial hardship due to a child battling a serious illness. Our first recipient is 3-year-old Isabella Diventi from Raritan Township who has a Primary Immune Deficiency. Our second recipient is 11-year-old Kinsley Geurds from Lambertville who has FOXGI syndrome. Our third recipient is 3-year-old Luna Best from Washington who has Cerebral Palsy. Our last recipients are 13-year-old Kaylee Banks from High Bridge who has Down Syndrome, celiac disease and GERD and her 18-year-old sister Penny Banks who is diagnosed with Stage 4 Osteosarcoma.

The event will be held Tuesday March 4th, 2025, at Hunterdon Central Regional High School Fieldhouse in Flemington, New Jersey. Game time is 7:00 PM. Hunterdon Central Regional High School is located on Route 31 in Flemington. For further directions call (908) 782-5727.

We also have business opportunities for advertisers. More than a thousand spectators will attend, and we are anticipating another sellout. Ad rates are as follows: Back Page $2,500 ,Full-Page $1,000, Half-Page $500, Quarter-Page $250. All donations of $50 or more will be noted in the Program.

Advance tickets for the game are $10 for adults and $5 for children under 12. All tickets are $10 at the door. Donations can also be made directly to the above address at any time.

For ticket information please call (908) 229 - 5460 or go to www.shannonfund.org. If you would like to advertise in the program, please call (908) 528 - 2231 or email Paul.McGill@shannonfund.org . Tickets also are available at:

Darrow's Sporting Edge	(908) 534 - 2838
Sneakers Plus	(908) 788 - 2921
Mr. Clymer	(908) 283 - 6738

Isabella Diventi's Story

Isabella was born on February 14, 2021—my perfect little Valentine. From the very beginning, her life has been full of challenges. Just a few days after she was born, Isabella had her first hospital admission, followed by another at just a few weeks old. We spent all of 2022 and most of 2023 inside the hospital, often for weeks at a time without ever leaving.

Over the next three years, she endured more than 30 hospital admissions, many of which required multiple rounds of IV antibiotics to fight severe infections. She's had pneumonia more times than I can count, six ear surgeries, countless ear infections, and every virus under the sun. Our life felt like a constant emergency, with endless trips to the emergency room, hospital stays, and specialists trying to uncover what was causing her body to struggle so much.

I remember begging the emergency room doctor to please figure out what was wrong with my little girl. I carried a 500-page binder filled with every medical record, hospital visit, and test result into the ER, hoping someone would see the pattern and give us the answers we desperately needed.

Isabella contracted a severe strep infection, which triggered something called PANDAS (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections). The infection caused swelling in her brain, leading to severe behavioral problems and seizure-like tics that no one could explain. Even after seeing a neurologist, we were left without answers. This strep infection hit her little body hard and took months to fully recover from its devastating effects.

Still not fully recovered from the strep infection, everything changed when Saint Peter's Hospital diagnosed Isabella with a dangerous infection called Mastoiditis, an infection inside her skull that required surgery. Her doctors quickly realized how serious her condition was and decided she needed specialized care. She was immediately transferred to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), where we finally got answers: Isabella would need weeks of specifically tailored IV antibiotics to fight the specific infection in her body and Isabella was diagnosed with a Primary Immune Deficiency.

Primary Immune Deficiency is a lifelong condition that affects Isabella's ability to fight off infections. It impacts many parts of her body, including her lungs, GI system, ears, sinuses, skin, and even her ability to heal from wounds. Everyday illnesses—even something as simple as a cold or an allergic reaction—can become serious and potentially life-threatening for her.

To keep her as healthy as possible, Isabella receives IVIG treatments every four weeks at CHOP. IVIG therapy provides antibodies her body can't make on its own. Each treatment day is long and difficult, but Isabella faces it with incredible bravery and strength.

We are incredibly thankful for the amazing team of specialists at CHOP, who continue to provide the best care possible. They've helped Isabella through countless procedures, tests, and treatments, always with compassion and expertise.

Despite everything she's been through, Isabella is strong, resilient, and full of life. She's our little warrior, and we're so proud of how far she's come. I truly believe God has a reason for everything, and we are beyond grateful for The Shannon Daley Memorial Fund for supporting families like ours during difficult times.

Kinsley Geurds's Story

We welcomed Kinsley into the world the day after Christmas in 2013. Her big brother and three sisters waited with cuddles and unconditional love. Our family was complete.

At two months old Kinsley began to turn blue. While at the hospital they discovered she had issues with her brain. Her first surgery followed later that week. We didn't know it at the time, but the next eight years of her life would be spent living in the hospital for weeks at a time, 5 code blues, 21 different symptoms without a diagnosis, and over 50 surgeries/procedures. With each hospitalization our family was separated, Dupont is in Delaware, and I was a stay-at-home mom. In my absence, we never left Kinsley alone in the hospital, her siblings were left in the care of family and friends. Relying on our community to help while I was gone and my husband worked. Routines shifted, unanswered questions, and the extra care required at home were challenging. Yet our children's love for their sister grew. They learned the medical terms, researched her symptoms on their own so they could better understand her body and symptoms. They never see her as an inconvenience and she is a natural part of everyday life, involved in every family activity. She is their baby sister -she isn't just tubes, IVs, and medical equipment she is their playmate, and they enjoy their time together.

Kinsley resembles a porcelain doll with porcelain skin, brown wavy hair, and huge blue eyes. Her smile is only erased by pain. Her petite frame might signify fragility, but her strong will and fighting spirit rival that of a heavyweight boxer. Her body has been through more than most people would endure in three lifetimes, yet she continues to be happy and full of love. Her contagious laughter, wicked sense of humor, and unwavering strength and resilience have been stealing hearts while redefining what it means to be a complex medically fragile child. She loves red, listening to music, bubbles, and long walks in her wheelchair. Kinsley was diagnosed two years ago with FOXG1 syndrome. To date, there are only 1,100 people across the globe with this diagnosis. There is no known cure or treatment.

She suffers from life-threatening seizures that turn off the part of the brain that signals breathing. Unfortunately, we have experienced this at home without nursing care and had to resuscitate her. She is non-verbal but says more with her facial expressions than anyone could with words. She cannot eat food, only tasting, and hasn't taken her first step… yet. Despite the original prognosis that she would not live to see her first birthday, she just celebrated her 11th birthday the day after Christmas, she continues to be a force of nature and an example that anything is possible.

We are beyond grateful to the Shannon Daley Memorial Fund for choosing our family. The hard work and dedication of the volunteers who created this event and gave so generously are appreciated. Many blessings to you all.

Luna Best's Story

Even before she was here, we were told she would be a high-risk pregnancy and were even moved to a room to discuss possibilities and the unlikely. This was not an option we were willing to entertain in the slightest. Do what you have to do to see that she makes it was all we told the Nicu doctor/ specialist, and we moved forward.

Born on Dec 5th, 2021, Luna Bella [pronounced be-ya] Best was unexpected, it seems she was in so much of a hurry to be with us she decided to arrive three months early. She was a tiny thing , weighing only 1lb 11oz, so small she could fit in my one hand and because she was a bit undeveloped it took a team of five nurses alongside a Nicu doctor to get her ready. She had to be wrapped in what looked to me a plastic bag to keep her body temp from falling. She had to be connected to several monitors and a breathing tube to keep constant checks on her heart rate, pulse and breathing. Being that her eyes couldn't open just yet and the light would have done much damage she had to have her head wrapped to protect them. It was amazing and heart wrenching to see her in that position knowing all we could do was watch [mom was exhausted from the delivery]. When she was finally stabilized, she was then moved to an enclosure with a UV light connected to cables and monitors and that was how we had to view her for the first few weeks, all while the nurses kept saying " she's going to be a tall one, she's really strong ". We of course did not see what they were talking about at the time, we were happy to have her and heartbroken that we couldn't take her home. Little did we know that her fight was just beginning.

Things were going well her vitals were stable for the most part even though she was still in the cradle we were allowed to hold her at times which meant the world to us, then during one of her checkups they gave us the news that there was fluid collecting on her brain and wasn't draining away like it should, she needed surgery asap to install a shunt to drain the fluid away from her head and into her stomach she was so tiny but it had to be done, and it went well, as time went on that was the first of three surgeries on her head alone that she underwent successfully. However, because of the pressure built up her entire left side became tight with limited mobility unlike her right side which functions normally, add that to the fact that she was premature her muscles and tendons were also affected. The second surgery was to make a correction to the shunt. She later had an issue because her skull closed too early and was forming into a point, so a half inch by 3-inch-long section of her skull had to be removed to allow her head to form in the best way possible, this placed her in the first of her three cranial helmets to support and reshape her head. When that was over, we all breathed a sigh of relief but as it happened, she had a few more challenges to face. Her hips were out of place and required correction this resulted in a brace she was to wear for a minimum of 23 hours a day for almost a year, which as it turned out did help but not in the way the doctor had hoped and that meant another surgery to cut the tendons in her inner thigh and rounds of Botox to the hips and ankles to aid with movement . She was then fitted with what was called an A-frame cast until she healed, a time she did not like, she could not sleep with the pain and muscle spasms and all we could do was comfort her as best we could. Then it was back into metal hip brace that she's currently wearing with promising results to date.

She has throughout her life, been having several different types of therapy to get her to a point where she can crawl and pull herself up [to a point], she can eat mostly on her own now and even carry a simple conversation when she wants to. She might have had a very early and difficult start but we all believe that she will get to run around one day. Like the nurses said, from the start she is a very strong girl.

We have to say thank you to the Shannon Daley Memorial fund from the bottom of our hearts for selecting us to receive such a generous gift. We are and will be forever grateful.

Penny & Kaylee Banks's Story

Life is never dull in our household with our two beautiful warriors! Our youngest, Kaylee, is 13 years old and has Down Syndrome, celiac disease, hypothyroidism, hearing loss, a history of choking, GERD, and several other medical conditions. Kaylee spent the first five weeks of her life in the NICU, and she had duodenal atresia surgery when she was four days old and g tube placement surgery when she was four weeks old (g tube was removed at five months). At two months of age, Kaylee had open heart surgery where her tiny heart was reconstructed due to an ASD and VSD repair. Through her first three years of life, Kaylee was in and out of the hospital for various medical surgeries and procedures such as ear tubes, endoscopies, bronchoscopies, as well as therapies and numerous specialists follow up appointments. At the age of three, Kaylee also underwent spinal fusion at C1/C2 for an occipital cervical issue that sometimes occurs in children with Down Syndrome. Then at the age of four, Kaylee had tonsillectomy to try to assist with sleep apnea. Since that time, she continues to have regular endoscopies to monitor her celiac disease and acid reflux, bloodwork to check on the fluctuating thyroid levels, audiology tests to monitor her hearing loss, and regular visits with endocrinology, cardiology, gastroenterology, and otolaryngology. Kaylee also receives weekly speech therapy.

Kaylee is a current seventh grader at High Bridge Middle School and is an active young lady participating in cheer for both the Hunterdon Huskies' Inspiration Team and her school's basketball teams, performing in her school's chorus recitals and plays, and attending social skills girls group classes at Hope for All Learners in Lebanon. Kaylee is extremely resilient and a child who is almost always smiling no matter what she is going through in life. Her pain tolerance is remarkable, and she is a very bright young lady who is determined to make her mark in life. We aren't quite sure what the future holds for Kaylee, but we know her attitude will take her far in life!

Our second warrior, Penny, is our oldest daughter. Throughout her childhood, Penny was a healthy girl who rarely needed medical attention. However, that all changed for Penny when she was diagnosed with stage four osteosarcoma two days before her 14th birthday. Penny's primary tumor was in her right femur with nodules in both lungs and her right hip. At the time of diagnosis, Penny was given a 30% cure rate which means there was a 30% chance that Penny would survive for five years.

Over the next nine months, Penny underwent surgery to place a port for chemo, limb salvage surgery to replace most of her femur and part of her tibia with a titanium rod, double thoracotomies to remove numerous nodules, hip surgery to remove several nodules, and numerous rounds of chemo. After Penny got through chemo and surgeries, she then underwent nine months of bi-weekly and then weekly immunology IVs to prevent recurrence.

Penny beat all odds and remained NED (no evidence of disease) for two and a half years after her treatment ended in November 2021. However, in June 2024, one day before her high school graduation from Voorhees High School, a single mediastinal tumor was found on her routine chest CT.

Treatment for the single tumor included surgery in Morristown and then consultation with Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) and Cleveland Clinic where it was decided that radiation would be the best course of action to try to prevent recurrence. However, in September 2024, during her three-month routine scans, several pleural and subpleural tumors were found in her right lung. We consulted with MSK and Cleveland Clinic again and we were told her tumors were inoperable and the goal was no longer to cure Penny but to try to stop the progression. She is taking an oral chemo called Cabozantinib (Cabo). The hope is that this drug will keep her stable and prevent new tumors from growing.

We are honored to have been selected by the Shannon Daley Memorial Fund. We are excited to be a part of this organization.